

bourgeois consciousness of how one's use of standard register indexes one's top-and-center positionality is "false," as it were, a "misrecognition" that correlates with the phenomenon of Labovian "hypercorrection"—too much manifestation by speakers of an indexically good thing—in nonhighest and not-most-central groups in the conically shaped space of stratification about a standard of usage.

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Language Philosophy as Language Ideology:

John Locke and Johann Gottfried Herder

Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs

What is philosophy?

To ask such a basic question about one of the most firmly established categories of Western discourse might seem banal, fruitless, or even perverse. But consider what issues would be raised if the question were asked from the perspective of a critical stance toward discourse. Now the focus shifts away from a concern with content, particularly with a construction of philosophy as comprising ideas that can be grasped by interpreting the referential content of philosophical texts. Such texts can rather be read subversively as powerful means of controlling the process of producing and receiving discourse.

Poststructuralists have detailed the role of philosophical texts in constructing ideologies of science, language, literature, society, gender, sexuality, the family, and so on. As students of language ideologies, our interest lies in how these texts construct and legitimate conceptions of language that both draw on and help shape other types of representations. In discussing the work of John Locke and Johann Gottfried Herder, we hope to identify ways that key texts seek to delegitimize particular practices of discourse production and reception while promoting

others. Such practices, we suggest, are crucial tools for positioning discourses—along with their authors and readers—vis-à-vis textual and social hierarchies. In the transformations of European society that took place in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these relationships of discourse to discourse and discourse to social life were of tremendous significance. In discussing Locke and Herder, therefore, we ask, “What is philosophy?” as a means of interrogating practices used in controlling the production and reception of socially dominant discourses.

Our readers might wonder what linguistic anthropologists can contribute to discussions of such widely debated figures; indeed we have asked this question of ourselves—and each other—repeatedly. This ground has, of late, been well trodden. Such writers as James Clifford (1988), Jacques Derrida (1967, 1974), Michel Foucault (1970, 1972, 1980), Julia Kristeva (1980, 1989), and Edward Said (1978) have stimulated critical revisionist histories of the emergence of Western thinking about language, literature, and culture, while Jürgen Habermas (1989) and Benedict Anderson (1991) have raised important questions regarding the role of discourse in the creation of civil society and the modern nation-state. We are, however, less concerned with rendering our own text authoritative by discovering something that has been left out by these critical rethinking, some sort of Derridian gap, than with responding to a sense of frustration with our own efforts to grapple with fundamental questions regarding the relationship between discourse and authority. How can we best characterize the relationship between discourse production and reception on the one hand, and the means by which authority, legitimacy, and social inequality are generated and deployed on the other?

Although recent and important work in a wide range of fields has informed this question, it seems also to have widened the gap between the empiricist and often microanalytic approach taken by most linguistic anthropologists, linguists, and sociologists in defining “discourse” and identifying its constituents in a given discursive realm, and the more critical approach of practitioners whom we might loosely group under the rubric of cultural studies. This latter approach tends to address broad political and historical issues more squarely at the same time that it manifests a reluctance to provide close analyses of the

operations that take place in the sites where “power,” “institutional control,” “logocentrism,” “patriarchy,” and the like are generated. We maintain that this hiatus between empirical discussions of linguistic forms and functions and critical analyses of race, class, gender, or nation is due, in part, to the way that academic discourses are embedded in extant processes of investing authority in particular methods of producing and receiving discourse.

As a host of writers have argued, one of the difficulties that haunts discussions of language emerges from ideologies that reduce discourse to systems of signs existing apart from history, social inequality, politics, and gender. This move acquired particular power through the universalizing rhetorics that predominated in the Enlightenment, as well as in much of the thinking that preceded and postdated it. Just as particular conceptions of “man,” “nature,” “mind,” or “knowledge” were promoted to the status of essential characteristics of *Homo sapiens* always and everywhere, writers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries commonly focused their efforts on demonstrating that language was also possessed of universal properties and functions. The fruits of this universalization were clearly evident in the second half of the nineteenth century, by which time many scholars of language felt that they could focus on the empirical work of identifying phonological, grammatical, lexical, and semantic elements and relations and their historical constitution. Recent research has shown how these supposedly universal features emerged from socially, culturally, and historically circumscribed features of the languages spoken by, as well as the lived experience and political-economic interests of, their authors (see, for example, Silverstein 1985; Taylor 1990a, 1990b).

Such efforts at analyzing the linguistic ideologies that shape discussions of language can easily fall prey to the very ideological pitfalls that they seek to expose. As Woolard and Schieffelin (1994:57) suggest in their review of work in this area, language ideologies are generally framed as “ideas,” “objectives,” “beliefs,” “notions,” and the like, particularly insofar as they form “sets,” “systems,” and “shared bodies.” A problem here is that studies that adopt such a focus may themselves be unduly shaped by the way the authors they study focus attention on abstract, generalized notions about language. It thus becomes more difficult to make a conceptual leap from the description of “systems” of

"ideas" to questions of their social and political effects in social life. We suggest that Locke and Herder, founding fathers of Western ideologies of language, and their contemporary critics tend to divert attention from the way that discussions of language promote, resist, or run cover for particular practices of discourse production and reception.

We would like to suggest that these practices are evident in two important ways in discussions of language. They emerge, first, from the representational content of texts, as authors describe and analyze competing methods of writing and reading, speaking and listening, generally seeking to delegitimize competing strategies while arguing for the superior theoretical grounding and/or empirical usefulness of the ones they promote. Most of these discussions also attempt to draw on the power of what Silverstein (1993) refers to as implicit metapragmatics; here authors use the form and functions of features of their own texts as exemplars of preferred practices, thereby attempting to imbue both texts and practices with authority.

The practices that interest us more directly in this essay emerge from the capacity of discourse to both represent and regulate other discourses, in order to draw attention to this reflexive relationship, we use the term *metadiscursive practices* (see Bauman 1993; Briggs 1993). The power to represent and to constrain discourse clearly relates to more than referential content and stylistic characteristics alone, as important as they may be. Metadiscursive practices shape, both positively and negatively, processes of producing and receiving texts, affecting who is authorized to speak or write or to be listened to or read, and in what sorts of social and institutional spaces. As we have argued previously (Bauman and Briggs 1990), rights to recontextualize speech are of great importance as well. We are particularly concerned with how particular modes of producing and receiving texts are imbued with authority. By legitimating certain metadiscursive practices and suppressing others, Locke and Herder promoted ideologies of language that emphasized shared identity while at the same time generating means of creating hierarchical rankings of discourses and modes of producing and receiving them. These discursive hierarchies both reflected and helped create emergent forms of social hierarchy. We will argue that intertextuality—that is, explicit or implicit links between texts—is of critical importance in the efforts of these writers to authorize particular

metadiscursive practices. Many of their assertions as to what sorts of texts and modes of creating and receiving them should be authoritative revolve around where intertextual links should be visible or invisible, how they should be generated, and what sorts of authority should accrue to them.

In centering our work on metadiscursive practices, we hope to provide ourselves with analytic resources for addressing the relationship between discursive processes and questions of authority and social inequality. By doing so, we hope to create a sort of unholy alliance between the empiricist and critical approaches to discourse analysis referred to above. In drawing attention to the interpenetration of discourses and to intertextuality, we draw on Bakhtin's (1981) social, political, and textual dialogism and Kristeva's (1980) characterization of intertextuality or "transposition." While an emphasis on *practices* certainly draws on the emphasis that has been accorded the term in the wake of Bourdieu's (1977) work, our usage here is most closely in accord with Foucault's (1972) concept of "discursive practice." We follow Foucault in drawing attention to discourse not simply as what was said or written but rather as practices that determine the limits of what can be expressed, the social relations of discourse production and reception, and the way discourse constitutes institutional configurations. Bakhtin, Kristeva, Bourdieu, and Foucault do not, however, offer a rich array of analytic tools for identifying how discourses intersect and exert control over discourse production and reception. We accordingly draw on Silverstein's (1976, 1993) work on metapragmatics and that of other linguistic anthropologists in attempting to analyze metadiscursive practices rigorously and at the same time to trace their social underpinnings and effects.

