New Directions in Critical Theory

AMY ALLEN, GENERAL EDITOR

New Directions in Critical Theory presents outstanding classic and contemporary texts in the tradition of critical social theory, broadly construed. The series aims to renew and advance the program of critical social theory, with a particular focus on theorizing contemporary struggles around gender, race, sexuality, class, and globalization and their complex interconnections.

Narrating Evil: A Postmetaphysical Theory of Reflective Judgment,
María Pía Lara

The Politics of Our Selves: Power, Autonomy, and Gender in Contemporary Critical Theory,
Amy Allen

Democracy and the Political Unconscious,
Noëlle McAfee

The Force of the Example: Explorations in the Paradigm of Judgment,
Alessandro Ferrara

Horrorism: Naming Contemporary Violence,
Adriana Cavarero

Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World,
Nancy Fraser

Pathologies of Reason: On the Legacy of Critical Theory,
Axel Honneth

States Without Nations: Citizenship for Mortals,
Jacqueline Stevens

The Racial Discourses of Life Philosophy: Négritude, Vitalism, and Modernity,
Donna V. Jones

Democracy in What State?
Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, Daniel Bensaïd, Wendy Brown, Jean-Luc Nancy, Jacques Rancière, Kristin Ross, Slavoj Žižek

Politics of Culture and the Spirit of Critique: Dialogues,
Edited by Gabriel Rockhill and Alfredo Gomez-Muller

LITERATURE, CRITICAL THEORY, AND POLITICS

MUTE SPEECH

JACQUES RANCIÈRE

TRANSLATED BY JAMES SWENSON
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY GABRIEL ROCKHILL

Columbia University Press New York

CHAPTER 3

THE BOOK OF LIFE AND THE EXPRESSION OF SOCIETY

A GOOD STARTING point is the primacy of *elocutio*, which will give rise to the theory of the absolute character of style and to the notions currently employed to indicate the specificity of modern literary language, namely the "intransitive" or "self-referential" character of language. Partisans of literary exceptionality and denouncers of its utopianism both tend to refer to German Romanticism and in particular to a formula of Novalis's: "It is amazing, the absurd error that people make of imagining they are speaking for the sake of things; no one knows the essential thing about language, that it is concerned only with itself."[1] But it is important to see that this "self-referentiality" of language is in no way a formalism. If language has no reason to be concerned with anything but itself, it is not because it is a self-sufficient game but because it already contains within itself an experience of the world and a text of knowledge, because it speaks this experience itself, before us. "It is the same with language as it is with mathematical formulae—they constitute a world in itself—their play is self-sufficient, they express nothing but their own marvelous nature, and this is the very reason why they are so expressive, why they are the mirror to the strange play of relationships among things."[2] The abstraction of mathematical signs leaves representative resemblance behind. But

in doing so it takes on the character of a language-mirror that expresses in its internal play the intimate play of relations between things. Language does not reflect things; it expresses their relations. But this expression is itself conceived as another resemblance. If the function of language is not to represent ideas, situations, objects, or characters according to the norms of resemblance, it is because it already presents, on its very body, the physiognomy of what it says. It does not resemble things as a copy because it bears their resemblance as a memory. It is not an instrument of communication because it is already the mirror of a community. Language is made of materialities that are materializations of its own spirit, the spirit that must become a world. And this future is itself attested by the way in which any physical reality is capable of being doubled, of displaying its nature, history, or destiny on its body.

Novalis's formula thus cannot be interpreted as an affirmation of the intransitivity of language in opposition to communicative transitivity. This opposition itself is, in fact, an ideological artifact. All communication, in fact, uses signs deriving from a variety of modes of signification: signs that say nothing, signs that efface themselves before their message, signs that have the value of gestures or of icons. Poetic "communication" in general is founded upon the systematic exploitation of differences between these regimes. The passage from a poetics of representation to a poetics of expression overturns the hierarchy of relations among them. In opposition to language considered as an instrument of demonstration and exemplification, addressed to a qualified auditor, it promotes a conception of language as a living body of symbols, that is, expressions that both show and hide what they say on their body, expressions that do not so much show a particular determinate thing as the nature and history of language as a world- or community-creating power. Language is not sent back to its own solitude, for it has no solitude. There are two privileged axes for thinking about language: the horizontal axis of the message transmitted to a determinate auditor to whom an object is signified, and the vertical axis where language speaks above all by manifesting its own provenance and bringing forth the powers sedimented in its own depths. There is no contradiction between the "monological" formula of Novalis, the mystical representative of pure poetry, and the reasonable considerations of the economist Sismondi, who assigns the origin of poetry to the moment in a nation's life at which "no one writes for the sake of writing; no one speaks merely for the sake of speaking."[3] These apparently contradictory theses are joined together not only by Novalis's link with the Schlegel brothers and August Schlegel's link with the circle of Mme de Staël, to which Sismondi belongs. They belong to a single idea of the correspondence between language and what it says. Language is only self-sufficient because the laws of a world are reflected in it.

