I am not sure, though, that we need be shy of something very like this as a conclusion. A really masterly use of a language — in free or fluid, not technical discourse — Shakespeare's use of English for example, goes a long way towards using the language as a whole.

Cleopatra, taking up the asp, says to it:

> Come, thou mortal wretch,
> With thy sharp teeth this knot intrinsicate
> Of life at once untie; poor venomous fool,
> Be angry, and despatch!

Consider how many senses of *mortal,* besides "death-dealing" come in; compare: "I have immortal longings in me." Consider *knot:* "This knot intrinsicate of life": "Something to be undone," "Something that troubles us until it is undone," "Something by which all holding-together hangs," "The nexus of all meaning." Whether the homophone *not* enters in here may be thought a doubtful matter. I feel it does. But consider *intrinsicate* along with *knot.* Edward Dowden, following the fashion of his time in making Shakespeare as simple as possible, gives "intricate" as the meaning here of *intrinsicate.* And the Oxford Dictionary, sad to say, does likewise. But Shakespeare is bringing together half a dozen meanings from *intrinsic* and *intrinse:* "Familiar," "intimate," "secret," "private," "innermost," "essential," "that which constitutes the very nature and being of a thing" — all the medical and philosophic meanings of his time as well as "intricate" and "involved." What the word does is exhausted by no one of these meanings and its force comes from all of them and more. As the movement of my hand uses nearly the whole skeletal system of the muscles and is supported by them, so a phrase may take its powers from an immense *system* of supporting uses of other words in other contexts.

Note

The word *usage* itself well illustrates some of the more troublesome shifts of meaning. An improved Rhetoric has among its aims an improved control over these. Here perhaps a list of some of the senses of *usage* may help us in avoiding misunderstanding.

1. The most inclusive sense is "the entire range of the powers which the word can exert as an instrument of communication in all situations and in co-operation with any other words."
(In this sense "Usage, and usage alone, undoubtedly controls language.")

2. "Some specific power which, in a limited range of situations and with a limited type of verbal context the word normally exerts."
(This is often called a *use* or *sense* and is what the Dictionary attempts to record in its definitions, by giving other words, phrases, and sentences with the same specific power.)

3. An instance of 2, at a certain place in Shakespeare, say, which may be appealed to to show that the word can have that power.

4. A supposed fixed "proper" meaning that the word must be kept to (has in its own right, etc.). This notion is derived from 1, 2, and 3 by oversimplification and a misconception of the working of language which, typically, takes the meaning of a sentence to be something built up from separate meanings of its words — instead of recognizing that it is the other way about and that the meanings of words are derived from the meanings of sentences in which they occur. This misconception assimilates the process by which words have their meanings determined with that by which they have their spelling determined and is the origin of a large part of misinterpretation.

Kenneth Burke

b. 1897

Much of Kenneth Burke's voluminous work over more than fifty years has been an attempt to redefine and expand the scope of rhetorical analysis and to apply it to all forms of language use. His chief contributions have been in developing rhetorical literary criticism and in analyzing the ways in which language systems — philosophical, political, literary, religious — describe and influence human motives. His early works, *Counter-Statement* (1931) and *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (1941), develop the theory that literature is a form of symbolic action. In *A Grammar of Motives* (1945), Burke presents the dramatistic pentad (act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose) as a method of analyzing ways of talking about motives. In *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950), he defines rhetoric as the use of language to form attitudes and influence action. In later work, such as *The Rhetoric of Religion* (1961), he presents elements of a proposed "symbolic" of motives, in which he examines the psychological effects produced by systems of rhetorical motivation.

Burke was born in Pittsburgh in 1897, attended Ohio State and Columbia Universities very briefly, and joined the Bohemian group of writers in Greenwich Village that included Hart Crane, e. e. cummings, Allen Tate, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and his childhood friend Malcolm Cowley. In the twenties, Burke worked for the avant-garde magazine *The Dial* as music critic, book reviewer, and editor while publishing poetry, short stories, essays, and reviews in a number of journals. During the Great Depression, he became attached to but did not join the Communist party, delivering papers at the Writers' Congresses of 1935, 1937, and 1939. He taught briefly at the New School for Social Research in the thirties and longer (from 1943 until 1961), at Bennington College and has been visiting professor at a great many colleges. In his long career, Burke has been studied and lionized by scholars in many fields. As one writer, Gregory S. Jay, put it recently, "He has lived to see his work repeatedly celebrated, forgotten, and revived as each new generation and movement in criticism belatedly stumbles upon the traces of Burke in territories it thought were undiscovered."[1]

In *Counter-Statement,* Burke announced that "effective literature could be nothing else but rhetoric." In so saying, he opposed the aesthetic view of literature as poetic and contemplative, divorced from the world of action. Burke's critical theory — which anticipates elements of reader-response criticism, American formalism, and deconstruction — is that literary forms are best understood by their effects on readers and that the study of rhetoric, much maligned by literary critics of the day, is precisely what is needed to understand the effects not only of literature but of all forms of discourse as well. The last section of *Counter-Statement,* the "Lexicon Rhetoricae," is an annotated list of literary-rhetorical terms intended as tools for

[1]Gregory S. Jay, "Burke Re-Marx," *PreText* 6 (Fall/Winter 1985), p. 169.

applying Burke's method. In rehabilitating rhetoric for use in literary criticism, Burke classifies literature as a kind of persuasive discourse, and though he tinkers with definitions that continue to distinguish "art" and "use" (that is, poetic and rhetoric), he comes to the conclusion that rhetorical analysis is appropriately applied to every kind of writing and speaking and may even be applied directly to the study of human relations.

Burke was vigorously attacked by both literary critics and rhetoricians for muddling literature and nonliterature, poetic and rhetoric, language and life. He responded by propounding the theory that literature is a form of symbolic action, with purposes and effects in the field of human relations. In *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action,* Burke argues that poetics is a subset of rhetoric. Literature and art, he says, have a hortatory or forensic function, especially in a capitalistic society, in which they often serve as propaganda.

In *A Grammar of Motives* (excerpted here), Burke presents the dramatistic system, which unifies rhetoric and poetic in a single analytical framework. In this system, statements about motives can be studied and compared by examining the ways in which they treat the dramatic elements of human relations: act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose. Burke asserts that this pentad of terms is intended as a way of analyzing not actual human behavior but only descriptions of behavior. His concern is "primarily with the analysis of *language* rather than with the analysis of *reality*." The terms of the pentad are not "forms of experience" but "forms of *talk about* experience." Nonetheless, he often applies the dramatistic method as a form of sociological analysis and, in later works, such as *Language as Symbolic Action* (1966, excerpted here), treats experience and language as completely interdependent. The bulk of *A Grammar of Motives* is taken up with analyses of common terms that are typically used to attribute motives, analyses of philosophical systems that describe motives, and a long study of the meanings of *dialectic*.

Burke's own method is dialectical, although *deconstructive* may be a better term today for characterizing his practice of revealing contrary meanings in supposedly positive terms and his emphasis on the way language "defeats" reality. For Burke, every epistemology has a key term, a "God-term," that names the fundamental ground of human action, as the name *God* does for religious epistemologies. These terms and the language systems that surround them are the resources for rhetorical action.

In *A Rhetoric of Motives* (excerpted here), Burke looks at the ways in which these resources are used to create "identification" with a group and its world view. *Identification* means to suggest more powerfully than *persuasion* the workings of rhetorical discourse in everyday language. Burke examines the ways in which the terms used to create identification work to include the members of a group in a common ideology, while at the same time they exclude alternate terms, other groups, and competing ideologies. (His general observations on the nature of inclusion and exclusion are included in our excerpt.) He then reviews the definitions of *rhetoric* given or implied by a number of philosophers, including Jeremy Bentham's critique of metaphoric deception, Blaise Pascal's analysis of Jesuit casuistry, and Karl Marx's demystification of Hegelian idealism.

The whole enterprise of making a grammar, a rhetoric, and a symbolic of motives is a way of analyzing systems of knowledge — primarily philosophy and poetry but also science, psychology, and popular culture — from the point of view of rhetoric. Burke's rhetoric, bound up in communities, communal ideas, social relations, religion, magic, and psychological effects, in verbal and nonverbal communication, seems to encompass almost everything. Although it is often frustrating to read Burke, his theories are undeniably powerful and his analyses full of remarkable insights. Needless to say, the selections reprinted here provide only a hint of what Burke has to offer.

Selected Bibliography

Our texts of *A Grammar of Motives* (New York, 1945) and *A Rhetoric of Motives* (New York, 1950) are the 1969 editions by the University of California Press. The excerpt from *Language as Symbolic Action* (1966) comes from the first edition, also published by the University of California Press.

Other works by Burke include *Counter-Statement* (New York, 1931), *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose* (New York, 1935), *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action* (Baton Rouge, 1941), *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology* (Boston, 1961), and *Dramatism and Development* (Worcester, Mass., 1972). Paul Jay has edited *The Selected Correspondence of Kenneth Burke and Malcolm Cowley, 1915–1981* (New York, 1988).

William H. Rueckert provides an extensive bibliography of Burke's work and an excellent annotated bibliography of works about Burke in *Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations,* 2nd ed. (Berkeley, 1982). Rueckert's *Critical Responses to Kenneth Burke, 1924–1966* (Minneapolis, 1969) also contains valuable bibliographic notes.

Among the books that have been written about Burke, several combine biography and a general review of his works: George Knox, *Critical Moments: Kenneth Burke's Categories and Critiques* (Seattle, 1957); Hugh Duncan, *Communication and Social Order* (New York, 1962); Merle Brown, *Kenneth Burke* (Minneapolis, 1969); and Armin Frank, *Kenneth Burke* (New York, 1969).

More specifically focused on rhetoric are Daniel Fogarty's introductory essay, "Kenneth Burke's Theory," in *Roots for a New Rhetoric* (New York, 1959); Virginia Holland's *Counterpoint: Kenneth Burke and Aristotle's Theories of Rhetoric* (New York, 1959); and Marie Hochmuth Nichols's "Kenneth Burke and the 'New Rhetoric'" (*Quarterly Journal of Speech* 38 [April 1952]: 133–44, rpt. in Schwartz and Rycenga, *The Province of Rhetoric,* and in R. Johannesen, *Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric*). Among the many more recent articles, see Ross Winterowd's "Kenneth Burke: An Annotated Glossary of His Terministic Screen" (*Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 15 [Summer/Fall 1985]: 145–77); and Michael Feehan's "Kenneth Burke's Discovery of Dramatism" (*Quarterly Journal of Speech* 65 [1979]: 405–11).

Stanley Edgar Hyman's discussion of Burke's critical method in *The Armed Vision: A Study in the Methods of Modern Literary Criticism* (New York, 1948) gives a sense of the confusion and dismay caused by Burke's theories at their first appearance. Frank Lentricchia focuses on Burke's Marxism in *Criticism and Social Change* (Chicago, 1983).

Burke recently engaged in a three-way debate in the journal *Critical Inquiry:* Wayne Booth, "Kenneth Burke's Way of Knowing," and Burke, "In Response to Booth: Dancing

with Tears in My Eyes" (both September 1974); Fredric Jameson, "The Symbolic Inference: or, Kenneth Burke and Ideological Analysis" (Spring 1978); Burke, "Methodological Repression and/or Strategies of Containment" (Winter 1978); and Jameson, "Critical Response: Ideology and Symbolic Action" (Winter 1978).

The statement from Gregory Jay is in a special edition of *Pre/Text* (Fall/Winter 1985) devoted to Burke.

From *A Grammar of Motives*

INTRODUCTION: THE FIVE KEY TERMS OF DRAMATISM

What is involved, when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it? An answer to that question is the subject of this book. The book is concerned with the basic forms of thought which, in accordance with the nature of the world as all men necessarily experience it, are exemplified in the attributing of motives. These forms of thought can be embodied profoundly or trivially, truthfully or falsely. They are equally present in systematically elaborated metaphysical structures, in legal judgments, in poetry and fiction, in political and scientific works, in news and in bits of gossip offered at random.

We shall use five terms as generating principles of our investigation. They are: Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, Purpose. In a rounded statement about motives, you must have some word that names the *act* (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names the *scene* (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred); also, you must indicate what person or kind of person *(agent)* performed the act, what means or instruments he used *(agency)*, and the *purpose*. Men may violently disagree about the purposes behind a given act, or about the character of the person who did it, or how he did it, or in what kind of situation he acted; or they may even insist upon totally different words to name the act itself. But be that as it may, any complete statement about motives will offer *some kind* of answers to these five questions: what was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency), and

If you ask why, with a whole world of terms to choose from, we select these rather than some others as basic, our book itself is offered as the answer. For, to explain our position, we shall show how it can be applied.

Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, Purpose. Although, over the centuries, men have shown great enterprise and inventiveness in pondering matters of human motivation, one can simplify the subject by this pentad of key terms, which are understandable almost at a glance. They need never to be abandoned, since all statements that assign motives can be shown to arise out of them and to terminate in them. By examining them quizzically, we can range far; yet the terms are always there for us to reclaim, in their everyday simplicity, their almost miraculous easiness, thus enabling us constantly to begin afresh. When they might become difficult, when we can hardly see them, through having stared at them too intensely, we can of a sudden relax, to look at them as we always have, lightly, glancingly. And having reassured ourselves, we can start out again, once more daring to let them look strange and difficult for a time.

In an exhibit of photographic murals *(Road to Victory)* at the Museum of Modern Art, there was an aerial photograph of two launches, proceeding side by side on a tranquil sea. Their wakes crossed and recrossed each other in almost an infinity of lines. Yet despite the intricateness of this tracery, the picture gave an impression of great simplicity, because one could quickly perceive the generating principle of its design. Such, ideally, is the case with our pentad of terms, used as generating principle. It should provide

into considerable complexity, and yet can be discovered beneath its elaborations.

We want to inquire into the purely internal relationships which the five terms bear to one another, considering their possibilities of transformation, their range of permutations and combinations — and then to see how these various resources figure in actual statements about human motives. Strictly speaking, we mean by a Grammar of motives a concern with the terms alone, without reference to the ways in which their potentialities have been or can be utilized in actual statements about motives. Speaking broadly we could designate as "philosophies" any statements in which these grammatical resources are specifically utilized. Random or unsystematic statements about motives could be considered as fragments of a philosophy.

One could think of the Grammatical resources as *principles,* and of the various philosophies as *casuistries* which apply these principles to temporal situations. For instance, we may examine the term Scene simply as a blanket term for the concept of background or setting *in general,* a name for *any* situation in which acts or agents are placed. In our usage, this concern would be "grammatical." And we move into matters of "philosophy" when we note that one thinker uses "God" as his term for the ultimate ground or scene of human action, another uses "nature," a third uses "environment," or "history," or "means of production," etc. And whereas a statement about the grammatical principles of motivation might lay claim to a universal validity, or complete certainty, the choice of any one philosophic idiom embodying these principles is much more open to question. Even before we know what act is to be discussed, we can say with confidence that a rounded discussion of its motives must contain a reference to *some kind of* background. But since each philsophic idiom will characterize this background differently, there will remain the question as to which characterization is "right" or "more nearly right."

It is even likely that, whereas one philosophic idiom offers the best calculus for one case, another case answers best to a totally different calculus. However, we should not think of "cases" in too restricted a sense. Although, from the standpoint of the grammatical principles inherent

in the internal relationships prevailing among our five terms, any given philosophy is to be considered as a casuistry, even a cultural situation extending over centuries is a "case," and would probably require a much different philosophic idiom as its temporizing calculus of motives than would be required in the case of other cultural situations.

In our original plans for this project, we had no notion of writing a "Grammar" at all. We began with a theory of comedy, applied to a treatise on human relations. Feeling that competitive ambition is a drastically overdeveloped motive in the modern world, we thought this motive might be transcended if men devoted themselves not so much to "excoriating" it as to "appreciating" it. Accordingly, we began taking notes on the foibles and antics of what we tended to think of as "the Human Barnyard."

We sought to formulate the basic stratagems which people employ, in endless variations, and consciously or unconsciously, for the outwitting or cajoling of one another. Since all these devices had a "you and me" quality about them, being "addressed" to some person or to some advantage, we classed them broadly under the heading of a Rhetoric. There were other notes, concerned with modes of expression and appeal in the fine arts, and with purely psychological or psychoanalytic matters. These we classed under the heading of Symbolic.

We had made still further observations, which we at first strove uneasily to class under one or the other of these heads, but which we were eventually able to distinguish as the makings of a Grammar. For we found in the course of writing that our project needed a grounding in formal considerations logically prior to both the rhetorical and the psychological. And as we proceeded with this introductory groundwork, it kept extending its claims until it had spun itself from an intended few hundred words into nearly 200,000, of which the present book is revision and abridgment.

Theological, metaphysical, and juridical doctrines offer the best illustration of the concerns we place under the heading of Grammar; the forms and methods of art best illustrate the concerns of Symbolic; and the ideal material to reveal the nature of Rhetoric comprises observa-

tions on parliamentary and diplomatic devices, editorial bias, sales methods, and incidents of social sparring. However, the three fields overlap considerably. And we shall note, in passing, how the Rhetoric and the Symbolic hover about the edges of our central theme, the Grammar.

A perfectionist might seek to evolve terms free of ambiguity and inconsistency (as with the terministic ideals of symbolic logic and logical positivism). But we have a different purpose in view, one that probably retains traces of its "comic" origin. We take it for granted that, insofar as men cannot themselves create the universe, there must remain something essentially enigmatic about the problem of motives, and that this underlying enigma will manifest itself in inevitable ambiguities and inconsistencies among the terms for motives. Accordingly, what we want is *not terms that avoid ambiguity,* but *terms that clearly reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise.*

Occasionally, you will encounter a writer who seems to get great exaltation out of proving, with an air of much relentlessness, that some philosophic term or other has been used to cover a variety of meanings, and who would smash and abolish this idol. As a general rule, when a term is singled out for such harsh treatment, if you look closer you will find that it happens to be associated with some cultural or political trend from which the writer would dissociate himself; hence there is a certain notable ambiguity in this very charge of ambiguity, since he presumably feels purged and strengthened by bringing to bear upon this particular term a kind of attack that could, with as much justice, be brought to bear upon any other term (or "title") in philosophy, including of course the alternative term, or "title," that the writer would swear by. Since no two things or acts or situations are exactly alike, you cannot apply the same term to both of them without thereby introducing a certain margin of ambiguity, an ambiguity as great as the difference between the two subjects that are given the identical title. And all the more may you expect to find ambiguity in terms so "titular" as to become the marks of a philosophic school, or even several philosophic schools. Hence, instead of considering it our task to "dispose of" any ambiguity by merely disclosing the fact that it is an ambiguity, we rather consider it our task to study and clarify the *resources* of ambiguity. For in the course of this work, we shall deal with many kinds of *transformation* — and it is in the areas of ambiguity that transformations take place; in fact, without such areas, transformation would be impossible. Distinctions, we might say, arise out of a great central moltenness, where all is merged. They have been thrown from a liquid center to the surface, where they have congealed. Let one of these crusted distinctions return to its source, and in this alchemic center it may be remade, again becoming molten liquid, and may enter into new combinations, whereat it may be again thrown forth as a new crust, a different distinction. So that *A* may become non-*A*. But not merely by a leap from one state to the other. Rather, we must take *A* back into the ground of its existence, the logical substance that is its causal ancestor, and on to a point where it is consubstantial with non-*A*; then we may return, this time emerging with non-*A* instead.

And so with our five terms: certain formal interrelationships prevail among these terms, by reason of their role as attributes of a common ground or substance. Their participation in a common ground makes for transformability. At every point where the field covered by any one of these terms overlaps upon the field covered by any other, there is an alchemic opportunity, whereby we can put one philosophy or doctrine of motivation into the alembic, make the appropriate passes, and take out another. From the central moltenness, where all the elements are fused into one togetherness, there are thrown forth, in separate crusts, such distinctions as those between freedom and necessity, activity and passiveness, cooperation and competition, cause and effect, mechanism and teleology.

Our term, "Agent," for instance, is a general heading that might, in a given case, require further subdivision, as an agent might have his act modified (hence partly motivated) by friends (coagents) or enemies (counteragents). Again, under "Agent" one could place any personal properties that are assigned a motivational value, such as "ideas," "the will," "fear," "malice," "intuition," "the creative imagination." A portrait painter may treat the body as a property of the agent (an expression of personality), whereas materialistic medicine would treat it as "scenic," a purely "objective material"; and from another point of view it could be classed as an agency, a means by which one gets reports of the world at large. Machines are obviously instruments (that is, Agencies); yet in their vast accumulation they constitute the industrial scene, with its own peculiar set of motivational properties. War may be treated as an Agency, insofar as it is a means to an end; as a collective Act, subdivisible into many individual acts; as a Purpose, in schemes proclaiming a cult of war. For the man inducted into the army, war is a Scene, a situation that motivates the nature of his training; and in mythologies war is an Agent, or perhaps better a superagent, in the figure of the war god. We may think of voting as an act, and of the voter as an agent; yet votes and voters both are hardly other than a politician's medium or agency; or from another point of view, they are a part of his scene. And insofar as a vote is cast without adequate knowledge of its consequences, one might even question whether it should be classed as an activity at all; one might rather call it passive, or perhaps sheer motion (what the behaviorists would call a Response to a Stimulus).

