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## Paul de Man, Thomas Carlyle, and 'The Rhetoric of Temporality'

'The Rhetoric of Temporality' is Paul de Man's best known, most influential, and (in Frank Lentricchia's words) "most openly metaphysical" essay.<sup>1</sup> In this work, de Man attempts to rehabilitate allegory (and what he takes to be the rhetoric of temporality) at the expense of symbol (and what he takes to be the rhetoric of spatiality, a metaphysics of accessible presence). In so arguing, he clears the way for the deconstructive readings collected in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (1971), *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (1979), *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (1984), and in the works of a host of followers, including J. Hillis Miller, Jonathan Culler and Jerome Christensen.<sup>2</sup> To take exception to the works of de Man is, in effect, to take issue with one version of deconstruction, as will become plain as this paper proceeds. The stakes are high on such occasions, often betraying the most level-headed and generous of scholars into bouts of malice, wilful insensitivity or pure exasperation. Murray Krieger, for example, is provoked into complaining of "this cursed principle of anteriority" that makes possible deconstructive theory and critical practice, before admitting that

De Man's stalwart attack upon symbol in the name of allegory is a climactic moment in the theoretical turnaround against the long and impressive development of organic poetics from the late eighteenth century through the New Criticism.<sup>3</sup>

Without dwelling on the ironic tension between "stalwart" and "turnaround" in the context of deconstruction, or on the privileging of consoling continuity ("long and impressive development") in Krieger's rhetoric of temporality, let me simply say that the passage quoted illustrates how difficult it is to be fair to de Man's arguments without either accepting them *in toto* or inadvertently supporting them by

attempting to deconstruct them. In other words, if one reads de Man in good faith (of which more later), then one has to take him very seriously; if one merely pretends him thus, then one is likely to reconstitute reading as misreading and to confirm his view of every text (including his own) as a system of tropes and its deconstruction.<sup>4</sup> What I will strive for in this paper is a fair reading (or strong misreading) of de Man, a reading which will then be tested for equity and suasiveness against Carlyle's reading and rhetoric of temporality. Even if I fail in this endeavour, I think it is important to seek out a critical discourse neither grimly self-conserving nor gleefully vertiginous, but, rather, a judiciously ludic recuperation of the notion of fair play.

## I

In 'The Rhetoric of Temporality' rhetoric is both theme and instrument, and an attentive reading of de Man's essay may tell us a good deal about rhetoric's continuing importance for literary theorists, critics, historians, and about the particular rhetorical strategies favoured by deconstructionists. To that end, I will begin with a brief re-capitulation of the essay's argument: its contentions, connections, methods, modes, ruses. Let us consider first how de Man establishes his authority in a manner characteristic of many arbiters of taste. One cannot help being struck (if not daunted or subdued) by the way de Man moves with apparent ease among the literary traditions of Europe—French, German, English—commenting with uniform confidence on Hölderlin, Hoffman and Friedrich Schlegel; Defoe, Wordsworth and Coleridge; *Le Roman de la Rose*, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, "De l'essence du rire," *La Chartreuse de Parme*.<sup>5</sup> Our sense of an accomplished comparatist at work is strengthened further by a series of allusions to philosophical authorities from Nietzsche and Kierkegaard to Walter Benjamin and Hans-Georg Gadamer. However, this movement among languages and across historical periods may be guided at least as much by tactical considerations as by the illustrative *copia* of a well-stocked mind. Is de Man making an appeal to an elite readership or effecting a repeal of the rights of less cultivated readers, or both, or neither? Does the allusive fabric of his essay mark an astutely ironic appreciation and redeployment of the grand Arnoldian manner, or does it pay tribute via its limited accessibility to that inclusion/exclusion which is a permanent property of discourse, the most incurable of all the diseases of language? In an essay on temporality by a literary scholar, we may look for answers to some of these questions in the treatment of literary or more generally aesthetic history.

Throughout 'The Rhetoric of Temporality' we find examples of the inconsistent and the residually implausible, instances of having it both ways that do not appear to try to draw attention to themselves and, consequently, have to be detected and pondered before they can be fairly assessed. De Man has regular recourse to notions of periodicity, discrediting, for example, the idea of the nineteenth century as the age of symbol by means of such reifying and reductive expressions as "the decorative allegorism of the rococo" (p. 175). In the process of deconstructing the romantic he hypostasizes the mediaeval, the baroque and the rococo. Moreover, when it is time "to shift attention from English to French literary history," that shift is justified as follows: "Because French pre-romanticism occurs, with Rousseau, so early in the eighteenth century, and because the Lockian heritage in France never reached, not even with Condillac, the degree of automaticism against which Coleridge and Wordsworth had to rebel in Hartley, the entire problem of analogy, as connected with the use of nature imagery, is somewhat clearer than in England" (p. 183). A suggestion of privileged and incontestable origin—Rousseau was first—is coupled with a blunt discrimination between English and French materialist thought, in the *name* of clarity but, perhaps, in the *interest* also of an enabling over-simplification. De Man makes use of two kinds of causality here, the one clear, the other not. On the one hand, expository clarity will be better served "Because . . . [x], and because . . . [y];" the parallel construction makes this much plain. On the other hand, however, we have a complex interrelation of materialist philosophers (Locke, Condillac, Hartley) and literary artists (Rousseau, Coleridge, Wordsworth), which seems to rest on the idea that the resistance of Rousseau to the "Lockian heritage" occurred earlier and therefore more straightforwardly than the "rebel[lion]" by Coleridge and Wordsworth against Locke's ultra-materialist English heir, David Hartley. De Man seeks to establish a time-frame wherein pre-romantic France inaugurates and will for more than a century continue to guide expressions of "the intimate proximity between nature and its beholder" (p. 183). Eager to replace symbol with allegory at the heart of romantic aesthetics by means of arguments from antecedence and origin, de Man plays down the materialism of Condillac, Rousseau's exact contemporary and the author of many passages at least as uncompromisingly grounded in sensation as anything to be encountered in *The Observations on Man*.<sup>6</sup> The claim that the "Lockian heritage" was not as rich and irresistible in France as in England during the eighteenth century thus prepares us for the revelation that Rousseau and a number of his compatriots were "at least as aware as their later commentators of what was involved in a development of the

general taste that felt attracted towards a new kind of landscape" (p. 183). If de Man can prove his point via Rousseau, then (we are encouraged to anticipate or conclude) the game will be up for romanticism as traditionally conceived.