This world can itself take on a number of figures, variously mystical or rational in appearance. For Novalis, inspired by Swedenborg, it is the "sensuous inner world" that is the truth of the other world, that spiritual truth that the process of *Bildung* should one day make identical with empirical reality. But Balzac, another Swedenborgian, will draw an equivalence between this sensuous inner world and the anatomy of society. Henceforth, language speaks in the first place of its own provenance. But this provenance can be just as well ascribed to the laws of history and society as to those of the spiritual world. The essence of poetry is identical with the essence of language insofar as the latter is itself identical with the internal law of societies. Literature is "social"; it is the expression of a society even as it is only concerned with itself, that is, with the way in which words contain a world. It is "autonomous" insofar as it has no rules proper to it, as it is the space without contours of its own in which the manifestations of poeticity can be displayed. It is in this sense that Jouffroy will be able to say that literature "is not properly speaking an art but the translation of the arts."[4] Formerly, the "poetic" translation of the arts had been the equivalence of different modes of the same act of representation. Henceforth, it is something entirely different: the translation of "languages." Each art is a specific language, a particular manner of combining the expressive values of sound, sign, and form. But a particular poetics is also a specific version of the principle of translation between languages. The various "schools" into which the romantic century is commonly divided—"Romanticism," "realism," and "symbolism"—are, in fact, all determined by the same principle. They differ amongst themselves only in terms of the point from which they effectuate this translation. As poeticized by Zola, the cascade of fabrics in Octave Mouret's shop window is indeed the poem of a poem, the poem of the double, "sensible-supersensible" being that Marx defines as the commodity. *The Ladies' Paradise* is much more devoted to the poetry of this supersensible being than it is to the tribulations of the pale Denise. Interminable "realist" or "naturalist" descriptions are not derived from a principle of reportage or the informative use of language, nor from a strategically calculated "reality effect," but rather from the poetics of the doubling of each thing in language.[5] *The Ladies' Paradise* presents us with a "sensuous inner world" that is neither more nor less mystical than Baudelaire's "double room," Mallarmé's "castle of purity," or Hugo's "shadowy voice." The poetic doubling of each thing can be interpreted in either a mystical or a positivist manner. In the first case, what it shows us is the spirit world, in the second the character of a civilization or the domination of a class. But mysticism and positivism can go together perfectly well, like Cuvier and Swedenborg in the preface to the *Human Comedy*. Long before positivist scholarship, writers strongly marked by symbolist mysticism

such as Hugo and Balzac were concerned to trace the way in which man "has a tendency to express his culture [*mœurs*], his thoughts, and his life in everything that he appropriates to his use" and to expose the principles of the "the history which so many historians have neglected: that of Manners."[6] Before them, it was historians of the origins of modern European civilizations such as Barante and Guizot who propagated the new understanding of literature by studying the relationship between its development and institutions and manners.

"Literature is an expression of society": this formula, which spreads through France in the opening years of the nineteenth century, is generally attributed to Bonald. We can see clearly what connects it with the obsessive preoccupations of counter-revolutionary thought that, mediated by Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte, will lead to Durkheimian scientific sociology: the critique of the formalism of theories of the social contract and the rights of man; the demand for an organic society in which laws, customs, and opinions reflect one another and express a single principle of organic cohesion. Against "*philosophie*" and the apriorism of natural law and the social contract, literature presents itself as the language of societies rooted in their histories and grasped in their profound organic life. As Chateaubriand notes, it was the émigrés of the Revolution who first spoke this language.[7] This does not, however, make it the expression of the counter-revolution; more profoundly, it is the language of the civilization whose secret progress is indifferent to the order of governments that attempt either to advance it or resist it. It is entirely natural that it should have been formulated first by those whom the revolutionary disturbances put on the outside of the movement of the age and the language of opinion, but also by those who sought to define a political order that would found liberty in the movement of societies themselves have it advance with the rhythm of changing civilization. Indeed, the new idea of literature was imposed not so much by the counter-revolutionaries as by the supporters of the third way, in-between Jacobin revolution and aristocratic counter-revolution: the partisans of reasonable liberty whose exemplary representative was Necker's daughter, Germaine de Staël. They were no more concerned than Vico had been with the theoretical foundation of a new poetics. In the Preface to the second edition of *The Influence of Literature upon Society*, Staël makes clear that the guardians of the temple of belles lettres can rest easy:

> My work has been misunderstood if it is believed that my purpose was to establish a poetics. I said on the very first page that Voltaire, Marmontel, and La Harpe leave nothing to be desired in this respect. What I wanted to show was the relation that exists between the literature and the social institutions of each century and each country [. . .]; I also wanted to prove

that reason and philosophy have always gained renewed force despite the innumerable misfortunes of the human race. Next to these results, my taste in poetry is inconsequential [. . .] and anyone who has different opinions than I do concerning the pleasures of the imagination could still completely agree with me about the comparisons I have drawn between the political situation of peoples and their literature.[8]

There is a certain irony in this modesty. It was not for nothing that Balzac made his spiritual brother, the mystic Louis Lambert, Mme de Staël's godson. It is true that on many points her tastes do agree with those of La Harpe, and she certainly knows his work better than she does that of Vico. Her first concern, moreover, is not aesthetic but political. Her goals are to find the "spirit" of literature in the same way that Montesquieu analyzed the spirit of the laws, to refute those who see the Revolution as a catastrophe brought on by the writers of the Enlightenment, and to show, through the testimony of literature, the contrary but necessary historical evolution that determined the Revolution as well as the role of "*littérateurs*" in a well-constituted republic. Still, under cover of talking about something other than poetics and of dealing with the extrinsic relation between works, institutions, and manners rather than with the value or proper creation of works, she ruins what was the very heart of the representative system, namely its normative character. For representative poetics, it was impossible to dissociate the reasons for the fabrication of the poem from judgments concerning its value. Poetical science stated what poems ought be in order to please those whose vocation was to judge them. The place defined by this relation between knowledge of fabrication and the norm of taste will henceforth be occupied by the analogy between spirit, language, and society. There is now no reason to worry about what the poem ought to be in order to satisfy its authorized judges. The poem is what it ought to be as the language of the spirit of a time, a people, and a civilization. Mme de Staël's lack of concern with its symbolic foundations validates a neutralized or "white" version of expressive poetics, one which reduces the key oppositions at stake to their common denominator: the poetics of the unconscious genius of peoples and that of the creative artist, the intransitivity of literature and its function as a mirror, the expression of a hidden spiritual world and that of the social relations of production. She thus gives a foundation to the simultaneous possibility of what seem to be contrary procedures: that of the mystics and iconoclasts of the Romantic revolution and that of reasonable minds such as Guizot, Barante, and Villemain, for whom the study of literature as an "expression of society" goes hand-in-hand with the quest for a new political order that will ratify the historical results of the

revolution and stabilize post-revolutionary society, an order in which the forms of a government will be "the expression of the manners, the belief, the confidence of a people," in which laws communicate with manners through "a sort of stamp for the current habits, opinions, and affections that may be received on trust throughout the country"[9]; an order of government capable, like Shakespearean theater, of simultaneously satisfying "the wants of the masses and the requirements of the most exalted minds,"[10] in which laws draw their force from manners and harmonize with them through the mediation of a regime of opinion. Barante became a peer of France during the Restoration; Guizot and Villemain were ministers of the "juste milieu" under Louis-Philippe. Together they welcomed the iconoclast Hugo to the Académie Française. Literary radicality and the banalization of the term literature go together, like the absolutization of art and the development of the historical, political, and sociological sciences.