Or imagine that one were to manipulate the terms, for the imputing of motives, in such a case as this: The hero (agent) with the help of a friend (coagent) outwits the villain (counteragent) by using a file (agency) that enables him to break his bonds (act) in order to escape (purpose) from the room where he has been confined (scene). In selecting a casuistry here, we might locate the motive in the agent, as were we to credit his escape to some trait integral to his personality, such as "love of freedom." Or we might stress the motivational force of the scene, since nothing is surer to awaken throughts of escape in a man than a condition of imprisonment. Or we might note the essential part played by the *coagent,* in assisting our hero to escape — and, with such thoughts as our point of departure, we might conclude that the motivations of this act should be reduced to social origins.

Or if one were given to the brand of speculative enterprise exemplified by certain Christian heretics (for instance, those who worshipped Judas as a saint, on the grounds that his betrayal of Christ, in leading to the Crucifixion, so brought about the opportunity for mankind's redemption) one might locate the necessary motivational origin of the act in the *counteragent.* For the hero would not have been prodded to escape if there had been no villain to imprison him. Inasmuch as the escape could be called a "good" act, we might find in such motivational reduction to the counteragent a compensatory transformation whereby a bitter fountain may give forth sweet waters. In his *Anti-Dühring* Engels gives us a secular variant which no one could reasonably call outlandish or excessive:

> It was slavery that first made possible the division of labour between agriculture and industry on a considerable scale, and along with this, the flower of the ancient world, Hellenism. Without slavery, no Greek state, no Greek art and science; without slavery, no Roman Empire. But without Hellenism and the Roman Empire as a basis, also no modern Europe.
>
> We should never forget that our whole economic, political, and intellectual development has as its presupposition a state of things in which slavery was as necessary as it was universally recognized. In this sense we are entitled to say: Without the slavery of antiquity, no modern socialism.

Pragmatists would probably have referred the motivation back to a source in *agency.* They would have noted that our hero escaped by using an *instrument,* the file by which he severed his bonds; then in this same line of thought, they would have observed that the hand holding the file was also an instrument; and by the same token the brain that guided the hand would be an instrument, and so likewise the educational system that taught the methods and shaped the values involved in the incident.

True, if you reduce the terms to any one of them, you will find them branching out again; for no one of them is enough. Thus, Mead called his pragmatism a philosophy of the *act.* And though Dewey stresses the value of "intelligence" as an instrument (agency, embodied in "scientific method"), the other key terms in his casuistry, "experience" and "nature," would be the equivalents of act and scene respectively. We must

add, however, that Dewey is given to stressing the *overlap* of these two terms, rather than the respects in which they are distinct, as he proposes to "replace the traditional separation of nature and experience with the idea of continuity." (The quotation is from *Intelligence and the Modern World*.)

As we shall see later, it is by reason of the pliancy among our terms that philosophic systems can pull one way and another. The margins of overlap provide opportunities whereby a thinker can go without a leap from any one of the terms to any of its fellows. (We have also likened the terms to the fingers, which in their extremities are distinct from one another, but merge in the palm of the hand. If you would go from one finger to another without a leap, you need but trace the tendon down into the palm of the hand, and then trace a new course along another tendon.) Hence, no great dialectical enterprise is necessary if you would merge the terms, reducing them even to as few as one; and then, treating this as the "essential" term, the "causal ancestor" of the lot, you can proceed in the reverse direction across the margins of overlap, "deducing" the other terms from it as its logical descendants.

This is the method, explicitly and in the grand style, of metaphysics which brings its doctrines to a head in some overall title, a word for being in general, or action in general, or motion in general, or development in general, or experience in general, etc., with all its other terms distributed about this titular term in positions leading up to it and away from it. There is also an implicit kind of metaphysics, that often goes by the name of No Metaphysics, and aims at reduction not to an overall title but to some presumably underlying atomic constituent. Its vulgar variant is to be found in techniques of "unmasking," which would make for progress and emancipation by applying materialistic terms to immaterial subjects (the pattern here being, "*X* is nothing but *Y*," where *X* designates a higher value and *Y* a lower one, the higher value being thereby reduced to the lower one).

The titular word for our own method is "dramatism," since it invites one to consider the matter of motives in a perspective that, being developed from the analysis of drama, treats language and thought primarily as modes of action. The method is synoptic, though not in the historical sense. A purely historical survey would require no less than a universal history of human culture; for every judgment, exhortation, or admonition, every view of natural or supernatural reality, every intention or expectation involves assumptions about motive, or cause. Our work must be synoptic in a different sense: in the sense that it offers a system of placement, and should enable us, by the systematic manipulation of the terms, to "generate," or "anticipate" the various classes of motivational theory. And a treatment in these terms, we hope to show, reduces the subject synoptically while still permitting us to appreciate its scope and complexity.

It is not our purpose to import dialectical and metaphysical concerns into a subject that might otherwise be free of them. On the contrary, we hope to make clear the ways in which dialectical and metaphysical issues *necessarily* figure in the subject of motivation. Our speculations, as we interpret them, should show that the subject of motivation is a philosophic one, not ultimately to be solved in terms of empirical science.

CONTAINER AND THING CONTAINED

The Scene–Act Ratio

Using "scene" in the sense of setting, or background, and "act" in the sense of action, one could say that "the scene contains the act." And using "agents" in the sense of actors, or acters, one could say that "the scene contains the agents."

It is a principle of drama that the nature of acts and agents should be consistent with the nature of the scene. And whereas comic and grotesque works may deliberately set these elements at odds with one another, audiences make allowances for such liberty, which reaffirms the same principle of consistency in its very violation.

The nature of the scene may be conveyed primarily by suggestions built into the lines of the verbal action itself, as with the imagery in the dialogue of Elizabethan drama and with the descriptive passages of novels; or it may be conveyed by non-linguistic properties, as with the materials of naturalistic stage sets. In any case, examining first the relation between scene and act, all we need note here is the principle whereby the scene is a fit "container" for the act, expressing in fixed properties the same quality that the action expresses in terms of development.

Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* is a good instance of the scene-act ratio, since the correlations between scene and act are readily observable, beginning with the fact that this representative middle-class drama is enacted against a typical middle-class setting. Indeed, in this work written at the very height of Ibsen's realistic period, we can see how readily realism leads into symbolism. For the succession of scenes both *realistically reflects* the course of the action and *symbolizes* it.

The first act (we are now using the word "act" in the purely technical sense, to designate the major division of a play, a sense in which we could even reverse our formula and say that "the act contains its scenes") — the first act takes place in Dr. Stockmann's sitting room, a background perfectly suited to the thoroughly bourgeois story that is to unfold from these beginnings. In the course of this act, we learn of a scene, or situation, prior to the opening of the play, but central to its motivation. Dr. Stockmann refers to an earlier period of withdrawal, spent alone in the far North. During his isolation, he had conceived of his plan for the public Baths. This plan may be considered either realistically or symbolically; it is the dramatist's device for materializing, or objectifying, a purely spiritual process, since the plot has to do with pollution and purification on a moral level, which has its scenic counterpart in the topic of the Baths.

Act II. Still in Dr. Stockmann's sitting room. Dr. Stockmann has learned that the Baths, the vessels of purification, are themselves polluted, and that prominent business and professional men would suppress this fact for financial reasons. This opposition is epitomized in the figure of Peter Stockmann, the Doctor's brother. The intimate, familial quality of the setting thus has its counterpart in the quality of the action, which involves the struggle of two social principles, the conservative and the progressive, as objectified and personalized in the struggle of the two brothers.

Act III takes place in the editorial office of the People's Messenger, a local newspaper in which Dr. Stockmann had hoped to publish his evidence that the water supply was contaminated. The action takes on a more forensic reference, in keeping with the nature of the place. In this Act we have the peripety of the drama, as Dr. Stockmann's expectations are reversed. For he learns that the personal and financial influence of his enemies prevents the publication of the article. This turn of the plot has its scenic replica in mimicry involving Peter Stockmann's hat and stick, properties that symbolize his identity as mayor. In false hope of victory, Dr. Stockmann had taken them up, and strutted about burlesquing his brother. But when Dr. Stockmann learns that the editor, in response to the pressure of the conservatives, will not publish the article, it is Peter Stockmann's turn to exult. This reversal of the action is materialized (made scenic) thus:

> PETER STOCKMANN: My hat and stick, if you please. (Dr. Stockmann *takes off the hat and lays it on the table with the stick*. Peter Stockmann *takes them up*.) Your authority as mayor has come to an untimely end.

In the next Act Dr. Stockmann does contrive to lay his case before a public tribunal of a sort: a gathering of fellow townsmen, assembled in "a big old-fashioned room," in the house of a friend. His appeal is unsuccessful; his neighbors vote overwhelmingly against him, and the scene ends in turbulence. As regards the scene-act ratio, note that the semi-public, semi-intimate setting reflects perfectly the quality of Dr. Stockmann's appeal.

In Act V, the stage directions tell us that the hero's clothes are torn, and the room is in disorder, with broken windows. You may consider these details either as properties of the scene or as a reflection of the hero's condition after his recent struggle with the forces of reaction. The scene is laid in Dr. Stockmann's *study*, a setting so symbolic of the direction taken by the plot that the play ends with Dr. Stockmann announc-

ing his plan to enroll twelve young *disciples* and with them to found a *school* in which he will work for the *education* of society.

The whole plot is that of an internality directed outwards. We progress by stages from a scene (reported) wherein the plan of social purification was conceived in loneliness, to the scene in his study where the hero announces in the exaltation of a dramatic finale: "The strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone." The pronouncement is modified by the situation in which it is uttered: as Dr. Stockmann speaks, he is surrounded by a loyal and admiring family circle, and his educational plan calls not for complete independence, but for cooperation. He is not setting himself up as the strongest man in the world, but merely as one headed in the same direction. And, with the exception of his brother Peter, we may consider his family circle as aspects of his own identity, being under the aegis of "loneliness" since it began so and retains the quality of its ancestry.

The end of the third play in O'Neill's trilogy, *Mourning Becomes Electra,* presents a contrasting instance of the scene-act ratio:

> LAVINIA: *(turns to him sharply)* You go now and close the shutters and nail them tight.
>
> SETH: Ayeh.
>
> LAVINIA: And tell Hannah to throw out all the flowers.
>
> SETH: Ayeh. *(He goes past her up the steps and into the house. She ascends to the portico — and then turns and stands for a while, stiff and square-shouldered, staring into the sunlight with frozen eyes.* Seth *leans out of the window at the right of the door and pulls the shutters closed with a decisive bang. As if this were a word of command,* Lavinia *pivots sharply on her heel and marches woodenly into the house, closing the door behind her.)*
>
> CURTAIN

We end here on the motif of the shut-in personality, quite literally objectified. And the closing, novelistic stage directions are beautifully suited to our purpose; for note how, once the shutters have been closed, thereby placing before our eyes the scenic replica of Lavinia's mental state, this scene in turn becomes the motivation of her next act. For we are told that she walks like an automaton in response to the closing of the shutter, "as if this were a word of command."

Hamlet contains a direct reference to the motivational aspect of the scene-act ratio. In an early scene, when Hamlet is about to follow the Ghost, Horatio warns:

> What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
> Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
> That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
> And there assume some other horrible form,
> Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
> And draw you into madness? Think of it;
> The very place puts toys of desperation,
> Without more motive, into every brain
> That looks so many fathoms to the sea
> And hears it roar beneath.

In the last four lines of this speech, Horatio is saying that the sheer natural surroundings might be enough to provide a man with a motive for an act as desperate and absolute as suicide. This notion (of the natural scene as sufficient motivation for an act) was to reappear, in many transformations, during the subsequent centuries. We find a variant of it in the novels of Thomas Hardy, and in other regionalists who derive motivations for their characters from what Virgil would have called the *genius loci*. There are unmistakable vestiges of it in scientific theories (of Darwinian cast) according to which men's behavior and development are explained in terms of environment. Geopolitics is a contemporary variant.

From the motivational point of view, there is implicit in the quality of a scene the quality of the action that is to take place within it. This would be another way of saying that the act will be consistent with the scene. Thus, when the curtain rises to disclose a given stage set, this stage set contains, simultaneously, implicitly, all that the narrative is to draw out as a sequence, explicitly. Or, if you will, the stage set contains the action *ambiguously* (as regards the norms of action) — and in the course of the play's development this ambiguity is converted into a corresponding *articulacy.* The proportion would be: scene is to act as implicit is to explicit. One could not deduce the details of the action from the details of the setting, but one could deduce the quality of the action from the quality of the setting. An extreme illustration would be an Expressionistic drama, having for its scenic reflex such abstract properties as lines askew, grotesque lighting, sinister color,and odd objects.

We have, of course, chosen examples particularly suited to reveal the distinction between act and scene as well as their interdependence. The matter is obscured when we are dealing with scene in the sense of the relationships prevailing among the various *dramatis personae.* For the characters, by being in interaction, could be treated as scenic conditions or "environment," of one another; and any act could be treated as part of the context that modifies (hence, to a degree motivates) the subsequent acts. The principles of dramatic consistency would lead one to expect such cases of overlap among the terms; but while being aware of them we should firmly fix in our minds such cases as afford a clear differentiation. Our terms leaning themselves to both merger and division, we are here trying to divide two of them while recognizing their possibilities of merger.

The Scene–Agent Ratio

The scene-agent ratio, where the synecdochic relation is between person and place, is partly exemplified in this citation from Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship:*

> These Arabs Mohammed was born among are certainly a notable people. Their country itself is notable; the fit habitation for such a race. Savage inaccessible rock-mountains, great grim deserts, alternating with beautiful strips of verdure; wherever water is, there is greenness, beauty; odoriferous balm-shrubs, date-trees, frankincense-trees. Consider that wide waste horizon of sand, empty, silent, like a sand-sea, dividing habitable place from habitable place. You are all alone there, left alone with the universe; by day a fierce sun blazing down on it with intolerable radiance; by night the great deep heaven with its stars. Such a country is fit for a swift-handed, deep-hearted race of men.

The correlation between the quality of the country and the quality of its inhabitants is here presented in quite secular terms. There is a sonnet by Wordsworth that is a perfect instance of the scene-agent ratio treated theologically:

> It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
> The holy time is quiet as a Nun
> Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
> Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
> The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea;
> Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
> And doth with his eternal motion make
> A sound like thunder — everlastingly.
> Dear Child! Dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
> 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.

By selecting a religious image in which to convey the purely naturalistic sense of hush, the octave infuses the natural scene with hints of a wider circumference, supernatural in scope. The sestet turns from scene to agent; indeed, the octave is all scene, the sestet all agent. But by the logic of the scene-agent ratio, if the scene is supernatural in quality, the agent contained by this scene will partake of the same supernatural quality. And so, spontaneously, purely by being the kind of agent that is at one with this kind of scene, the child is "divine." The contents of a divine container will synecdochically share in its divinity.

Swift's satire on philosophers and mathematicians, the Laputans in the third book of *Gulliver's Travels,* offers a good instance of the way in which the scene-agent ratio can be used for the depiction of character. To suggest that the Laputans are, we might say, "up in the air," he portrays them as living on an island that floats in space. Here the nature of the inhabitants is translated into terms of their habitation.

Variants of the scene-agent ratio abound in typical nineteenth-century thought, so strongly given to the study of motives by the dialectic pairing of people and things (man and nature, agent and scene). The ratio figures characteristically in the idealist's concern with the *Einklang zwischen Innen- und Aussenwelt.*[1] The paintings

[1] "Harmony between the inner life and the external world." [Ed.]

of the pointillist Seurat carry the sense of consistency between scene and agent to such lengths that his human figures seem on the point of dissolving into their background. However, we here move beyond strictly scene-agent matters into the area better covered by our term, agency, since the extreme impression of consistency between scene and agent is here conveyed by stressing the distinctive terms of the method, or medium (that is, agency), which serves as an element common to both scene and agents.

The logic of the scene-agent ratio has often served as an embarrassment to the naturalistic novelist. He may choose to "indict" some scene (such as bad working conditions under capitalism) by showing that it has a "brutalizing" effect upon the people who are indigenous to this scene. But the scene-agent ratio, if strictly observed here, would require that the "brutalizing" situation contain "brutalized" characters as its dialectical counterpart. And thereby, in his humanitarian zeal to save mankind, the novelist portrays characters which, in being as brutal as their scene, are not worth saving. We could phrase this dilemma in another way: our novelist points up his thesis by too narrow a conception of scene as the motive-force behind his characters; and this restricting of the scene calls in turn for a corresponding restriction upon personality, or role.

Further Instances of These Ratios

The principles of consistency binding scene, act, and agent also lead to reverse applications. That is, the scene-act ratio either calls for acts in keeping with scenes or scenes in keeping with acts — and similarly with the scene-agent ratio. When Lavinia instructs Seth to nail fast the shutters and throw out the flowers, by her command (an act) she brings it about that the scene corresponds to her state of mind. But as soon as these scenic changes have taken place, they in turn become the motivating principle of her subsequent conduct. For the complete embodiment of her purposes functions as a "command" to her; and she obeys it as a response to a stimulus, like a pure automaton moved by the sheer disposition of material factors.

In behavioristic metaphysics (behaviorists would call it No Metaphysics) you radically truncate the possibilities of drama by eliminating action, reducing action to sheer motion. The close of the O'Neill play follows this same development from action to motion, a kind of inverted transcendence. Because of this change, Lavinia's last moments must be relegated to stage directions alone. She does not *act,* she is automatically *moved*. The trilogy did not end a moment too soon; for its close represented not only the end of Lavinia, but the end of the motivating principle of drama itself. The playwright had here obviously come to the end of a line. In his next plays he would have to "turn back." For he could have "gone on" only by abandoning drama for some more "scientific" form. (He might have transcended drama scientifically, for instance, by a collating of sociological observations designed to classify different types of motorist and to correlate them with different types of response to traffic signals.)

We noted how, in Ibsen's drama, the hero's state of mind after his conflict with the townspeople was objectified in such scenic properties as his torn clothing, and the broken windows and general disorder of his study. It is obvious that one might have carried this consistency further in either direction (for instance, spreading it more environmentally, as were we to enlist turbulent weather as an aspect of the scene, or more personally, as were we to enlist facial expressions and postures of the body, which of course the actor does, in interpreting his role, regardless of the playwright's omissions). If you took the hero's state of mind as your point of departure here, you could say that the whole scene becomes a mere aspect of the role, or person ("agent") — or that the physical body of the agent is itself but "scenic," to be listed among the person's "properties," as with a dwelling that a man had ordered built in strict accordance with his own private specifications, or as theologians see in "body" the dwelling place of "soul." We observe the same ratio in Swift's account of his Laputans when, to suggest that in their thinking they could be transcendental, or introvert, or extremely biased, but never well balanced, he writes: "Their heads were all inclined, either to the right or to the left; one of their eyes turned inward, and the other directly up to the zenith." But lest our speculations seem too arbitrary, let us cite one more anecdote, this time from a tiny drama enacted in real life, and here reported to illustrate how, when a state of mind is pronounced in quality, the agent may be observed arranging a corresponding pattern in the very properties of the scene.

The occasion: a committee meeting. The setting: a group of committee members bunched about a desk in an office, after hours. Not far from the desk was a railing; but despite the crowding, all the members were bunched about the chairman at the desk, inside the railing. However, they had piled their hats and coats on chairs and tables outside the pale. General engrossment in the discussion. But as the discussion continued, one member quietly arose, and opened the gate in the railing. As unnoticeably as possible, she stepped outside and closed the gate. She picked up her coat, laid it across her arm, and stood waiting. A few moments later, when there was a pause in the discussion, she asked for the floor. After being recognized by the chairman, she very haltingly, in embarrassment, announced with regret that she would have to resign from the committee.

Consider with what fidelity she had set the scene for this pattern of severance as she stepped beyond the railing to make her announcement. Design: chairman and fellow members within the pale, sitting, without hats and overcoats — she outside the pale, standing, with coat over her arm preparatory to departure. She had strategically modified the arrangement of the scene in such a way that it implicitly (ambiguously) contained the quality of her act.

Ubiquity of the Ratios

If we but look about us, we find examples of the two ratios everywhere; for they are at the very centre of motivational assumptions. But to discern them in their ubiquity, we must remain aware of the many guises which the five terms may assume in the various casuistries. In the introduction to his *Discourses,* for instance, Machiavelli complains that people read history without applying its lessons, "as though heaven, the sun, the elements, and men had changed the order of their motions and power, and were different from what they were in ancient times." For our purposes, the quotation could be translated, "as though human agents and both the supernatural and the natural scenes had changed, with a corresponding change in the nature of motives."