However, before considering the treatment of Rousseau in 'The Rhetoric of Temporality,' let us look at one more feature of the long sentence quoted and discussed above. In the middle of the sentence, in distinguishing between French and English followers of Locke, de Man uses the term "automaticism," a word not recorded in *OED*, nor in any of the major North American dictionaries I have checked. The term is to be found neither in Hartley nor in Condillac, so far as I know.<sup>7</sup> The closest approximation to "automaticism" seems to be "automaticity," a coinage attributed by *OED* to David Ferrier in his *The Functions of the Brain* (1876). The term that one would have expected de Man to use is not "automaticism" but "automatism," whose first definition in *OED* is as follows: "The quality of being automatic, or of acting mechanically only; involuntary action. Hence, the doctrine attributing this quality to animals." De Man's preference for "automaticism" may well be motivated by a desire to stress the doctrine rather than its application, but it is also possible that he has recourse to an unusual term in order to avoid "automatism" and thereby to suppress a strong association with *automatisme* and Descartes, an association which would expand his time-frame and call in question his characterization of Condillac and French materialist thought. The disruptive potential of a traditional term, its ability to introduce an infinite referential regress (from *automatisme* to *automatismos* and beyond) such as de Man elsewhere in this essay regards as inevitable (p. 190), is countered by a move to neologism, a move to reduce and confine lexis-as-temporality. One consequence is a degree of confusion and evasion in usage similar to and supportive of the confusion created by the more or less simultaneous denial of access to origin and employment of phrases such as "to designate the historical origin of this tendency" (p. 184), and the confused attitude towards ethos—as, on the one hand, a stable configuration, coalescence or coagulation of chaos, and, on the other, a bogus pre-text for *Geistesgeschichte*, that popular but inadequate refuge for those who lack the stomach and the stamina for the journey downwards through the abyss of language.

But is de Man's inconsistency on questions of origin, ethos, lexis, a serious weakness in his argument or merely something that goes with the territory, or, more accurately, with the temporality? Is de Man forced to delay or discourage deconstruction of his own claims simply

in order to make those claims "in the first place"? Is his essay then locatable in a linguistic space between aphorism and aporia, a space that defies time temporarily, while the text discloses itself to be, like all texts, a self-deferring artifact? Before succumbing to the attractions of the transhistorical, the permanent properties of discourse or of the human psyche, it is as well to remind ourselves that the romantic period appeals powerfully to deconstructionists because of its concern with origin and development, continuity and rupture, the many variations on the theme of fluency, and the equally persistent encounters with what Byron called "a sad chasm in [our] connections";<sup>8</sup> the pressures, in sum, that led Napoleon to legitimize himself by appropriating origins and antecedents in one gulp: "Je suis un ancêtre." But it is still too early to say whether de Man distorts romantic praxis in order to make his re-reading of it appear plausible, or whether he discovers in it an indisputable aporia which is extendable backwards and forwards through literary history.

De Man himself may be inconsistent in important but problematic respects, but there is no doubting his ability to expose comparable inconsistencies in others, especially those who affirm allegiance to "an organic conception of language" (p. 181), and as a result confuse themselves on the question of priority of subject over object, the privileging of symbol, synecdoche, and organic language which reveals itself as the locus of transcendence—and do so at the expense of allegory, arbitrary and limited polysemia, and language which constitutes itself by bearing conventional, systematic witness to temporal structure. As teachers and readers we ought to be much more open-minded and alert after encountering passages such as this:

Whether it occurs in the form of an ethical conflict, as in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, or as an allegorization of the geographical site, as in Wordsworth, the prevalence of allegory always corresponds to the unveiling of an authentically temporal destiny. This unveiling takes place in a subject that has sought refuge against the impact of time in a natural world to which, in truth, it bears no resemblance. The secularized thought of the pre-romantic period no longer allows a transcendence of the antinomies between the created world and the act of creation by means of a positive recourse to the notion of a divine will; the failure of the attempt to conceive of a language that would be symbolical as well as allegorical, the suppression, in the allegory, of the analogical and anagogical levels, is one of the ways in which this impossibility becomes manifest. In the world of the symbol it would be possible for the image to coincide with the substance, since the substance and its representation do not differ in their being but only in their extension: they are part and whole of the same set of categories. Their relationship is one of simultaneity, which, in truth, is spatial in kind, and in which the intervention of time is merely a matter of contingency, whereas, in the world of allegory, time is the originary constitutive category. The relationship between the alle-

gorical sign and its meaning (*signifié*) is not decreed by dogma; in the instances we have seen in Rousseau and in Wordsworth, this is not at all the case. We have, instead, a relationship between signs in which the reference to their respective meanings has become of secondary importance. But this relationship between signs necessarily contains a constitutive temporal element; it remains necessary, if there is to be allegory, that the allegorical sign refer to another sign that precedes it. The meaning constituted by the allegorical sign can then consist only in the *repetition* (in the Kierkegaardian sense of the term) of a previous sign with which it can never coincide, since it is of the essence of this previous sign to be pure anteriority. The secularized allegory of the early romantics thus necessarily contains the negative moment which in Rousseau is that of renunciation, in Wordsworth that of the loss of self in death or in error.

Whereas the symbol postulates the possibility of an identity or an identification, allegory designates primarily a distance in relation to its own origin, and, renouncing the nostalgia and the desire to coincide, it establishes its language in the void of this temporal difference. In so doing, it prevents the self from an illusory identification with the non-self, which is now fully, though painfully, recognized as a non-self. It is this painful knowledge that we perceive at the moments when early romantic literature finds its true voice. It is ironically revealing that this voice is so rarely recognized for what it really is and that the literary movement in which it appears has repeatedly been called a primitive naturalism or a mystified solipsism. . . .

We are led, in conclusion, to a historical scheme that differs entirely from the customary picture. The dialectical relationship between subject and object is no longer the central statement of romantic thought, but this dialectic is now located entirely in the temporal relationships that exist within a system of allegorical signs. It becomes a conflict between a conception of the self seen in its authentically temporal predicament and a defensive strategy that tries to hide from this negative self-knowledge. On the level of language the asserted superiority of the symbol over allegory, so frequent during the nineteenth century, is one of the forms taken by this tenacious self-mystification. Wide areas of European literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries appear as regressive with regard to the truths that come to light in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. For the lucidity of the pre-romantic writers does not persist. It does not take long for a symbolic conception of metaphorical language to establish itself everywhere, despite the ambiguities that persist in aesthetic theory and poetic practice. But this symbolical style will never be allowed to exist in serenity; since it is a veil thrown over a light one no longer wishes to perceive, it will never be able to gain an entirely good poetic conscience. (pp. 190-1)

So concludes "Allegory and Symbol," the first part of de Man's two-part essay. In summarizing his provocative alternative to the "customary picture" of the period, de Man betrays an impressive sensitivity to the "correspondence" between rhetoric, history, theology and phenomenology. There is a large and commendable element of risk involved in making such connections and claims, though that risk is offset in part by a studious reliance on fairly familiar models of

secularization, positivity/negativity, authenticity, identity, void, and on a regular alternation between suppression of the inconvenient and invocation of the reassuring. This would be scanned.