Our selection of Locke and Herder for this analysis is arbitrary in the sense that any major statement of linguistic ideology contains representations of practices of discourse production and reception. Our choice is also highly motivated, however, by the conviction that these authors contributed fundamentally to the establishment of two modes of connecting conceptions of language with metadiscursive practices that not only played a key role in the emergence of contemporary Western society but have hardly lost their force today. Locke attempted to delegitimize nearly all interactionally, socially, institutionally, politically, and

historically based modes of producing and receiving texts. In his view, writing and reading, speaking and listening must emerge from connections between language and knowledge that are systematically stripped of all contextual and intertextual associations. By attacking textual authority, particularly as it is interactionally and intertextually produced, he rendered it less visible.

Herder, on the other hand, emerges as the Romantic champion of all that Locke sought to suppress: intertextuality, discursive authority, tradition, the social and cultural grounding of discourse, and the sensory celebration of poetics. By identifying the intertextual and social authority of discourse vis-à-vis its "authentic" connection with particular social formations (the patriarchal family, *das Volk*, "the German people," etc.), however, he rendered invisible the role of his own metadiscursive practices in constructing these social forms and subordinating them to the interests of the then emerging bourgeoisie and nation-state.

SCIENCE, RELIGION, AND THE MISSION OF LOCKE'S ESSAY

John Locke concludes his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, the work in which he presents his philosophy of language in its fullest terms, with a threefold division of the sciences: natural philosophy, practica, and the doctrine of signs (IV.xxi.1-4).¹ This classification argues for the need to place Locke's *Essay* in the context of the emergence in the seventeenth century of the "new science." The scientific movement created an epistemological shift; as it became more fully institutionalized over a century later, it had a profound effect on the structure of society (see Berman 1978). A transformation of language ideologies and metadiscursive practices was shaped by and helped construct and legitimate the intellectual, technological, and social revolutions associated with the emergence of modern science.

As Gruner (1977:114) notes, the mode of scientific inquiry that was formed during the seventeenth century is distinguished less by the kinds of objects it investigated than by its methods. Behind the differences that separate deductive from inductive approaches and rationalism from empiricism lie a host of shared assumptions. Perhaps the most basic of these is the role of abstraction and idealization in gaining

knowledge of the natural world. As Hall (1963:235) suggests, the main object of the mechanical philosophy associated with such figures as Galileo, Boyle, and Newton is the principle of the simplicity of physical structure. In order to understand things scientifically, the experienced complexity and diversity of phenomena must be broken up conceptually into their basic components. Understanding nature thus entails discovering the fundamental elements that are the same everywhere and discerning their motions or relations.

The great conceptual breakthrough of Galileo, Newton, and others was to wed the concern with abstraction, idealization, and the uniformity of nature with mathematical reasoning. Mathematics, as Hall (1963:80) argues, provided science with a model for seeing nature as consistent and ideal, and allowed practitioners to generalize from one example to all similar instances with certainty. Abstraction, experimentation, and mathematical theorization enabled Newton and his followers to wage what Hall (1963:131) aptly refers to as "a joint attack on the complexity of things."

Hobbes, who applied Galileo's mechanical philosophy to politics, wrote that "[t]he Scripture was written to shew unto men the kingdom of God; and to prepare their mindes to become his obedient subjects; leaving the world, and the Philosophy thereof, to the disputation of men, for the exercising of their naturall Reason" (1968:145). As Gruner (1977) argues, both rationalists and empiricists made human beings—and particularly the human mind—the central point of reference. The mechanical philosophy of the seventeenth century rejected the search for the essential, intrinsic structure of nature in favor of the way it is experienced by humans through their senses. According to this philosophy, human beings possess no special insight into the ultimate nature of things, which is the purview of divine knowledge; on the other hand, humans could speak with authority regarding the way the world impinged upon their senses. Similarly, the study of Aristotelian final causes was rejected in favor of concern with efficient causes, again replacing a range of phenomena not fully accessible to humans with one that could be ascertained through experimentation.

Followers of the "new science" rejected the belief that humans could circumvent natural law through magic and alchemy and subscribed to the view that the world could truly be known only by human-

made models that reduced the flux of experience to abstract principles and procedures. This conceptual step formed a necessary prerequisite to using science as a means of gaining power over nature. As we shall see, once the gaze of the new science was focused on it, language seemed particularly in need of reduction to fully accessible, elementary, and unified units and relations if it were to take its place alongside the scientific study of nature in the search for knowledge, utility, and domination.

The principal institutional agent of the new science was the Royal Society, formed in 1660, eleven years before Locke finished the first two drafts of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. According to its 1662 royal charter, the Royal Society was intended "to be employed for the promoting of the knowledge of natural things, and useful Arts by Experiments" (quoted in Sprat 1958:134; see also Purver 1967). Robert Boyle, Christopher Wren, and Robert Hooke joined the Royal Society a few years later, and Newton and Locke became members as well. After receiving assurance from the Dutch mathematician, scientist, and inventor Christian Huygens that Newton's mathematics was reliable, Locke incorporated Newton's scientific ideas into his own work and helped to create an image of Newton as a prominent philosopher (Hall 1963:297, 319). In his *Essay*, Locke (IV.vii.11) refers to Newton's *Principia* as a "never enough to be admired book." Aarsleff (1982:56) suggests that Locke knew and admired Boyle's work more than that of any other individual. The *Essay* was dedicated to Thomas Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, who was president of the Royal Society when the work appeared in 1690. In a lengthy "Epistle to the Reader," Locke (Epistle I:14) characterizes his role as that of "an under-labourer in clearing the ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge," thus placing himself in relation to such "master-builders" in "the commonwealth of learning" as Boyle, Huygens, and Newton.

Locke had his task cut out for him. If we accept the origin myth that Locke provides for his own narrative, it was precisely the *failure* of discourse that prompted Locke to write the *Essay*: "I should tell thee, that five or six friends meeting at my chamber, and discoursing on a subject very remote from this, found themselves quickly at a stand, by the difficulties that rose on every side" (Epistle I:9). Locke thus seeks to legitimate his project by linking it to a master narrative of seventeenth-

century England: the story of the individual male philosopher/scientist who finds himself surrounded by disorder and uncertainty. Virtually compelled by these circumstances to set out on a mission that seeks to provide a new conceptual foundation, he proposes a model for creating conceptual, scientific, and social order and exhorts his readers to promulgate it or at least to proclaim its legitimacy.

We would be rather naive in assuming, however, that Locke's purpose in writing the *Essay* emerged whole cloth in the course of this gathering of friends. In his Epistle (I:14), Locke explicitly ties his efforts to the widespread conviction that the abuses of language had degraded philosophy to such a degree that it impeded the advance of knowledge and "was thought unfit or incapable to be brought into well-bred company and polite conversation." Locke thus characterizes his *Essay*, a founding document of linguistic and semiotic inquiry, as an effort to make language and human understanding safe for science—and for society.

How could Locke establish confidence in phenomena that lacked the certainty, reliability, and subtlety of nature? Locke (Introduction I:28) reports that his efforts center on investigating the "original" of ideas in an effort "to show what *knowledge* the understanding hath by those ideas" and to explore the nature of faith or opinion. By attaining a firmer grasp on the powers of the mind, Locke hopes to prevail upon his readers "to sit down in a quiet ignorance of those things which, upon examination, are found to be beyond the reach of our capacities." We will return to this below, as it bears important implications with respect to the relationship between metadiscursive practices and linguistic hegemony.