Besides general synonyms for scene that are obviously of a background character, such as "society," or "environment," we often encounter quite specific localizations, words for particular places, situations, or eras. "It is 12:20 P.M." is a "scenic" statement. Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* are formed about a scenic contrast between morning and night, with a corresponding contrast of actions. Terms for historical epochs, cultural movements, social institutions (such as "Elizabethan period," "romanticism," "capitalism") are scenic, though often with an admixture of properties overlapping upon the areas covered by the term, agent. If we recall that "ideas" are a property of agents, we can detect this strategic overlap in Locke's expression, "the scene of ideas," the form of which Carl Becker exactly reproduces when referring to "climates of opinion," in *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers.*

The word "ground," much used in both formal philosophy and everyday speech when discussing motives, is likewise scenic, though readily encroaching upon the areas more directly covered by "agent" and "purpose." We can discern the scenic reference if the question, "On what grounds did he do this?" is translated: "What kind of scene did he say it was, that called for such an act?" Hegelian idealism exploits the double usage (ground as "background" and ground as "reason") by positing "Reason" as the ultimate ground, the *Grundprinzip,* of all history. Thus, whereas historicism regularly treats historical scenes as the background, or motive, of individual developments, Hegel would treat Reason as the background, or motive, of historical sequence in general. Let us not worry, at this point, what it may "mean" to say that "Reason" is at once the mover of history and the substance of which

history is made. It is sufficient here to note that such terministic resources were utilized, and to detect the logic of the pentad behind them.

The maxim, "terrain determines tactics," is a strict localization of the scene-act ratio, with "terrain" as the casuistic equivalent for "scene" in a military calculus of motives, and "tactics" as the corresponding "act."

Political commentators now generally use the word "situation" as their synonym for scene, though often without any clear concept of its function as a statement about motives. Many social psychologists consciously use the term for its motivational bearing (it has a range extending from the broadest concepts of historical setting down to the simplified, controlled conditions which the animal experimenter imposes upon his rats in a maze). The Marxist reference to "the objective situation" is explicitly motivational, and the theorists who use this formula discuss "policies" as political acts enacted in conformity with the nature of scenes. However, the scene-act ratio can be applied in two ways. It can be applied deterministically in statements that a certain policy *had* to be adopted in a certain situation, or it may be applied in hortatory statements to the effect that a certain policy *should be* adopted in conformity with the situation. The deterministic usage (in scene-agent form) was exemplified in the statement of a traveller who, on arriving from France under German domination, characterized the politicians as "prisoners of the situation." And the hortatory usage was exemplified when a speaker said that President Roosevelt should be granted "unusual powers" because our country was in an "unusual international situation." In a judgment written by Justice Hugo L. Black, the Supreme Court ruled that it was not "beyond the war powers of Congress and the Executive to exclude those of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast area at the time they did." And by implication, the scene-act ratio was invoked to substantiate this judgment:

> When under conditions of modern warfare our shores are threatened by hostile forces, the power to protect must be commensurate with the threatened danger.

Among the most succinct instances of the scene-act ratio in dialectical materialism is Marx's assertion (cited also by Lenin in *The State and Revolution*), that "Justice can never rise superior to the economic conditions of society and the cultural development conditioned by them." That is, in contrast with those who would place justice as a property of personality (an attribute purely of the *agent*), the dialectical materialist would place it as a property of the *material situation* ("economic conditions"), the scene in which justice is to be enacted. He would say that no higher quality of justice can be enacted than the nature of the scenic properties permits. Trotsky gave the same form an ironic turn when he treated Stalinist policies as the inevitable result of the attempt to establish socialism under the given conditions. That is, you can't get a fully socialist *act* unless you have a fully socialist *scene*, and for the dialectical materialist such a scene requires a high stage of industrial development.

And there is a variant of the usage in Coleridge (in his early libertarian and "necessitarian" period, when he was exalted with thoughts of "aspheterism"). Concerning "Pantisocracy" (the plan of Coleridge, Southey, and their associates to found a communistic colony on the banks of the Susquehanna), he wrote that it would "make virtue inevitable." That is, the colonists were to arrange a social situation of such a sort that virtuous acts would be the logical and spontaneous result of conditions.

As for "act," any verb, no matter how specific or how general, that has connotations of consciousness or purpose falls under this category. If one happened to stumble over an obstruction, that would be not an act, but a mere motion. However, one could convert even this sheer accident into something of an act if, in the course of falling, one suddenly *willed* his fall (as a rebuke, for instance, to the negligence of the person who had left the obstruction in the way). "Dramatistically," the basic unit of action would be defined as "the human body in conscious or purposive motion." Hence we are admonished that people often speak of action in a purely figurative sense when they have only motion in mind, as with reference to the action of a motor, or the interaction of forces. Terms like "adjustment" and "adaptation" are ambiguously suited to cover both action and sheer motion, so that it is usually difficult to decide in just which sense a thinker is using them, when he applies them to social motives. This ambiguity may put them in good favor with those who would deal with the human realm in a calculus patterned after the vocabularies of the physical sciences, and yet would not wholly abandon vestiges of "animism." Profession, vocation, policy, strategy, tactics are all concepts of action, as are any words for specific vocations. Our words "position," "occupation," and "office" indicate the scenic overtones in action. Our words for particular "jobs" under capitalist industrialism refer to acts, but often the element of action is reduced to a minimum and the element of sheer motion raised to a maximum. (We here have in mind not only certain near-automatic tasks performed to the timing of the conveyor belt, but also many of the purely clerical operations, filing, bookkeeping, recording, accounting, and the like, necessary to the present state of technology.)

When Christ said, "I am the way" *(hodos)*, we could translate, "I am the act," or more fully, "I represent a system, or synthesis, of the right acts." *Tao* and *yoga* are similar words for act. And we see how readily act in this sense can overlap upon agency when we consider our ordinary attitude towards scientific method *(methodos)*, which we think of pragmatically, not as a way of life, or *act* of *being*, but as a *means* of *doing*.

The Greek word for justice *(diké)* was in its beginnings as thorougly an "act" word as *tao, yoga,* and *hodos*. Originally it meant *custom, usage, manner, fashion*. It also meant *right*. The connection between these two orders of meaning is revealed in our expression, "That sort of thing just isn't done," and in the fact that our word "morality" comes from a Latin word for "custom." Liddell and Scott's lexicon notes that in the *Odyssey* the word is used of mortals, gods, kings, and suitors, referring to their *custom, way of acting, law of being*. After the homogeneous tribal pattern of Greek life (with its one "way" or "justice" shared by all) had dissolved into a political state, with its typical conflicts of property interests, *diké* became a word of the law courts. Hence, in post-Homeric usage, it refers to *legal justice*, the *right* which is presumed to be the object of law. In this form, it could represent a Platonic ideal, that might prevail over and above the real ways of the different social classes. This is the kind of justice that Marx was refuting by a sophisticated reversion to a more "Homeric" usage.

Range of All the Ratios

Though we have inspected two ratios, the five terms would allow for ten (scene-act, scene-agent, scene-agency, scene-purpose, act-purpose, act-agent, act-agency, agent-purpose, agent-agency, and agency-purpose). The ratios are principles of determination. Elsewhere in the Grammar we shall examine two of these (scene-purpose and agency-purpose) in other connections; and the rest will figure in passing. But the consideration of words for "ways" calls for special attention to the *act-agent* ratio.

Both act and agent require scenes that "contain" them. Hence the scene-act and scene-agent ratios are in the fullest sense positive (or "positional"). But the relation between act and agent is not quite the same. The agent does not "contain" the act, though its results might be said to "preexist virtually" within him. And the act does not "synecdochically share" in the agent, though certain ways of acting may be said to induce corresponding moods or traits of character. To this writer, at least, the act-agent ratio more strongly suggests a temporal or sequential relationship than a purely positional or geometric one. The agent is an author of his acts, which are descended from him, being good progeny if he is good, or bad progeny if he is bad, wise progeny if he is wise, silly progeny if he is silly. And, conversely, his acts can make him or remake him in accordance with their nature. They would be his product and/or he would be theirs. Similarly, when we use the scene-act and scene-agent ratios in reverse (as with the sequence from act or agent to corresponding scene) the image of derivation is stronger than the image of position.

One discerns the workings of the act-agent

ratio in the statement of a former cabinet member to the effect that "you can safely lodge responsibility with the President of the United States," owing to "the tremendously sobering influence of the Presidency on any man, especially in foreign affairs." Here, the sheer nature of an office, or position, is said to produce important modifications in a man's character. Even a purely symbolic act, such as the donning of priestly vestments, is often credited with such a result. And I have elsewhere quoted a remark by a political commentator: "There seems to be something about the judicial robes that not only hypnotizes the beholder but transforms the wearer."

Ordinarily, the scene-act and scene-agent ratios can be extended to cover such cases. Thus, the office of the Presidency may be treated as a "situation" affecting the agent who occupies it. And the donning of vestments brings about a symbolic situation that can likewise be treated in terms of the scene-agent ratio. But there are cases where a finer discrimination is needed. For instance, the resistance of the Russian armies to the Nazi invasion could be explained "scenically" in terms of the Soviet political and economic structure; or one could use the act-agent ratio, attributing the power and tenacity to "Russian" traits of character. However, in deriving the act from the scene, one would have to credit socialism as a major scenic factor, whereas a derivation of the act from the agents would allow for a much more felicitous explanation from the standpoint of capitalist apologetics.

Thus, one of our leading newspapers asked itself whether Hitler failed "to evaluate a force older than communism, more instinctive than the mumbling cult of Stalin — the attachment of the peasant masses to 'Mother Russia,' the incoherent but cohesive force of Russian patriotism." And it concluded that "the Russian soldier has proved the depth of his devotion to the Russian soil." Patriotism, attachment to the "mother," devotion to the soil — these are essentially motives located in the agent, hence requiring no acknowledgment of socialist motives.

There is, or course, scenic reference in the offing; but the stress upon the term, agent, encourages one to be content with a very vague treatment of scene, with no mention of the political and economic factors that form a major aspect of national scenes. Indeed, though our concern here is with the Grammar of Motives, we may note a related resource of Rhetoric: one may deflect attention from scenic matters by situating the motives of an act in the agent (as were one to account for wars purely on the basis of a "warlike instinct" in people): or conversely, one may deflect attention from the criticism of personal motives by deriving an act or attitude not from traits of the agent but from the nature of the situation.

The difference between the use of the scene-act and act-agent ratios can also be seen in the motivations of "democracy." Many people in Great Britain and the United States think of these nations as "vessels" of democracy. And democracy is felt to reside in us, intrinsically, because we are "a democratic people." Democratic acts are, in this mode of thought, derived from democratic agents, agents who would remain democratic in character even though conditions required the temporary curtailment or abrogation of basic democratic rights. But if one employed, instead, the scene-act ratio, one might hold that there are certain "democratic situations" and certain "situations favorable to dictatorship, or requiring dictatorship." The technological scene itself, which requires the planning of a world order, might be thought such as to favor a large measure of "dictatorship" in our political ways (at least as contrasted with the past norms of democracy). By the act-agent ratio, a "democratic people" would continue to perform "democratic acts"; and to do so they would even, if necessary, go to the extent of restoring former conditions most favorable to democracy. By the scene-act ratio, if the "situation" itself is no longer a "democratic" one, even an "essentially democratic" people will abandon democratic ways.

A picturesque effect can be got in imaginative writings by the conflicting use of the scene-act and act-agent ratios. One may place "fools" in "wise situations," so that in their acts they are "wiser than they know." Children are often "wise" in this sense. It is a principle of incongruity that Chaplin has built upon. Empson would call it an aspect of "pastoral."

Here is an interesting shift of ratios in a citation from an address by Francis Biddle when he was Attorney General:

> The change of the world in terms of time and space in the past hundred years — railroad, telegraph, telephone, automobile, movie, airplane, radio — had hardly found an echo in our political growth, except in the necessary patches and arrangements which have made it so extraordinarily complex without making it more responsive to our needs.

Note first that all the changes listed here refer to *agencies* of communication (the pragmatist emphasis). Then, having in their accumulation become scenic, they are said to have had a motivating effect upon our political acts ("growth"). But though the complexity of the scene has called forth "the necessary patches and arrangements" (another expression for "acts"), we are told that there are still unsatisfied "needs." Now, "needs" are a property of agents; hence an act designed to produce a situation "more responsive to our needs" would have its most direct locus of motivation under the heading of agent, particularly if these were said to be "primal needs" rather than "new needs," since "new needs" might best be treated as "a function of the situation." I borrow the expression from a prominent educator, Eduard C. Lindeman, who shortly after the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor complained of a tendency "to believe that morale will now become a function of the situation and that hence it is less important to plan for education."

The ratios may often be interpreted as principles of selectivity rather than as thoroughly causal relationships. That is, in any given historical situation, there are persons of many sorts, with a corresponding variety in the kinds of acts that would be most representative of them. Thus, a given political situation may be said not to change people in their essential character, but rather to favor, or bring to the fore (to "vote for"), certain kinds of agents (with their appropriate actions) rather than others. Quick shifts in political exigencies do not of a sudden make all men "fundamentally" daring, or all men "fundamentally" cautious, in keeping with the nature of the scene; but rather, one situation calls for cautious men as its appropriate "voice," another for daring men, one for traditionalists, another for innovators. And the inappropriate acts and temperaments simply do not "count for" so much as they would in situations for which they are a better fit. One set of scenic conditions will "implement" and "amplify" given ways and temperaments which, in other situations would remain mere potentialities, unplanted seeds, "mute inglorious Miltons." Indeed, there are times when out-and-out materialistic philosophies, which are usually thought of as "tough," can be of great solace to us precisely because they encourage us to believe in the ratios as a selective principle. For we may tell ourselves that the very nature of the materials with which men deal will not permit men to fall below a certain level of sloth, error, greed, and dishonesty in their relations with one another, as the cooperative necessities of the situation implement and amplify only those traits of character and action that serve the ends of progress.

There is, of course, a circular possibility in the terms. If an agent acts in keeping with his nature as an agent (act-agent ratio), he may change the nature of the scene accordingly (scene-act ratio), and thereby establish a state of unity between himself and his world (scene-agent ratio). Or the scene may call for a certain kind of act, which makes for a corresponding kind of agent, thereby likening agent to scene. Or our act may change us and our scene, producing a mutual conformity. Such would be the Edenic paradigm, applicable if we were capable of total acts that produce total transformations. In reality, we are capable of but partial acts, acts that but partially represent us and that produce but partial transformations. Indeed, if all the ratios were adjusted to one another with perfect Edenic symmetry, they would be immutable in one unending "moment."

Theological notions of creation and re-creation bring us nearest to the concept of total acts. Among the controversies that centered around Lutheranism, for instance, there was a doctrine, put forward by the theologian Striegel, who held that Christ's work on the Cross had the effect of changing God's attitude towards mankind, and that men born after the historical Christ can take advantage of this change. Here we have

something like the conversion of God himself, brought about by Christ's sacrifice (a total action, a total passion). From the godlike nature came a godlike act that acted upon God himself. And as regards mankind, it amounts to a radical change in the very structure of the Universe, since it changed God's attitude towards men, and in God's attitude towards men resides the ultimate ground of human action.

A similar pattern is implicated in the close of Aeschylus's trilogy, the *Oresteia,* where the sufferings of Orestes terminate in the changed identity of the Furies, signalized by their change of name from Erinyes to Eumenides. Under the influence of the "new gods," their nature as motives takes on a totally different accent; for whereas it was their previous concern to avenge evil, it will henceforth be their concern to reward the good. An *inner* goad has thus been cast forth, externalized; whereby, as Athena says, men may be at peace within, their "dread passion for renown" thereafter being motivated solely by "war from without."

Only the scene-act and scene-agent ratios fit with complete comfort in this chapter on the relation between container and contained. The act-agent ratio tugs at its edges; and we shall close noting concerns that move us still farther afield. In the last example, we referred to God's *attitude*. Where would attitude fall within our pattern? Often it is the *preparation* for an act, which would make it a kind of symbolic act, or incipient act. But in its character as a state of *mind* that may or may not lead to an act, it is quite clearly to be classed under the head of *agent*. We also spoke of Christ's sacrifice as "a total action, a total passion." This suggests other "grammatical" possibilities that involve a dialectic pairing of "active" and "passive." And in the reference to a *state* of mind, we casually invite a dialectic pairing of "actus" and "status."[2]

This group of concerns will be examined in due course. Meanwhile, we should be reminded that the term *agent* embraces not only all words general or specific for person, actor, character, individual, hero, villain, father, doctor, engineer, but also any words, moral or functional, for *patient,* and words for the motivational properties or agents, such as "drives," "instincts," "states of mind." We may also have collective words for agent, such as nation, group, the Freudian "super ego," Rousseau's *"volonté générale,"*[3] the Fichtean "generalized I."

[2]"Action" and "condition." [Ed.]

ANTINOMIES OF DEFINITION

Paradox of Substance

There is a set of words comprising what we might call the Stance family, for they all derive from a concept of place, or placement. In the Indo-Germanic languages the root for this family is *stā,* to stand (Sanscrit, *sthā*). And out of it there has developed this essential family, comprising such members as: consist, constancy, constitution, contrast, destiny, ecstasy, existence, hypostatize, obstacle, stage, state, status, statute, stead, subsist, and system. In German, an important member of the Stance family is *stellen,* to place, a root that figures in *Vorstellung,* a philosopher's and psychologist's word for representation, conception, idea, image.

Surely, one could build a whole philosophic universe by tracking down the ramifications of this one root. It would be "implemented" too, for it would have stables, staffs, staves, stalls, stamens, stamina, stanchions, stanzas, steeds, stools, and studs. It would be a quite regional world, in which our Southern Agrarians might take their stand.[4]

Unquestionably, the most prominent philosophic member of this family is "substance." Or at least it used to be, before John Locke greatly impaired its prestige, so that many thinkers today explicitly banish the term from their vocabularies. But there is cause to believe that, in banishing the *term,* far from banishing its *functions* one merely conceals them. Hence, from the dramatistic point of view, we are admonished to dwell upon the word, considering its embarrassments and its potentialities of transformation, so that we may detect its covert influence even in cases where it is overtly absent. Its relation to our five terms will become apparent as we proceed.

[3]"General will" (i.e., the will of society). [Ed.]

[4]*I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* (1930) is the manifesto of the Southern Agrarian movement headed by, among others, John Crowe Ransom, Robert Penn Warren, and Allen Tate. [Ed.]

First we should note that there is, etymologically, a pun lurking behind the Latin roots. The word is often used to designate what some thing or agent intrinsically *is,* as *per* these meanings in Webster's: "the most important element in any existence; the characteristic and essential components of anything; the main part; essential import; purport." Yet etymologically "substance" is a scenic word. Literally, a person's or a thing's substance would be something that stands beneath or supports the person or thing.

Let us cite a relevant passage in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Chapter XXIII, "Of Our Complex Ideas of Substances"):

> 1. *Ideas of particular substances, how made.* The mind being, as I have declared, furnished with a great number of the simple ideas conveyed in by the senses, as they are found in exterior things, or by reflection on its own operations, takes notice, also, that a certain number of these simple ideas go constantly together; which being presumed to belong to one thing, and words being suited to common apprehensions, and made use of for quick despatch, are called, so united in one subject, by one name; which, by inadvertency, we are apt afterward to talk of and consider as one simple idea, which indeed is a complication of many ideas together; because, as I have said, not imagining how these simple ideas can subsist by themselves, we accustom ourselves to suppose some *substratum* wherein they do subsist, and from which they do result; which therefore we call *substance.*
>
> 2. *Our obscure idea of substance in general.* — So that if anyone will examine himself concerning his notion of pure substance in general, he will find he has no other idea of it at all, but only a supposition of he knows not what support of such qualities which are capable of producing simple ideas in us; which qualities are commonly called accidents. If anyone should be asked, what is the subject wherein color or weight inheres, he would have nothing to say but, the solid extended parts. And if he were demanded, what is it that solidity and extension inhere in, he would not be in a much better case than the Indian before mentioned, who, saying that the world was supported by a great elephant, was asked, what the elephant rested on; to which his answer was, a great tortoise; but being again pressed to know what gave support to the broad-backed tortoise, replied — something, he knew not what. And thus here, as in all other cases where we use words without having clear and distinct ideas, we talk like children: who, being questioned what such a thing is which they know not, readily give this satisfactory answer, that it is *something;* which in truth signifies no more, when so used, either by children or men, but that they know not what; and that the thing they pretend to know and talk of, is what they have no distinct idea of at all, and so are perfectly ignorant of it, and in the dark. The idea, then, we have, to which we give the *general* name substance, being nothing but the supposed, but unknown support of those qualities we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist *sine re substante,* "without something to support them," we call that support *substantia;* which according to the true import of the word, is, in plain English, standing under, or upholding.