Taken out of context, the passage quoted may seem to bear witness to a suppression/substitution similar to the displacement of "automatism" by "automaticism." In particular, one may be surprised to find "prevalence" instead of "presence" at the end of the opening sentence: "the prevalence of allegory always corresponds to the unveiling of an authentically temporal destiny." Is this a further instance where the troublesome associations of one term (its link with that which deconstruction is at such pains to discredit, namely a metaphysics of *presence*) require that it be passed over, in the phrasing of an axiom, in favour of a term more redolent of process than substance, of the agonistic rather than the accommodating? On what basis does de Man privilege allegory in its relations with symbol in particular texts? Earlier in the essay, de Man does mention the "presence of nature" (p. 108) but only as a desideratum inscribed in "the poetic praxis of romantic poets." Perhaps, then, his avoidance of the term in an affirmative context is not so much evasion as consistency. But even if presence is re-constituted as dialogic prevalence, how does one determine the 'victor' in any contest of discourses, the discourse that 'ultimately' prevails in a given text?

De Man re-reads *La Nouvelle Héloïse* in order to exemplify and justify this very procedure, but in so doing he replaces a valued, potential presence (nature, available via the mediation of symbol) with an over-valORIZED rhetorical mode (allegory), whose superiority to symbol is conveyed by expressions such as these: ". . . this polemic of taste is superficial, for Rousseau's concerns are clearly different . . . . The analogism of the style and the sensuous intensity of the passion are closely related. But this should not blind us to the explicit thematic function of the letter, which is one of temptation and near-fatal relapse into former error, openly and explicitly condemned, without any trace of ambiguity, in the larger context of Rousseau's novel" (p. 185). De Man appears to read with an eye to plurivalency, but that plurivalency is rapidly re-ordered in the interests of prevalence, namely, the prevalence of a power hostile to analogism and symbol. This power manifests itself as an "explicit thematic function" expressive of the values that prevail in "the larger context of Rousseau's novel". Whereas the analogism is local, the allegory is more global, enjoying dominion over the whole of which the Meillerie episode in part four of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* forms a part. This territorial prevalence is then clarified further in a re-constitution of mass as centrality. Quite evidently, de Man is not treating of an aleatory text but of an hierarchically ordered

one in which there is marginalized symbolism as well as an allegorical “central emblem . . . the garden that Julie has created on the Wolner estate as a place of refuge.” In support of this contention de Man proceeds to consider “the historical sources of the passage” (p. 185, emphasis mine). We are quickly embarked upon a historical regress by way of *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Roman de la Rose* to the age of allegory and to “language . . . purely figural” rather than “the language of correspondences.” The historical regress blocked on the philosophical level by hypostasizing France’s “Lockian heritage,” is expedited on the literary level. And the result of this controlled intertextual play is to reveal a very important “tension”: “not between the two distant literary sources, the one erotic, the other puritanical, but between the allegorical language of a scene such as Julie’s Elysium and the symbolic language of passages such as the Meillierie episode” (p. 188). Rhetorical prevalence now becomes a “triumph” “ultimately resolved” on the basis of an ethical preference for renunciation over enjoyment. Ethically authorized “allegorizing tendencies, though often in a very different form, are present not only in Rousseau but in all European literature between 1760 and 1800. Far from being a mannerism inherited from the exterior aspects of the baroque and the rococo, they appear at the most original and profound moments in the works, when an authentic voice becomes audible.” In generalizing the force of his reading of Rousseau, de Man grounds a very orthodox series of preferences—for earning over “inheriting,” style over “mannerism,” interior over “exterior,” “original” over derivative, “profound” over shallow, “authentic” over inauthentic—in an existential version of choice. It is because of this existential stance than de Man feels entitled to interpret the fact of “allegorizing tendencies” being “present” in a text, to mean that they are “prevalent.”

This reading, this bestowal of an existentially authorized privilege upon allegory, could certainly be disputed at its ‘source’ in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, a work whose title-page, Prefaces, epistolary form and rhetorical play are dazzlingly dialogic.<sup>9</sup> However, for a number of reasons that will become clear later, I wish to relocate that dispute in the context of Carlyle rather than Rousseau. But before doing so, I must do something more to bring out the challenge and subtlety of ‘The Rhetoric of Temporality.’

In the preceding pages we travelled back within de Man’s essay in order to understand better why its first part concludes the way it does, and, in particular, how it justifies its re-constitution of “simultaneous co-presence” (of allegory and symbol) as “prevalence” (of allegory over symbol). One might find further cause for concern and/or admiration in the “allegorizing tendencies” of de Man’s own prose, the

stylistic recourse in support of his argument to an allegorizing of the superior potency of certain abstractions via expression such as “sought refuge against the impact of time” or “the secularized thought of the pre-romantic period no longer allows a transcendence” or “the relationship . . . is not decreed by dogma.” The latter two expressions, moreover, seem to corroborate Hans Blumenberg’s claim in ‘The Rhetoric of Secularizations’ that “Secularization as an intentional style consciously seeks a relation to the sacred as a provocation . . . . Precepts of rhetorical daring make the result of linguistic secularization, from allusion to frivolous comparison, a basic element of literary style.”<sup>10</sup> De Man does what everyone else does, but outdoes most of us in his “rhetorical daring” and “provocation,” especially in his most determined efforts to confute the idea of language as the locus of transcendence.

De Man puts his faith in particular practitioners and a particular mode of discourse, deliberately stopping short of suggesting that *all* discourse comes into being as “the unveiling of an authentically temporal destiny.” As a consequence, he ignores the possibility that language itself will insist, even if the individual writer will not or cannot “conceive of a language that would be symbolical as well as allegorical.” However, de Man’s selective endorsement of language is made possible only by underestimating temporality—as a force that is permitted entry into “The world of symbol . . . merely as a matter of contingency”—and by virtue of a false alignment of symbol with simultaneity and the spatial. By accepting at face value the claims of symbol’s most ardent devotees, de Man is able to suppress the referential *mobilité* of symbolic completion in time; that is to say, by drawing on the traditional associations of symbol with visual verification and consubstantial complementarity (as in the simultaneous apprehension and matching of two parts of what was once a single object, knucklebone or die)<sup>11</sup> de Man is able to maintain that symbolic restitution of part to whole is conceived of as occurring outside time. But his case is based on a strategy of doubling that comes very close to ontological double-dealing, if not double-crossing. In recognising, albeit temporarily and for purposes of contrast, the “world of symbol” as well as the “world of allegory,” the one representing “ontological bad faith” while the other represents “authentically temporal destiny,” de Man confines poetic praxis within poetic theory, distinguishing in order to discriminate between temporal and atemporal “sets of categories.” In so doing, he has to bracket the temporal in the *epoché* of symbol, for the duration of an intuition of wholeness which reveals the transcendental in action. This makes romantic theory of the symbol appear very vulnerable, and rightly so, but it does not make romantic poetry