Locke may have simply inherited the fundamental problem with which he struggled, but his proposed solution was brilliant and largely original. Bacon had argued in the *Novum Organum* (1863) that the fundamental failing of concepts and words is that they are less reliable than scientific observations and mathematical models as means of representing the nature of things. In his *History of the Royal Society*, Thomas Sprat (1958:62) went on to claim that Society members would free philosophy "not so much, by any solemnity of Laws, or ostentation of Ceremonies; as by solid Practice, and examples: not, by a glorious pomp of Words; but by the silent, effectual, and unanswerable

Arguments of real Productions"; the place of words in the presentation of scientific findings could be taken directly by "Inventions, Motions and Operations" (1958:327). If language was to be saved, and many doubted that it could be, it must be made to function like the more certain forms of knowledge. Turning this notion on its head, Locke argues that the value of language and thought as means of acquiring knowledge is derived precisely from their fundamental *difference* from the means by which we could come to know nature through observation. Language is, he claims, essentially reliable; reforming language thus involves developing a greater and more systematic appreciation of its particular nature rather than trying to make it look more like knowledge of the natural world.

Having indicated why we consider it productive to examine Locke's language ideology within the context of the emergent scientific epistemologies of the seventeenth century, we must recognize as well that religious factors played a significant role in shaping Locke's ideas on language and discursive practice. Ironically, it is a testimonial to the epistemological power of Locke's philosophy of science that we should have to do so, for his ideas were instrumental in relocating the boundary between the two domains at a considerable remove from the point at which he and his colleagues in the Royal Society would have located it. It is suggestive in this regard to learn that the subject of the discourse that engaged the five or six friends who met in Locke's chambers, according to one of the participants, was "the principle of morality and revealed religion" (James Tyrell, quoted in Woolhouse 1997:xi). This prompts Woolhouse to suggest, "Perhaps, then, the questions about which 'difficulties rose on every side' concerned the manner in which the principles of morality are discovered and known to be true, and the role and authority of religious revelation as a source and foundation of morality," hotly debated issues in the tumultuous public sphere of mid-seventeenth-century England. "Questions about the possible sources of moral knowledge specifically," Woolhouse (1997:xi) continues, "could certainly have exposed the need for a wider investigation into the extent to which knowledge of any kind is attainable by the human mind."

Religious knowledge was central to the program of the Royal Society. Thomas Sprat (quoted in Aarsleff 1994:254) declares in his

History that "the intellectual Disposition of this Age is bent upon a rational Religion," consistent with the notion that the goal of science was to illuminate God's hand in creation. Recognition of the place of religion in the scientific epistemology of Locke's day should make us aware in turn that the metadiscursive regimentation of science and of religion are mutually implicated in Locke's writings.

Toward a Doctrine of Signs

The significance of Locke's departure from established Western linguistic ideologies and practices cannot be overemphasized. As Aarsleff (1982) notes, Locke's *Essay* had a profound impact on thinking about language during the following three centuries. Before turning to Locke's treatment of metadiscursive practices, we will outline four facets of his conceptualization of language: (1) the notion that language forms part of a special domain that he termed the "semiotic"; (2) an approach to language that privileges abstraction and decontextualization; (3) the equation of linguistic order with atomistic, minimal units (signs) rather than larger discursive units; and (4) the proposition that signs were relatively arbitrary, conventional, shared, and context-free.

Locke concludes his *Essay* (IV.xxi.5) with the following sentence: "All which three, viz. *things*, as they are in themselves knowable; *actions* as they depend on us, in order to happiness; and the right use of *signs* in order to knowledge, being *totto coelo* different, they seemed to me to be the three great provinces of the intellectual world, wholly separate and distinct one from another." The third branch, which Locke terms "the doctrine of signs," is concerned with "the nature of signs, the mind makes use of for the understanding of things, or conveying its knowledge to others" (IV.xxi.4). Locke argues that words, as signs, stand not for "the reality of things" but for "ideas in the mind of the speaker." As such, the association of sound and idea is based not on a natural connection but on "a perfectly arbitrary imposition" that is created by "the free choice of the mind, pursuing its own ends" (III.ii.4-5, 12).

Locke argues that we can never know the internal constitution of things, which he refers to as "real essences"; the common view that words stand "for the reality of things" is accordingly mistaken. In building his theory of conventional and arbitrary associations between words

and ideas, Locke makes a basic distinction between words that stand for simple ideas and general words. Simple ideas are products of sensation, "those impressions objects themselves make on our minds" (III.iv.11). Their meaning is accordingly determined by sense experience and cannot be defined through language. Their meaning must rather be characterized by specifying the sensations from which they are derived. While the mind is thus more passive in forming simple ideas, it does not simply reflect either things or sensations. A simple idea of an apple is abstracted from the sensations that emanate from a range of real, particular apples; in its formation, information is selected from the available range of sensory impressions.

Most words are, in contrast, general terms; unlike simple ideas, which are tied to classes of things, general terms are created by the mind by combining a number of simple ideas. Since the mind is free to combine simple ideas that are not associated in nature, it necessarily selects certain sensory characteristics and rejects others as a basis for creating a general term. "Mixed modes" thus refer directly to "ideas in the mind" rather than to things in the world, even though the process of construction is ultimately retracable through reflection (III.v.1). This conception allows Locke to retain a commitment to the primacy of sense data while at the same time suggesting that sense data play a vastly different role in language than in knowledge of things in themselves.

Locke repeatedly discusses the central role of abstraction in the creation of general names. The abstract ideas that mediate between simple ideas and general names are derived by factoring out the particulars through which each simple idea differs and "retaining only those wherein they agree" (III.iii.9). Meaning and language itself emerge, in Peircean terms, from a suppression of indexicality—that is, ties to context—in favor of the creation of symbols. Locke (III.iii.6) points specifically to the crucial importance of abstraction from physical, social, and linguistic contexts: "Words become general by being made the signs of general ideas: and ideas become general, by separating from them the circumstances of time and place, and any other ideas that may determine them to this or that particular existence."

The equation of language with abstraction is rationalized in part by the need for economy. Noting that "the true end of speech... is to be the easiest and shortest way of communicating our notions" (III.vi.33),

Locke argues that the ability to encompass a number of particulars within a general class enables us to avoid wasting "our time and breath in tedious descriptions" (III.vi.30). A second consideration goes to the heart of Locke's concern with the nature of human understanding and the reason that language plays a central role in acquiring knowledge. Since things in themselves are only particulars, direct contemplation of things is incapable of yielding universal knowledge. Words, on the other hand, are signs of general classes created by the mind; since they are abstract, words provide means of creating the sorts of true and universal propositions to which Locke grants epistemological privilege. Once general terms have been combined in propositions, it is possible to derive conclusions that are universal, certain, and eternal. Truth and abstraction are one: "Truth, then seems to me... to signify nothing but the joining or separating of Signs" (IV.v.2). Locke repeatedly turns to mathematics as a model for discourse in view of its ability to use economical, basic terms with precisely defined values in generating universal, certain propositions (see, for example, Locke 1971:70, 91). He argues that the ability to derive general truths and abstract notions presupposes "the use of reason" (I.i.13); in arguing that the development of abstract ideas is progressive and not innate, Locke suggests that children, idiots, illiterates, day laborers, and savages are possessed of more limited capacities for abstract thinking than, we would presume, educated, adult Europeans.