The same structure is present in the corresponding Greek word, *hypostasis,* literally, a standing under: hence anything set under, such as stand, base, bottom, prop, support, stay; hence metaphorically, that which lies at the bottom of a thing, as the groundwork, subject matter, argument of a narrative, speech, poem; a starting point, a beginning. And then come the metaphysical meanings (we are consulting Liddell and Scott): subsistence, reality, real being (as applied to mere appearance), nature, essence. In ecclesiastical Greek, the word corresponds to the Latin *Persona,* a Person of the Trinity (which leads us back into the old argument between the homoousians and the homoiousians, as to whether the three persons were of the same or similar substance). Medically, the word can designate a suppression, as of humours that ought to come to the surface; also matter deposited in the urine; and of liquids generally, the sediment, lees, dregs, grounds. When we are examining, from the standpoint of the Symbolic, metaphysical tracts that would deal with "fundamentals" and get to the "bottom" of things, this last set of meanings can admonish us to be on the lookout for what Freud might call "cloacal" motives, furtively interwoven with speculations that may on

the term's adoption by other schools. A literary critic who spoke of "the literary situation," for instance, meant not the "objective conditions" under which a writer writes, but the motives peculiar to a writer's medium. What looked "scenic" was here actually "pragmatic," since the writer's medium is an *agency*. And similarly, essayists now often speak of "the human situation" when they seem to have in mind the *motives peculiar to men as men,* a usage that would call for the classifying of the expression under the heading of *agent,* hence giving the *apparently* materialistic usage an *essentially* idealistic application (since, as we have said, idealism features the term agent).

Besides the concealments of misnomer and those due to mutual borrowings among the philosophic schools, there is an internal development that causes the nature of philosophy as an assertion to be lost in the problems of demonstration. That is, as soon as a philosopher has begun to investigate the possibilities in whatever term he has selected as his *Ausgangspunkt,*[6] he finds that the term does not merely create other terms in its image. Also, it generates a particular set of *problems* — and the attempt to solve these problems may lead the philosopher far from his beginnings. It is somewhat, alas! as with the design for a perpetual motion machine. Such a design may have been quite simple in its original conception, but it becomes fantastically complex as the inventor finds that each new wheel or trip or pin or cam which he added to solve his problem gave rise to a new problem, and this in turn suggested the need of some other contrivance, which relieves his former embarrassments only by introducing a new embarrassment of its own.

Indeed, since all the terms of the pentad continually press for consideration, and since it is not possible for us, without contradiction, to recreate in words a world which is itself not verbal at all, we can safely accept it as an axiom that the mere attempt to contemplate persistently the resources of any one term will lead to the discovery of many problems the answers to which will *transcend* the genius of this term. And if a reader comes upon a philosophy after it has been thus sophisticated, he may find himself so caught up in its problems-atop-problems-atop-problems and problems-within-problems-within-problems that he cannot sense the principle of generation behind them. For usually the thinker himself has become similarly intricated.

But with the pentad as a generating principle, we may extricate ourselves from these intricacies, by discovering the kinds of *assertion* which the different schools would exemplify in a hypothetical state of purity. Once this approach is established, problems are much less likely to conceal the underlying design of assertion, or may even serve to assist in the characterizing of a given philosophic work.

[6]"Starting point." [Ed.]

From *A Rhetoric of Motives*

INTRODUCTION

The only difficult portion of this book happens, unfortunately, to be at the start. There, selecting texts that are usually treated as pure poetry, we try to show why rhetorical and dialectical considerations are also called for. Since these texts involve an imagery of killing (as a typical text for today should) we note how, behind the surface, lies a quite different realm that has little to do with such motives. An imagery of killing is but one of many terminologies by which writers can represent the process of change. And while recognizing the sinister implications of a preference for homicidal and suicidal terms, we indicate that the principles of development or transformation ("rebirth") which they stand for are not strictly of such a nature at all.

We emerge from the analysis with the key term, "Identification." Hence, readers who would prefer to begin with it, rather than to worry a text until it is gradually extricated, might go lightly through the opening pages, with the intention of not taking hold in earnest until they come to the general topic of *Identification.*

Thereafter, with this term as instrument, we seek to mark off the areas of rhetoric, by showing how a rhetorical motive is often present where it is not usually recognized, or thought to belong. In part, we would but rediscover rhetorical elements that had become obscured when rhetoric as a term fell into disuse, and other specialized disciplines such as esthetics, anthropology, psychoanalysis, and sociology came to the fore (so that esthetics sought to outlaw rhetoric, while the other sciences we have mentioned took over, each in its own terms, the rich rhetorical elements that esthetics would ban).

But besides this job of reclamation, we also seek to develop our subject beyond the traditional bounds of rhetoric. There is an intermediate area of expression that is not wholly deliberate, yet not wholly unconscious. It lies midway between aimless utterance and speech directly purposive. For instance, a man who identifies his private ambitions with the good of the community may be partly justified, partly unjustified. He may be using a mere pretext to gain individual advantage at the public expense; yet he may be quite sincere, or even may willingly make sacrifices in behalf of such identification. Here is a rhetorical area not analyzable either as sheer design or as sheer simplicity. And we would treat of it here.

Traditionally, the key term for rhetoric is not "identification," but "persuasion." Hence, to make sure that we do not maneuver ourselves unnecessarily into a weak position, we review several classic texts which track down all the major implications of that term. Our treatment, in terms of identification, is decidedly not meant as a substitute for the sound traditional approach. Rather, as we try to show, it is but an accessory to the standard lore. And our book aims to make itself at home in both emphases.

Particularly when we come upon such aspects of persuasion as are found in "mystification," courtship, and the "magic" of class relationships, the reader will see why the classical notion of clear persuasive intent is not an accurate fit, for describing the ways in which the members of a group promote social cohesion by acting rhetorically upon themselves and one another. As W. C. Blum has stated the case deftly, "In identification lies the source of dedications and enslavements, in fact of cooperation."

All told, persuasion ranges from the bluntest quest of advantage, as in sales promotion or propaganda, through courtship, social etiquette, education, and the sermon, to a "pure" form that delights in the process of appeal for itself alone, without ulterior purpose. And identification ranges from the politician who, addressing an audience of farmers, says, "I was a farm boy myself," through the mysteries of social status, to the mystic's devout identification with the source of all being.

That the reader might find it gratifying to observe the many variations on our two interrelated themes, at every step we have sought to proceed by examples. Since we did not aim to write a compendium, we have not tried to cover the field in the way that a comprehensive historical survey might do — and another volume will be needed to deal adequately with the polemic kinds of rhetoric (such as the verbal tactics now called "cold war").

But we have tried to show what portions of other works should be selected as parts of a "course in rhetoric," and how they should be considered for our particular purposes. We have tried to show how rhetorical analysis throws light on literary texts and human relations generally. And while interested always in rhetorical devices, we have sought above all else to write a "philosophy of rhetoric."

We do not flatter ourselves that any one book can contribute much to counteract the torrents of ill will into which so many of our contemporaries have so avidly and sanctimoniously plunged. But the more strident our journalists, politicians, and alas! even many of our churchmen become, the more convinced we are that books should be written for tolerance and contemplation. . . .

PART I

Identification and "Consubstantiality"

A is not identical with his colleague, *B*. But insofar as their interests are joined, A is *identified* with *B*. Or he may *identify himself* with *B* even

when their interests are not joined, if he assumes that they are, or is persuaded to believe so.

Here are ambiguities of substance. In being identified with *B*, *A* is "substantially one" with a person other than himself. Yet at the same time he remains unique, an individual locus of motives. Thus he is both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another.

While consubstantial with its parents, with the "firsts" from which it is derived, the offspring is nonetheless apart from them. In this sense, there is nothing abstruse in the statement that the offspring both is and is not one with its parentage. Similarly, two persons may be identified in terms of some principle they share in common, an "identification" that does not deny their distinctness.

To identify *A* with *B* is to make *A* "consubstantial" with *B*. Accordingly, since our *Grammar of Motives* was constructed about "substance" as key term, the related rhetoric selects its nearest equivalent in the areas of persuasion and dissuasion, communication and polemic. And our third volume, *Symbolic of Motives,* should be built about *identity* as titular or ancestral term, the "first" to which all other terms could be reduced and from which they could then be derived or generated, as from a common spirit. The thing's *identity* would here be its uniqueness as an entity in itself and by itself, a demarcated unit having its own particular structure.

However, "substance" is an abstruse philosophic term, beset by a long history of quandaries and puzzlements. It names so paradoxical a function in men's systematic terminologies, that thinkers finally tried to abolish it altogether — and in recent years they have often persuaded themselves that they really did abolish it from their terminologies of motives. They abolished the *term,* but it is doubtful whether they can ever abolish the *function* of that term, or even whether they should *want* to. A doctrine of *consubstantiality,* either explicit or implicit, may be necessary to any way of life. For substance, in the old philosophies, was an *act;* and a way of life is an *acting-together;* and in acting together, men have common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes that make them *consubstantial.*

The *Grammar* dealt with the universal paradoxes of substance. It considered resources of placement and definition common to all thought. The *Symbolic* should deal with unique individuals, each its own peculiarly constructed act, or form. These unique "constitutions" being capable of treatment in isolation, the *Symbolic* should consider them primarily in their capacity as singulars, each a separate universe of discourse (though there are also respects in which they are consubstantial with others of their kind, since they can be classed with other unique individuals as joint participants in common principles, possessors of the same or similar properties).

The *Rhetoric* deals with the possibilities of classification in its *partisan* aspects; it considers the ways in which individuals are at odds with one another, or become identified with groups more or less at odds with one another.

Why "at odds," you may ask, when the titular term is "identification"? Because, to begin with "identification" is, by the same token, though roundabout, to confront the implications of *division.* And so, in the end, men are brought to that most tragically ironic of all divisions, or conflicts, wherein millions of cooperative acts go into the preparation for one single destructive act. We refer to that ultimate *disease* of cooperation: *war.* (You will understand war much better if you think of it, not simply as strife come to a head, but rather as a disease, or perversion of communion. Modern war characteristically requires a myriad of constructive acts for each destructive one; before each culminating blast there must be a vast network of interlocking operations, directed communally.)

Identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. Identification is compensatory to division. If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity. If men were wholly and truly of one substance, absolute communication would be of man's very essence. It would not be an ideal, as it now is, partly embodied in material conditions and partly frustrated by these same conditions; rather, it would be as natural, spontaneous, and total as with those ideal prototypes of communication, the theologian's angels, or "messengers."

The *Grammar* was at peace insofar as it contemplated the paradoxes common to all men, the universal resources of verbal placement. The *Symbolic* should be at peace, in that the individual substances, or entities, or constituted acts are there considered in their uniqueness, hence outside the realm of conflict. For individual universes, as such, do not compete. Each merely *is,* being its own self-sufficient realm of discourse. And the *Symbolic* thus considers each thing as a set of interrelated terms all conspiring to round out their identity as participants in a common substance of meaning. An individual does in actuality compete with other individuals. But within the rules of Symbolic, the individual is treated merely as a self-subsistent unit proclaiming its peculiar nature. It is "at peace," in that its terms *cooperate* in modifying one another. But insofar as the individual is involved in conflict with other individuals or groups, the study of this same individual would fall under the head of *Rhetoric.* Or considered rhetorically, the victim of a neurotic conflict is torn by parliamentary wrangling; he is heckled like Hitler within. (Hitler is said to have confronted a constant wrangle in his private deliberations, after having imposed upon his people a flat choice between conformity and silence.) Rhetorically, the neurotic's every attempt to legislate for his own conduct is disorganized by rival factions within his own dissociated self. Yet, considered Symbolically, the same victim is technically "at peace," in the sense that his identity is like a unified, mutually adjusted set of terms. For even antagonistic terms, confronting each other as parry and thrust, can be said to "cooperate" in the building of an overall form.

The *Rhetoric* must lead us through the Scramble, the Wrangle of the Market Place, the flurries and flare-ups of the Human Barnyard, the Give and Take, the wavering line of pressure and counterpressure, the Logomachy, the onus of ownership, the Wars of Nerves, the War. It too has its peaceful moments: at times its endless competition can add up to the transcending of itself. In ways of its own, it can move from the factional to the universal. But its ideal culminations are more often beset by strife as the condition of their organized expression, or material embodiment. Their very universality becomes transformed into a partisan weapon. For one need not scrutinize the concept of "identification" very sharply to see, implied in it at every turn, its ironic counterpart: division. Rhetoric is concerned with the state of Babel after the Fall. Its contribution to a "sociology of knowledge" must often carry us far into the lugubrious regions of malice and the lie.

The Identifying Nature of Property

Metaphysically, a thing is identified by its *properties.* In the realm of Rhetoric, such identification is frequently by property in the most materialistic sense of the term, economic property, such property as Coleridge, in his "Religious Musings," calls a

> twy-streaming fount,
> Whence Vice and Virtue flow, honey and gall.

And later:

> From Avarice thus, from Luxury and War
> Sprang heavenly Science; and from Science, Freedom.

Coleridge, typically the literary idealist, goes one step further back, deriving "property" from the workings of "Imagination." But meditations upon the dual aspects of property as such are enough for our present purposes. In the surrounding of himself with properties that name his number or establish his identity, man is ethical. ("Avarice" is but the scenic word "property" translated into terms of an agent's attitude, or incipient act.) Man's moral growth is organized through properties, properties in goods, in services, in position or status, in citizenship, in reputation, in acquaintanceship and love. But however ethical such an array of identifications may be when considered in itself, its relation to other entities that are likewise forming their identity in terms of property can lead to turmoil and discord. Here is *par excellence* a topic to be considered in a rhetoric having "identification" as its key term. And we see why one should expect to get much insight from Marxism, as a study of capitalistic rhetoric. Veblen is also, from this point of view, to be considered a theorist of rhetoric. (And we know of no better way to quickly glimpse the range of rhetoric than to

read, in succession, the articles on "Property" and "Propaganda" in *The Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*.)

Bentham's utilitarian analysis of language, treating of the ways in which men find "eulogistic coverings" for their "material interests," is thus seen to be essentially rhetorical, and to bear directly upon the motives of property as a rhetorical factor. Indeed, since it is so clearly a matter of rhetoric to persuade a man by identifying your cause with his interests, we note the ingredient of rhetoric in the animal experimenter's ways of conditioning, as animals that respond avidly at a food signal suggest, underlying even human motives, the inclination, like a house dog, to seek salvation in the Sign of the Scraped Plate. But the lessons of this "animal rhetoric" can mislead, as we learn from the United States' attempts to use food as an instrument of policy in Europe after the war. These efforts met with enough ill will to suggest that the careful "screening" of our representatives, to eliminate reformist tendencies as far as possible and to identify American aid only with conservative or even reactionary interests, practically *guaranteed* us a dismal rhetoric in our dealings with other nations. And when Henry Wallace, during a trip abroad, began earning for our country the genuine good will of Europe's common people and intellectual classes, the Genius of the Screening came into its own: our free press, as at one signal, began stoutly assuring the citizens of both the United States and Europe that Wallace did not truly represent us. What did represent us, presumably, was the policy of the Scraped Plate, which our officialdom now and then bestirred themselves to present publicly in terms of a dispirited "idealism," as heavy as a dead elephant. You see, we were not to be identified with very resonant things; our press assured our people that the outcome of the last election had been a "popular mandate" to this effect. (We leave this statement unrevised. For the conditions of Truman's reelection, after a campaign in which he out-Wallaced Wallace, corroborated it "in principle.")

In pure identification there would be no strife. Likewise, there would be no strife in absolute separateness, since opponents can join battle only through a mediatory ground that makes this communication possible, thus providing the first condition necessary for their interchange of blows. But put identification and division ambiguously together, so that you cannot know for certain just where one ends and the other begins, and you have the characteristic invitation to rhetoric. Here is a major reason why rhetoric, according to Aristotle, "proves opposites." When two men collaborate in an enterprise to which they contribute different kinds of services and from which they derive different amounts and kinds of profit, who is to say, once and for all, just where "cooperation" ends and one partner's "exploitation" of the other begins? The wavering line between the two cannot be "scientifically" identified; rival rhetoricians can draw it at different places, and their persuasiveness varies with the resources each has at his command. (Where public issues are concerned, such resources are not confined to the intrinsic powers of the speaker and the speech, but depend also for their effectiveness upon the purely technical means of communication, which can either aid the utterance or hamper it. For a "good" rhetoric neglected by the press obviously cannot be so "communicative" as a poor rhetoric backed nation-wide by headlines. And often we must think of rhetoric not in terms of some one particular address, but as a general *body of identifications* that owe their convincingness much more to trivial repetition and dull daily reënforcement than to exceptional rhetorical skill.)

If you would praise God, and in terms that happen also to sanction one system of material property rather than another, you have forced Rhetorical considerations upon us. If you would praise science, however exaltedly, when that same science is at the service of imperialist-militarist expansion, here again you bring things within the orbit of Rhetoric. For just as God has been identified with a certain worldly structure of ownership, so science may be identified with the interests of certain groups or classes quite *unscientific* in their purposes. Hence, however "pure" one's motives may be actually, the impurities of identification lurking about the edges of such situations introduce a typical Rhetorical wrangle of the sort that can never be settled once and for all, but belongs in the field of moral controversy where men properly seek to "prove opposites."

Thus, when his friend, Preen, wrote of a meeting where like-minded colleagues would be present and would all be proclaiming their praise of science, Prone answered: "You fail to mention another colleague who is sure to be there too, unless you take care to rule him out. I mean John Q. Militarist-Imperialist." Whereat, Preen: "This John Q. Militarist-Imperialist must be quite venerable by now. I seem to have heard of him back in Biblical times, before Roger B. Science was born. Doesn't he get in everywhere, unless he is explicitly ruled out?" He does, thanks to the ways of identification, which are in accordance with the nature of property. And the rhetorician and the moralist become one at that point where the attempt is made to reveal the undetected presence of such an identification. Thus in the United States after the Second World War, the temptations of such an identification became particularly strong because so much scientific research had fallen under the direction of the military. To speak merely in praise of science, without explicitly dissociating oneself from its reactionary implications, is to identify oneself with these reactionary implications by default. Many reputable educators could thus, in this roundabout way, *function* as "conspirators." In their zeal to get federal subsidies for the science department of their college or university, they could help to shape educational policies with the ideals of war as guiding principle.

Identification and the "Autonomous"

As regards "autonomous" activities, the principle of Rhetorical identification may be summed up thus: The fact that an activity is capable of reduction to intrinsic, autonomous principles does not argue that it is free from identification with other orders of motivation extrinsic to it. Such other orders are extrinsic to it, as considered from the standpoint of the specialized activity alone. But they are not extrinsic to the field of moral action as such, considered from the standpoint of human activity in general. The human agent, *qua* human agent, is not motivated solely by the principles of a specialized activity, however strongly this specialized power, in its suggestive role as imagery, may affect his character. Any specialized activity participates in a larger unit of action. "Identification" is a word for the autonomous activity's place in this wider context, a place with which the agent may be unconcerned. The shepherd, *qua* shepherd, acts for the good of the sheep, to protect them from discomfiture and harm. But he may be "identified" with a project that is raising the sheep for market.

Of course, the principles of the autonomous activity can be considered irrespective of such identifications. Indeed, two students, sitting side by side in a classroom where the principles of a specialized subject are being taught, can be expected to "identify" the subject differently, so far as its place in a total context is concerned. Many of the most important identifications for the specialty will not be established at all, until later in life, when the specialty has become integrally interwoven with the particulars of one's livelihood. The specialized activity itself becomes a different thing for one person, with whom it is a means of surrounding himself with family and amenities, than it would be for another who, unmarried, childless, loveless, might find in the specialty not so much a means to gratification as a substitute for lack of gratification.

Carried into unique cases, such concern with identifications leads to the sheer "identities" of Symbolic. That is, we are in pure Symbolic when we concentrate upon one particular integrated structure of motives. But we are clearly in the region of rhetoric when considering the identifications whereby a specialized activity makes one a participant in some social or economic class. "Belonging" in this sense is rhetorical. And, ironically, with much college education today in literature and the fine arts, the very stress upon the pure autonomy of such activities is a roundabout way of identification with a privileged class, as the doctrine may enroll the student stylistically under the banner of a privileged class, serving as a kind of social insignia promising preferment. (We are here obviously thinking along Veblenian lines.)

The stress upon the importance of autonomous principles does have its good aspects. In particular, as regards the teaching of literature, the

insistence upon "autonomy" reflects a vigorous concern with the all-importance of the text that happens to be under scrutiny. This cult of patient textual analysis (though it has excesses of its own) is helpful as a reaction against the excesses of extreme historicism (a leftover of the nineteenth century) whereby a work became so subordinated to its background that the student's appreciation of first-rate texts was lost behind his involvement with the collateral documents of fifth-rate literary historians. Also, the stress upon the autonomy of fields is valuable methodologically; it has been justly praised because it gives clear insight into some particular set of principles; and such a way of thinking is particularly needed now, when pseudoscientific thinking has become "unprincipled" in its uncritical cult of "facts." But along with these sound reasons for a primary concern with the intrinsic, there are furtive temptations that can figure here too. For so much progressive and radical criticism in recent years has been concerned with the social implications of art, that affirmations of art's autonomy can often become, by antithesis, a roundabout way of identifying oneself with the interests of political conservatism. In accordance with the rhetorical principle of identification, whenever you find a doctrine of "nonpolitical" esthetics affirmed with fervor, look for its politics.

But the principle of autonomy does allow for historical shifts whereby the nature of an identification can change greatly. Thus in his book, *The Genesis of Plato's Thought,* David Winspear gives relevant insight into the aristocratic and conservative political trends with which Plato's philosophy was identified at the time of its inception. The Sophists, on the other hand, are shown to have been more closely allied with the rising business class, then relatively "progressive" from the Marxist point of view, though their position was fundamentally weakened by the fact that their enterprise was based on the acceptance of slavery. Yet at other periods in history the Platonist concern with an ideal state could itself be identified with wholly progressive trends.

