LEO SPITZER

Linguistics and Literary History

Essays in Stylistics

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and Literary, History
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FOREWORD

THE following studies owe their birth to the kind invitation of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at Princeton University, extended to me at the behest of Professor Américo Castro, to give a lecture on the subject indicated by the title of the first essay, and to the further invitation of the Princeton University Press to expand the lecture (which is reproduced herein with the addition of some notes) into a book which would show some practical applications of my linguistic method to literature.

I dedicate this first book of mine printed in America, which is to continue the series of studies in stylistics previously published in Germany—*Aufsätze zur romanischen Syntax und Stilistik*, Halle (Niemeyer) 1918; *Stilstudien*, I-II, München (Hueber) 1928; *Romanische Stil- und Literaturstudien*, I-II, Marburg an der Lahn (Elwert) 1931—to Assistant Professor ANNA GRANVILLE HATCHER who is an outstanding American scholar in the too little cultivated field of syntax—which, in her case, is expanded into stylistic and cultural history—and who could thus teach me, not only the intricacies of English syntax and stylistics, but some of the more recondite features of American culture and of its particular moral, logical, and aesthetic aspirations: a knowledge without which all endeavors of the philologist to explain poetry to an American public must fail completely. For poetry has always been addressed to a public with which the poet felt himself to be united—so that the explanation of poetry, too, must needs be addressed to a public whose reactions the commentator is able to foresee. It is one of the benefits falling to the lot of the emigrant scholar that, however much his outward activity may be curtailed in the new country in comparison with his former situation, his inner activity is bound to be immensely enhanced and intensified: instead of writing as he pleases, after the usual fashion of the German scholar in particular (who is so well satisfied to live in the paradise of his ideas, whether this be accessible to his fellow men or not), he must, while trying to preserve his own idea of scholarship, continually count with his new audience, bearing in mind not

only the conventional requirements but also those innermost strivings of the nation (inasmuch as it is given him to feel them) which, opposed to his nature as they may have seemed to him in the beginning, tend imperceptibly to become a second nature in him—indeed, to make shine by contrast his first nature in the clearest light. And, by so doing, he comes to feel enriched and to find that he has attained peace and happiness.

L.S.

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Because the chapters listed above are intended to be read as
articles one after the other, and consultation as a reference book
is not envisaged, the author has decided that an index should not
be included in the book.

I

LINGUISTICS AND LITERARY HISTORY[1]

THE title of this book is meant to suggest the ultimate unity of linguistics and literary history. Since my activity, throughout my scholarly life, has been largely devoted to the rapprochement of these two disciplines, I may be forgiven if I preface my remarks with an autobiographic sketch of my first academic experiences: What I propose to do is to tell you only my own story, how I made my way through the maze of linguistics, with which I started, toward the enchanted garden of literary history—and how I discovered that there is as well a paradise in linguistics as a labyrinth in literary history; that the methods and the degree of certainty in both are basically the same; and, that if today the humanities are under attack (and, as I believe, under an unwarranted attack, since it is not the humanities themselves that are at fault but only some so-called humanists who persist in imitating an obsolete approach to the natural sciences, which have themselves evolved toward the humanities)—if, then, the humanities are under attack, it would be pointless to exempt any one of them from the verdict: if it is true that there is no value to be derived from the study of language, we cannot pretend to preserve literary history, cultural history—or history.

I have chosen the autobiographical way because my personal situation in Europe forty years ago was not, I believe, essentially different from the one with which I see the young scholar of today (and in this country) generally faced. I chose to relate to you my own experiences also because the basic approach of the individual scholar, conditioned as it is by his first experiences, by his *Erlebnis*, as the Germans say, determines his method: *Methode ist Erlebnis*, Gundolf has said. In fact, I would advise every older scholar to tell his public the basic experiences underlying his methods, his *Mein Kampf*, as it were—without dictatorial connotations, of course.