Locke points to a crucial constraint on "the free choice of the mind" in creating signs. Sounds must be used identically by speaker and hearer in such a way as "to convey the precise notions of things." Maintaining a rigid one-to-one correspondence between sound and meaning is, accordingly, requisite for communication: "It is plain cheat and abuse, when I make [words] stand sometimes for one thing and sometimes for another" (III.x.5).

Here Locke has reconceptualized language in such a way as to counter the deep skepticism expressed by Bacon and by his fellow members of the Royal Society. Speech and thought are not only based in sense data; they also draw on means of abstracting from particulars that are just as systematic as those associated with experimental science. But Locke has really taken a much more fundamental step, not only making language safe for science but constructing an ideology of

should rather be strictly limited, leading us as quickly as possible out of language and into universal knowledge and reason.

Creating intertextual links, for Locke, is a passive process that deters individuals from following the path to truth and knowledge; the chain of signifiers accordingly must be broken and ideas derived from texts must be "divested of the false lights and deceitful ornaments of speech" (Locke 1971:93). Rather than making meaning immediately accessible, intertextuality embeds it in the discourses articulated by other people and in other times (III.ix.9-10). According to Locke, knowledge must be internalized by each individual through rational reflection at the same time that it is externalized by connecting it, through observation and sense perception, with reality. Otherwise, individuals will be discursively dependent on others "without being steady and settled in their own judgements" (Locke 1971:39). A person's reading "makes his understanding only the warehouse of other men's lumber" (1971:93). In a similarly individualistic and utilitarian metaphor, intertextuality is compared to "borrowed wealth" and "fairy money," which cannot be used as currency and "make no considerable addition to [one's] stock" (I.iii.24). Steven Shapin (1994) argues that members of the Royal Society took an emergent image of the independent gentleman—who did not need to lean on anyone for social, economic, or intellectual support—and used it in constructing a model of the natural philosopher; the growing cachet of science fashioned this figure into a dominant icon of the emergent modern social order. (See also Shapin and Schaffer 1985.)

Like Bacon, Locke attacked the notion that discursive authority should be vested in particular persons or texts. As is well known, Locke was a staunch opponent of the notion of innate ideas, which contradicted his conception of the arbitrary nature of signs and their ultimate derivation from sensation and reflection. His attack on innate ideas also stemmed, however, from his efforts to discredit extant metadiscursive practices. If we accept the proposition that some ideas are central, innate, and universal, Locke argues, these ideas will be used to create fixed intertextual bases for the production and interpretation of discourse. Such a practice would simply fill our heads with "other men's opinions"; the comprehension of truth and reason would thus be undertaken by another, and "what in them was science, is in us but

language modeled on the very properties of scientific knowledge that held the most cachet for its seventeenth-century proponents—and, we would argue, most twentieth-century proponents of a scientific outlook as well. According to Bacon and Sprat, language was damned as a means of acquiring knowledge by its intrinsic association with rhetoric, intertextuality, social interaction, and conflict, that is, with difference, politics, and historical particularity. Locke cut the conceptual links between language and society, politics, and history by arguing that the indexical grounding of speech in the social world is not its intrinsic character but is rather "plain cheat and abuse"—the way that misguided individuals get detoured from the true linguistic path. For Locke, language's essential nature remains untouched by these characteristics; it rather embodies the characteristics most highly prized by his fellows in the Royal Society, "a reliable, certain, but abstract relationship to particulars." Locke's perspective recasts efforts to create scientific practices that discard language entirely or invent artificial languages as unnecessary and misguided. Since language is intrinsically reliable, all that is needed to render it both a perfect mode of communication and a reliable means of generating universal propositions, knowledge, and truth is a program of reform that would clear away "the cheat and abuse" of words.

What is the source of language's contamination? In the *Essay on Human Understanding* as well as in *Of the Conduct of the Understanding* (1971) and *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1989), Locke attacks metadiscursive practices that promote referential ambiguity and variability, and he attempts substitute practices that are more in line with his characterization of language's conceptual foundation. Intertextuality lies at the core of unacceptable metadiscursive practices. Locke argues that discourse that is produced through explicitly intertextual links is deeply grounded indexically in particular texts, persons, and activities. Beyond being incapable of producing the abstract, general thinking that generates knowledge, such practices simply provide a cover for semantic indeterminacy, shifting definitions, weak arguments, and imperfections of knowledge (IV.xx.17). Practices that emphasize intertextuality lead squarely in the wrong direction for Locke, creating endless links between discourses that draw interlocutors further and further into language itself. The "intervention of words" (III.ix.21)

opiniatry" (i.e., opinionatedness; Liv.24). No matter how true they might be, ideas gained in this fashion can contribute nothing to knowledge and reason. Locke strongly attacked textual authority itself; language must serve only as a neutral and transparent means of communicating ideas that exist in the mind of the speaker. Authoritative texts, he asserted, encourage belief at the expense of knowledge and comprehension. Whereas belief is dialogic, involving social and discursive relationships, knowledge is monologic, individual, rational, and universal. We will have more to say about this monologic internalization of the word later.

One rubric Locke uses to frame his attack on intertextuality is tradition. Locke conceived of tradition as intertextually constituted, a chain of testimonies with each successive link standing at a farther remove from the experiential base of true knowledge. "[A]ny testimony," he maintains,

the further off it is from the original truth, the less force and proof it has. The being and existence of the thing itself, is what I call the original truth. A credible man vouching his knowledge of it, is a good proof: but if another equally credible, do witness it from his report, the testimony is weaker; and a third that attests from hearsay of an hearsay, is yet less considerable. So that *in traditional truths, each remove weakens the force of the proof*: and the more hands the tradition has successively passed through, the less strength and evidence does it receive from them. (IV.xvi.10)

Locke recognizes here the metadiscursive foundation of traditional authority in the course of denying its legitimacy. This is a resonant moment in the advent of modernity, as Locke advances "rational man" as the arbiter of "authentic truths," displacing "men [who] look on opinions to gain force by growing older" (IV.xvi.10).

According to Locke, it is especially difficult to extirpate intertextually based practices because they are closely associated with the way individuals acquire signs. Particularly in the case of signs that signify complex ideas, we first appropriate names through conversation without being sure that we grasp the ideas they signify. This process is of tremendous importance developmentally, in Locke's view, "in that chil-

dren, being taught words, whilst they have but imperfect notions of things, apply them at random, and without much thinking, and seldom frame determined ideas to be signified by them" (III.xi.24). The metadiscursive practices that Locke attacks are, moreover, rooted in "custom," such that contextual and intertextual associations can be extirpated only with great difficulty. Here Locke constructs a dichotomy between discursive practices associated with rationality, involving logical relationships between decontextualized signs, and practices that order signs and shape their meaning indexically through contextual and intertextual links. Rather than leading "men" to a deeper grasp of the intrinsic nature of language, such practices deprive them of their common sense by filling their heads with "some independent ideas, of no alliance to one another, [that] are, by education, custom, and the constant din of their party, so coupled in their minds that they always appear there together" (II.xxxiii.18).

Although Locke asserts that his program of language reform through practices of linguistic self-help is generally applicable, he notes repeatedly that it is more applicable to some persons and in some discursive spheres than others. Arguing that language is used for "recording our own thoughts" and "for the communicating of our thoughts to others" (III.ix.1), Locke suggests that the communicative function is accomplished distinctly in civil and philosophical spheres. The *civil use* of words "may serve for the upholding common conversation and commerce, about the ordinary affairs and conveniences of civil life," but their *philosophical* use revolves around communicating "the precise notions of things" and general propositions regarding "certain and undoubted truths" that provide solid conceptual and discursive foundations (III.ix.3). Locke suggests that the requirements for semantic precision and referential constancy are more stringent in the philosophical domain, whereas "[v]ulgar notions suit vulgar discourses... Merchants and lovers, cooks and tailors, have words wherewithal to dispatch their ordinary affairs" (III.xi.10). He notes that "it would be well, too, if [the process of stabilizing and strictly delimiting significations] extended itself to common conversation and the ordinary affairs of life" (III.xi.10), but seems to doubt that individuals who must devote themselves to "ordinary affairs" are likely to benefit from his program of conceptual and linguistic reform. We will comment below on the

importance of Locke's assertion that the language of some social groups is more susceptible to reform than that of others.