During the Second World War many good writers who had previously complained of the Marxist concern with propaganda in art, themselves wrote books in which they identified their esthetic with an anti-Fascist politics. At the very least such literature attributed to Hitlerite Germans and their collaborators the brutal and neurotic motives which in former years had been attributed to "Everyman." (Glenway Wescott's *Apartment in Athens,* for instance.) So the overgeneralized attempt to discredit *Marxist* Rhetoric by discrediting *all* Rhetoric was abandoned, at least by representative reviewers whose criticism was itself a rhetorical act designed to identify the public with anti-Fascist attitudes and help sell anti-Fascist books (as it later contributed to the forming of anti-Soviet attitudes and the sale of anti-Soviet books). In the light of such developments, many critics have become only too accommodating in their search for covert and overt identifications that link the "autonomous" field of the arts with political and economic orders of motivation. Head-on resistance to the questioning of "purity" in specialized activities usually comes now from another quarter: the liberal apologists of science.

The "Autonomy" of Science

Science, as mere instrument (agency), might be expected to take on the nature of the scenes, acts, agents, and purposes with which it is identified. And insofar as a faulty political structure perverts human relations, we might reasonably expect to find a correspondingly perverted science. Thus, even the apologists of the Church will grant that, in corrupt times, there is a corresponding corruption among churchmen; and it is relevant to recall those specialists whose technical training fitted them to become identified with mass killings and experimentally induced sufferings in the concentration camps of National Socialist Germany. Hence, insofar as there are similar temptations in our own society (as attested by the sinister imagery of its art), might we not expect similar motives to lurk about the edges of our sciences (though tempered in proportion as the sinister political motives themselves are tempered in our society, under our less exacting social and economic conditions)? But liberal apologetics indignantly resists any suggestion that sadistic motives may lurk behind unnecessary animal experiments that cause suffering. The same people who, with reference to the scientific horrors of Hitlerism, admonish against the ingredients of Hitlerite thinking in our own society, will be outraged if you follow out the implications of their own premises, and look for similar temptations among our specialists.

One can sympathize with this anxiety. The liberal is usually disinclined to consider such possibilities because applied science is for him not a mere set of instruments and methods, whatever he may assert; it is a *good* and *absolute,* and is thus circuitously endowed with the philosophic function of *God* as the grounding of values. His thinking thus vacillates indeterminately between his overt claims for science as sheer method, as sheer coefficient of power, and his covert claims for science as a substance which, like God, would be an intrinsically *good* power. Obviously, any purely secular power, such as the applications of technology, would not be simply "good," but could become identified with motives good, bad, or indifferent, depending upon the uses to which it was put, and upon the ethical attitudes that, as part of the context surrounding it, contributed to its meaning in the realm of motives and action.

The unavowed identification, whereby a theological *function* is smuggled into a term on its face wholly secular, can secretly reenforce the characteristically liberal principle of occupational autonomy, itself reenforced by the naively pragmatist notion that practical specialized work is a sufficient grounding of morality. If the technical expert, as such, is assigned the task of perfecting new powers of chemical, bacteriological, or atomic destruction, his morality *as technical expert* requires only that he apply himself to his task as effectively as possible. The question of what the new force might mean, as released into a social texture emotionally and intellectually unfit to control it, or as surrendered to men whose *specialty is professional killing* — well, that is simply "none of his business," as specialist, however great may be his misgivings as father of a family, or as citizen of his nation and of the world. The extreme division of labor under late capitalist liberalism having made dispersion the norm and having transformed the state of Babel into an ideal, the true liberal must view almost as an affront the Rhetorical concern with identifications whereby the principles of a specialty cannot be taken on their face, simply as the motives proper to that specialty. They *are* the motives proper to the specialty *as such,* but not to the specialty as *participant in a wider context of motives.*

In sum, as regards tests of "autonomy," the specialist need only consider, as a disciplinary factor, the objective resistances supplied by the materials with which he works. The liberal criterion was that propounded by Rousseau in *Émile:* The principle of constraint was to come from the nature of *things,* not from authorities and their precepts. Yet, willy nilly, a science takes on the moral qualities of the political or social movements with which it becomes identified. Hence, a new anguish, a crisis in the liberal theory of science. In his *Genealogy of Morals,* Nietzsche met the same problem keenly, but perversely, by praising "autonomy" as the *opposite* of the moral. Modern political authoritarianism, like the earlier theocratic kinds, would subordinate the autonomous specialty to overall doctrinal considerations. The rhetorical concept of "identification" does not justify the excesses to which such doctrinaire tendencies can be carried. But it does make clear the fact that one's morality as a specialist cannot be allowed to do duty for one's morality as a citizen. Insofar as the two roles are at odds, a specialty at the service of sinister interests will itself become sinister.

"Redemption" in Post-Christian Science

With a culture formed about the idea of redemption by the sacrifice of a Crucified Christ, just what does happen in an era of post-Christian science, when the ways of socialization have been secularized? Does the need for the vicarage of this Sacrificial King merely dwindle away? Or must some other person or persons, individual or corporate, real or fictive, take over the redemptive role? Not all people, perhaps, seek out a Vessel to which will be ritualistically delegated a purgative function, in being symbolically laden

with the burdens of individual and collective guilt. But we know, as a lesson of recent history, how anti-Semitism provided the secularized replica of the Divine Scapegoat in the post-Christian rationale of Hitler's National Socialist militarism; and we know how Jews and other minority groups are thus magically identified by many members of our society. And since we also know that there are at large in the modern world many militaristic and economic trends quite like those of Germany under the Hitlerite "science" of genocide, we should at least be admonished to expect, in some degree, similar cultural temptations. For the history of the Nazis has clearly shown that there are cultural situations in which scientists, whatever may be their claims to professional austerity, will contrive somehow to identify their specialty with modes of justification, or socialization, not discernible in the sheer motions of the material operations themselves. In its transcendence of natural living, its technical scruples, its special tests of purity, a clinic or laboratory can be a kind of secular temple, in which ritualistic devotions are taking place, however concealed by the terminology of the surface. Unless properly scrutinized for traces of witchcraft, these could furtively become devotions to a satanic order of motives. At least such was the case with the technological experts of Hitlerite Germany. The very scientific ideals of an "impersonal" terminology can contribute ironically to such disaster: for it is but a step from treating inanimate nature as mere "things" to treating animals, and then enemy peoples, as mere things. But they are not mere things, they are persons — and in the systematic denial of what one knows in his heart to be the truth, there is a perverse principle that can generate much anguish.

Dual Possibilities of Science

But one cannot be too careful here. Religion, politics, and economics are notoriously touchy subjects, and with many persons today, the cult of applied science has the animus of all three rolled into one. We should take pains to make this clear: we are most decidedly *not* saying that science *must* take on such malign identifications as it presumably has, for some scientists, when fitted into the motives of a Fascist state. In the United States, for instance, the Federation of American Scientists has been urgently seeking to dissociate the idea of atomic war power from the idea of national security. Thus, the Federation proclaimed, in a statement issued September 1, 1947, on the second anniversary of V-J Day:

> Many persons have justified the support of science for its war potential, implying that national security will result. We hear this justification in Congress. We hear it even from the atomic mission. We assert that national security cannot result from military preparedness or the support of science for its war potential.

When men are of good will, we can always expect many such efforts to break such sinister identifications, which their knowledge of their special field enables them to recognize as false.

Unfortunately, good will as thus circumscribed is not enough. The same statement goes on to say: "Our Government has advocated a sound policy in the United Nations concerning atomic energy." Yet there seems much justice in the complaint of the Soviet delegates that the measures we propose would guarantee the United States perpetual superiority in this field, unless other nations deliberately violated the proposed treaty by finding ways to continue their experiments in secret.

In a speech made before the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission (September 10, 1947), the Soviet representative, Gromyko, came upon some paradoxes in this connection. He was attacking United States' proposals for giving "the right of ownership" to an *international* organ of control. He contended that this arrangement would contradict the principle of state sovereignty. Thus the *socialist* delegate was arguing for the *restriction* of ownership to national boundaries, while the world's greatest *capitalist* country argued for ownership by a *universal* body. *On its face,* the capitalist proposal seems much nearer to the ideal socialist solution than the position of the Soviet Union is.

However, the history of corporate management in the United States, and of political parties everywhere, gives ample evidence of all the devices whereby *actual control* of a property differs from *nominal ownership* of it. And obviously the interests in *actual control* of the agency that allocated the rights and resources of atomic development could have all the advantages of *real* ownership, however international might be the *fictions* of ownership. Where the *control* resides, there resides the *function* of ownership, whatever the *fictions* of ownership may be. It would certainly be no new thing to rhetoric if highly *discriminatory* claims were here being protected in the name of *universal* rights. And the Soviet delegate was at least justified in calling for measures that *unmistakably* avoid such a possibility, which was not considered in the scientists' statement as published in the press. There was a hint of "maneuvering" in our proposals, maneuvering to put the Russians in the position of seeming to delay an adequate international control over the atomic bomb, when there were strong doubts whether our own Congress would itself have agreed to any such control.

Lying outside the orbit of the scientists' specialty, there are psychological considerations which are nearly always slighted, since they involve identifications manifestly extrinsic to atomic physics in itself. Possibilities of deception arise particularly with those ironies whereby the scientists' truly splendid terminology for the expert smashing of lifeless things can so catch a man's fancy that he would transfer it to the realm of human relations likewise. It is not a great step from the purely professional poisoning of harmful insects to the purely professional blasting and poisoning of human beings, as viewed in similarly "impersonal" terms. And such inducements are particularly there, so long as factional division (of class, race, nationality, and the like) make for the ironic mixture of identification and dissociation that marks the function of the scapegoat. Indeed, the very "global" conditions which call for the greater identification of all men with one another have at the same time increased the range of human conflict, the incentives to division. It would require sustained rhetorical effort, backed by the imagery of a richly humane and spontaneous poetry, to make us fully sympathize with people in circumstances greatly different from our own. Add now the international rivalries that goad to the opposite kind of effort, and that make it easy for some vocalizers to make their style "forceful" by simply playing up these divisive trends, and you see how perverted the austere scientific ideal may become, as released into a social texture unprepared for it.

The good will of scientists is not enough, however genuine it may be. There is the joke of the father who put his little son on the table and, holding out his arms protectively, said, "Jump." The trusting child jumped; but instead of catching him, the father drew back, and let him fall to the floor. The child was hurt, both physically and in this violation of its confidence. Whereupon the father drove home the moral: "Let that be a lesson to you. Never trust anyone, not even your own father." Now, when the apologists of science teach their subject thus, instead of merely exalting it, we can salute them for truly admonishing us, in being as "scientific" about the criticism of science as in the past they have been about the criticism of religion.

To sum up:

(1) We know, as a matter of record, that science under Fascism became sinister. (2) We are repeatedly being admonished that there is a high percentage of Fascist motivation in our own society. (3) Why, then, should there not be, in our society, a correspondingly high incentive to sinister science? Particularly inasmuch as sinister motives already show in much of our art, both popular and recondite, while the conditions of secrecy imposed upon many experimental scientists today add a "conspiratorial" motive to such "autonomous" activity. In the past, the great *frankness* of science has been its noblest attribute, as judged from the purely humanistic point of view. But any tendency to place scientific development primarily under the heading of "war potential" must endanger this essential moralistic element in science, replacing the norms of *universal clarity* with the divisive demands for *conspiracy.* Insofar as such conditions prevail, science loses the one ingredient that can keep it wholesome: its enrollment under the forces of

light. To this extent, the scientist must reject and resist in ways that mean the end of "autonomy," or if he accepts, he risks becoming the friend of fiends. Scientific discoveries have always, of course, been used for the purposes of war. But the demand that scientific advance *per se* be guided by military considerations *changes the proportions* of such motivation tremendously. Scientists of good will must then become uneasy, in that the morality of their specialty is no longer enough. The liberal ideal of autonomy is denied them, except insofar as they can contrive to conceal from themselves the true implications of their role.

Ingenuous and Cunning Identifications

The thought of self-deception brings up another range of possibilities here. For there is a wide range of ways whereby the rhetorical motive, through the resources of identification, can operate without conscious direction by any particular agent. Classical rhetoric stresses the element of explicit design in rhetorical enterprise. But one can systematically extend the range of rhetoric, if one studies the persuasiveness of false or inadequate terms which may not be directly imposed upon us from without by some skillful speaker, but which we impose upon ourselves, in varying degrees of deliberateness and unawareness, through motives indeterminately self-protective and/or suicidal.

We shall consider these matters more fully later, when we study the rhetoric of *hierarchy* (or as it is less revealingly named, *bureaucracy*). And our later pages on Marx and Veblen would apply here. But for the present we might merely recall the psychologist's concept of "malingering," to designate the ways of neurotic persons who, though not actually ill, persuade themselves that they are, and so can claim the attentions and privileges of the ill (their feigned illness itself becoming, at one remove, genuine). Similarly, if a social or occupational class is not too exacting in the scrutiny of identifications that flatter its interests, its very philosophy of life is a profitable malingering (profitable at least until its inaccuracies catch up with it) — and as such, it is open to either attack or analysis, Rhetoric comprising both the *use* of persuasive resources (*rhetorica utens,* as with the philippics of Demosthenes) and the *study* of them (*rhetoric docens,* as with Aristotle's treatise on the "art" of Rhetoric).

This aspect of identification, whereby one can protect an interest merely by using terms not incisive enough to criticize it properly, often brings rhetoric to the edge of cunning. A misanthropic politician who dealt in mankind-loving imagery could still think of himself as rhetorically honest, if he meant to do well by his constituents yet thought that he could get their votes only by such display. Whatever the falsity in overplaying a role, there may be honesty in the assuming of that role itself; and the overplaying may be but a translation into a different medium of communication, a way of amplifying a statement so that it carries better to a large or distant audience. Hence, the persuasive identifications of Rhetoric, in being so directly designed for *use,* involve us in a special problem of *consciousness,* as exemplified in the Rhetorician's particular *purpose* for a given statement.

The thought gives a glimpse into rhetorical motives behind many characters in drama and fiction. Shakespeare's Iago and Molière's Tartuffe are demons of Rhetoric. Every word and act is addressed, being designed to build up false identifications in the minds of their victims. Similarly, there is a notable ingredient of Rhetoric in Stendhal's Julien Sorel, who combines "heightened consciousness" with "freedom" by a perversely frank decision to perfect his own kind of hypocrisy as a means of triumphing over the hypocrisy of others. All his actions thus become rhetorical, framed for their effect; his life is a spellbinding and spellbound address to an audience.

Did you ever do a friend an injury by accident, in all poetic simplicity? Then conceive of this same injury as done by sly design, and you are forthwith within the orbit of Rhetoric. If you, like the Stendhals and Gides, conceive a character by such sophistication, Rhetoric as the speaker's attempt to identify himself favorably with his audience then becomes so transformed that the work may seem to have been written under an esthetic of pure "expression," without regard for communicative appeal. Or it may appeal perversely, to warped motives within the audience. Or it may be but an internalizing of the rhetorical motive, as the very actions of such a representative figure take on a rhetorical cast. Hence, having woven a rhetorical motive so integrally into the very essence of his conception, the writer can seem to have ignored rhetorical considerations; yet, in the sheer effrontery of his protagonist there is embedded, however disguised or transformed, an *anguish* of communication (communication being, as we have said, a generalized form of love).

As regards the rhetorical ways of Stendhal's hero, moving in the perverse freedom of duplicity: After the disclosure of his cunning, Julien abandons his complex rhetorical morality of hypocrisy-to-outhypocritize-the-hypocrites, and regains a new, suicidally poetic level of simplicity. *"Jamais cette tête n'avait été aussi poétique qu'au moment où elle allait tomber."*[1] The whole structure of the book could be explained as the account of a hero who, by the disclosure of his Rhetoric, was jolted into a tragically direct poetic. Within the terms of the novel, "hypocrisy" was the word for "rhetoric," such being the quality of the rhetoric that marked the public life of France under the reign of *Napoléon le Petit*.

Rhetoric of "Address" (to the Individual Soul)

By our arrangement, the individual in his uniqueness falls under the head of Symbolic. But one should not thereby assume that what is known as "individual psychology" wholly meets the same test. Particularly in the Freudian concern with the neuroses of individual patients, there is a strongly rhetorical ingredient. Indeed, what could be more profoundly rhetorical than Freud's notion of a dream that attains expression by stylistic subterfuges designed to evade the inhibitions of a moralistic censor? What is this but the exact analogue of the rhetorical devices of literature under political or theocratic censorship? The *ego* with its *id* confronts the *superego* much as an orator would confront a somewhat alien audience, whose susceptibilities he must flatter as a necessary step towards persuasion. The Freudian psyche is quite a parliament, with conflicting interests expressed in ways variously designed to take the claims of rival factions into account.

The best evidence of a strongly rhetorical ingredient in Freud's view of the psyche is in his analysis of *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious*. In particular, we think of Freud's concern with the role of an audience, or "third person," with whom the speaker establishes rapport, in their common enterprise directed against the butt of tendentious witticisms. Here is the purest rhetorical pattern: speaker and hearer as partners in partisan jokes made at the expense of another. If you "internalize" such a variety of motives, so that the same person can participate somewhat in all three positions, you get a complex individual of many voices. And though these may be treated, under the heading of Symbolic, as a concerto of principles mutually modifying one another, they may likewise be seen, from the standpoint of Rhetoric, as a parliamentary wrangle which the individual has put together somewhat as he puts together his fears and hopes, friendships and enmities, health and disease, or those tiny rebirths whereby, in being born to some new condition, he may be dying to a past condition, his development being dialectical, a series of terms in perpetual transformation.

Thus by a roundabout route we come upon another aspect of Rhetoric: its nature as *addressed,* since persuasion implies an audience. A man can be his own audience, insofar as he, even in his secret thoughts, cultivates certain ideas or images for the effect he hopes they may have upon him; he is here what Mead would call "an 'I' addressing its 'me'"; and in this respect he is being rhetorical quite as though he were using pleasant imagery to influence an outside audience rather than one within. In traditional Rhetoric, the relation to an external audience is stressed. Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric,* for instance, deals with the appeal to audiences in this primary sense: It lists typical beliefs, so that the speaker may choose among them the ones with which he would favorably identify his cause or unfavorably identify the cause of an opponent; and it lists

[1] "Never was that head so poetic as at the moment when it was about to fall." [Ed.]

the traits of character with which the speaker should seek to identify himself, as a way of disposing an audience favorably towards him. But a modern "post-Christian" rhetoric must also concern itself with the thought that, under the heading of appeal to audiences, would also be included any ideas or images privately addressed to the individual self for moralistic or incantatory purposes. For you become your own audience, in some respects a very lax one, in some respects very exacting, when you become involved in psychologically stylistic subterfuges for presenting your own case to yourself in sympathetic terms (and even terms that seem harsh can often be found on closer scrutiny to be flattering, as with neurotics who visit sufferings upon themselves in the name of very high-powered motives which, whatever their discomfiture, feed pride).

Such considerations make us alert to the ingredient of rhetoric in all *socialization,* considered as a *moralizing* process. The individual person, striving to form himself in accordance with the communicative norms that match the cooperative ways of his society, is by the same token concerned with the rhetoric of identification. To act upon himself persuasively, he must variously resort to images and ideas that are formative. Education ("indoctrination") exerts such pressure upon him from without; he completes the process from within. If he does not somehow act to tell himself (as his own audience) what the various brands of rhetorician have told him, his persuasion is not complete. Only those voices from without are effective which can speak in the language of a voice within.

Among the Tanala of Madagascar, it is said, most of those tribesmen susceptible to *tromba* ("neurotic seizure indicated by an extreme desire to dance") were found to be among the least favored members of the tribe. Such seizures are said to be a device that makes the possessed person "the center of all the attention." And afterwards, the richest and most powerful members of the sufferer's family foot the bill, so that "the individual's ego is well satisfied and he can get along quite well until the next tromba seizure occurs." In sum, "like most hysterical seizures, tromba requires an audience."

The citations are from A. Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society* (New York: Columbia University Press). They would suggest that, when asking what all would fall within the scope of our topic, we could also include a "rhetoric of hysteria." For here too are expressions which are *addressed* — and we confront an ultimate irony, in glimpsing how even a catatonic lapse into sheer automatism, beyond the reach of all normally linguistic communication, is in its origins communicative, addressed, though it be a paralogical appeal-that-ends-all-appeals.

Rhetoric and Primitive Magic

The Kardiner citations are taken from a paper by C. Kluckhohn on "Navaho Witchcraft," containing observations that would also bring witchcraft within the range of rhetoric. Indeed, where witchcraft is imputed as a motive behind the individual search for wealth, power, or vengeance, can we not view it as a primitive vocabulary of *individualism* emerging in a culture where *tribal* thinking had been uppermost, so that the individualist motive would be admitted and suspect? And any breach of identification with the tribal norms being sinister, do we not glimpse rhetorical motives behind the fact that Macbeth's private ambitions were figured in terms of witches?