I had decided, after college had given me a solid foundation in the classical languages, to study the Romance languages and particularly French philology, because, in my native Vienna, the gay and orderly, skeptic and sentimental, Catholic and pagan Vienna of yore was filled with adoration of the French way of life. I had always been surrounded by a French atmosphere and, at that juvenile stage of experience, had acquired a picture, perhaps overgeneralized, of French literature, which seemed to me definable by an Austrianlike mixture of sensuousness and reflection, of vitality and discipline, of sentimentality and critical wit. The moment when the curtain rose on a French play given by a French troupe, and the valet, in a knowing accent of psychological alertness, with his rich, poised voice, pronounced the words "Madame est servie," was a delight to my heart.

But when I attended the classes of French linguistics of my great teacher Meyer-Lübke no picture was offered us of the French people, or of the Frenchness of their language: in these classes we saw Latin *a* moving, according to relentless phonetic laws, toward French *e* (*pater* > *père*); there we saw a new system of declension spring up from nothingness, a system in which the six Latin cases came to be reduced to two, and later to one—while we learned that similar violence had been done to the other Romance languages and, in fact, to many modern languages. In all this, there were many facts and much rigor in the establishment of facts, but all was vague in regard to the general ideas underlying these facts. What was the mystery behind the refusal of Latin sounds or cases to stay put and behave themselves? We saw incessant change working in language—but why? I was a long while realizing that Meyer-Lübke was offering only the *pre*-history of French (as he established it by a comparison with the other Romance languages), not its history. And we were never allowed to contemplate a phenomenon in its quiet being, to look into its face: we always looked at its neighbors or at its predecessors—we were always looking over our shoulder. There were presented to us the relationships of phenomenon *a* and phenomenon *b*; but phenomenon *a* and phenomenon *b* did not exist in themselves, nor did the historical line *a* - *b*.

In reference to a given French form, Meyer-Lübke would quote Old Portuguese, Modern Bergamesque and Macedo-rumanian, German, Celtic, and paleo-Latin forms; but where was reflected in this teaching my sensuous, witty, disciplined Frenchman, in his presumably 1000 years of existence? He was left out in the cold while we talked about his language; indeed, French was not the language of the Frenchman, but an agglomeration of unconnected, separate, anecdotic, sense-less evolutions: a French historical grammar, apart from the word-material, could as well have been a Germanic or a Slav grammar: the leveling of paradigms, the phonetic evolutions occur there just as in French.

When I changed over to the classes of the equally great literary historian Philipp August Becker, that ideal French-man seemed to show some faint signs of life—in the spirited analyses of the events in the *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, or of the plot of a Molière comedy; but it was as if the treat-ment of the contents were only subsidiary to the really scholarly work, which consisted in fixing the dates and his-torical data of these works of art, in assessing the amount of autobiographical elements and written sources which the poets had supposedly incorporated into their artistic produc-tions. Had the *Pèlerinage* to do with the Xth crusade? Which was its original dialect? Was there any epic poetry, Mero-vingian or other, which preceded Old French epic poetry? Had Molière put his own matrimonial disillusionment into the *Ecole des femmes*? (While Becker did not insist on an affirmative conclusion, he considered such a question to be a part of legitimate literary criticism.) Did the medieval farce survive in the Molière comedy? The existing works of art were stepping-stones from which to proceed to other phenom-ena, contemporary or previous, which were in reality quite heterogeneous. It seemed indiscrete to ask what made them works of art, what was expressed in them, and why these expressions appeared in France, at that particular time. Again, it was prehistory, not history, that we were offered, and a kind of materialistic prehistory, at that. In this attitude of positivism, exterior events were taken thus seriously only to evade the more completely the real question: Why did the