Locke's approach to remedying the abuse of words essentially boils down to two principles. First, we must reflect on the words we use to ensure clear and constant relationships between ideas and names. Individuals are to sit down and systematize the meaning of each word in their vocabulary through its correspondence with sense data. Each sign can then be placed in a constant and logical relationship vis-à-vis all other signs, and each act of speaking is to be guided by this internalized lexicon. Second, individuals who have undertaken this process of self-correction must be constantly on guard against the possibility that their interlocutors might not define signs in the same fashion.

The language ideology and metadiscursive practices that Locke proposes have profound implications for social inequality. In his treatment of understanding and language, Locke develops a strong cognitive and linguistic component to his doctrine of natural rights. All persons are born with "faculties and powers" that would enable them to cultivate their understanding and heighten their linguistic precision. Not everyone subjects himself or herself, however, to the "much time, pains, and skill, strict inquiry, and long examination" (III.vi.30) required for this process of linguistic reflection and reasoning. Locke makes it clear that social class, occupation, and gender create great gulfs in the ability of individuals to reason, the breadth of their understanding, and the degree of verbal competence they achieve. "The day labourer in a country village has commonly but a small pittance of knowledge because his ideas and notions have been confined to the narrow bounds of a poor conversation and employment" (Locke 1971:10); such "men of low and mean education" are similarly "no more capable of reasoning than almost a perfect natural" (1971:21). Philosophers and truth seekers, on the other hand, *must* develop their understanding, rationality, and verbal skills, and he deems such training necessary for the education of gentlemen. The relevance of gender as well as social class is clear here. Locke notes, for example, that women, like men whose business is confined to common life, can appropriately develop verbal skills entirely by rote; gentlemen and philosophers, on the other hand, should master grammatical rules and perfect the stylistic features of their speech (Locke 1989:224). Thus, as we

ascend the social ladder in terms of both class and rank, consciousness of linguistic structure and language use becomes increasingly necessary. Locke's nascent sociolinguistics (of which more later) suggests that those who occupy the lower rungs are not able to gain access to the metadiscursive practices that promote conceptual and linguistic excellence.

The development of reasoning and linguistic precision is limited by the range of experiences gained through one's occupation and the amount of leisure time available. Differential competence in reasoning and using language properly becomes pronounced, according to Locke, through practice. He argues, "We are born with faculties and powers capable of almost anything... but it is only the exercise of those powers which give us ability and skill in anything, and leads us towards perfection" (Locke 1971:13). Locke observed long ago that social class is inscribed on the body as much as it is on the tongue when he suggested that it is training and practice that create differences in "carriage and language" between a middle-aged ploughman and a gentleman (1971:13). The ability "to reason well or speak handsomely" is limited by an individual's access to the metadiscursive practices that instill such competence—and thus quite clearly by class and gender.

In outlining his proposal for perfecting language by standardizing it, Locke suggests that the linguistically enlightened have the right and the duty to regulate the language use of their interlocutors. The self-disciplining process must accordingly be extended interpersonally: "In discourse with others, (if we find them mistake us,) we ought to tell what the complex idea is that we make such a name stand for" (III.xi.24). The inverse is true as well, such that the linguistically unformed pose a conceptual if not social danger: "He that uses words without any clear and steady meaning" may "lead himself and others into errors," and thus "ought to be looked on as an enemy to truth and knowledge" (III.xi.5). Locke makes it clear that the rationalizing process accords individuals the right to discipline others; bonding together in a joint effort to make our words clear and ensure that we use them identically, we are "not to be unwilling to have them examined by others" (III.v.16). The linguistically enlightened can also play a special role in policing the language acquisition of children, "diligently to watch, and carefully to prevent the undue connexion of ideas in the minds of young people" (II.xxxiii.8). In the Epistle Dedicatory to *Some*

Thoughts Concerning Education, Locke argues that the most care should be devoted to the education of gentlemen: "For if those of that Rank are by their Education once set right, they will quickly bring all the rest into Order" (1989:80).

Having presented a new ideology of language, Locke seeks to legitimate a new set of metadiscursive practices by claiming that they can help perfect language by capitalizing on its real nature. For him, the discursive practices that are antithetical to rationality and science are embodied in the *bête noire* of rhetoric, particularly as it emerged in "the art of disputation." In Locke's view, rhetoric, especially as embodied in the discursive practices of the "schoole-men," brings into high relief what he regarded as the core of language: abstract and decontextualized signs with precise, nonoverlapping, stable meanings arranged in logical relations. At the same time, the dangers of rhetoric underlined for him the need to reform existing discursive practices. According to Locke, rhetoric fosters unexamined, imprecise uses of language ordered through intertextual and other types of indexical linkages. Since it confounds rather than clarifies meaning, "the admired Art of Disputing hath added much to the natural imperfection of languages" (III.x.6) and kept "even inquisitive men from true knowledge" (III.x.10).

Rhetoric becomes the foe of rationality and knowledge through its connection with passion, emotionality, and external authority. Locke's ideal discursive type—plain speech that conveys information with maximal economy through referentially stable signs—engages the rational capacity of the mind in an active process, one that enables it to create and evaluate clear arguments. Rhetoric and its devices (metaphor, figurative meaning, dialectic, syllogisms, and the like) rather render the mind passive and foster an emotional attachment to the words of others, thus engendering social as well as intellectual dependence. As Barrilli (1989:78–81) notes, Locke echoed the Baconian dichotomy that opposes the universality of logic to the particularity of rhetoric. Reason needs only the discursive common denominator, stable signs, to convey it, and it is accordingly free of the indexicality that links rhetoric to texts and/or discursive interactions. Discourse must be purified of interest—that is, free from the influence of individual agency, social location, and history. Rational discourse thus leads one to truth,

which is characterized as universal, unimpeachable, and intrinsic knowledge, "the necessary and indubitable connexion of all the ideas or proofs one to another" (IV.xvii.2). Locke draws on cross-cultural comparisons to support his claim for the universality of plain speech and the marginality of rhetoric: men can reason quite adequately in Asia and America "who yet never heard of a syllogism" (IV.xvii.4).

Locke marginalizes rhetoric by aestheticizing it as verbal ornamentation and locating it in the realm of "wit and fancy" (III.x.34). Since it strives for entertainment and pleasantries, rhetoric can be tolerated "in discourses where we seek rather pleasure and delight than information and improvement" (III.x.34). Moreover, rhetoric is condemned as not only an art but a false one at that—"the art of rhetoric" really amounts to the "arts of fallacy." Locke urges that "in all discourses that pretend to inform or instruct, it is wholly to be avoided" (II:146). The discursive realm to which rhetoric is relegated must be tabooed not only for thwarting reason and knowledge but also for the seductive power of its beauty.