The principle of this solidarity is simple. There are only two kinds of poetics: a representative poetics that determines the genre and generic perfection of poems on the basis of their invention of a fable; and an expressive poetics that determines them as direct expressions of the poetic power. A normative poetics says how poems should be made; a historical poetics says how they are made, that is, in the end, how they express the state of things, language, and manners that gave them birth. This fundamental division puts on the same side the adepts of pure literature and the historians and sociologists who see it as the expression of a society, those who dream of a spirit world along with the geologists of social mentalities. It subsumes the practice of pure artists and social critics under a single spiritual principle whose ineradicable vitality consists in its remarkable capacity to transform itself into a principle of positive science and materialist philosophy. This principle can be summarized in two fundamental rules: first, to find beneath words the vital force that is the cause of their utterance; second, to find in the visible the sign of the invisible.

On turning over the large stiff pages of a folio volume, or the yellow leaves of a manuscript, in short, a poem, a code of laws, a profession of faith, what is your first comment? You say to yourself that the work before you is not of its own creation. It is simply a mold like a fossil, an imprint similar to one of those forms embedded in a stone by an animal that once lived and perished. Beneath the shell was an animal and behind the document there was a man [. . .]. On observing the visible man with your own eyes what do you try to find in him? The invisible man. These words which your ears catch, those gestures, those airs of the head, his attire and sensible operations of all kinds, are, for you, merely so many expressions; these express

something, a soul. An inward man is hidden beneath the outward man, and the latter simply manifests the former.

The author who thus places himself beneath the mystical sign of Saint-Martin's "invisible man," of the spirit of the letter and the sensuous inner world, is none other than the great iconoclast who established the hateful "reduction" of literary works to the conditions of race, milieu and moment: Hyppolite Taine.[11] No doubt the young Stéphane Mallarmé thought that Taine's theory, which makes literature the expression of a specific race and milieu, is "humiliating for the artist," but even as he reproaches Taine for not understanding "the beauty of verse," he credits him with feeling "the soul of poetry marvelously."[12] Similarly, Proust may claim, against Sainte-Beuve, that the power of the work is autonomous with respect to the conditions of its birth, as he will reject the patriotic and popular art that many of his contemporaries called for. But this is only because they did not go far enough along the path toward understanding the relation between the work and the necessity it expresses. The deciphering of the Proustian inner book is inseparable from the observation of the laws and the transformations of society, and the affirmation that the work is the translation of the unique world seen by each artist is strictly complemented by the thesis that each of these unique visions "reflects in its own way the most general laws of the species and an moment of evolution," so that a hillside by Marguerite Audoux and a prairie by Tolstoy can be relined into a single frame.[13]

These examples should suffice to show how frivolous it is to oppose art for art's sake and the writer's ivory tower to the hard laws of social reality, or the creative power of works to the cultural and sociological relativization of literature and art. Literature and civilization are terms that imposed themselves simultaneously. Literature considered as the free creation of individual genius and literature considered as testimony to the spirit or manners of a society derive from the same revolution that, by making poetry a mode of language, replaced the principle of representation with that of expression. Those who invented "literature" in France (Sismondi, Barante, Villemain, Guizot, Quinet, Michelet, Hugo, Balzac, and a few others) simultaneously invented what they called "civilization" and we call "culture." They laid down the hermeneutic principles of history and sociology, the sciences that give the silence of things its eloquence as a true testimony about a world or refer any proffered speech to the mute truth expressed by the speaker's attitude or the writer's paper. The opposition between the creative individual and the collectivity or that between artistic creation and cultural commerce can only be formulated on the basis of the same idea of language and the same rupture of the representative circle. This circle defined a

certain society of the speech act, a set of legitimate relations and criteria of legitimacy between the author, his "subject," and his spectator. The rupture of this circle makes the sphere of literature and that of social relations coextensive. It places the singularity of the work and the community it manifests in a direct relation of reciprocal expression. Each expresses the other but this reciprocity has no possible norm. The notion of genius is what makes the passage from one side to the other possible. Romantic genius is that of an individual only insofar as it is also that of a place, a time, a people, a history. Literature is the accomplishment of the non-normative power of poeticity only insofar as it is also the "expression of society." These statements would be equally valid if reversed. Every age and form of civilization "bears its literature, just as every geological age is marked by the appearance of certain species of organized orders that belong to a single system." But also: "A poem creates a people. It was heroic Greece that produced Homer, and from Homer that civilized Greece emerged."[14]