similarly so, not even in the lyric poem's dealings with the possibility of a timeless realm of poesis.<sup>12</sup> In the interests of re-writing literary history and re-habilitating allegory, de Man refuses to see that nothing is impervious to time; that all categories and sets of categories can be considered categories of language, and, as such, bear with them the inscription and emplotment of language-as-temporality.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, de Man cannot appeal in his own defence to the fact that such notions of the primacy of language originate in the twentieth century with thinkers such as Benjamin Lee Whorf and Emile Benveniste. He could have found similar formulations of the logogenerative nature of 'reality' among the numerous reflections during the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century on the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign: in James Harris, for example, or in William Cobbett or Horne Tooke, the latter of whom could declare: "Participles and Adjectives, not understood as such, have *caused* a metaphysical jargon and a false morality, which can only be dissipated by etymology."<sup>14</sup> According to Tooke, to ignore the linguisticity of language, to treat it as a serviceable transparency, to deny the grounding of processes and qualities in the conventional arbitrariness of language, is to attempt to efface the history of the linguistic sign, to suppress temporality in the interests of one or another transcendental, anti-democratic orthodoxy. Tooke's recourse to semantic history to demystify the transhistorical would have been understood and applauded by Heidegger, just as certainly as it was understood and deplored by Coleridge and the Germano-Coleridgean defenders of the Johanine Logos.<sup>15</sup> Tooke offers perhaps the most striking romantic anticipation of Max Müller's doctrine of Nominism, wherein "there is no such thing as intellect, understanding, mind, and reason, but all these are only aspects of language."<sup>16</sup> Tooke's example shows how romantic theory must be understood to include works which deliberately subvert the pretensions of language to a morally authorized metaphysics of presence. And what is true of romantic theory is far more true of romantic praxis, which for the most part internalizes and modifies current theory to conform to the realities of language-as-temporality.

At the end of the first part of 'The Rhetoric of Temporality' de Man remarks that it is "ironically revealing" that "the true voice" of early romantic literature "is so rarely recognised for what it really is." This remark helps prepare us for the disclosure of "the implicit and rather enigmatic link" between allegory and the trope of irony which the second part of the essay endeavours at some length to explain and justify. De Man claims that irony is "conspicuously absent from all these poets [Rousseau, Wordsworth, Hölderlin]" (p. 192), before trying to redefine ironic superiority as temporal distanciation, irony as a

permanent parabasis or legitimately re-constituted temporality best accommodated, not by poetry, but by the novel or “novelistic forms and devices.” Allegory and irony are linked not only by “their common demystification of an organic world postulated in a symbolic mode of analogical correspondences or in a mimetic mode of representation in which fiction and reality could coincide. It is especially against the latter mystification that irony is directed: the regression in critical insight marked by the transition from an allegorical to a symbolic theory of poetry would find its historical equivalent in the regression from the eighteenth-century ironic novel, based on what Friedrich Schlegel called ‘Parekbase,’ to nineteenth-century realism” (pp. 203-04). De Man continues in this vein for several pages, restating his position in consistently provocative terms such as these: “The dialectical play between the two modes [allegory and symbol], as well as their common interplay with mystified forms of language (such as symbolic or mimetic representation), which it is not in their power to eradicate, make up what is called literary history” (p. 207). Once again the essay offers us a mixture of the shrewd, the challenging and the unconvincing. Irony and allegory are re-furbished and re-habilitated, and set to “authentic” work by turning symbol and mimesis into stable props of “ontological bad faith.” De Man enhances our awareness of temporal structure as a constant, ubiquitous, ineffaceable mark of language by misrepresenting parts of that language available in the recognisable but by no means smug or predictable generic configurations known as poetry and drama. The selective recognition of reflexivity as a significant feature of literary works, the arbitrary confinement of irony to certain authors, works, clusters of devices, these go some way towards adequately characterising literary history—and, indeed, all discourse—but de Man persists in clinging to privilege and hierarchy in a way that depletes the dialogic, reducing it to an interplay between the authentic and the inauthentic. Literary discourse always *knows* better and can often *do* better than this, indulging valorising tendencies only wryly, and always (of course) in the cautionary contexts of the historically mediated.

## II

Let us turn now to a reconsideration of Carlylean praxis. *Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh* was serialized in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1833 and 1834, and published in book form first in Boston in 1836 and then in London in 1838.<sup>17</sup> This work's full title in the first English edition brings together three languages: one dead (Latin), one native, and one foreign (German). The work an-

nounces itself dialogically and intertextually, via a quasi-scholarly reference to the re-working of the person and/or the profession of the tailor, an allusion to an ultra-reflexive textual precursor (*The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*), and the apparent identification of the *Sartor* in question as a gentleman whose German name is almost accessible (and definitely unappealing) to English ears. Meaning establishes itself as the consequence of complex relations between languages, epochs, genres (Menippean satire, biography, fiction, allegory); a consequence that requires us to pursue a fuller understanding of its implications within the equally complex relations in the work itself between authorities (Carlyle, the Editor, Teufelsdröckh, Heuschrecke), texts (editorial commentary, excerpts from the first volume *On Clothes*, Heuschrecke's covering letter, the "Six considerable Paper-Bags" of autobiographical documents), and modes (grave and mocking, transcendental and "descendental," symbolic and allegorical). However, before we move from title-page to text we encounter a couplet from Goethe's "Book of Apothegms" in the *West-Östlicher Divan*: "Mein Vermächtniss, wie herrlich weit und breit! / Die Zeit ist mein Vermächtniss, mein Acker ist die Zeit."<sup>18</sup> Carlyle misremembers details of the couplet but retains enough of Goethe's delicate balance between the expansive and confining features of time, man's only proper portion and domain. This balance, this tempering of claims to timelessness, is brilliantly maintained throughout the work, including the opening of the second chapter where the Editor hails the epigraph from Goethe as "sublime"—translating the last part of it in a way that seems to permit access to the transhistorical for "a speculative man 'whose seedfield . . . is Time' "—before allowing the first volume *On Clothes* to make its mark only "in chalk in the Editor's calendar." The dissemination of Teufelsdröckh's "new ideas" of a transcendental Clothes Philosophy is marked inescapably and ineffaceably by irony and temporality; "Professor Teufelsdröckh's the Discloser" will not resolve in any ultimate or final sense the tensions between revelation and concealment, the making and unmaking of meaning.

Hard on the heels of its self-conscious title-page, *Sartor Resartus* reworks the conventions of titles (both bibliographic and academic), encouraging us to reflect on the relation between the 'real' title of the work and the paragraph we find on page 5 of the text:

*Die Kleider, ihr Werden und Werken* (Clothes, their Origin and Influence) von Diog. Teufelsdröckh, J. U. D. etc. *Stillschweigen und Cognie. Weissnichtswo*, 1831.

Quotations from Part the First of this work will form the basis for the first ten chapters of *Sartor*, relegating the Editor to a more modest role

than hitherto, so that, among other things, an argument from Edenic origins can be mounted in support of the ancient and continuing importance of clothes, but in a consummately ironic manner that draws attention to the increasingly problematic status of all arguments from biblical origin:

To the First Chapter, which turns on Paradise and Fig-leaves, and leads us into interminable disquisitions of a mythological, metaphorical, cabalistico-sartorial and quite antediluvian cast, we shall content ourselves with giving, an unconcerned approval. Still less have we to do with 'Lilis, Adam's first wife, whom, according to the Talmudists, he had before Eve, and who bore him, in that wedlock, the whole progeny of aerial, aquatic, and terrestrial Devils, '—very needlessly, we think. On this portion of the Work, with its profound glances into the *Adam-Kadmon*, or Primeval element, here strangely brought into relation with the *Nifl* and *Muspel* (Darkness and Light) of the antique North, it may be enough to say, that its correctness of deduction, and depth of Talmudic and Rabbinical lore have filled perhaps not the worst Hebraist in Britain with something like astonishment.