This forbidden terrain is occupied, for Locke, by two other superfluous and dangerous characters: women and poetry. By way of anticipating charges of "great boldness, if not brutality" for speaking against rhetoric, Locke (III.x.34) notes: "Eloquence, like the fair sex, has too prevailing beauties in it to suffer itself ever to be spoken against. And it is in vain to find fault with those arts of deceiving, wherein men find pleasure to be deceived." He creates a powerfully seductive analogy, aligning his dichotomy between knowledge, truth, universality, rationality, agency, and science, on the one hand, and passion, beauty, belief, passivity, particularity, error, deceit, and rhetoric on the other, with the relationship between men and women. Interestingly, Locke simultaneously denies women access as skilled practitioners into the feminine realm of rhetoric. Learning to speak and write in the "plain Natural way," that is by rote, will suffice for women and for those engaged in "the common Affairs of Life and ordinary commerce" (Locke 1989:224, 225). The way Locke connects gender and class in this assertion becomes more explicit as he goes on to suggest that all gentlemen should be taught grammar and rhetoric "since the want of Propriety, and Grammatical Exactness, is thought very misbecoming [to] one of that Rank, and usually draws on one guilty of such Faults,

the censure of having had a Lower Breeding and worse Company, than suits with his quality" (1989:225). We will have more to say later about this contradiction in Locke's view of rhetoric.

Locke allowed even less space in his schema for poetics than for rhetoric. Poetry, for Locke, is simply referential redundancy. If the use of words is confined to the expression of clear and distinct ideas through stable significations, large tomes "would shrink into a very narrow compass; and many of the philosophers (to mention no other) as well as poets works, might be contained in a nutshell" (III.xi.26). In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1989:230), Locke argues that poetry is socially useless, a waste of time that squanders estates rather than produces wealth and places one in "bad company and places." Poetry should thus be expunged from education, or at least from the teaching of gentlemen, and parents whose children possess a "Poetic Vein...should labour to have it stifled, and suppressed" (1989:230). Here Locke would seem to muster religious overtones in linking aesthetics with frivolity, desire, and sin.² Poetry, like rhetoric, embodies for Locke the excesses of language, the points at which language steps beyond "the true end of speech, which is to be the easiest and shortest way of communicating our notions" (III.vi.33), inverting the means-ends relationship with content in celebrating form for form's sake.

We hasten to note a fascinating exception to Locke's dismissal of rhetoric, one that emerges in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. There he is concerned with an aspect of "ill-breeding" that springs from failing to show "Respect, Esteem, and Good-will" for one's interlocutors (Locke 1989:203). According to Locke, the appearance of disrespect can spring from several factors. A "natural roughness" precludes consideration of the "inclinations, tempers, or conditions" of interlocutors (1989:201). Other sources of interpersonal friction include displaying contempt or censoriousness toward others or, on the other hand, flattery and excessive formality ("Ceremony"). Locke seems to have anticipated Bakhtin, Goffman, and reception theory by observing that only clowns and brutes fail to perceive "what pleases or displeases" their interlocutors or to "bend to a compliance and accommodate themselves to those they have to do with" (1989:201). The contradictory character of his call for dialogicality in conversation goes hand in hand with his assertions that such sensitivity will not only dis-

play good breeding but "bespeak the more favourable Attention and give great Advantage" (1989:205) and that more "Credit and Esteem" will be accrued by offering even an ill argument or ordinary observation "with some civil Preface of Deference and Respect to the Opinions of others" than by presenting a clever argument "with a rough, insolent, or noisy Management" (1989:203).

Locke specifically argues for the centrality of discursive interaction here. "*Good-Breeding*" is not essentially a matter of taking off hats and holding one's legs properly: "*Civility* being, in truth, nothing but a care to show any slighting, or contempt, of any one in Conversation" (1989:203). Locke astutely observes the range of channels that shape the conversational encounter—"Looks, Voice, Words, Motions, Gestures" (1989:200)—and anticipates both Benjamin Lee Whorf and sociolinguistics in arguing that such fashions of speaking are "as peculiar and different, in several Countries of the World, as their languages" (1989:204). Rather than giving children rules of linguistic etiquette, one should accordingly model the process of expressing love and respect "acceptably to every one, according to the Fashions they have been used to" (1989:204).

It seems clear that one of the primary motives for Locke's distrust of rhetoric and his general attack on the "cheat and abuse" of words was his clear conviction that such discursive practices are capable of generating conflict, even to the point of undermining the social order. The foregoing exception to his dismissal of rhetoric revolves around precisely this issue—conversation's potential for generating conflict must be defused. While the right to disagree with opinions and correct matters of fact must be preserved, objections must be raised "in the gentlest manner, and [with the] softest words [that] can be found" in order to preserve civility (1989:202).

As usual, "learned men" exemplify the dangers of unconstrained dispute and the disruptive potential of indexically grounded speech. Locke asserts that the learned men who "had the advantage to destroy the instruments and means of discourse, conversation, instruction, and society...did no more but perplex and confound the signification of words" (III.x.10). In areas that concern morality and ethics, for example, "Nothing can be so dangerous as *principles thus taken up without questioning or examination*" (IV.xii.4). Locke projected the abuse of words

directly onto the larger social stage, arguing that confused, indeterminate, and shifting meanings, illogical relationships between ideas, and particularly the metadiscursive practices associated with disputation "establish the irreconcilable opposition between different sects of philosophy and religion" (II.xxxiii.18) and have "brought confusion, disorder, and uncertainty into the affairs of mankind; and if not destroyed, yet in a great measure rendered useless, these two great rules, religion and justice" (III.x.12). On the other hand, when language is reformed—restored to its true nature as shared, arbitrary, and decontextualized signs, it provides a crucial social glue, "without which laws could be but ill made, or vice and disorders repressed" (II.xxii.10).

This message is powerful: language is essentially ordered and rational. When discourse is shaped by metadiscursive practices grounded in indexicality and intertextuality, however, language becomes a source of irrationality, difference, and social disorder. Imposing metadiscursive practices that center on rational self-disciplining is not only necessary for scientific advancement; the fate of civil society hinges, at least in part, on the development of new ways of speaking and practices for imposing them:

I leave it to be considered, whether it would not be well for mankind, whose concernment it is to know things as they are, and to do what they ought, and not to spend their lives in talking about them, or tossing words to and from; whether it would not be well, I say, that the use of words were made plain and direct; and that language, which was given to us for the improvement of knowledge and the bond of society, should not be employed to darken truth and unsettle people's rights. (III.x.13)

Those individuals who have undertaken Locke's process of linguistic self-disciplining are accorded a crucial role in shaping how language acquisition, discourse, and metadiscursive practices will be rationalized.

The fruits of discipline will, according to Locke, also provide a basis for deciding what can be said, in that the process of rational reflection will enlighten us as to the limits of human knowledge. These epistemological limits mark another point at which metadiscursive vig-

ilance is necessary to forestall conflict. In the course of the *Essay*, Locke identifies many theologically founded bases of certainty and assent as beyond the reach of empirically grounded reason and knowledge. John Marshall (1994:351) suggests that the overall effect of these critiques, especially within the context of the theological debates and religious turmoil of the period during which Locke composed the *Essay*, "was to suggest that no theological doctrines beyond the existence of God were beyond legitimate debate and widely differing interpretations and assents." Locke was acutely aware of the susceptibility of theological debate to degenerate into social conflict, civil war, or state-sponsored persecution, and from this awareness sprang his vigorous advocacy of toleration. In his *Letter on Toleration* (1968), revered as a charter document by champions of freedom of expression, Locke frames the argument for toleration in terms of the necessary separation of church and state, but in the *Essay* it is couched in metadiscursive terms, keyed to the limits of certainty:

Since therefore it is unavoidable to the greatest part of men, if not all, to have several *opinions*, without certain and indubitable proofs of their truths; and it carries too great an imputation of ignorance, lightness, or folly, for men to quit and renounce their former tenets, presently upon the offer of an argument, which they cannot immediately answer, and show the insufficiency of: it would, methinks, become all men to maintain *peace*, and the common offices of humanity, and *friendship*, in the *diversity of opinions*, since we cannot reasonably expect, that anyone should readily and obsequiously quit his own opinion, and embrace ours with a blind resignation to an authority, which the understanding of man acknowledges not. (IV.xvi.4)