A people makes a poem, a poem makes a people. The formula of the equation appears under both figures from the beginning. There are those who dream of a new poem for a people still to come. "The Oldest Systematic Programme of German Idealism," tossed onto paper during the French Revolution by Hegel, Hölderlin, and Schelling, is the talisman of this dream. There are also those who search in the poems of the past for the physiognomy of the people who made them. This is the path adopted by Mme de Staël, who will hand it on to the historians of literature of the age of Louis-Philippe. But it was above all Hegel—a somewhat older Hegel, that of the *Lectures on Aesthetics*—who will set out the principles of the latter group, later to be systematized by Taine as a positive science of literature. The interminable quarrel between the guardians and the demystifiers of art is based on the infinite reversibility of the formula. In the 1830s, Gautier polemicized against "social art"; in the 1860s, Taine identified the history of English literature with the physiology of a people. At the turn of the century, Lanson imposed the history of literary creators upon the republican school in preference to that of the literary history of societies; Sartre and Bourdieu, in the most recent half-century, demystified the illusion of the creator. The supporters of "universalism" can today attack "cultural relativism" and wax indignant over those who dare to put the sublime art of Shakespeare and the vulgar manufacture of boots into the single category of "culture." In each case, the terms opposed to one another live off of their solidarity. Shakespeare's genius has only been imposed as an artistic model since it has been admitted that both his plays and the manufacture of boots are expressions of a single civilization. This is why Marxist sociology has been able to take up so large a part of the heritage of the sciences of spirit for its own profit. No doubt Lukács repudiated his *Theory of*

the Novel as the sin of a young man still caught in the hermeneutic idealism of the *Geisteswissenschaften* dominant within German universities before 1914. His analyses have nonetheless been broadly taken up as a materialist explanation of the relation between novelistic form and bourgeois domination. "Spirit" is the very name of the convertibility between the power of expression that manifests itself in the work and the collective power that the work manifests. It is vain to oppose the illusion of those who believe in the absoluteness of literature to the wisdom of those who know the social conditions of its production. Literature as an expression of individual genius and literature as an expression of society are the two versions of a single text; they express one and the same mode of perception of works and the art of writing.

FROM GENERALIZED POETICS TO THE MUTE LETTER

PART II

CHAPTER 1: FROM REPRESENTATION TO EXPRESSION

1. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Mallarmé, or the Poet of Nothingness*, trans. Ernest Sturm (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 139.
2. Charles de Rémusat, *Passé et present* (1847), cited by Armand de Pontmartin, "De l'esprit littéraire en 1858," in *Nouvelles causeries du samedi* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1859), 4; Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly, "Gustave Flaubert," *Le roman contemporain*, in *XIX^e siècle: les œuvres et les hommes* (Paris: Lemerre, 1902), vol. 18, p. 103; Léon Bloy, *Belluaires et porchers* (Paris: Stock, 1905), 96–97.
3. Gustave Planche, "Poètes et romanciers modernes de la France: M. Victor Hugo," *Revue des deux mondes* (1838), vol. 1, 757.
4. Charles Batteux, *A Course of the Belles Letters, or the Principles of Literature* (London: B. Law, 1761), vol. 1, 110.
5. Voltaire, *Commentaires sur Corneille*, in *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire* (Geneva: The Voltaire Foundation, 1975), vol. 55, 465, 976, 964, 965, 731.
6. Batteux, *Course of Belles Letters*, vol. 1, 157.
7. Jean-François de La Harpe, *Lycée ou Cours de littérature* (Paris, 1840), vol. 1, 476.
8. Voltaire, *Commentaires sur Corneille*, vol. 55, 830–831.
9. Batteux, *Course of Belles Letters*, vol. 1, 111.
10. Marc Fumaroli, *L'âge de l'éloquence: rhétorique et "res literaria" de la Renaissance au seuil de l'époque classique* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994), 30.
11. La Harpe, *Lycée*, vol. 1, 198.
12. See Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Qu'est-ce qu'un genre littéraire?* (Paris: Seuil, 1989).
13. Flaubert to Louise Colet, January 16, 1852, *The Letters of Gustave Flaubert, 1830–1857*, ed. and trans. Francis Steegmuller (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 154.