phenomena *Pèlerinage* and *Ecole des femmes* happen at all?
And, I must admit, in full loyalty to Meyer-Lübke, that he
taught more of reality than did Becker: it was unquestionable
that Latin *a* had evolved to French *e*; it was untrue that
Molière's experience with the possibly faithless Madeleine
Béjart had evolved to the work of art *Ecole des femmes*. But,
in both fields, that of linguistics as well as that of literary
history (which were separated by an enormous gulf: Meyer-
Lübke spoke only of language and Becker only of literature),
a meaningless industriousness prevailed: not only was this
kind of humanities not centered on a particular people in a
particular time, but the subject matter itself had got lost:
Man.[2] At the end of my first year of graduate studies, I
had come to the conclusion, not that the science offered *ex
cathedra* was worthless but that I was not fit for such studies
as that of the irrational vowel *-i-* in Eastern French dialects,
or of the *Subjektivismusstreit* in Molière: never would I get
a Ph.D.! It was the benignity of Providence, exploiting my
native Teutonic docility toward scholars who knew more
than I, which kept me faithful to the study of Romance
philology. By not abandoning prematurely this sham science,
by seeking, instead, to appropriate it, I came to recognize its
true value as well as my own possibilities of work—and to
establish my life's goal. By using the tools of science offered
me, I came to see under their dustiness the fingerprints of a
Friedrich Diez and of the Romantics, who had created these
tools; and henceforth they were not dusty any more, but ever
radiant and ever new. And I had learned to handle many and
manifold facts: training in handling facts, brutal facts, is
perhaps the best education for a wavering, youthful mind.

And now let me take you, as I promised to do, on the path
that leads from the most routinelike techniques of the linguist
toward the work of the literary historian. The different fields
will appear here in the ascending order, as I see them today,
while the concrete examples, drawn from my own activity,
will not respect the chronological order of their publication.

Meyer-Lübke, the author of the comprehensive and still
final etymological dictionary of Romance languages, had
taught me, among many other things, how to find etymolo-

gies; I shall now take the liberty of inflicting upon you a concrete example of this procedure—sparing you none of the petty drudgery involved. Since my coming to America, I have been curious about the etymology of two English words, characterized by the same "flavor": *conundrum* "a riddle the answer to which involves a pun; a puzzling question," and *quandary* "a puzzling situation." The NED attests *conundrum* first in 1596; early variants are *conimbrum, quonundrum, quadrundum*. The meaning is "whim" or "pun." In the seventeenth century it was known as an Oxford term: preachers were wont to use in their sermons the baroque device of puns and conundrums, e.g. "Now all House is turned into an Alehouse, and a pair of dice is made a Paradice; was it thus in the days of Noah? Ah no." This baroque technique of interlarding sermons with puns is well known from the *Kapuziner-Predigt*, inspired by Abraham a Santa Clara, in Schiller's *Wallenstein's Lager*: "Der *Rheinstrom* ist worden zu einem *Peinstrom*," etc.

The extraordinary instability (reflecting the playfulness of the concept involved) of the phonetic structure: *conundrum - conimbrum - quadrundrum*, points to a foreign source, to a word which must have been (playfully) adapted in various ways. Since the English variants include among them a -*b*- and a -*d*- which are not easily reducible to any one basic sound, I propose to submit a French word-family which, in its different forms, contains both -*b*- and -*d*-: the French *calembour* is exactly synonymous with *conundrum* "pun." This *calembour* is evidently related to *calembredaine* "nonsensical or odd speech," and we can assume that *calembour*, too, had originally this same general reference. This word-family goes back probably to Fr. *bourde* "tall story" to which has been added the fanciful, semipejorative prefix *cali-*, that can be found in *à califourchon* "straddling" (from Latin *quadrifurcus*, French *carrefour* "crossroads": the *qu-* of the English variants points to this Latin etymon). The French ending -*aine* of *calembredaine* developed to -*um*: *n* becomes *m* as in *ransom* from French *rançon*; *ai* becomes *o* as in *mitten* (older *mitton*) from French *mitaine*. Thus *calembourdane*, as a result of various assimilations and short-