At first glance we may seem to be straining the conception of rhetoric to the breaking point, when including even a treatise on primitive witchcraft within its range. But look again. Precisely at a time when the *term* "rhetoric" had fallen into greatest neglect and disrepute, writers in the "social sciences" were, under many guises, making good contributions to the New Rhetoric. As usual with modern thought, the insights gained from *comparative culture* could throw light upon the classic approach to this subject; and again, as usual with modern thought, this light was interpreted in terms that concealed its true relation to earlier work. And though the present writer was strongly influenced by anthropological inquiries into primitive magic, he did not clearly discern the exact relation between the anthropologist's concern with magic and the literary critic's concern with communication until he had systematically worked on this *Rhetoric* for some years. Prior to this discovery, though he persisted in anthropological hankerings, he did so with a bad conscience; and he was half willing to agree with literary opponents who considered such concerns alien to the study of literature proper.

Now, in noting methodically how the anthropologist's account of magic can belong in a rhetoric, we are better equipped to see exactly wherein the two fields of inquiry diverge. Anthropology is a gain to literary criticism only if one knows how to "discount" it from the standpoint of rhetoric. And, ironically, anthropology can be a source of disturbance, not only to literary criticism in particular, but to the study of human relations in general, if one does not so discount it, but allows *its* terms to creep into one's thinking at points where issues *should* be studied explicitly in terms of rhetoric.

We saw both the respects in which the anthropologists' study of magic overlaps upon rhetoric and the respects in which they are distinct when we were working on a review of Ernst Cassirer's *Myth of the State*. The general proposition that exercised us can be stated as follows:

We must begin by confronting the typically scientist view of the relation between science and magic. Since so many apologists of modern science, following a dialectic of simple antithesis, have looked upon magic merely as an early form of bad science, one seems to be left only with a distinction between bad and good science. Scientific knowledge is thus presented as a terminology that gives an accurate and critically tested description of reality; and magic is presented as antithetical to such science. Hence magic is treated as an early uncritical attempt to do what science does, but under conditions where judgment and perception were impaired by the naïvely anthropomorphic belief that the impersonal forces of nature were motivated by personal designs. One thus confronts a flat choice between a civilized vocabulary of scientific description and a savage vocabulary of magical incantation.

In this scheme, "rhetoric" has no systematic location. We recall noting the word but once in Cassirer's *Myth of the State,* and then it is used only in a random way; yet the book is really about nothing more nor less than a most characteristic concern of rhetoric: the manipulation of men's beliefs for political ends.

Now, the basic function of rhetoric, the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents, is certainly not "magical." If you are in trouble, and call for help, you are no practitioner of primitive magic. You are using the primary resource of human speech in a thoroughly realistic way. Nor, on the other hand, is your utterance "science," in the strict meaning of science today, as a "semantic" or "descriptive" terminology for charting the conditions of nature from an "impersonal" point of view, regardless of one's wishes or preferences. A call for help is quite "prejudiced"; it is the most arrant kind of "wishful thinking"; it is not merely descriptive, it is *hortatory*. It is not just trying to tell how things are, in strictly "scenic" terms; it is trying to *move people*. A call for help might, of course, include purely scientific statements, or preparations for action, as a person in need might give information about particular dangers to guard against or advantages to exploit in bringing help. But the call, in itself, as such, is not scientific; it is *rhetorical*. Whereas poetic language is a kind of symbolic action, for itself and in itself, and whereas scientific action is a preparation for action, rhetorical language is inducement to action (or to attitude, attitude being an incipient act).

If you have only a choice between magic and science, you simply have no bin in which to accurately place such a form of expression. Hence, since "the future" is not the sort of thing one can put under a microscope, or even test by a knowledge of *exactly equivalent conditions* in the past, when you turn to political exhortation, you are involved in decisions that necessarily lie beyond the strictly scientific vocabularies of description. And since the effective politician is a "spellbinder," it seems to follow by elimination that the hortatory use of speech for political ends can be called "magic," in the discredited sense of that term.

As a result, much analysis of political exhortation comes to look simply like a survival of primitive magic, whereas it should be handled in its own terms, as an aspect of what it really is: rhetoric. The approach to rhetoric in terms of "word magic" gets the whole subject turned backwards. Originally, the magical use of symbolism to affect natural processes by rituals and incantations was a mistaken transference of a

proper linguistic function to an area for which it was not fit. The realistic use of addressed language to *induce action in people* became the magical use of addressed language to *induce motion in things* (things by nature alien to purely linguistic orders of motivation). If we then begin by treating this *erroneous* and *derived* magical use as *primary,* we are invited to treat a *proper* use of language (for instance, political persuasion) simply as a vestige of benightedly prescientific magic.

To be sure, the rhetorician has the tricks of his trade. But they are not mere "bad science"; they are an "art." And any overly scientist approach to them (treating them in terms of flat dialectical opposition to modern technology) must make our world look much more "neoprimitive" than is really the case. At the very least, we should note that primitive magic prevailed most strongly under social conditions where the rationalization of social effort in terms of money was negligible; but the rhetoric of modern politics would establish social identifications atop a way of life highly diversified by money, with the extreme division of labor and status which money served to rationalize.

Realistic Functions of Rhetoric

Gaining courage as we proceed, we might even contend that we are not so much proposing to import anthropology into rhetoric as proposing that anthropologists recognize the factor of rhetoric in their own field. That is, if you look at recent studies of primitive magic from the standpoint of this discussion, you might rather want to distinguish between magic as "bad science" and magic as "primitive rhetoric." You then discover that anthropology does clearly recognize the rhetorical *function* in magic; and far from dismissing the rhetorical aspect of magic merely as bad science, anthropology recognizes in it a pragmatic device that greatly assisted the survival of cultures by promoting social cohesion. (Malinowski did much work along these lines, and the Kluckhohn essay makes similar observations about witchcraft.) But now that we have confronted the term "magic" with the term "rhetoric," we'd say that one comes closer to the true state of affairs if one treats the socializing aspects of magic as a "primitive rhetoric" than if one sees modern rhetoric simply as a "survival of primitive magic."

For rhetoric as such is not rooted in any past condition of human society. It is rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic, and is continually born anew; the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols. Though rhetorical considerations may carry us far afield, leading us to violate the principle of autonomy separating the various disciplines, there is an intrinsically rhetorical motive, situated in the persuasive use of language. And this persuasive use of language is not derived from "bad science," or "magic." On the contrary, "magic" was a faulty derivation from it, "word magic" being an attempt to produce linguistic responses in kinds of beings not accessible to the linguistic motive. However, once you introduce this emendation, you can see beyond the accidents of language. you can recognize how much of value has been contributed to the New Rhetoric by these investigators, though their observations are made in terms that never explicitly confront the rhetorical ingredient in their field of study. We can place in terms of rhetoric all those statements by anthropologists, ethnologists, individual and social psychologists, and the like, that bear upon the *persuasive* aspects of language, the function of language as *addressed,* as direct or roundabout appeal to real or ideal audiences, without or within.

Are we but haggling over a term? In one sense, yes. We are offering a rationale intended to show how far one might systematically extend the term "rhetoric." In this respect, we are haggling over a term; for we must persist in tracking down the *function* of that term. But to note the ingredient of rhetoric lurking in such anthropologist's terms as "magic" and "witchcraft" is not to ask that the anthropologist replace his words with ours. We are certainly not haggling over terms in that sense. The term "rhetoric" is no substitute for "magic," "witchcraft," "socialization," "communication," and so on. But the term rhetoric designates a *function* which is present in the areas variously covered by those other terms. And we are asking only that this *function* be recognized for what it is: a linguistic function by nature as *realistic* as a proverb, though it may be quite far from the kind of realism found in strictly "scientific realism." For it is essentially a realism of the *act:* moral, persuasive — and acts are not "true" and "false" in the sense that the propositions of "scientific realism" are. And however "false" the "propositions" of primitive magic may be, considered from the standpoint of scientific realism, it is different with the peculiarly *rhetorical* ingredient in magic, involving ways of identification that contribute variously to social cohesion (either for the advantage of the community as a whole, or for the advantage of special groups whose interests are a burden on the community, or the advantages of special groups whose rights and duties are indeterminately both a benefit and a tax on the community, as with some business enterprise in our society).

The "pragmatic sanction" for this function of magic lies outside the realm of strictly true-or-false propositions; it falls in an area of deliberation that itself draws upon the resources of rhetoric; it is itself a subject matter belonging to an art that can "prove opposites."

To illustrate what we mean by "proving opposites" here: we read an article, let us say, obviously designed to dispose the reading public favorably towards the "aggressive and expanding" development of American commercial interests in Saudi Arabia. It speaks admiringly of the tremendous changes which our policies of commerce and investment will introduce into a vestigially feudal culture, and of the great speed at which the rationale of finance and technology will accomplish these changes. When considering the obvious rhetorical intent of these "facts," we suddenly, in a perverse *non sequitur,* remember a passage in the Kluckhohn essay, involving what we would now venture to call "the rhetoric of witchcraft":

> In a society like the Navaho which is competitive and capitalistic, on the one hand, and still familistic on the other, any ideology which has the effect of slowing down economic mobility is decidedly adaptive. One of the most basic strains in Navaho society arises out of the incompatibility between the demands of familism and the emulation of European patterns in the accumulating of capital.

And in conclusion we are told that the "survival of the society" is assisted by "any pattern, such as witchcraft, which tends to discourage the rapid accumulation of wealth" (witchcraft, as an "ideology," contributing to this end by identifying new wealth with malign witchery). Now, when you begin talking about the optimum rate of speed at which cultural changes should take place, or the optimum proportion between tribal and individualistic motives that should prevail under a particular set of economic conditions, you are talking about something very important indeed, but you will find yourself deep in matters of rhetoric: for nothing is more rhetorical in nature than a deliberation as to what is too much or too little, too early or too late; in such controversies, rhetoricians are forever "proving opposites."

Where are we now? We have considered two main aspects of rhetoric: its use of *identification* and its nature as *addressed.* Since identification implies division, we found rhetoric involving us in matters of socialization and faction. Here was a wavering line between peace and conflict, since identification is got by property, which is ambivalently a motive of both morality and strife. And inasmuch as the ultimate of conflict is war or murder, we considered how such imagery can figure as a terminology of reidentification ("transformation" or "rebirth"). For in considering the wavering line between identification and division, we shall always be coming upon manifestations of the logomachy, avowed as in invective, unavowed as in stylistic subterfuges for presenting real divisions in terms that deny division.

We found that this wavering line between identification and division was forever bringing rhetoric against the possibility of malice and the lie; for if an identification favorable to the speaker or his cause is made to seem favorable to the audience, there enters the possibility of such "heightened consciousness" as goes with deliberate cunning. Thus, roundabout, we confronted the nature of rhetoric as *addressed* to audiences of the first, second, or third person. Socialization itself was, in the widest sense, found to be addressed. And by reason of such simultaneous identification-with and division-from as mark the choice of a scapegoat, we found that rhetoric involves us in problems related to

witchcraft, magic, spellbinding, ethical promptings, and the like. And in the course of discussing these subjects, we found ourselves running into another term: persuasion. Rhetoric is the art of persuasion, or a study of the means of persuasion available for any given situation. We have thus, deviously, come to the point at which Aristotle begins his treatise on rhetoric.

So we shall change our purpose somewhat. Up to now, we have been trying to indicate what kinds of subject matter not traditionally labeled "rhetoric" should, in our opinion, also fall under this head. We would now consider varying views of rhetoric that have already prevailed; and we would try to "generate" them from the same basic terms of our discussion.

As for the relation between "identification" and "persuasion": we might well keep it in mind that a speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications; his act of persuasion may be for the purpose of causing the audience to identify itself with the speaker's interests; and the speaker draws on identification of interests to establish rapport between himself and his audience. So, there is no chance of our keeping apart the meanings of persuasion, identification ("consubstantiality") and communication (the nature of rhetoric as "addressed"). But, in given instances, one or another of these elements may serve best for extending a line of analysis in some particular direction.

And finally: The use of symbols, by one symbol-using entity to induce action in another (persuasion properly addressed) is in essence not magical but *realistic*. However, the resources of identification whereby a sense of consubstantiality is symbolically established between beings of unequal status may extend far into the realm of the *idealistic*. And as we shall see later, when on the subject of order, out of this idealistic element there may arise a kind of magic or mystery that sets its mark upon all human relations.

From *Language as Symbolic Action*

Terministic Screens

I
DIRECTING THE ATTENTION

We might begin by stressing the distinction between a "scientistic" and a "dramatistic" approach to the nature of language. A "scientistic" approach begins with questions of *naming*, or *definition*. Or the power of language to define and describe may be viewed as derivative; and its essential function may be treated as attitudinal or hortatory: attitudinal as with expressions of complaint, fear, gratitude, and such; hortatory as with commands or requests, or, in general, an instrument developed through its use in the social processes of cooperation and competition. I say "developed"; I do *not* say "originating." The ultimate *origins* of language seem to me as mysterious as the origins of the universe itself. One must view it, I feel, simply as the "given." But once an animal comes into being that does happen to have this particular aptitude, the various tribal idioms are unquestionably *developed* by their use as instruments in the tribe's way of living (the practical role of symbolism in what the anthropologist, Malinowski, has called "context of situation"). Such considerations are involved in what I mean by the "dramatistic," stressing language as an aspect of "action," that is, as "symbolic action."

The two approaches, the "scientistic" and the "dramatistic" (language as definition, and language as act) are by no means mutually exclusive. Since both approaches have their proper uses, the distinction is not being introduced invidiously. Definition itself is a symbolic act, just as my proposing of this very distinction is a symbolic act. But though at this moment of beginning, the overlap is considerable, later the two roads diverge considerably, and direct our attention to quite different kinds of observation. The quickest way to indicate the differences of direction might be by this formula: The "scientistic" approach builds the edifice of language with primary stress upon a proposition such as "It *is*, or it *is not*." The "dramatistic" approach puts the primary stress upon such hortatory expressions as "thou *shalt*, or thou *shalt not*." And at the other extreme the distinction becomes quite obvious, since the scientistic approach culminates in the kinds of speculation we associate with symbolic logic, while the dramatistic culminates in the kinds of speculation that find their handiest material in stories, plays, poems, the rhetoric of oratory and advertising, mythologies, theologies, and philosophies after the classic model.

The dramatistic view of language, in terms of "symbolic action," is exercised about the necessarily *suasive* nature of even the most unemotional scientific nomenclatures. And we shall proceed along those lines; thus:

Even if any given terminology is a *reflection* of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a *selection* of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a *deflection* of reality.

In his seventh *Provincial Letter*, Pascal satirizes a device which the Jesuits of his day called "directing the intention." For instance, to illustrate satirically how one should "direct the intention," he used a burlesque example of this sort: Dueling was forbidden by the Church. Yet it was still a prevalent practice. Pascal satirically demonstrated how, by "directing the intention," one could both take part in a duel and not violate the Church injunctions against it. Thus, instead of intentionally going to take part in a duel, the duelists would merely go for a walk to a place where the duel was to be held. And they would carry guns merely as a precautionary means of self-protection in case they happened to meet an armed enemy. By so "directing the intention," they could have their duel without having transgressed the Church's thou-shall-not's against dueling. For it was perfectly proper to go for a walk; and in case one encountered an enemy bent on murder, it was perfectly proper to protect oneself by shooting in self-defense.

I bring up this satirically excessive account of directing the *in*tention, in the hopes that I can thereby settle for less when discussing the ways in which "terministic screens" direct the *at*tention. Here the kind of deflection I have in mind concerns simply the fact that any nomenclature necessarily directs the attention into some channels rather than others. In one sense, this likelihood is painfully obvious. A textbook on physics, for instance, turns the *at*tention in a different direction from the textbook on law or psychology. But some implications of this terministic incentive are not so obvious.

When I speak of "terministic screens," I have particularly in mind some photographs I once saw. They were *different* photographs of the *same* objects, the difference being that they were made with different color filters. Here something so "factual" as a photograph revealed notable distinctions in texture, and even in form, depending upon which color filter was used for the documentary description of the event being recorded.

Similarly, a man has a dream. He reports his dream to a Freudian analyst, or a Jungian, or an Adlerian, or to a practitioner of some other school. In each case, we might say, the "same" dream will be subjected to a different color filter, with corresponding differences in the nature of the event as perceived, recorded, and interpreted. (It is a commonplace that patients soon learn to have the kind of dreams best suited to the terms favored by their analysts.)

II
OBSERVATIONS IMPLICIT IN TERMS

We have now moved things one step further along. Not only does the nature of our terms affect the nature of our observations, in the sense that the terms direct the *at*tention to one field rather than to another. Also, *many of the "observations" are but implications of the particular terminology in terms of which the observations are made*. In brief, much that we take as observations about "reality" may be but the spinning out of possibilities implicit in our particular choice of terms.

Perhaps the simplest illustration of this point is to be got by contrasting secular and theological terminologies of motives. If you want to operate, like a theologian, with a terminology that in-

Michel Foucault

1926–1984

Michel Foucault was born in Poitiers, France, and educated in Paris at the École Normale Supérieur, where he took degrees in philosophy (1948), psychology (1950), and psychiatry (1952). For the next several years, he worked in psychiatric hospitals and taught psychopathology at the École Normale and elsewhere. In 1961 he published *Madness and Civilization*, which was accepted as his Ph.D. dissertation. In this book, Foucault argues that the source of madness should be sought not in the pathology of the individual but in the history of definitions of reason and in social divisions that follow these stipulations.

Following publication of this book, Foucault served in several prestigious academic posts, culminating in his election to the Collège de France in 1970. During this period, too, he wrote extensively about the complex interconnections between the historical development of knowledge, its formulation in discourse, and the effects of knowledge upon social practices. In the 1970s, Foucault shifted his attention to prisons, the treatment of prisoners, and the social history of imprisonment. He was actively involved in the prisoners' rights movement in France and published his study of incarceration, *Discipline and Punish*, in 1975.

His last major project focuses on the history of sexuality, a study of the ways in which social institutions exercise power over sexual identity and attitudes. Foucault's approach to historiography and his reconceptions of the relationships among language, knowledge, and social organization have made him a central figure in twentieth-century philosophy. Moreover, his work on the effects of discourse raises serious questions for any future definition of rhetoric.

In "The Order of Discourse" (1971; excerpted here), Foucault remarks that the tendency of Western philosophy, since the demise of the Sophists, has been to deny discourse its own reality and to think of discourse as the dress of thought or the conveyer of preexisting meaning. Foucault calls this tendency the "will to truth." The desire to locate truth in something other than discourse itself has, says Foucault, spawned several mistaken beliefs. One is that the author or speaker is the source of discourse and that the speaker's task is "to animate the empty forms of language." Another is that nature is the source of discourse, which merely names things in the world. Disciplines and institutions founded on such beliefs subscribe to the will to truth and reinforce the idea that the rules of discourse are subsidiary to the expression of thought. Discourse, they say, facilitates the exchange of knowledge but does not create it.

Foucault's project in "The Order of Discourse" and the earlier *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969; excerpted here) is to question the will to truth and to "restore to discourse its character as an event." To do so, he reverses the order of the relationship between discourse and what is traditionally taken to be its source: That is, he treats author, meaning, and knowledge itself as a function of discourse, not as its source. His method is therefore to examine discourse as a practice, a form of action, and not as a reflection of the world.

Foucault's theory of discourse describes the relationship between language and knowledge; the functions of disciplines, institutions, and other discourse communities; the ways that particular statements come to have truth value; the constraints on the production of discourse about objects of knowledge; the effects of discursive practices on social action; and the uses of discourse to exercise power. *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is Foucault's most extensive exposition of this theory. Here, Foucault attempts to describe the methods and assumptions that guided his earlier books and to sketch a theory of discourse and knowledge that will guide his further work. He begins with a discussion of historiography and the dangers of easy assumptions about the continuity of the development of ideas. He then looks at the ways in which knowledge emerges from discourse.

What, Foucault asks, connects statements about an object of knowledge? He rejects the answer that it is the object itself:

> It is not enough for us to open our eyes, to pay attention, or to be aware, for new objects suddenly to light up and emerge out of the ground. . . . [T]he object does not await in limbo the order that will free it and enable it to become embodied in a visible and prolix objectivity; it does not preexist itself.

Knowledge is created not by the act of observing, Foucault says, but through "relations . . . between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioral patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification, modes of characterizations; and these relations are not present in the object." This is not to deny the existence of phenomena but to say that what we know of them is a function of the needs or desires of society and institutions and of available methods (which may be different in different communities) of coming to know something.

When discourse about knowledge is produced, Foucault asks (echoing Friedrich Nietzsche), who is speaking? What institutional role, legal status, social privilege, or educational or other certification determines who may claim the right to speak authoritatively? Only after we have established the perspective of the discourse community that authorizes such speakers and settings, Foucault says, is it possible to look at the forms of reasoning that may have been used in the statements. To do otherwise would be "to see discourse as a phenomenon of expression — the verbal translation of a previously established synthesis." The authority of the speaker, the authorizing powers, and the mode of expression are mutually defining, and all are part of the larger discursive formation that makes it possible to speak of certain objects at all. "Thus conceived, discourse is not the majestically unfolding manifestation of a thinking, knowing, speaking subject," says Foucault, "but, on the contrary, a totality, in which the dispersion of the subject and his discontinuity with himself may be determined."