CHAPTER 2: FROM THE BOOK OF STONE TO THE BOOK OF LIFE

1. C. D., "*Notre-Dame de Paris*, par M. Victor Hugo," *Revue des deux mondes* (1831), vol. 1, 188.
2. "I hope that we will eventually put nothing but the author's name on the cover of a book" (Émile Deschamps, "M. de Balzac," *Revue des deux mondes* (1831), vol. 4, 314–315).
3. Victor Hugo, *Le Rhin*, in *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Club français du livre, 1968), vol. 4, 253.
4. Pierre-Daniel Huet, *Traité de l'origine des romans* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970), 28–29.
5. Giambattista Vico, *New Science: Principles of the New Science Concerning the Common Nature of Nations*, trans. David Marsh (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2001), 157.
6. Ibid., 96, 162.
7. Edgar Quinet, *Allemagne et Italie: philosophie et poésie* (Paris: Desforges, 1839), vol. 2, 97–98.
8. A. W. Schlegel, *Vorlesungen über schöne Literatur und Kunst*, in *Kritische Ausgabe der Vorlesungen*, ed. Ernst Behler and Frank Jolles (Paderborn: Schönigh, 1989), vol. 1, 388.
9. Ibid., vol. 1, 250.
10. Cf. Théodore Jouffroy, *Cours d'esthétique*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Hachette, 1863), 220: "The stone does not say much because its elementary signs are not sufficiently prominent; it is a scribbled, poorly written word."
11. See Novalis [Georg Friedrich von Hardenberg], *Notes for a Romantic Encyclopedia: Das Allgemeine Brouillon*, trans. David W. Wood (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 24: "It is not only man that speaks—the universe also speaks—everything speaks—infinite languages. / Theory of signatures."
12. Proust particularly emphasizes the theme of the alliterations of things with respect to the transparent carafes that children set in the Vivonne to catch fish, so that "one no longer knows whether the river is a crystal carafe or if the carafe is frozen liquid." Text drawn from notebook 4, printed in *Cahiers Marcel Proust 7* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 165; compare Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way*, in *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (New York: Vintage, 1982), vol. 1, 183–184 [where *allitération perpétuelle* is rendered as "perpetually in flight"].

CHAPTER 3: THE BOOK OF LIFE AND THE EXPRESSION OF SOCIETY

1. Novalis [Georg Friedrich von Hardenberg], "Monologue," in *The Origins of Modern Critical Thought: German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism from Lessing to Hegel*, ed. David Simpson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 274.
2. Ibid.
3. Jean-Charles-Léonard Simonde de Sismondi, *Historical View of the Literature of the South of Europe*, trans. Thomas Roscoe (London: Henry Bohn, 1846 [1813]), vol. 2, 25.
4. Théodore Jouffroy, *Cours d'esthétique*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Hachette, 1863), 199.
5. Zola was clearly conscious of this on at least one occasion, when, accusing his naturalism of having often substituted the enchanted nature of romanticism for scientific "nature," he gives his own interpretation of the "petrification" inherent in the literary project:

> Now it is certain that we rarely hold ourselves to this scientific rigor. All reaction is violent, and we shall react still against the abstract formula of the last centuries. Nature has entered into our works with so impetuous a bound that it has filled them, sometimes swamping the human element, submerging and carrying away characters in the midst of a downfall of rocks and great trees. [. . .]
>
> We dream of all kinds of folly, we write books in which the springs commence to sing, the oaks to talk with each other, the rocks to sigh and palpitate like a woman overcome with the midday heat. And there are symphonies in the leaves, roles given to the blades of grass, poems on light and on odors. If there is any excuse to be offered for such digressions it is because we have dreamed of broadening humanity, and that we have imbued even the stones in the roadways with it

(Emile Zola, *The Experimental Novel and Other Essays*, trans. Belle M. Sherman [New York: Cassell, 1893], 233–236).