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enings which I will spare you, becomes *colundrum, *columbrum* and then *conundrum, conimbrum,* etc. Unfortunately, the French word-family is attested rather late, occurring for the first time in a comic opera of Vadé in 1754. We do find, however, an *équilbourdie* "whim" as early as 1658 in the *Muse normande,* a dialectal text. The fact is that popular words of this sort have, as a rule, little chance of turning up in the (predominantly idealistic) literature of the Middle Ages; it is, therefore, a mere accident that English *conundrum* is attested in 1596 and French *calembour* only in 1757; at least, the chance appearance of *équilbourdie* in the dialectal text of 1658 gives us an earlier attestation of the French word-family. That the evidently popular medieval words emerge so late in literature is a fact explainable by the currents prevalent in literature; the linguist must take his chances with what literature offers him in the way of attestation. In view of the absolute evidence of the equation *conundrum = calembredaine* we need not be intimidated by chronological divergencies—which the older school of etymologists (as represented by the editors of the NED) seem to have overrated.

After *conundrum* had ceased to be a riddle to me, I was emboldened to ask myself whether I could not now solve the etymology of the word *quandary*—which also suggested to me a French origin. And, lo and behold: this word, of unknown origin, which is attested from about 1580 on, revealed itself etymologically identical with *conundrum*! There are English dialect forms such as *quándorum quóndorum* which serve to establish an uninterrupted chain: *calembredaine* becomes *conimbrum conundrum quonundrum quandorum* and these give us *quandary*.[3]

Now what can be the humanistic, the spiritual value of this (as it may have seemed to you) juggling with word forms? The particular etymology of *conundrum* is an inconsequential fact; that an etymology can be found by man is a miracle. An etymology introduces meaning into the meaningless: in our case, the evolution of two words in time—that is, a piece of linguistic history—has been cleared up. What seemed an agglomeration of mere sounds now appears motivated. We feel

the same "inner click" accompanying our comprehension of this evolution in time as when we have grasped the meaning of a sentence or a poem—which then become more than the sum total of their single words or sounds (*poem* and *sentence* are, in fact, the classical examples given by Augustine and Bergson in order to demonstrate the nature of a stretch of *durée réelle*: the parts aggregating to a whole, time filled with contents). In the problem which we chose, two words which seemed erratic and fantastic, with no definite relationships in English, have been unified among themselves and related to a French word-family.

The existence of such a loan-word is another testimony to the well-known cultural situation obtaining when medieval England was in the sway of French influence: the English and French word-families, although attested centuries after the Middle Ages, must have belonged to one Anglo-French word-family during that period, and their previous existence is precisely proved by proving their family relationship. And it is not by chance that English borrows words for "pun" or "whim" from the witty French, who have also given *carriwitchet* "quibble" and (perhaps: see the NED) *pun* itself to English. But, since a loan-word rarely feels completely at home in its new environment, we have the manifold variations of the word, which fell apart into two word-groups (clearly separated, today, by the current linguistic feeling): *conundrum-quandary.* The instability and disunity of the word-family is symptomatic of its position in the new environment.

But the instability apparent in our English words had already been characteristic of *calembredaine - calembour*, even in the home environment: this French word-family, as we have said, was a blend of at least two word-stems. Thus we must conclude that the instability is also connected with the semantic content: a word meaning "whim, pun" easily behaves whimsically—just as, in all languages throughout the world, the words for "butterfly" present a kaleidoscopic instability. The linguist who explains such fluttery words has to juggle, because the speaking community itself (in our case, the English as well as the French) has juggled. This juggling

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in itself is psychologically and culturally motivated: language is not, as the behavioristic, antimentalistic, mechanistic or materialistic school of linguists, rampant in some universities, would have it: a meaningless agglomeration of corpses: dead word-material, automatic "speech habits" unleased by a trigger motion. A certain automatism may be predicated of the use of *conundrum* and *quandary* in contemporary English, and of *calembour, calembredaine* in contemporary French (though, even today, this automatism is not absolute, since all these words have still a connotation of whimsicality or fancifulness and are, accordingly, somewhat motivated). But this is certainly not true for the history of the words: the linguistic creation is always meaningful and, yes, clear-minded: it was a feeling for the appositeness of nomenclature which prompted the communities to use, in our case, two-track words. They gave a playful expression to a playful concept, symbolizing in the word their attitude toward the concept. It was when the creative, the Renaissance, phase had passed that English let the words congeal, petrify, and split into two. This petrification is, itself, due to a decision of the community which, in eighteenth-century England, passed from the Renaissance attitude to the classicistic attitude toward language, which would replace creativity by standardization and regulation. Another cultural climate, another linguistic style. Out of the infinity of word-histories which could be imagined we have chosen only one, one which shows quite individual circumstances, such as the borrowing of a foreign word by English, the original French blend, the subsequent alterations and restrictions; every word has its own history, not to be confused with that of any other. But what repeats itself in all word-histories is the possibility of recognizing the signs of a people at work, culturally and psychologically. To speak in the language of the homeland of philology: *Wortwandel ist Kulturwandel und Seelenwandel*; this little etymological study has been humanistic in purpose.