But, quitting this twilight region, Teufelsdröckh hastens from the Tower of Babel, to follow the dispersion of Mankind over the habitable and habitable globe. Walking by the light of Oriental, Pelasgic, Scandinavian, Egyptian, Otaheitean, Ancient and Modern researches of every conceivable kind, he strives to give us in compressed shape (as the Nurnbergers given an *Orbis Pictus*) an *Orbis Vestitus*; or view of the costumes of all mankind, in all countries, in all times. It is here that to the Antiquarian, to the Historian, we can triumphantly say: Fall to! Here is learning: an irregular Treasury, if you will; but inexhaustible as the Hoard of King Nibelung, which twelve wagons in twelve days at the rate of three journeys a day, could not carry off. (p. 29).

This passage follows a Vichian path from myth to history, from syncretic invention to antiquarian inventory, and this progress is marked by changes in the Editor's reactions. He moves from "unconcerned approval" (of the comments on Adam and Eve) to something like irritation or disapproval (of the Adam-Lillith episode), and thence to "something like astonishment" at his subject's powers of deduction and command of abstruse law and commentary. In the second paragraph the Editor begins fairly descriptively with a Teufelsdröckh now more intent on compression than prolixity, before showing himself to be a sympathetic advocate ("we can triumphantly say") of the value of his subject's researches. We are told that Teufelsdröckh moves from twilight into the light, but this is not so much progress from ignorance to understanding as it is the exchange of one set of difficulties for another, abundance of conjecture for an embarrassment of ethnographic riches. The Editor hints that he thinks Teufelsdröckh's pursuit of origins is excessive ("interminable"), perhaps because he thinks that is the reason why we never get more than the first of the

three projected volumes of *Die Kleider*. However, the Editor is no more immune to irony than Teufelsdröckh in this matter. *Sartor Resartus* has from the very outset made much of the importance and the problematic nature of beginnings, so that the Editor's "unconcerned approval" of the First Chapter of *Die Kleider* must strike us as much too cavalier or patronising. Teufelsdröckh, on the other hand, destabilizes the Judaeo-Christian account of man's origins by bringing it "strangely into relation" with Norse mythology, a lateral move across cultural traditions which may create a syncretic accord but takes us no closer to *the* origin. Infinitely regressive temporality offers an impasse as real for comparativists as for narrow adherents to the Genesis account. Moreover, if by some fluke of comparative philology Teufelsdröckh had succeeded in re-writing man's primal scene definitively, we readers are not given access to that revisionary narrative by the Editor. Caught in the intertextuality of living, we often try but can never succeed in re-constituting language as the *locus amoenus* of the transcendental.

Irony, reflexivity, intertextuality all help call into question traditional and consoling versions of the plot of human history, its *Werden and Werken*, but that history reveals itself via a problematic material narrative as well as a self-subverting interpretative summa. *Sartor Resartus* interweaves elements of 'high' hermeneutic discourse with details of the physical production of all discourse (especially written discourse) in a way that effectively thwarts the transcendental desire for the immaterial. That desire, seriously threatened by Teufelsdröckh's failure to keep separate the "Historical-Descriptive" and the "Philosophical-Speculative" as a result of his "adherence to the mere course of Time" (p. 26), and frustrated further by the lack of a full and accurate biography or autobiography capable of accounting for the works in terms of their creator's life, is also opposed by the physical description of his published and unpublished effusions. Teufelsdröckh's "high, silent, meditative Transcendentalism" (p. 10) is least vulnerable when it exists solely "*in petto*" (p. 12). However, when it seeks utterance it does so most comfortably through the combination of voice, commanding presence and "fit audience" (p. 14), or in the form of the "remarkable volume" in which his "Soul lie[s] enclosed" (p. 21). None the less, just as Teufelsdröckh's physical presence during his rare monologues and unexpected toast at the *Grüne Gans* coffee house is either simultaneously marked or immediately followed by absence, and provokes a very mixed reaction among his auditors (pp. 11, 14-15), so Teufelsdröckh's spiritual presence in his published text is consistently problematic and viewed by the Editor with very mixed feelings (p. 21). This latter presence in print is evident only "Occasion-

ally” amid many “sheer sleeping and soporific passages” (p. 24), anticipating Teufelsdröckh’s later distinction between the “Partial Inspiration” of human texts and the “Plenary Inspiration” of the “One Bible . . . [w]hereof all other Bibles are but leaves,—say, in Picture-Writing to assist the weaker faculty” (p. 155), a reinforcement of the distinction between a unique original and countless epigones by means of a reversal of the history of writing, so that the accomplished script of the “God-Hand” pre-dates the primitive glyphs of generations of the faithful. (There is a semantic analogue to the glyphic on page 28: “Nay, what is your Montesquieu himself but a clever infant spelling Letters from a hieroglyphical prophetic Book, the lexicon of which lies in Eternity, in Heaven?”) Interestingly enough, Teufelsdröckh has to rewrite history in order to be in a position to exalt divine *écriture*: he is able to claim that his experience of divinity is an event concerning which “no doubt is possible,” but only because this visionary experience pretends to be ahistorical and therefore not confined by contemporary understanding of the historical development of writing.<sup>19</sup>

The reader of *Sartor* may share Teufelsdröckh’s high estimate of silence, of an oral presentation more oracular than interactive, and of inspired writing. However, the reader *qua* reader cannot for long ignore the intersubjective nature of all language and the fact that language and its users are always situated in a particular time and place. The transcendent self is a social construction as much as language is, and both have histories more or less intelligible. The history of a printed text may be expressed in particular physical features which may in turn suggest corresponding intellectual qualities, as in the description, quoted from the *Weissnichtwo’sche Anzeiger*, of the volume *On Clothes* as “a Volume of that extensive, close-printed, close-meditated sort, which, be it spoken with pride, is seen only in Germany, perhaps only in Weissnichtwo” (p. 5). Or, the physical appearance of the printed page may occasion more imaginative connections: “On the whole, Professor Teufelsdröckh is not a cultivated writer. Of his sentences perhaps not more than nine-tenths stand straight on their legs; the remainder are in quite angular attitudes, buttressed-up by props (of parentheses and dashes), and ever with this or the other tagrag hanging from them: a few even sprawling out helplessly on all sides, quite broken-backed and dismembered” (p. 24). These “quite angular attitudes” are even more in evidence in Teufelsdröckh’s manuscripts, written not in clear and upright uncial but in a “scarce legible *cursiv-schrift*” very much in keeping with the endlessly eager pursuit of truth recorded on the “miscellaneous masses of sheets, and oftener shreds and snips” sealed in the “six considerable Paper-Bags” by Heuschrecke for transmission to the Editor (p. 61). But these