6. Honoré de Balzac, Introduction, *The Works of Honoré de Balzac*, ed. George Saintsbury (Freeport, NY: Books for Librairies Press, 1971 [reprint of 1901 edition]), vol. 1, 3, 5.
7. See François-René de Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, book 13, ch. 11 (translation by A. S. Kline available online at http://www.poetryintranslation.com/klineaschateaubriand.htm): "The literature that expresses the new era has only held sway for forty or fifty years from the moment whose idiom it became [. . .]. It was Madame de Staël, Benjamin Constant, Lemercier, Bonald, and, finally, I who first spoke that language. The changes in literature, which the nineteenth century boasted of, arose from emigration and exile."
8. Staël, *De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales*, in *Œuvres complètes* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1967), vol. 1, 196–197.
9. Amable-Guillaume-Prosper Brugière, Baron de Barante, *A Tableau of French Literature during the Eighteenth Century* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1833 [1814]), xv–xvi.
10. François Guizot, *Shakespeare and His Times* (New York: Harper, 1852), 155.
11. Hyppolite Adolphe Taine, *A History of English Literature*, trans. Henri van Laun (New York : Colonial Press, 1900), vol. 1, 1–2, 5.
12. Stéphane Mallarmé to Eugène Lefébure, June 30, 1865, in Stéphane Mallarmé, *Correspondance*, ed. Henri Mondor and Lloyd James Austin (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), vol. 1, 170.
13. Marcel Proust, manuscript fragment from notebook 26, cited by Bernard Brun, "'Une des lois vraiment immuables de ma vie spirituelle': quelques éléments de la *démonstration* proustienne dans les brouillons de *Swann*," *Bulletin d'informations proustiennes* 10 (1979), 27.
14. Jean-Jacques Ampère, "De l'histoire de la littérature française," *Revue des deux mondes* (1834), vol. 4, 409, 415.

CHAPTER 4: FROM THE POETRY OF THE FUTURE TO THE POETRY OF THE PAST

1. Novalis [Georg Friedrich von Hardenberg], *Notes for a Romantic Encyclopedia: Das Allgemeine Brouillon*, trans. David W. Wood (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 132 [translation modified].
2. Ibid., xxii. On nature as poem, see the final chapter of F. W. J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), trans. Albert Hofstadter, in *The Origins of Modern Critical Thought: German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism from Lessing to Hegel*, ed. David Simpson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 225–232 [citation from p. 228], to which A. W. Schlegel's *Vorlesungen über schöne Literatur und Kunst* refer; and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. Philip Barnard and Cheryl Lester (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988), 93.
3. Friedrich Schlegel, *Lucinde and the Fragments*, trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 170.
4. Ibid., 164. We should note that this is a rare instance of a text by Schlegel that gives even an indirect definition of the notion of the fragment. It should be compared with fragment 77: "But as yet no genre exists that is fragmentary both in form and content, *simultaneously completely subjective and individual, and completely objective and like a necessary part in the system of all the sciences*" (170, italics added).
5. Ibid., fragment 116, 175.
6. G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 1045.
7. Ibid., 1052–1053.
8. Ibid., 1049.
9. Ibid., 261.
10. "Oldest Programme for a System of German Idealism," *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 185–187.
11. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 1092 (translation modified).
12. Friedrich Schlegel, "On Goethe's *Meister*," in *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*, ed. Bernstein, 269–286.
13. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 593.
14. Jean Paul, "Einige *Jus de tablette* für Mannspersonen," Appendix to *Leben des Quintus Fixlein*, in *Werke*, ed. Norbert Miller (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1962), vol. 4, 203.

CHAPTER 5: THE BOOK IN PIECES

1. Proust, *Time Regained*, in *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (New York: Vintage, 1982), vol. 3, 876, 914.
2. For details of this lineage, see William Nelson, *Fact or Fiction: The Dilemma of the Renaissance Storyteller* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973).
3. Let us take as an example, both because it summarizes so many others and because Proust found it particularly touching, the discovery made by the young shepherdess Marie-Claire in the garret at the farm: "The only thing I found was a little book without any cover. The corners of the leaves were rolled up as if it had been carried about in somebody's pocket for a long time. The first two pages were missing, and the third page was so dirty that I could not read the print. I took it under the skylight, to see a little better, and I saw that it was called *The Adventures of Telemachus*" (Marguerite Audoux, *Marie-Claire*, trans. John N. Raphael [New York: George H. Doran, 1911], 119). For other examples, see Jacques Rancière, *The Nights of Labor: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth-Century France*, trans. John Drury (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989); and *Short Voyages to the Land of the People*, trans. James Swenson (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). On the symbolic value of Fénelon's *Telemachus* as a book in which the ignorant can discover themselves capable of reading, see Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).
4. Charles Nodier, "De l'utilité morale de l'instruction pour le peuple," *Rêveries* (Paris: Plasma, 1979), 173–189.
5. Eugène Lerminier, "De l'encyclopédie à deux sous et de l'instruction du peuple," *Revue des deux mondes* (1834), vol. 1, 284.