If we accept the equation: *conundrum* and *quandary* = *calembredaine*—how has this been found? I may say, by quite an orthodox technique which would have been approved by Meyer-Lübke—though he would not, perhaps, have stopped

to draw the inferences on which I have insisted. First, by collecting the material evidence about the English words, I was led to seek a French origin. I had also observed that the great portion of the English vocabulary which is derived from French has not been given sufficient attention by etymologists; and, of course, my familiarity with the particular behavior of "butterfly words" in language was such as to encourage a relative boldness in the reconstruction of the etymon. I had first followed the inductive method—or rather a quick intuition—in order to identify *conundrum* with *calembredaine*; later, I had to proceed deductively, to verify whether my assumed etymon concorded with all the known data, whether it really explained all the semantic and phonetic variations; while following this path I was able to see that *quandary* must also be a reflection of *calembredaine*. (This to-and-fro movement is a basic requirement in all humanistic studies, as we shall see later.) For example, since the French word-family is attested later than is the English, it seemed necessary to dismiss the chronological discrepancies; fortunately—or, as I would say, providentially—the Normandian *équilbourdie* of 1658 turned up! In this kind of gentle blending together of the words, of harmonizing them and smoothing out difficulties, the linguist undoubtedly indulges in a propensity to see things as shifting and melting into each other—an attitude to which you may object: I cannot contend more than that this change was *possible* in the way I have indicated, since it contradicts no previous experience; I can say only that two unsolved problems (the one concerning the prehistory of *conundrum*, the other that of *calembredaine*) have, when brought together, shed light on each other, thereby enabling us to see the common solution. I am reminded here of the story of the Pullman porter to whom a passenger complained in the morning that he had got back one black shoe and one tan; the porter replied that, curiously enough, a similar discovery had been made by another passenger. In the field of language, the porter who has mixed up the shoes belonging together is language itself, and the linguist is the passenger who must bring together what was once a historical unit. To place two phenomena within a framework adds something to the knowl-

edge about their common nature. There is no mathematical demonstrability in such an equation, only a feeling of inner evidence; but this feeling, with the trained linguist, is the fruit of observation combined with experience, of precision supplemented by imagination—the dosage of which cannot be fixed a priori, but only in the concrete case. There is under-lying such a procedure the belief that this is the way things happened; but there is always a belief underlying the human-ist's work (similarly, it cannot be demonstrated that the Romance languages form a unity going back to Vulgar Latin; this basic assumption of the student in Romance languages, first stated by Diez, cannot be proved to the disbeliever).[4] And who says belief, says suasion: I have, deliberately and tendentiously, grouped the variants of *conundrum* in the most plausible order possible for the purpose of winning your as-sent. Of course, there are more easily believable etymologies, reached at the cost of less stretching and bending: no one in his senses would doubt that French *père* comes from Latin *pater*, or that this, along with English *father*, goes back to an Indo-European prototype. But we must not forget that these smooth, standard equations are relatively rare—for the reason that a word such as "father" is relatively immune to cultural revolutions or, in other words, that, in regard to the "father," a continuity of feeling, stretching over more than 4000 years, exists in Indo-European civilization.