correspondences between medium and message are potentially misleading, especially when the message is a transcendental one which may encourage the reader to view the medium as of meagre and passing interest, a symptom of something altogether more important. And it is as a corrective to such transcendental reading that *Sartor Resartus* includes generous tributes to the system of textual production: "He who first shortened the labour of Copyists by device of *Movable Types* was disbanding hired Armies, and cashiering most Kings and Senates, and creating a whole new Democratic world: he had invented the Art of Printing" (p. 31). Teufelsdröckh's words support the Editor's earlier sense of the harmfulness of premature reification and closure, of that kind of selective curiosity whereby people content themselves with uncomprehending assumptions about an unusual person like Teufelsdröckh or about "the fabrication of their daily *Allgemeine Zeitung*, or the domestic habits of the Sun" (p. 13). To supplement those reductions whereby we simplify and discipline our interest in the world around us, we may, in the case of an eccentric genius or the source in the heavens of warmth and light, have recourse to mysticism; but, in the case of the daily newspaper, any fuller accounting for its "fabrication" will be inescapably historical.

*Sartor Resartus* continues to be renowned not for its insistence on the obstacles to transcendence and the transhistorical but rather for its depiction of the movement from "The Everlasting No" through the "Centre of Indifference" to "The Everlasting Yea" (in Book Two), and for the paean to "Symbols" (in Book Three) which prepares us for the doctrine of "Natural Supernaturalism."<sup>20</sup> The tendency to reduce the work to some spiritual essence, to savour its symbolism as a form of desire which transfigures human beings and their world, lends support to de Man's claims about romantic reading and writing as acts of "ontological bad faith." However, even in the most sustained tribute to symbol in *Sartor Resartus* there is not the subordination of allegory and suppression of temporality that de Man might see there, and that has been detected and praised by many of Carlyle's readers over the years.

The chapter entitled "Symbols" is a self-conscious "insertion" designed to "elucidate the drift of the foregoing obscure utterances" (p. 173). This chapter defines itself first by a referential regress from the obscurities of the preceding "singular chapter on Church-Clothes" back through a series of equally obscure passages to the title-page and its antecedents. "Symbols" will be a gloss on a "drift" and nothing more, an elucidation which, when it admits to its own linguisticity, admits also to its inadequacy:

To *state* Teufelsdröckh's whole doctrine, indeed, were beyond our compass: nowhere is he more mysterious, impalpable, than in this of 'Fantasy being the organ of the Godlike'; and how 'Man thereby, though based, to all seeming, on the small Visible, does nevertheless extend down into the infinite deeps of the Invisible, of which Invisible, indeed, his Life is properly the bodying forth.' Let us, omitting these high transcendental aspects of the matter, study to glean (whether from the Paper-Bags or the Printed Volume) what little seems logical and practical, and cunningly arrange it into such a degree of coherence as it will assume. (pp. 173-4, emphasis mine)

Language, which is all the Editor has to supplement what he has of Teufelsdröckh, aligns itself with temporal linearity, limitation, and absence. Fantasy, in contrast, ranges along the coordinates of spiritual space, authenticating its existence as the invisible made visible in imaginative incarnations of the "high transcendental." The Editor mentions the latter "aspects of the matter" only to "omit" them (although they predominate in Teufelsdröckh's discourse) in favour of "what little seems logical and practical." This inclusion/exclusion encourages us to think of the "high transcendental" as absent from the surface of the ensuing discourse yet furnishing its Ur-text, inter-text, and sub-text. When omission draws attention to itself in this fashion we are more disposed to *feel* the lack, that is, to experience transcendental desire such as Teufelsdröckh prescribes as the *sine qua non* for personal reformation. However, Teufelsdröckh's appeal to the visual and the visionary is countered by the Editor's comments and connecting statements, with their explicit insistence on the provisional and processive ("to study to glean"). Teufelsdröckh's language, bristling as it does with capitalized terms, allegorizes its own desire to reify and permanently place, but the quotation marks which indicate its provenance do not have the power to remove it from the intertextual continuum of *Sartor Resartus*. The "high transcendental" contributes instead to its own displacement: in the sequences of discourse a mysterious spiritual order is reconstituted as the editorial "arrangement" of intractable materials.

The arrangement that makes up the remainder of the "Symbols" chapter begins with a passionately sustained "cry" on the theme of "the benignant efficacities of Concealment." The cryptic quality of Teufelsdröckh's earlier statements is justified as part of a more general defence of hiddenness. "SILENCE and SECRECY" are commended as the necessary conditions of gestation leading to great actions and events, before Teufelsdröckh is moved to consider two memorable pronouncements relevant to his theme:

Speech is too often not, as the Frenchman defined it, the art of concealing Thought; but of quite stifling and suspending Thought, so that there

is none to conceal. Speech too is great, but not the greatest. As the Swiss Inscription says: *Sprechen ist silbern, Schweigen ist golden* (Speech is silvern, Silence is golden); or, as I might rather express it: Speech is of Time, Silence is of Eternity. (p. 174)

The paraphrase of and dissent from Talleyrand's witty tribute to disingenuousness—itself the result of intertextual play on Molière's claim, "La parole a été donné a l'homme pour expliquer ses pensées"—is followed by a confirmation of the ranking of speech and silence with which the paragraph began. Then an authoritative "Swiss Inscription" is cited verbatim (and translated literally). However, even this authority is subject to change, as Teufelsdröckh replaces the traditional assessment of two precious metals with a distinction that is resoundingly temporal. The amusing irony of a publisher called "Stillschweigen" has been amplified into a full-blown paradox at the heart of epistemology and semiosis, but the rhetoric of atemporality, which has tried consistently to favour speech over writing and to limit irony to paradox because of that trope's strong associations with the articulation of religious mystery, has recourse to writing about time in order to clinch its argument, thereby reminding us that not all irony is as apparently constructive as hypostasising paradox, and that when he communicates Teufelsdröckh is inevitably incapable of "quite stifling and suspending" language-as-temporality. In his terms, he must speak about speechlessness; in our terms, perhaps in real terms, he utters a paradox in a medium that refuses to efface its own history or to stabilize all irony. Teufelsdröckh does what he can to limit the historicizing of the immutable: the Swiss wisdom is conveyed as the gnomic utterance of a whole nation, culturally authored and authorized, unlike the cynicism of a single survivor of French revolutionary politics; and the term "Inscription" suggests lapidary writing rather than "the Printing-Press with its Newspapers" (p. 175), in other words, the very form of *écriture* where people most markedly challenge the tyranny of time. Yet temporality will not be denied, and, while Teufelsdröckh turns his attention to non-verbal symbols, we are left with serious reservations about his treatment of the symbolic systems of written and spoken language, and also, perhaps, with the possibility familiar to Socrates (Plato, *Sophist* 262d) and to students of the philosophy of language ever since, namely, that thought is silent speech grounded in the categories of language.