Clearly, in Locke's view, if speech is "the great bond that holds society together" (III.xi.1), social order depends upon linguistic discipline to clear language of its imperfections as an instrument of pure reference and to purge discourse of the abuses to which interest, habit, and the practical exigencies of social life have made it susceptible. Those men who have submitted their own speech to the discipline Locke prescribes constitute a discursive elite, metadiscursive arbiters of epistemological and social order. Locke clearly counts himself among this

linguistic elect and offers his *Essay* as a self-help manual for those who seek linguistic self-improvement. Not content simply to tell people what to do, Locke seeks to model the metadiscursive practices he advocates. He asserts that he has avoided intertextuality in the construction of his text, boasting that "I shall not need to shore...up [this Discourse] with props and buttresses, leaning on borrowed or begged foundations" (Epistle I:18). Locke believes that the practices he promotes will further social as well as intellectual order: "I shall imagine I have done some service to truth, peace, and learning if, by any enlargement on this subject, I can make men reflect on their own use of language" (III.v.16).

It seems worthwhile to stress that "language" here means English. Although gentlemen should learn Latin and scholars would be wise to study Greek, it is the ability to convey one's thoughts in English that really counts. Locke faults teachers who teach rhetoric and logic in Latin and Greek "but yet never taught [their pupils] how to express themselves handsomely with their Tongues or Pens in the Language they are always to use" (1989:242). In deriding those who exalt Latin and Greek but consider English to be "the Language of the illiterate Vulgar," Locke cautions that unnamed neighboring countries "hath not thought it beneath the Publick Care, to promote and reward the improvement of their own Language" through colleges and stipends (1989:244). National pride is thus mustered to the task of reforming the English language and asserting its discursive centrality.

Locke's discussion of the importance of English seems emblematic of the social implications of his take on discourse in general, just as it anticipates a vast range of efforts to regiment English. Once simplified and standardized, English can successfully serve as an essential social glue; through its rational and universal character it can help overcome rampant social disorder and impose civility. Nevertheless, only an elite minority of the population enjoys the leisure, education, and circumstances required to undergo the process of rational reflection, referential reduction, semantic rationalization, and stylistic polishing that is needed to become a linguistic model and a flawless communicator. Thus, that which joins ultimately separates; just as social class and gender restrict access to the practices that enable speakers to dominate this

standardized code, an individual's speech closely indexes and legitimates her or his location in the social structure. Since speaking properly is tied to understanding, rationality, agency, truth, and social order, linguistic competence à la Locke provides a powerful synecdoche of one's suitability and authority as a member of civil society.

The parallels between *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and the *Two Treatises on Government* (Locke 1960) are striking in this connection. Since they occupy different "provinces of the intellectual world" and are "wholly separate and distinct one from another" (IV.xxi.5), we would hardly want to suggest that Locke sees language and knowledge on the one hand and the moral and political determination of human conduct on the other as identical. Nonetheless, both contribute in important ways to legitimating social inequality and a new social order. In these texts, Locke challenges established views that see property rights and language as intrinsically social in nature, arguing that both spring from the natural and universal endowment enjoyed by each individual. In each case, their fruitful cultivation is dependent upon an individual's use of reason; using language, labor, or property without exercising one's rationality creates conflict and social disorder.

In Locke's view, some individuals make much greater use of their natural reason. Everyone is naturally granted rationality, language, and the capacity to labor; all individuals thus possess a natural potential for rationally reflecting on their condition and use of signs.³ Locke repeatedly argues that people are only capable of utilizing capacities that they developed through sustained practice. Those who have expanded their rational capabilities can justifiably hold more property and alienate labor as well as provide models for the linguistic conduct of others. Since irrationality is associated with conflict and social disorder, those who differ, as MacPherson (1962:246) puts it, in "their ability or willingness to order their lives according to the bourgeois moral code" must accept their inferior position for the good of the society. Locke's writings on language thus seem to provide no less solid a foundation for naturalizing bourgeois society and social inequality than his political theory. In both cases, denying analytic status to difference and inequality paradoxically legitimated linguistic and political practices that created and sustained them.

LANGUAGE REFORM IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GERMANY

If the language ideology of Locke is built on the foundation of an emergent scientific epistemology, that of Johann Gottfried Herder is founded on an equally emergent conception of national literatures. It would, though, be a misrepresentation of Herder and a disservice to our argument to suggest that Herder's ideology of language is solely or narrowly about language as a vehicle for literary expression. Literature, for Herder, was a frame of orientation for a conception of language that also encompasses history, culture, and politics and that views the place of language and literature as foundational to all of these dimensions of human existence.

It is not our intention to trace in detail the biographical factors, historical forces, and individual influences that contributed to the shaping of Herder's thought. Fortunately, that task has received the attention of a number of able scholars, including Aarsleff (1982:146-209), Bendix (1997:27-44), Blackall (1978),⁴ and Clark (1969). We can, however, as we did for Locke, outline in broad terms some of the principal aspects of the intellectual context within which Herder's writings on language are to be understood.

In his wide-ranging study, *The Emergence of German as a Literary Language* (1978), Eric Blackall traces the intense preoccupation with the German language that characterized German intellectual life in the eighteenth century to the disastrous and lingering effects of the Thirty Years War, which engendered a widespread sense that Germany had lost its national pride and respect and a concomitant feeling that German culture was inferior to that of France. One manifestation of this cultural distress was a deep anxiety about the capacity of the German language as a vehicle for literature, philosophy, and other forms of intellectual expression (Blackall 1978:1-2). Importantly, however, as Blackall is at pains to establish, "the dissatisfaction was no passive despair; it was accompanied by a vigorous determination to improve the situation" (1978:1).

The intellectual stimulus for these efforts at reforming and reconstructing the German language came from such influential figures as Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who tied his program for the promotion of the vernacular to the patriotic need for pride in one's fatherland, and

Christian Thomasius, for whom the cultivation of German was part of an Enlightenment vision that demanded liberation from past habits of thought and from the separation of the world of learning from everyday life perpetuated by a reliance on Latin for intellectual expression (Barnard 1965:8; Blackall 1978:2-18; Clark 1969:10). But the efforts at linguistic reform became more broadly based as well with the growth of "German Societies," nominally open to "all aficionados of the German language," but in practice made up largely of middle-class intellectuals—priests, teachers, professors, students—with links to the universities (van Dülmen 1992:45). While programs for language reform followed many lines, both practical and theoretical, we may identify two broad problems in particular that framed the efforts of German intellectuals to comprehend the nature of language and its role in the formation of German culture, namely, the origin and evolution of language and the relationship of language and literature to national identity.

Concerning the first of these, Ernest A. Menze and Karl Menges (1992:282-83) offer a useful and concise overview of the principal theological, anthropological, and epistemological issues and positions that shaped the debates. The central questions identified by Menze and Menges were three: Is language to be considered a divine gift or the result of an evolutionary process? Is language the decisive element that differentiates humans from animals? And, what is the relationship between language and consciousness? To these, we may add a fourth: Is language a precondition of society or an outcome of the human social condition?

Those who advanced a theologically founded theory argued that humans were endowed with language by divine inspiration but differed among themselves on the question of whether God's gift consisted of ready-made language or of the capacity to create language. The proponents of a rationalist theory, by contrast, viewed language as the product of the human capacity for reason and thus as representing a fundamental contrast between humans and animals. A third, "sensualist" position held that the emergence of language, like all human knowledge, is rooted in sensory perception and shaped by the evolutionary differentiation of the senses. All of these theoretical positions implicate conceptions of the nature of society by asking if language is

prerequisite to society or a product of mankind's social nature. Indeed, the theological and the rational positions might easily be reformulated with "society" in place of "language." Further, theories of language origin are characteristically coupled with theories of its subsequent historical trajectory: progressive development, the maintenance of or degeneration from an original state of perfection, or an organic cycle of growth, maturity, decline, and death.