Thus our etymological study has illuminated a stretch of linguistic history, which is connected with psychology and history of civilization; it has suggested a web of interrelations between language and the soul of the speaker. This web could have been as well revealed by a study of a syntactical, a morphological evolution—even a phonetic evolution of the type "*a* becomes *e*," wherein Meyer-Lübke had failed to see the *durée réelle*, exclusively concerned as he was with *l'heure de la montre*: his historical "clock time."

Now, since the best document of the soul of a nation is its literature, and since the latter is nothing but its language as this is written down by elect speakers, can we perhaps not hope to grasp the spirit of a nation in the language of its outstand-ing works of literature? Because it would have been rash to

compare the whole of a national literature to the whole of a national language (as Karl Vossler has prematurely tried to do) I started, more modestly, with the question: "Can one distinguish the soul of a particular French writer in his particular language?" It is obvious that literary historians have held this conviction, since, after the inevitable quotation (or misquotation) of Buffon's saying: "*Le style c'est l'homme,*" they generally include in their monographs a chapter on the style of their author. But I had in mind the more rigorously scientific definition of an individual style, the definition of a linguist which should replace the casual, impressionistic remarks of literary critics. Stylistics, I thought, might bridge the gap between linguistics and literary history. On the other hand, I was warned by the scholastic adage: *individuum est ineffabile*; could it be that any attempt to define the individual writer by his style is doomed to failure? The individual stylistic deviation from the general norm must represent a historical step taken by the writer, I argued: it must reveal a shift of the soul of the epoch, a shift of which the writer has become conscious and which he would translate into a necessarily new linguistic form; perhaps it would be possible to determine the historical step, psychological as well as linguistic? To determine the beginning of a linguistic innovation would be easier, of course, in the case of contemporary writers, because their linguistic basis is better known to us than is that of past writers.

In my reading of modern French novels, I had acquired the habit of underlining expressions which struck me as aberrant from general usage, and it often happened that the underlined passages, taken together, seemed to offer a certain consistency. I wondered if it would not be possible to establish a common denominator for all or most of these deviations; could not the common spiritual etymon, the psychological root, of several individual "traits of style" in a writer be found, just as we have found an etymon common to various fanciful word formations?[5] I had, for example, noticed in the novel *Bubu de Montparnasse* of Charles-Louis Philippe (1905), which moves in the underworld of Parisian pimps and prostitutes, a particular use of *à cause de*, reflecting

the spoken, the unliterary language: "Les réveils de midi sont lourds et poisseux. . . . On éprouve un sentiment de déchéance *à cause* des réveils d'autrefois." More academic writers would have said "en se rappelant des réveils d'autrefois. . . ," "à la suite du souvenir. . . ." This, at first glance, prosaic and commonplace *à cause de* has nevertheless a poetic flavor, because of the unexpected suggestion of a causality, where the average person would see only coincidence: it is, after all, not unanimously accepted that one awakes with a feeling of frustration from a noon siesta *because* other similar awakenings have preceded; we have here an assumed, a poetic reality, but one expressed by a prosaic phrase. We find this *à cause de* again in a description of a popular celebration of the 14th of July: "[le peuple], *à cause de* l'anniversaire de sa délivrance, laisse ses filles danser en liberté." Thus, one will not be surprised when the author lets this phrase come from the mouth of one of his characters: "Il y a dans mon coeur deux ou trois cent petites émotions qui brûlent *à cause de toi*." Conventional poetry would have said "qui brûlent pour toi"; "qui brûlent *à cause de toi*" is both less and more: more, since the lover speaks his heart better in this sincere, though factual manner. The causal phrase, with all its semipoetic implications, suggests rather a commonplace speaker, whose speech and whose habits of thought the writer seems to endorse in his own narrative.