Once Teufelsdröckh has satisfied himself that language is in its important but subordinate place, he pays further tribute to "the wondrous agency of *Symbols*" (p. 175). Playing off the traditional theological distinction between enigma and kerygma, he brings speech and silence into a collaborative, "expressive" union:

Thus in many a painted Device, or simple Seal-emblem, the commonest Truth stands out to us proclaimed with quite new emphasis.

'For it is here that Fantasy with her mystic wonderland plays into the small prose domain of Sense, and becomes incorporated therewith. In the Symbol proper, what we can call a Symbol, there is ever, more or less distinctly and directly, some embodiment and revelation of the Infinite; the Infinite is made to blend itself with the Finite, to stand visible, and as it were, attainable there. By Symbols, accordingly, is man guided and commanded, made happy, made wretched.' (p. 175).

Consistent with the emphasis here on the visible and the static is the impression that "Truth" may exist prior to and independently of any particular expression of it. The "wondrous agency" of symbol is not matched by a conception of "Truth" as an activity, an endless series of acts of signification and interpretation, but rather as a stable cluster of precepts or unchanging essence conveyed with renewed force by authoritative visual allegories. This visual medium of expression is kept free from the linguistic contamination or dilution manifest in mottoes. The device of emblem, Quarles's "silent parable," hence lends credence to the notion of a special bond between silence and immutable truth, and to the idea of allegory as bearing the impress of enduring values. The basis of Teufelsdröckh's attraction to the emblematic is clear enough, but his is for all that an implausible semiosis. Visual signs may be diminutive *signa* ("Seal" is derived from the Latin plural for little signs, *sigilia*) but they do have a history worthy of the name, as iconographers were already making clear during the 1830s,<sup>21</sup> and they do also generate interpretations with just as much regularity as do linguistic texts.<sup>22</sup> Teufelsdröckh's move to the visual from the verbal symbol is marked by an attempt to undervalue the connection between verbal and visual signs, making much of the material properties of the latter after making little of the material history of the former. The visual symbol emerges as the silent instrument of transcendental truth, visual allegory as clarity and closure sealed against the distortions and false concealments of language.

So far so good for Teufelsdröckh. However, in the transition from one paragraph to the next he re-formulates his position in terms that seem initially spatial, visual, allegorical, but which gradually permit the incursion of time/language. In attempting to describe the special commerce between the visionary and the non-visionary, Teufelsdröckh creates an uneasy opposition between "Fantasy" and "Sense" as two separate territories coming into contact through the sole, sporadic initiative of the former. The awkwardness of image and idiom ("plays into") appears at odds with the claim to "incorporation," while the belittling of sensation through its association with language ("the small prose domain of Sense") reminds us that there is more bias than

cogency to Teufelsdröckh's selective praise of the boundless realm of "mystic" Fantasy. He uses the term "mystic" (rather than "poetic") because of its associations with hiddenness and silent meditation, and its compatibility with that process of making visible traditionally denoted by *phantasia*. To have contrasted the *poetry* of wonderland to the *prose* of the world would have been problematic on two grounds: first, such a contrast would at the very least have insinuated that language has a constitutive role in both realms; and second, it would have laid claim to a clear distinction between poetry and prose in a work which continuously and effectively challenges that very distinction. Teufelsdröckh seems aware of the vulnerability of his image of incorporation, and his rhetoric becomes more defensive and provisional as he comes up against the impasse which the Editor confronted at the beginning of the chapter: how can you convey an adequate sense of the "high transcendental aspects" of symbol without demystifying them? The "Symbol proper" is now authenticated by a linguistic community ("what we can call a Symbol"), but with that prescriptiveness there comes also a new degree of permissiveness ("more or less . . . some embodiment and revelation"). This greater flexibility, true to the realities and history of linguistic use and social convention, carries over into the temporal re-statement of visual disclosure as the "blending" of the Infinite with the Finite. When Teufelsdröckh is plain he is also less dogmatic, more self-conscious in his qualification of access to the Infinite by "as it were." His metaphysics of presence subverts itself in the very (linguistic) art of defining its "proper" self and substance, his "as it were" replicating the nervous or meticulous "gleichsam" at the heart of the transcendental affirmations of Schelling and other German idealists.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the Editor's earlier assurances to the contrary, we are faced once more with the mysteries of the "high transcendental." The Editor tries once again to counteract this persistent tendency in Teufelsdröckh by quoting a passage "in quite antipodal contrast with these high-soaring delineations, which [he has] here cut short on the verge of the inane" (p. 175). This editorial comment draws on the "Lockian heritage" in order to indicate the limits to tolerance and intellectual ability, somewhat timorously adapting Locke's famous description of "The capacious mind of man . . . that . . . makes excursions into the incomprehensible inane."<sup>24</sup> The promised respite from the transcendental comes in the form of "actually existing Motive Millwrights" and a series of brief but severe strictures on Utilitarianism and the felicific calculus. The "Motive-grinder" is ridiculed and then left "to Time, and the medicating virtue of Nature" (p. 176), while Teufelsdröckh returns to Fantasy, now defined as the residue of the redeemable and the

redemptive in even "the basest Sensualist": "Ever in the dullest existence there is a sheen either of Inspiration or of Madness . . . that gleams-in from the circumambient Eternity, and colours with its own hues our little islet of Time." In contrast to Shelleyan "Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass, / Stain[ing] the white radiance of Eternity," Teufelsdröckh offers us a version of eternity as the source of colour in the world of sense. Teufelsdröckh is forced to reverse the perspective and movement of Shelley's Platonism because of his determination to distinguish between transparent Understanding and chromatic Fantasy, respectively the "window" and the "eye" of man. For Teufelsdröckh, the colourfulness of symbols is an index of their power to move men to heroism or to faith, on the basis of "intrinsic" or "extrinsic value." He argues that "all national or other sectarian Costumes and Customs" acquire value according to historically mediated convention, whereas "religious Symbols," as expressed in the highest prophetic art, admit divinity to the presence of the audience.