Though Foucault seems eager to avoid traditional rhetorical categories, he notes that an analysis of discourse must examine the apparatus of conventions that disciplines and other discourse communities use for defining, comparing, and proving concepts. Such analysis must also look at standards of reasonableness and judgment, standards of reference to common knowledge and to the history of the community, and at communal rules for the construction of texts.

Foucault also examines the "strategies" of discourse, by which he means the functions of discourse in different periods or communities. Part of the description of discursive practices, for Foucault, must include the effects of discourse in society and the means by which its effects are brought to bear, through teaching, in the formation of laws, or in the creation of disciplines. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault admits that describing the effects of discourse is the most difficult aspect of discursive formations, and in later books he takes up the idea under the rubric of "power," through which he questions the relation of discourse to objects of observation, judgment, analysis, legal control, physical control, naming, management, regulation, and modification.

Foucault concludes that "[t]here is no knowledge without a particular discursive practice; and any discursive practice may be defined by the knowledge that it forms." There is no transcendental continuity to knowledge, in misty origins, in experience, or in the speaker. Knowledge is the function of a material discourse in a social order. Foucault's project, as he defines it, is

> an attempt to reveal discursive practices in their complexity and density; to show that to speak is to do something — something other than to express what one thinks; to translate what one knows, and something other than to play with the structures of a language [*langue*]; to show that to add a statement to a pre-existing series of statements is to perform a complicated and costly gesture, which involves conditions (and not only a situation, a context, and motives), and rules (not the logical and linguistic rules of construction); to show that a change in the order of discourse does not presuppose "new ideas," a little invention and creativity, a different mentality, but transformations in a practice, perhaps also in neighboring practices, and in their common articulation.

Though Foucault avoids talking about rhetoric, preferring *discourse* as his comprehensive term, there is no question that his theory addresses a number of ideas that are central to modern rhetoric. He makes a powerful argument that discourse (for which we may read *rhetoric*) is epistemic; he states in compelling terms that discourse is a form of social action; he enriches and complicates the notion of context with a network of archives, disciplines, institutions, and social practices that control the production of discourse. And he demonstrates the microphysics of power that resides in the knowledge that is disseminated in discourse and embodied in laws, regulations, texts, and in the very architecture of hospitals, schools, and prisons, showing the ways that seemingly diverse discourses come together in formations that affect social practices and social controls. Foucault traces the routes of power through the interstices of statements and the fields of their support to their relations of appropriation and use. "It is in discourse," he says in *The History of Sexuality,* "that power and knowledge are joined together."[1]

[1]Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* (1976; trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Random House, 1978), p. 100.

Selected Bibliography

The Archaeology of Knowledge (1969) has been translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York, 1972). Our text of "The Order of Discourse," translated by Ian McLeod, is in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader,* ed. Robert Young (Boston, 1981).

Other works by Foucault include *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1961; trans. Richard Howard, New York, 1965), *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (1963; trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, New York, 1973), *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1966; New York, 1971), and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975; trans. Alan Sheridan, New York, 1977). The three volumes of *The History of Sexuality* are *Volume 1: An Introduction* (1976), *The Uses of Pleasure* (1982), and *The Care of the Self* (1983), all translated by Robert Hurley. Three good collections of Foucault's essays are *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews,* trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, 1977); *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977,* trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper, ed. Colin Gordon (New York, 1982); and *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984,* ed. Lawrence Kritzman (Boston, 1988).

Michael Clark has compiled the monumental *Michel Foucault: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York, 1983), a testament to Foucault's influence in a surprising number of fields. A more selective bibliography is in *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric* by S. Foss, K. Foss, and R. Trapp (Prospect Heights, Ill., 1985).

There are no "basic" introductions to Foucault's thought. A broad overview of Foucault's life and ideas can be found in Alan Sheridan's *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth* (New York, 1980). Hayden White's essay "Michel Foucault," in *Structuralism and Since: From Lévi-Strauss to Derrida,* ed. John Sturrock (Oxford, 1979), is helpful. An excellent comparison of Foucault and Derrida is Edward Said's "The Problem of Textuality: Two Exemplary Positions" (*Critical Inquiry,* 4 [Summer 1978]: 673–714; revised as "Criticism Between Culture and System" in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* [Cambridge, Mass., 1983]).

For a more detailed analysis of Foucault's theories, see Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault,* trans. Sean Hand (Minneapolis, 1988); Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago, 1982); David Couzens Hoy, ed. *Foucault: A Critical Reader* (Oxford, 1984), a very good collection of essays; Mark Poster, *Foucault, Marxism, and History* (Oxford, 1984); and Karlis Racevskis, *Michel Foucault and the Subversion of Intellect* (Ithaca, 1983).

modifications, is integrated into operations and strategies in which its identity is maintained or effaced. Thus the statement circulates, is used, disappears, allows or prevents the realization of a desire, serves or resists various interests, participates in challenge and struggle, and becomes a theme of appropriation or rivalry.

From *The Order of Discourse*

I

I wish I could have slipped surreptitiously into this discourse which I must present today, and into the ones I shall have to give here, perhaps for many years to come. I should have preferred to be enveloped by speech, and carried away well beyond all possible beginnings, rather than have to begin it myself. I should have preferred to become aware that a nameless voice was already speaking long before me, so that I should only have needed to join in, to continue the sentence it had started and lodge myself, without really being noticed, in its interstices, as if it had signalled to me by pausing, for an instant, in suspense. Thus there would be no beginning, and instead of being the one from whom discourse proceeded, I should be at the mercy of its chance unfolding, a slender gap, the point of its possible disappearance.

I should have liked there to be a voice behind me which had begun to speak a very long time before, doubling in advance everything I am going to say, a voice which would say: "You must go on, I can't go on, you must go on, I'll go on, you must say words, as long as there are any, until they find me, until they say me, strange pain, strange sin, you must go on, perhaps it's done already, perhaps they have said me already, perhaps they have carried me to the threshold of my story, before the door that opens on my story, that would surprise me, if it opens."[1]

I think a good many people have a similar desire to be freed from the obligation to begin, a similar desire to be on the other side of discourse from the outset, without having to consider from the outside what might be strange, frightening, and perhaps maleficent about it. To this very common wish, the institution's reply is ironic, since it solemnizes beginnings, surrounds them with a circle of attention and silence, and imposes ritualized forms on them, as if to make them more easily recognizable from a distance.

Desire says: "I should not like to have to enter this risky order of discourse; I should not like to be involved in its peremptoriness and decisiveness; I should like it to be all around me like a calm, deep transparence, infinitely open, where others would fit in with my expectations, and from which truths would emerge one by one; I should only have to let myself be carried, within it and by it, like a happy wreck." The institution replies: "You should not be afraid of beginnings; we are all here in order to show you that discourse belongs to the order of laws, that we have long been looking after its appearances; that a place has been made ready for it, a place which honors it but disarms it; and that if discourse may sometimes have some power, nevertheless it is from us and us alone that it gets it."

But perhaps this institution and this desire are nothing but two contrary replies to the same anxiety: anxiety about what discourse is in its material reality as a thing pronounced or written; anxiety about this transitory existence which admittedly is destined to be effaced, but according to a time scale which is not ours; anxiety at feeling beneath this activity (despite its grayness and ordinariness) powers and dangers that are hard to imagine; anxiety at suspecting the struggles, victories, injuries, dominations and enslavements, through so many words even though long usage has worn away their roughness.

What, then, is so perilous in the fact that people speak, and that their discourse proliferates to infinity? Where is the danger in that?

II

Here is the hypothesis which I would like to put forward tonight in order to fix the terrain — or perhaps the very provisional theater — of the work I am doing: that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized, and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality.

In a society like ours, the procedures of exclusion are well known. The most obvious and familiar is the prohibition. We know quite well that we do not have the right to say everything, that we cannot speak of just anything in any circumstances whatever, and that not everyone has the right to speak of anything whatever. In the taboo on the object of speech, and the ritual of the circumstances of speech, and the privileged or exclusive right of the speaking subject, we have the play of three types of prohibition which intersect, reinforce, or compensate for each other, forming a complex grid which changes constantly. I will merely note that at the present time the regions where the grid is tightest, where the black squares are most numerous, are those of sexuality and politics; as if discourse, far from being that transparent or neutral element in which sexuality is disarmed and politics pacified, is in fact one of the places where sexuality and politics exercise in a privileged way some of their most formidable powers. It does not matter that discourse appears to be of little account, because the prohibitions that surround it very soon reveal its link with desire and with power. There is nothing surprising about that, since, as psychoanalysis has shown, discourse is not simply that which manifests (or hides) desire — it is also the object of desire; and since, as history constantly teaches us, discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized.

There exists in our society another principle of exclusion, not another prohibition but a division and a rejection. I refer to the opposition between reason and madness. Since the depths of the Middle Ages, the madman has been the one whose discourse cannot have the same currency as others. His word may be considered null and void, having neither truth nor importance, worthless as evidence in law, inadmissible in the authentification of deeds or contracts, incapable even of bringing about the transubstantiation of bread into body at Mass. On the other hand, strange powers not held by any other may be attributed to the madman's speech: the power of uttering a hidden truth, of telling the future, of seeing in all naivete what the others' wisdom cannot perceive. It is curious to note that for centuries in Europe the speech of the madman was either not heard at all or else taken for the word of truth. It either fell into the void, being rejected as soon as it was proffered, or else people deciphered in it a rationality, naive or crafty, which they regarded as more rational than that of the sane. In any event, whether excluded, or secretly invested with reason, the madman's speech, strictly, did not exist. It was through his words that his madness was recognized; they were the place where the division between reason and madness was exercised, but they were never recorded or listened to. No doctor before the end of the eighteenth century had ever thought of finding out what was said, or how and why it was said, in this speech which nonetheless determined the difference. This whole immense discourse of the madman was taken for mere noise, and he was only symbolically allowed to speak, in the theater, where he would step forward, disarmed and reconciled, because there he played the role of truth in a mask.

You will tell me that all this is finished today or is coming to an end; that the madman's speech is no longer on the other side of the divide: that it is no longer null and void; on the contrary, it puts us on the alert; that we now look for a meaning in it, for the outline or the ruins of some *oeuvre*; and that we have even gone so far as to come across this speech of madness in what we

Translated by Ian McLeod.

[1]Samuel Beckett, *The Unnameable*, in *Three Novels by Samuel Beckett* (New York, 1955), p. 414. [Ed.]

articulate ourselves, in that slight stumbling by which we lose track of what we are saying. But all this attention to the speech of madness does not prove that the old division is no longer operative. You have only to think of the whole framework of knowledge through which we decipher that speech, and of the whole network of institutions which permit someone — a doctor or a psychoanalyst — to listen to it, and which at the same time permit the patient to bring along his poor words or, in desperation, to withhold them. You have only to think of all this to become suspicious that the division, far from being effaced, is working differently along other lines, through new institutions, and with effects that are not at all the same. And even if the doctor's role were only that of lending an ear to a speech that is free at last, he still does this listening in the context of the same division. He is listening to a discourse which is invested with desire, and which — for its greater exaltation or its greater anguish — thinks it is loaded with terrible powers. If the silence of reason is required for the curing of monsters, it is enough for that silence to be on the alert, and it is in this that the division remains.

It is perhaps risky to consider the opposition between true and false as a third system of exclusion, along with those just mentioned. How could one reasonably compare the constraint of truth with divisions like those, which are arbitrary to start with or which at least are organized around historical contingencies; which are not only modifiable but in perpetual displacement; which are supported by a whole system of institutions which impose them and renew them; and which act in a constraining and sometimes violent way?

Certainly, when viewed from the level of a proposition, on the inside of a discourse, the division between true and false is neither arbitrary nor modifiable nor institutional nor violent. But when we view things on a different scale, when we ask the question of what this will to truth has been and constantly is, across our discourses, this will to truth which has crossed so many centuries of our history; what is, in its very general form, the type of division which governs our will to know (*notre volonté de savoir*), then what we see taking shape is perhaps something like a system of exclusion, a historical, modifiable, and institutionally constraining system.

There is no doubt that this division is historically constituted. For the Greek poets of the sixth century B.C., the true discourse (in the strong and valorized sense of the word), the discourse which inspired respect and terror, and to which one had to submit because it ruled, was the one pronounced by men who spoke as of right and according to the required ritual; the discourse which dispensed justice and gave everyone his share; the discourse which in prophesying the future not only announced what was going to happen but helped to make it happen, carrying men's minds along with it and thus weaving itself into the fabric of destiny. Yet already a century later the highest truth no longer resided in what discourse was or did, but in what it said: a day came when truth was displaced from the ritualized, efficacious, and just act of enunciation, towards the utterance itself, its meaning, its form, its object, its relation to its reference. Between Hesiod and Plato a certain division was established, separating true discourse from false discourse: a new division because henceforth the true discourse is no longer precious and desirable, since it is no longer the one linked to the exercise of power. The sophist is banished.

This historical division probably gave our will to know its general form. However, it has never stopped shifting: sometimes the great mutations in scientific thought can perhaps be read as the consequences of a discovery, but they can also be read as the appearance of new forms in the will to truth. There is doubtless a will to truth in the nineteenth century which differs from the will to know characteristic of Classical culture in the forms it deploys, in the domains of objects to which it addresses itself, and in the techniques on which it is based. To go back a little further: at the turn of the sixteenth century (and particularly in England), there appeared a will to know which, anticipating its actual contents, sketched out schemas of possible, observable, measurable, classifiable objects; a will to know which imposed on the knowing subject, and in some sense prior to all experience, a certain position, a certain gaze and a certain function (to see rather than to read, to verify rather than to make commentaries on); a will to know which was prescribed (but in a more general manner than by any specific instrument) by the technical level where knowledges had to be invested in order to be verifiable and useful. It was just as if, starting from the great Platonic division, the will to truth had its own history, which is not that of constraining truths: the history of the range of objects to be known, of the functions and positions of the knowing subject, of the material, technical, and instrumental investments of knowledge.

This will to truth, like the other systems of exclusion, rests on an institutional support: it is both reinforced and renewed by whole strata of practices, such as pedagogy, of course; and the system of books, publishing, libraries; learned societies in the past and laboratories now. But it is also renewed, no doubt more profoundly, by the way in which knowledge is put to work, valorized, distributed, and in a sense attributed, in a society. Let us recall at this point, and only symbolically, the old Greek principle: though arithmetic may well be the concern of democratic cities, because it teaches about the relations of equality, geometry alone must be taught in oligarchies, since it demonstrates the proportions within inequality.

Finally, I believe that this will to truth — leaning in this way on a support and an institutional distribution — tends to exert a sort of pressure and something like a power of constraint (I am still speaking of our own society) on other discourses. I am thinking of the way in which for centuries Western literature sought to ground itself on the natural, the *"vraisemblable,"* on sincerity, on science as well — in short, on "true" discourse. I am thinking likewise of the manner in which economic practices, codified as precepts or recipes and ultimately as morality, have sought since the sixteenth century to ground themselves, rationalize themselves, and justify themselves in a theory of wealth and production. I am also thinking of the way in which a body as prescriptive as the penal system sought its bases or its justification, at first of course in a theory of justice, then, since the nineteenth century, in a sociological, psychological, medical, and psychiatric knowledge: it is as if even the word of the law could no longer be authorized, in our society, except by a discourse of truth.

Of the three great systems of exclusion which forge discourse — the forbidden speech, the division of madness, and the will to truth, I have spoken of the third at greatest length. The fact is that it is towards this third system that the other two have been drifting constantly for centuries. The third system increasingly attempts to assimilate the others, both in order to modify them and to provide them with a foundation. The first two are constantly becoming more fragile and more uncertain, to the extent that they are now invaded by the will to truth, which for its part constantly grows stronger, deeper, and more implacable.

And yet we speak of the will to truth no doubt least of all. It is as if, for us, the will to truth and its vicissitudes were masked by truth itself in its necessary unfolding. The reason is perhaps this: although since the Greeks "true" discourse is no longer the discourse that answers to the demands of desire, or the discourse which exercises power, what is at stake in the will to truth, in the will to utter this "true" discourse, if not desire and power? "True" discourse, freed from desire and power by the necessity of its form, cannot recognize the will to truth which pervades it; and the will to truth, having imposed itself on us for a very long time, is such that the truth it wants cannot fail to mask it.

Thus all that appears to our eyes is a truth conceived as a richness, a fecundity, a gentle and insidiously universal force, and in contrast we are unaware of the will to truth, that prodigious machinery designed to exclude. All those who, from time to time in our history, have tried to dodge this will to truth and to put it into question against truth, at the very point where truth undertakes to justify the prohibition and to define madness, all of them, from Nietzsche to Artaud and Bataille, must now serve as the (no doubt lofty) signs for our daily work.

III

There are, of course, many other procedures for controlling and delimiting discourse. Those of

which I have spoken up to now operate in a sense from the exterior. They function as systems of exclusion. They have to do with the part of discourse which puts power and desire at stake.

I believe we can isolate another group: internal procedures, since discourses themselves exercise their own control; procedures which function rather as principles of classification, of ordering, of distribution, as if this time another dimension of discourse had to be mastered: that of events and chance.

In the first place, commentary. I suppose — but without being very certain — that there is scarcely a society without its major narratives, which are recounted, repeated, and varied; formulae, texts, and ritualized sets of discourses which are recited in well-defined circumstances; things said once and preserved because it is suspected that behind them there is a secret or a treasure. In short, we may suspect that there is in all societies, with great consistency, a kind of gradation among discourses: those which are said in the ordinary course of days and exchanges, and which vanish as soon as they have been pronounced; and those which give rise to a certain number of new speech acts which take them up, transform them or speak of them, in short, those discourses which, over and above their formulation, are said indefinitely, remain said, and are to be said again. We know them in our own cultural system: they are religious or juridical texts, but also those texts (curious ones, when we consider their status) which are called "literary"; and to a certain extent, scientific texts.

This differentiation is certainly neither stable, nor constant, nor absolute. There is not, on the one side, the category of fundamental or creative discourses, given for all time, and on the other, the mass of discourses which repeat, gloss, and comment. Plenty of major texts become blurred and disappear, and sometimes commentaries move into the primary position. But though its points of application may change, the function remains; and the principle of a differentiation is continuously put back in play. The radical effacement of this gradation can only ever be play, utopia, or anguish. The Borges-style play of a commentary which is nothing but the solemn and expected reappearance word for word of the text that is commented on; or the play of a criticism that would speak forever of a work which does not exist.[2] The lyrical dream of a discourse which is reborn absolutely new and innocent at every point, and which reappears constantly in all freshness, derived from things, feelings, or thoughts. The anguish of that patient of Janet's for whom the least utterance was gospel truth, concealing inexhaustible treasures of meaning and worthy to be repeated, recommenced, and commented on indefinitely: "When I think," he would say when reading or listening, "when I think of this sentence which like the others will go off into eternity, and which I have perhaps not yet fully understood."[3]

But who can fail to see that this would be to annul one of the terms of the relation each time, and not to do away with the relation itself? It is a relation which is constantly changing with time; which takes multiple and divergent forms in a given epoch. The juridical exegesis is very different from the religious commentary (and this has been the case for a very long time). One and the same literary work can give rise simultaneously to very distinct types of discourse: the *Odyssey* as a primary text is repeated, in the same period, in the translation by Bérard, and in the endless "*explications de texte,*" and in Joyce's *Ulysses*.

For the moment I want to do no more than indicate that, in what is broadly called commentary, the hierarchy between primary and secondary text plays two roles which are in solidarity with each other. On the one hand it allows the (endless) construction of new discourses: the dominance of the primary text, its permanence, its status as a discourse which can always be reactualized, the multiple or hidden meaning with which it is credited, the essential reticence and richness which is attributed to it, all this is the basis for an open possibility of speaking. But on the other hand the commentary's only role, whatever the techniques used, is to say at last what was silently articulated "beyond," in the text. By a paradox which it always displaces but never escapes, the commentary must say for the first time what had, nonetheless, already been said, and must tirelessly repeat what had, however, never been said. The infinite rippling of commentaries is worked from the inside by the dream of a repetition in disguise: at its horizon there is perhaps nothing but what was at its point of departure — mere recitation. Commentary exorcises the chance element of discourse by giving it its due; it allows us to say something other than the text itself, but on condition that it is this text itself which is said, and in a sense completed. The open multiplicity, the element of chance, are transferred, by the principle of commentary, from what might risk being said, on to the number, the form, the mask, and the circumstances of the repetition. The new thing here lies not in what is said but in the event of its return.