Our observation about *à cause de* gains strength if we compare the use, in the same novel, of other causal conjunctions, such as *parce que*: for example, it is said of the pimp's love for his sweetheart Berthe: "[il aimait] sa volupté particulière, quand elle appliquait son corps contre le sien. . . . Il aimait cela qui la distinguait de toutes les femmes qu'il avait connues *parce que* c'était plus doux, *parce que* c'était plus fin, et *parce que* c'était sa femme à lui, qu'il avait eue vierge. Il l'aimait *parce qu*'elle était honnête et qu'elle en avait l'air, et pour toutes les raisons qu'ont les bourgeois d'aimer leur femme." Here, the reasons why Maurice loved to embrace his sweetheart (*parce que c'était doux, fin, parce que c'était sa femme a lui*) are outspokenly classified or censored by the writer as being *bourgeois*; and yet, in Philippe's narra-

tive, the *parce que* is used as if he considered these reasons to be objectively valid.

The same observation holds true for the causal conjunction *car*: in the following passage which describes Maurice as a being naturally loved by women: "Les femmes l'entouraient d'amour comme des oiseaux qui chantent le soleil et la force. Il était un de ceux que nul ne peut assujettir, *car* leur vie, plus forte et plus belle, comporte l'amour du danger."

Again, it can happen that a causal relationship is implied without the use of a conjunction, a relationship due to the gnomic character adherent, at least in that particular milieu, to a general statement—the truth of which is, perhaps, not so fully accepted elsewhere: "Elle l'embrassa à pleine bouche. *C'est une chose hygiénique* et bonne entre un homme et sa femme, qui vous amuse un petit quart d'heure avant de vous endormir." (Philippe could as well have written "car. . . ," "parce que c'est une chose hygiénique. . . .") Evidently this is the truth only in that particular world of sensuous realism which he is describing. At the same time, however, the writer,' while half-endorsing these bourgeois platitudes of the under-world, is discreetly but surely suggesting his criticism of them.

Now I submit the hypothesis that all these expansions of causal usages in Philippe cannot be due to chance: there must be "something the matter" with his conception of causality. And now we must pass from Philippe's style to the psychological etymon, to the radix in his soul. I have called the phenomenon in question "pseudo-objective motivation": Philippe, when presenting causality as binding for his characters, seems to recognize a rather objective cogency in their sometimes awkward, sometimes platitudinous, sometimes semipoetic reasonings; his attitude shows a fatalistic, half-critical, half-understanding, humorous sympathy with the necessary errors and thwarted strivings of these underworld beings dwarfed by inexorable social forces. The pseudo-objective motivation, manifest in his style, is the clue to Philippe's *Weltanschauung*; he sees, as has also been observed by literary critics, without revolt but with deep grief and a Christian spirit of contemplativity, the world functioning

wrongly with an appearance of rightness, of objective logic. The different word-usages, grouped together (just as was done with the different forms of *conundrum* and *quandary*) lead toward a psychological etymon, which is at the bottom of the linguistic as well as of the literary inspiration of Philippe.

Thus we have made the trip from language or style to the soul. And on this journey we may catch a glimpse into a historical evolution of the French soul in the twentieth century: first we are given insight into the soul of a writer who has become conscious of the fatalism weighing on the masses, then, into that of a section of the French nation itself, whose faint protest is voiced by our author. And in this procedure there is, I think, no longer the timeless, placeless philology of the older school, but an explanation of the concrete *hic et nunc* of a historical phenomenon. The to-and-fro movement we found to be basic with the humanist has been followed here, too: first we grouped together certain causal expressions, striking with Philippe, then hunted out their psychological explanation, and finally, sought to verify whether the element of "pseudo-objective motivation"[6] concorded with what we know, from other sources, about the elements of his inspiration. Again, a belief is involved— which is no less daring than is the belief that the Romance languages go back to one invisible, basic pattern manifest in them all: namely, the belief that the mind of an author is a kind of solar system into whose orbit all categories of things are attracted: language, motivation, plot, are only satellites of this mythological entity (as my antimentalistic adversaries would call it): *mens Philippina.* The linguist as well as his literary colleague must always ascend to the etymon which is behind all those particular so-called literary or stylistic devices which the literary historians are wont to list. And the individual *mens Philippina* is a reflection of the *mens Franco-gallica* of the twentieth century; its ineffability consists precisely in Philippe's anticipatory sensitivity for the spiritual needs of the nation.