However, this latter distinction is no sooner made than it is eroded, first by special pleading on behalf of Christianity, and then by the claim that "on the whole, as Time adds much to the sacredness of Symbols, so likewise in his progress he at length defaces, or even desecrates them; and Symbols, like all terrestrial Garments, wax old" (p. 179). The "divinest Symbol" is held to be "Jesus of Nazareth, and his Life, and his Biography, and what followed therefrom." We return here to divinity captured in privileged texts "whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into, and anew made manifest." Teufelsdröckh's special case for Christianity marks his departure from the visual and the eternal for the verbal and the temporal: the Biography of Jesus is located in and partly constitutive of history (already defined by Carlyle as "the essence of innumerable Biographies");<sup>25</sup> and biblical hermeneutics is busily historicizing the Biography, making manifestly new and challenging interpretations of the "significance" of the Gospels. Symbol as text *will* privilege language-as temporality, claims to plenary inspiration notwithstanding. In his eagerness to establish the need for new symbols, Teufelsdröckh argues for the eventual demystification and obsolescence of all symbols, and for the fact that all texts, whether the Bible or "Homer's Epos" or *Die Kleider*, can be appropriated and "reinterpreted" only in ways that assent to the historicity of both text and interpreter. Mired in textuality once again, Teufelsdröckh can do little more than look to the future for a new idiom at once organicist and promethean, and arrogate to himself in the present the role of "Legislator" of his culture's symbols (perhaps adapting Shelley once again). A chapter that began so provisionally ends on a similar note, the textuality of symbol occasioning the con-

vergence of several of the activities denoted by *texere*: "Alas, move whithersoever you may, are not the rags and tatters of superannuated worn-out Symbols (in this Ragfair of a World) dropping off everywhere, to hoodwink, to halter, to tether you; nay, if you shake them not aside, threatening to accumulate, and perhaps produce suffocation?" (p. 180)

### III

And so *Sartor* proceeds to its beautifully calculated, problematic close, an ending that I have not time to discuss in detail on this occasion. After reading de Man's essay, we are undoubtedly in a better position to appreciate the various forms of "mystified language" that convey Teufelsdröckh's will-to-transcendence; to detect the elements of "ontological bad faith" in the chapter on "Symbols" and the later one on "Organic Filaments"; and to acknowledge the importance of irony to the thwarting of transcendence. However, *Sartor*, in all its generic instability, leaves us also with a salutary sense of the problematic nature of all genres, not only the novel, and of the undecidable contest between symbol and allegory which helps situate all discourse in and as temporality. It is not allegory alone, but allegory as it is apprehended in the rhetorical *agon* of discourse, that "unveil[s] an authentic temporal destiny." The authenticity in question is not, as I understand it, de Man's existential version (for which one can find an especially effective antidote in Adorno),<sup>26</sup> but rather an authenticity whose guarantor is language. To say so is not to sanction a return to formalism or to naive logocentrism, or to the conservative deconstruction that has recently prevailed at Yale, but to recognize the power of language as a model of intelligibility, if not as "the proper metaphor for the life process,"<sup>27</sup> and the challenge of language as the ground of possible intersubjectivity and the "morality immanent within discourse,"<sup>28</sup> and, as such, perhaps our only hope.

### NOTES

1. *After the New Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 292.
2. See, e.g., J. Hillis Miller, "The Two Allegories," *Allegory, Myth and Symbol*, ed. Morton W. Bloomfield (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1981), p. 355 ff.; Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1982), p. 250 ff.; Jerome C. Christensen, "The Symbol's Errant Allegory: Coleridge and His Critics," *ELH* 45 (1978), 644.
3. "'A Waking Dream': The Symbolic Alternative to Allegory," *Allegory, Myth and Symbol*, pp. 4, 14.
4. *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1979), pp. 205, 235, 249.
5. "The Rhetoric of Temporality," *Interpretation: Theory and Practice*, ed. Charles S. Singleton (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), pp. 173-209. All further references will be to this version of the essay and will be identified parenthetically in the text.

6. Cf., e.g., Etienne Condillac, "De l'Art de Penser," *Oeuvres Complètes*, 21 volumes (Paris: Guillaume, 1821-22), V, 4ff., and David Hartley, *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty and His Expectations* (London: S. Richardson, 1749), propositions 61-63. For a trenchant assessment of Condillac's "Lockian heritage," see Jacques Derrida, *The Archaeology of the Frivolous: Reading Condillac*, trans. John P. Leavey (Pittsburgh: Duquesne U.P., 1980).
7. Condillac relies generally on "nécessité" and "habitude," while Hartley uses "automatic" and the "Mechanism of the Human Mind."
8. *The Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, ed. Leslie Marchand, 12 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P.), II, 77.
9. The novel begins with the problematics of reference and then proceeds to explore such intriguing issues as the relation between writing and absence, signification, the abyss, epiphany and naming. See, e.g., *Oeuvres Complètes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond (Paris, Gallimard, 1961), II, 15, 45, 61, 77, 477.
10. Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983), p. 104.
11. See Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), *symbolon*.
12. I deal with this matter at some length in "Culler and Byron on Apostrophe and Lyric Time," forthcoming in *Studies in Romanticism*.
13. Cf. Emile Benveniste, "Categories and Categories of Language" in *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables: U. of Miami Press, 1971).
14. *EPEA PTEREONTA, or the Diversions of Purley*: new edn., rev. Richard Taylor (London: Tegg, 1840), p. 313.
15. See, e.g., *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E.L. Griggs, vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 764; James Gilchrist, *Philosophic Etymology of Rational Grammar* (London: Rowland Hunter, 1816), p. 10; *Guesses at Truth*, by two brothers [Julius Charles and Augustus Hare], new edn. (London: Macmillan, 1878), p. 154.
16. F. Max Müller, *The Science of Thought* (London: Longmans, 1887), p. x.
17. See Isaac Watson Dyer, *A Bibliography of Thomas Carlyle's Writings and Ana* (Portland, Maine: Southworth Press, 1928), p. 221 ff. All references to *Sartor* in this essay will follow the text in the first volume of the Centenary Edition of *The Works of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. H.D. Traill, 30 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1896-99).
18. For Carlyle's use of variants on this couplet, see *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, ed. Charles Richard Sanders and Kenneth J. Fielding, vol. 5 (Durham, N.C.: Duke U.P., 1976), p. 200, n. 4.
19. Glyphic development had been delineated especially effectively by William Warburton in *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated*, 2nd edn. corrected and enlarged (London: Fletcher Gyles, 1738), II, 66 ff. Warburton's work occasioned conservative and radical responses in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, just as it now helps provoke theorists as different as Walter J. Ong and Jacques Derrida.
20. Cf., e.g., *Victorian Prose and Poetry*, ed. Lionel Trilling and Harold Bloom, *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature*, II (London: Oxford U.P., 1973), p. 799 ff.; and Robert L. Peters ed., *Victorians on Literature and Art* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1961), p. 11.
21. See, e.g., Lionello Venturi, *History of Art Criticism*, trans. Charles Marriott (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1936), chapters 7 to 10.
22. However, the *how* and the *what* of such interpretation remain subjects of vigorous disagreement between art historians and literary critics. See, e.g., the essays by E.H. Gombrich and Murray Krieger which open *Critical Inquiry* 11 (1984), 181 ff.
23. I treat the recourse to "gleichsam" in some detail in two essays forthcoming in *Analecta Husserliana*: "Byron, Ricoeur, and the Hermeneutics of Action," and "This hard, gemlike flame": Walter Pater and the Aesthetic Accommodation of Fire."
24. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* (London: Thomas Bassett, 1690), ii.vii. 10.
25. "On History" (1830), *Works*, XXVII, 86.
26. Theodore Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern U.P., 1973).
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