I believe there exists another principle of rarefaction of a discourse, complementary to the first, to a certain extent: the author. Not, of course, in the sense of the speaking individual who pronounced or wrote a text, but in the sense of a principle of grouping of discourses, conceived as the unity and origin of their meanings, as the focus of their coherence. This principle is not everywhere at work, nor in a constant manner: there exist all around us plenty of discourses which circulate without deriving their meaning or their efficacity from an author to whom they could be attributed: everyday remarks, which are effaced immediately; decrees or contracts which require signatories but no author; technical instructions which are transmitted anonymously. But in the domains where it is the rule to attribute things to an author — literature, philosophy, science — it is quite evident that this attribution does not always play the same role. In the order of scientific discourse, it was indispensable, during the Middle Ages, that a text should be attributed to an author, since this was an index of truthfulness. A proposition was considered as drawing even its scientific value from its author. Since the seventeenth century, this function has steadily been eroded in scientific discourse: it now functions only to give a name to a theorem, an effect, an example, a syndrome. On the other hand, in the order of literary discourse, starting from the same epoch, the function of the author has steadily grown stronger: all those tales, poems, dramas, or comedies which were allowed to circulate in the Middle Ages in at least a relative anonymity are now asked (and obliged to say) where they come from; who wrote them. The author is asked to account for the unity of the texts which are placed under his name. He is asked to reveal or at least carry authentification of the hidden meaning which traverses them. He is asked to connect them to his lived experiences, to the real history which saw their birth. The author is what gives the disturbing language of fiction its unities, its nodes of coherence, its insertion in the real.

I know that I will be told: "But you are speaking there of the author as he is reinvented after the event by criticism, after he is dead and there is nothing left except for a tangled mass of scribblings; in those circumstances a little order surely has to be introduced into all that, by imagining a project, a coherence, a thematic structure that is demanded of the consciousness or the life of an author who is indeed perhaps a trifle fictitious. But that does not mean he did not exist, this real author, who bursts into the midst of all these worn-out words, bringing to them his genius or his disorder."

It would of course, be absurd to deny the existence of the individual who writes and invents. But I believe that — at least since a certain epoch — the individual who sets out to write a text on the horizon of which a possible *oeuvre* is prowling, takes upon himself the function of the author: what he writes and what he does not write, what he sketches out, even by way of provisional drafts, as an outline of the *oeuvre,* and what he lets fall by way of commonplace remarks — this whole play of differences is prescribed by the author-function, as he receives it from his epoch, or as he modifies it in his turn. He may well overturn the traditional image of the author; nevertheless, it is from some new author-position that he will cut out, from everything he could say and from all that he does say every day at any moment, the still trembling outline of his *oeuvre*.

The commentary-principle limits the chance-element in discourse by the play of an identity

[2]See Borges's story, "Pierre Menard's *Don Quixote*." [Ed.]

[3]Pierre Janet (1859–1947), French psychologist. [Ed.]

which would take the form of repetition and sameness. The author-principle limits this same element of chance by the play of an identity which has the form of individuality and the self.

We must also recognize another principle of limitation in what is called, not sciences but "disciplines": a principle which is itself relative and mobile; which permits construction, but within narrow confines.

The organization of disciplines is just as much opposed to the principle of commentary as to that of the author. It is opposed to the principle of the author because a discipline is defined by a domain of objects, a set of methods, a corpus of propositions considered to be true, a play of rules and definitions, of techniques and instruments: all this constitutes a sort of anonymous system at the disposal of anyone who wants to or is able to use it, without their meaning or validity being linked to the one who happened to be their inventor. But the principle of a discipline is also opposed to that of commentary: in a discipline, unlike a commentary, what is supposed at the outset is not a meaning which has to be rediscovered, nor an identity which has to be repeated, but the requisites for the construction of new statements. For there to be a discipline, there must be the possibility of formulating new propositions, ad infinitum.

But there is more; there is more, no doubt, in order for there to be less: a discipline is not the sum of all that can be truthfully said about something; it is not even the set of all that can be accepted about the same data in virtue of some principle of coherence or systematicity. Medicine is not constituted by the total of what can be truthfully said about illness; botany cannot be defined by the sum of all the truths concerning plants. There are two reasons for this: first of all, botany and medicine are made up of errors as well as truths, like any other discipline — errors which are not residues or foreign bodies but which have positive functions, a historical efficacity, and a role that is often indissociable from that of the truths. And besides, for a proposition to belong to botany or pathology, it has to fulfill certain conditions, in a sense stricter and more complex than pure and simple truth: but in any case, other conditions. It must address itself to a determinate plane of objects: from the end of the seventeenth century, for example, for a proposition to be "botanical" it had to deal with the visible structure of the plant, the system of its close and distant resemblances or the mechanism of its fluids; it could no longer retain its symbolic value, as was the case in the sixteenth century, nor the set of virtues and properties which were accorded to it in antiquity. But without belonging to a discipline, a proposition must use conceptual or technical instruments of a well-defined type; from the nineteenth century, a proposition was no longer medical — it fell "outside of medicine" and acquired the status of an individual phantasm or popular imagery — if it used notions that were at the same time metaphorical, qualitative, and substantial (like those of engorgement, of overheated liquids or of dried-out solids). In contrast it could and had to make use of notions that were equally metaphorical but based on another model, a functional and physiological one (that of the irritation, inflammation, or degeneration of the tissues). Still further: in order to be part of a discipline, a proposition has to be able to be inscribed on a certain type of theoretical horizon: suffice it to recall that the search for the primitive language, which was a perfectly acceptable theme up to the eighteenth century, was sufficient, in the second half of the nineteenth century, to make any discourse fall into — I hesitate to say error — chimera and reverie, into pure and simple linguistic monstrosity.

Within its own limits, each discipline recognizes true and false propositions; but it pushes back a whole teratology of knowledge beyond its margins. The exterior of a science is both more and less populated than is often believed: there is of course immediate experience, the imaginary themes which endlessly carry and renew immemorial beliefs; but perhaps there are no errors in the strict sense, for error can only arise and be decided inside a definite practice; on the other hand, there are monsters on the prowl whose form changes with the history of knowledge. In short, a proposition must fulfill complex and heavy requirements to be able to belong to the grouping of a discipline: before it can be called true or false, it must be "in the true," as Canguilhem would say.

People have often wondered how the botanists or biologists of the nineteenth century managed not to see that what Mendel was saying was true. But it was because Mendel was speaking of objects, applying methods, and placing himself on a theoretical horizon which were alien to the biology of his time. Naudin, before him, had of course posited the thesis that hereditary traits are discrete; yet, no matter how new or strange this principle was, it was able to fit into the discourse of biology, at least as an enigma. What Mendel did was to constitute the hereditary trait as an absolutely new biological object, thanks to a kind of filtering which had never been used before: he detached the trait from the species, and from the sex which transmits it; the field in which he observed it being the infinitely open series of the generations, where it appears and disappears according to statistical regularities. This was a new object which called for new conceptual instruments and new theoretical foundations. Mendel spoke the truth, but he was not "within the true" of the biological discourse of his time: it was not according to such rules that biological objects and concepts were formed. It needed a complete change of scale, the deployment of a whole new range of objects in biology for Mendel to enter into the true and for his propositions to appear (in large measure) correct. Mendel was a true monster, which meant that science could not speak of him; whereas about thirty years earlier, at the height of the nineteenth century, Scheiden, for example, who denied plant sexuality, but in accordance with the rules of biological discourse, was merely formulating a disciplined error.

It is always possible that one might speak the truth in the space of a wild exteriority, but one is "in the true" only by obeying the rules of a discursive "policing" which one has to reactivate in each of one's discourses.

The discipline is a principle of control over the production of discourse. The discipline fixes limits for discourse by the action of an identity which takes the form of a permanent re-actuation of the rules.

We are accustomed to see in an author's fecundity, in the multiplicity of the commentaries, and in the development of a discipline so many infinite resources for the creation of discourses. Perhaps so, but they are nonetheless principles of constraint; it is very likely impossible to account for their positive and multiplicatory role if we do not take into consideration their restrictive and constraining function.

IV

There is, I believe, a third group of procedures which permit the control of discourses. This time it is not a matter of mastering their powers or averting the unpredictability of their appearance, but of determining the condition of their application, of imposing a certain number of rules on the individuals who hold them, and thus of not permitting everyone to have access to them. There is a rarefaction, this time, of the speaking subjects; none shall enter the order of discourse if he does not satisfy certain requirements or if he is not, from the outset, qualified to do so. To be more precise: not all the regions of discourse are equally open and penetrable; some of them are largely forbidden (they are differentiated and differentiating), while others seem to be almost open to all winds and put at the disposal of every speaking subject, without prior restrictions.

In this regard I should like to recount an anecdote which is so beautiful that one trembles at the thought that it might be true. It gathers into a single figure all the constraints of discourse: those which limit its powers, those which master its aleatory appearances, those which carry out the selection among speaking subjects. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Shogun heard tell that the Europeans' superiority in matters of navigation, commerce, politics, and military skill was due to their knowledge of mathematics. He desired to get hold of so precious a knowledge. As he had been told of an English sailor who possessed the secret of these miraculous discourses, he summoned him to his palace and kept him there. Alone with him, he took lessons. He learned mathematics. He retained power, and lived to a great old age. It was not until the nineteenth century that there were Japanese mathematicians. But the anecdote does not stop there: it has its European side too. The story has it that this English sailor, Will Adams, was an autodidact, a carpenter who had learned ge-

ometry in the course of working in a shipyard. Should we see this story as the expression of one of the great myths of European culture? The universal communication of knowledge and the infinite free exchange of discourses in Europe, against the monopolized and secret knowledge of Oriental tyranny?

This idea, of course, does not stand up to examination. Exchange and communication are positive figures working inside complex systems of restriction, and probably would not be able to function independently of them. The most superficial and visible of these systems of restriction is constituted by what can be gathered under the name of ritual. Ritual defines the qualification which must be possessed by individuals who speak (and who must occupy such-and-such a position and formulate such-and-such a type of statement, in the play of a dialogue, of interrogation or recitation); it defines the gestures, behavior, circumstances, and the whole set of signs which must accompany discourse; finally, it fixes the supposed or imposed efficacity of the words, their effect on those to whom they are addressed, and the limits of their constraining value. Religious, judicial, therapeutic, and in large measure also political discourses can scarcely be dissociated from this deployment of a ritual which determines both the particular properties and the stipulated roles of the speaking subjects.

A somewhat different way of functioning is that of the "societies of discourse," which function to preserve or produce discourses, but in order to make them circulate in a closed space, distributing them only according to strict rules, and without the holders being dispossessed by this distribution. An archaic model for this is provided by the groups of rhapsodists who possessed the knowledge of the poems to be recited or potentially to be varied and transformed. But though the object of this knowledge was after all a ritual recitation, the knowledge was protected, defended and preserved within a definite group by the often very complex exercises of memory which it implied. To pass an apprenticeship in it allowed one to enter both a group and a secret which the act of recitation showed but did not divulge; the roles of speaker and listener were not interchangeable.

There are hardly any such "societies of discourse" now, with their ambiguous play of the secret and its divulgation. But this should not deceive us: even in the order of "true" discourse, even in the order of discourse that is published and free from all ritual, there are still forms of appropriation of secrets, and noninterchangeable roles. It may well be that the act of writing as it is institutionalized today, in the book, the publishing-system and the person of the writer, takes place in a "society of discourse," which though diffuse is certainly constraining. The difference between the writer and any other speaking or writing subject (a difference constantly stressed by the writer himself), the intransitive nature (according to him) of his discourse, the fundamental singularity which he has been ascribing for so long to "writing," the dissymmetry that is asserted between "creation" and any use of the linguistic system — all this shows the existence of a certain "society of discourse," and tends moreover to bring back its play of practices. But there are many others still, functioning according to entirely different schemas of exclusivity and disclosure: e.g., technical or scientific secrets, or the forms of diffusion and circulation of medical discourse, or those who have appropriated the discourse of politics or economics.

At first glance, the "doctrines" (religious, political, philosophical) seem to constitute the reverse of a "society of discourse," in which the number of speaking individuals tended to be limited even if it was not fixed; between those individuals, the discourse could circulate and be transmitted. Doctrine, on the contrary, tends to be diffused, and it is by the holding in common of one and the same discursive ensemble that individuals (as many as one cares to imagine) define their reciprocal allegiance. In appearance, the only prerequisite is the recognition of the same truths and the acceptance of a certain rule of (more or less flexible) conformity with the validated discourses. If doctrines were nothing more than this, they would not be so very different from scientific disciplines, and the discursive control would apply only to the form or the content of the statement, not to the speaking subject. But doctrinal allegiance puts in question both the statement and the speaking subject, the one by the other. It puts the speaking subject in question through and on the basis of the statement, as is proved by the procedures of exclusion and the mechanisms of rejection which come into action when a speaking subject has formulated one or several unassimilable statements; heresy and orthodoxy do not derive from a fanatical exaggeration of the doctrinal mechanisms, but rather belong fundamentally to them. And conversely the doctrine puts the statements in question on the basis of the speaking subjects, to the extent that the doctrine always stands as the sign, manifestation, and instrument of a prior adherence to a class, a social status, a race, a nationality, an interest, a revolt, a resistance or an acceptance. Doctrine binds individuals to certain types of enunciation and consequently forbids them all others; but it uses, in return, certain types of enunciation to bind individuals amongst themselves, and to differentiate them by that very fact from all others. Doctrine brings about a double subjection: of the speaking subjects to discourses, and of discourses to the (at least virtual) group of speaking individuals.

On a much broader scale, we are obliged to recognize large cleavages in what might be called the social appropriation of discourses. Although education may well be, by right, the instrument thanks to which any individual in a society like ours can have access to any kind of discourse whatever, this does not prevent it from following, as is well known, in its distribution, in what it allows and what it prevents, the lines marked out by social distances, oppositions, and struggles. Any system of education is a political way of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, along with the knowledges and powers which they carry.

I am well aware that it is very abstract to separate speech-rituals, societies of discourse, doctrinal groups, and social appropriations, as I have just done. Most of the time, they are linked to each other and constitute kinds of great edifices which ensure the distribution of speaking subjects into the different types of discourse and the appropriation of discourses to certain categories of subject. Let us say, in a word, that those are the major procedures of subjection used by discourse. What, after all, is an education system, other than a ritualization of speech, a qualification and a fixing of the roles for speaking subjects, the constitution of a doctrinal group, however diffuse, a distribution and an appropriation of discourse with its powers and knowledges? What is "*écriture*" (the writing of the "writers") other than a similar system of subjection, which perhaps takes slightly different forms; but forms whose main rhythms are analogous? Does not the judicial system, does not the institutional system of medicine likewise constitute, in some of their aspects at least, similar systems of subjection of and by discourse?

V

I wonder whether a certain number of themes in philosophy have not come to correspond to these activities of limitation and exclusion, and perhaps also to reinforce them.

They correspond to them first of all by proposing an ideal truth as the law of discourse and an immanent rationality as the principle of their unfolding, and they reintroduce an ethic of knowledge, which promises to give the truth only to the desire for truth itself and only to the power of thinking it.

Then they reinforce the limitations and exclusions by a denial of the specific reality of discourse in general.

Ever since the sophists' tricks and influence were excluded and since their paradoxes have been more or less safely muzzled, it seems that Western thought has taken care to ensure that discourse should occupy the smallest possible space between thought and speech. Western thought seems to have made sure that the act of discoursing should appear to be no more than a certain bridging (*apport*) between thinking and speaking — a thought dressed in its signs and made visible by means of words, or conversely the very structures of language put into action and producing a meaning-effect.

This very ancient elision of the reality of discourse in philosophical thought has taken many forms in the course of history. We have seen it again quite recently in the guise of several familiar themes.

Perhaps the idea of the founding subject is a

way of eliding the reality of discourse. The founding subject, indeed, is given the task of directly animating the empty forms of language with his aims; it is he who in moving through the density and inertia of empty things grasps by intuition the meaning lying deposited within them; it is likewise the founding subject who founds horizons of meaning beyond time which history will henceforth only have to elucidate and where propositions, sciences, and deductive ensembles will find their ultimate grounding. In his relation to meaning, the founding subject has at his disposal signs, marks, traces, letters. But he does not need to pass via the singular instance of discourse in order to manifest them.

The opposing theme, that of originating experience, plays an analogous role. It supposes that at the very basis of experience, even before it could be grasped in the form of a cogito, there were prior significations — in a sense, already said — wandering around in the world, arranging it all around us and opening it up from the outset to a sort of primitive recognition. Thus a primordial complicity with the world is supposed to be the foundation of our possibility of speaking of it, in it, or indicating it and naming it, or judging it and ultimately of knowing it in the form of truth. If there is discourse, then, what can it legitimately be other than a discreet reading? Things are already murmuring meanings which our language has only to pick up; and this language, right from its most rudimentary project, was already speaking to us of a being of which it is like the skeleton.

The idea of universal mediation is yet another way, I believe, of eliding the reality of discourse, and despite appearances to the contrary. For it would seem at first glance that by rediscovering everywhere the movement of a *logos* which elevates particularities to the status of concepts and allows immediate consciousness to unfurl in the end the whole rationality of the world, one puts discourse itself at the center of one's speculation. But this *logos*, in fact, is only a discourse that has already been held, or rather it is things themselves, and events, which imperceptibly turn themselves into discourse as they unfold the secret of their own essence. Thus discourse is little more than the gleaming of a truth in the process of being born to its own gaze; and when everything finally can take the form of discourse, when everything can be said and when discourse can be spoken about everything, it is because all things, having manifested and exchanged their meaning, can go back into the silent interiority of their consciousness of self.

Thus in a philosophy of the founding subject, in a philosophy of originary experience, and in a philosophy of universal mediation alike, discourse is no more than a play, of writing in the first case, of reading in the second, and of exchange in the third, and this exchange, this reading, this writing never put anything at stake except signs. In this way, discourse is annulled in its reality and put at the disposal of the signifier.

What civilization has ever appeared to be more respectful of discourse than ours? Where has it ever been more honored, or better honored? Where has it ever been, seemingly, more radically liberated from its constraints, and universalized? Yet it seems to me that beneath this apparent veneration of discourse, under this apparent logophilia, a certain fear is hidden. It is just as if prohibitions, barriers, thresholds, and limits had been set up in order to master, at least partly, the great proliferation of discourse, in order to remove from its richness the most dangerous part, and in order to organize its disorder according to figures which dodge what is most uncontrollable about it. It is as if we had tried to efface all trace of its irruption into the activity of thought and language. No doubt there is in our society, and, I imagine, in all others, but following a different outline and different rhythms, a profound logophobia, a sort of mute terror against these events, against this mass of things said, against the surging-up of all these statements, against all that could be violent, discontinuous, pugnacious, disorderly as well, and perilous about them — against this great incessant and disordered buzzing of discourse.

And if we want to — I would not say, efface this fear, but — analyze it in its conditions, its action, and its effects, we must, I believe, resolve to take three decisions which our thinking today tends to resist and which correspond to the three groups of functions which I have just mentioned: we must call into question our will to truth, restore to discourse its character as an event, and finally throw off the sovereignty of the signifier.

Jacques Derrida

b. 1930

Jacques Derrida was born in Algiers in 1930. He is a Sephardic Jew (in *Glas* and elsewhere, he comments on his interest in the Jewish tradition) who was educated in Algeria and in France; in France, he studied philosophy at the École Normale Supérieure. Derrida also studied at Harvard for a year (1956–1957) and in the sixties was associated with the avant-garde journal *Tel Quel*. He is Directeur d'Études (Director of Studies) of the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales. Having taught for many years at the École Normale Supérieure and at Yale, Derrida now teaches at the University of California at Irvine.

In his many books and articles, Derrida persistently attacks the idea that language is or can be referential. He finds this idea active as a premise in philosophy, in most discussions of language, and in everyday thought. For Derrida, as for Friedrich Nietzsche, Michel Foucault, and a few others, including the Sophists, language does not mediate our relationship to a more or less knowable world. Rather, Derrida maintains that *"il n'y a pas de hors-texte"* — there is nothing outside of the text.[1] By this he means that our knowledge of the world is constructed from language, and language is not a transparent medium of reference or of thought. Language cannot be transcended to reach the thing *signified* while disposing of the *signifier*. This effort to reach past language to the reality it names is what Derrida calls "the metaphysics of presence."

In his attack on the metaphysics of presence that dominates philosophy, Derrida focuses on the notion that speech is prior to and somehow superior to writing. He points out that Plato was the first of many philosophers who distrusted writing. Speech, those philosophers claimed, is immediate, in the sense that it takes place at the moment of interaction between people who are exchanging their thoughts. It is, they argue, an expression of thought. It is clearly the expression of the speaker, who is, of course, present, directed to the interlocutor, who is also present. Speech is an attempt to represent something else, to transfer thoughts, to communicate ideas. In this sense, speech is an attempt to overcome language. Plato distrusted both rhetoric and writing because they subverted the attempt of speech to transcend itself. Rhetoric focused on motives for speaking that were not intended to reach the absolute truth. Rhetoric, moreover, made a virtue of linguistic facility, attending to the material effects of style and structure. Plato similarly distrusted writing, which compounded the problems introduced by rhetoric by allowing the writer to manage the language, to review and revise, to polish — and then to disappear. Because the author of written discourse does not utter the words, complains Plato, the speech situation is absent; therefore, also absent is the possibility of the kind of dialogue that prompts clarification, probing of premises, corrections, and so on.

[1]Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 158.