Now, it is obvious that a modern writer such as Philippe, faced with the social disintegration of humanity in the

twentieth century, must show more patent linguistic deviations, of which the philologist may take stock in order to build up his "psychogram" of the individual artist. But does Philippe, a stranded being broken loose from his moorings, transplanted, as it were, into a world from which he feels estranged—so that he must, perforce, indulge in arbitrary whimsicality—represent only a modern phenomenon? If we go back to writers of more remote times, must it not be that we will always find a balanced language, with no deviations from common usage?

It suffices to mention the names of such dynamic writers of older times as Dante or Quevedo or Rabelais to dispel such a notion. Whoever has thought strongly and felt strongly has innovated in his language; mental creativity immediately inscribes itself into the language, where it becomes linguistic creativity; the trite and petrified in language is never sufficient for the needs of expression felt by a strong personality. In my first publication, "Die Wortbildung als stilistisches Mittel" (a thesis written in 1910), I dealt with Rabelais' comic word-formations, a subject to which I was attracted because of certain affinities between Rabelaisian and Viennese (Nestroy!) comic writing, and which offered the opportunity of bridging the gap between linguistic and literary history. Be it said to the eternal credit of the scholarly integrity of Meyer-Lübke that he, in contrast to the antimentalists who would suppress all expressions of opposition to their theories, recommended for publication a book with an approach so aberrant from his own. In this work I sought to show, for example, that a neologism such as *pantagruélisme*, the name given by Rabelais to his stoic-epicurean philosophy ("certaine gayeté d'esprict, conficte en mépris des choses fortuites") is not only a playful outburst of a genuine gaiety, but a thrust from the realm of the real into that of the unreal and the unknown—as is true, in fact, of any nonce-word. On the one hand, a form with the suffix *-ism* evokes a school of serious philosophic thought (such as *Aristotelianism, scholasticism*, etc.) ; on the other, the stem, *Pantagruel*, is the name of a character created by Rabelais, the half-jocular, half-philosophical giant and patriarchal king. The coupling of the

learned philosophical suffix with the fanciful name of a fanciful character amounts to positing a half-real, half-unreal entity: "the philosophy of an imaginary being." The contemporaries of Rabelais who first heard this coinage must have experienced the reactions provoked by any nonce-word: a moment of shock followed by a feeling of reassurance: to be swept toward the unknown frightens, but realization of the benignly fanciful result gives relief: laughter, our physiological reaction on such occasions, arises precisely out of a feeling of relief following upon a temporary breakdown of our assurance. Now, in a case such as that of the creation *pantagruélisme,* the designation of a hitherto unknown but, after all, innocuous philosophy, the menacing force of the neologism is relatively subdued. But what of such a list of names as that concocted by Rabelais for the benefit of his hated adversaries, the reactionaries of the Sorbonne: *sophistes, sorbillans, sorbonagres, sorbonigenes, sorbonicoles, sorboniformes, sorboniseques, niborcisans, sorbonisans, saniborsans.* Again, though differently, there is an element of realism present in these coinages: the Sorbonne is an existing reality, and the formations are explainable by well-known formative processes. The edition of Abel Lefranc, imbued with his positivistic approach, goes to the trouble of explaining each one of these formations: *sorboniforme* is after *uniforme, sorbonigene* after *homogène,* while *niborcisans, saniborsans* offer what, in the jargon of the linguists, is called a metathesis. But by explaining every coinage separately, by dissolving the forest into trees, the commentators lose sight of the whole phenomenon: they no longer see the forest—or rather the jungle which Rabelais must have had before his eyes, teeming with viperlike, hydralike, demonlike shapes. Nor is it enough to say that the scholarly Rabelais indulges in humanistic word lists with a view to enriching the vocabulary—in the spirit of an Erasmus who prescribed the principle of *copia verborum* to students of Latin—or that Rabelais' rich nature bade him make the French language rich; the aesthetics of richness is, in itself, a problem; and why should richness tend toward the frightening, the bottomless? Perhaps Rabelais' whole attitude toward language rests upon a vision