These problems of the origin and evolution of language were widely debated in the mid- to late-eighteenth century, deriving considerable stimulus from the contributions of Etienne Bonnot Condillac and Jean-Jacques Rousseau in France and the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment in Britain. The engagement of German scholars, like Johann Peter Süßmilch and Johann David Michaelis, with these issues took place within a broader intellectual arena that transcended political or linguistic boundaries and at the same time allowed for the valorization of particular languages as in some way superior to others (Aarsleff 1982:146–209). Indeed, one issue that raised the question of the relative capacities and merits of particular languages had to do with the second broad problem that gave focus to debates concerning language reform in eighteenth-century Germany, namely, the relationship between language and literary expression. At one level, the problem might be framed in general, universal terms, by asking, for example, what stage of linguistic development or what type of language is best suited to poetry or prose. For the most part, however, the particularities of specific languages figure prominently in consideration of language and literary expression.

As the debate was joined in eighteenth-century Germany, we find on the one hand proponents of Latin or French or even English as superior for literary purposes to German, and, on the other, champions of some variety of German—past or current, natural or constructed—as the only proper vehicle for an authentic German literature. This may state the terms of the debate in too oppositional a fashion, to be sure, for one of the most prominent figures in the arena, Johann Christoph Gottsched, advocated the German vernacular as a literary language while at the same time advancing French classical drama as a literary standard.

One prominent line of influence on German thought concerning national literatures came from the British philologists Thomas

Blackwell, Robert Lowth, Hugh Blair, and Robert Wood. Blackwell and Wood in their studies of Homer, Lowth in his classic work on ancient Hebrew poetics, and Blair in his defense of Ossian pioneered a historically, linguistically, and culturally relativist—that is to say, contextual—approach to literary expression. They insisted that the true literary qualities of the Homeric epics, the Old Testament, or the Ossianic epics could only be discovered and appreciated through a contextually grounded critical reading in which the particularities of time, place, and language were taken fully into account. In its strongest form, as in Lowth's *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1969), this demanded an interpretive effort that prefigures the ethnographic goal of "seeing through the native's eyes." Lowth is worth quoting in this regard:

To all who apply themselves to the study of their poetry...difficulties and inconveniences must necessarily occur. Not only the antiquity of these writings forms a principal obstruction in many respects; but the manner of living, of speaking, of thinking, which prevailed in those times, will be found altogether different from our customs and habits. There is, therefore, great danger, lest, viewing them from an improper situation, and rashly estimating all things by our own standard, we form an erroneous judgment.

Of this kind of mistake we are to be always aware, and these inconveniences are to be counteracted by all possible diligence: nor is it enough to be acquainted with the language of this people, their manners, discipline, rites, and ceremonies; we must even investigate their inmost sentiments, the manner and connexion of their thoughts; in one word, we must see all things with their eyes, estimate all things by their opinions: we must endeavour as much as possible to read Hebrew as the Hebrews would have read it. (Lowth 1969 (I):112–13)

The relativizing thrust of the critical method advanced by these British philologists, taken up by such influential German scholars as Michaelis and Christian Gottlob Heyne, fostered a conception of literature as a national phenomenon and of a standard of literary power and authenticity as achieved only through faithfulness to one's own national language and culture.

Language, Poetics, and Tradition in Herder

Johann Gottfried Herder's early essay, "On Diligence in the Study of Several Learned Languages," published in 1764, signaled his public entry into the intellectual arena we have sketched out in the foregoing pages and marked the beginning of a passionate lifelong engagement with language, literature, and the foundations of national culture. Although many students of Herder's voluminous writings fault him for a lack of intellectual consistency over the long course of his career, we share the judgment of those who find an overall coherence in his work. Accordingly, rather than offering a chronological examination of his writings on language, we will endeavor to delineate in general, synthetic terms the intellectual core of his ideology of language. We begin, though, with specific attention to his essay *On the Origins of Language* (1772), the work best known to students and historians of linguistics. The essay won the prize competition of the Berlin Academy for 1771, the topic of which was framed in the following terms: "Supposing that human beings were left to their natural faculties, are they in a position to invent language? And by which means will they achieve this invention on their own?" (Aarsleff 1982:194-95). Herder's victorious submission brought him into full intellectual prominence and established him as a significant participant in the language debates of the day.

The essay opens with a provocative assertion: "While still an animal, man already has language" (SW 5:5/Herder 1966:87).⁵ As Herder develops upon this assertion, however, it soon becomes clear that this language that resides in our animal nature is but one species of language, not yet human language. The language that we have "in common with the animals," as sentient beings among other sentient beings, consists of "screams," "sounds," "moans," "wild inarticulate tones," responses to "violent sensations of [the] body" (SW 5:5-7/Herder 1966:87-88). This "language of feeling," to be sure, has communicative power, striking a resonant chord in other sentient beings of like feeling. But true human language, in Herder's view, rests on very specifically human capacities that clearly differentiate us from other animals. These capacities Herder terms *Besonnenheit*, reflection, one of the most fundamental concepts in all of his philosophy.

Besonnenheit is the "entire disposition of man's forces," a complex and unitary human capacity that encompasses "the total economy of

his sensuous and cognitive, or his cognitive and volitional nature" (SW 5:28/Herder 1966:109-10; see also Barnard 1965:42-43). In the concept of *Besonnenheit*, Herder rejects the separation of faculties—reason, emotion, will, and so forth—on which Kantian philosophy is built. For Herder, "all such words as sensuousness and instinct, fantasy and reason are after all no more than determinations of one single power wherein opposites cancel each other out" (SW 5:31/Herder 1966:112); in the concept of *Besonnenheit* the Kantian antinomies vanish (Clark 1969:407).⁶ In *Besonnenheit resides* "The distinctive character of mankind" (SW 5:29/Herder 1966:110) as well as the capacity for language: "Man, placed in a state of reflection which is peculiar to him, with this reflection for the first time given full freedom of action, did invent language" (SW 5:34/Herder 1966:115).

The process begins with the human animal immersed in a sea of sensations. By exercise of the power of reflection, one set of sensations is singled out, arrested; the sensory image thus selected becomes the focus of alert and conscious attention (SW 5:34-35/Herder 1966:115) and is recognized as a distinguishing characteristic of its source. It is worth noting here the *reflexivity* of the process. *Besonnenheit* is not merely reflection in the sense of focused consciousness but involves also consciousness of consciousness: in the exercise of *Besonnenheit* man must be "conscious of being attentive" (SW 5:35/Herder 1966:115).

In an extended argument that we need not recapitulate here, Herder concludes that sonic images are the ones most apt to be singled out in this reflective process. His central example is the bleating of a sheep: "The sound of bleating perceived by a human soul as the distinguishing mark of the sheep became, by virtue of this reflection, the name of the sheep, even if his tongue never tried to stammer it." The bleating is "a conceived sign through which the soul clearly remembered an idea—and what is that other than a word? And what is the entire human language other than a collection of such words?" (SW 5:36/Herder 1966:117). By this process, then, "human language is invented" (SW 5:35/Herder 1966:116).

It is important to emphasize that the language thus invented is not merely an abstract set of signs by which the reflective being apprehends the phenomenal world. In Herder's view, it "is in its very origin...a means of contact," a social instrument: "I cannot think the first human

thought, I cannot align the first reflective argument without dialoguing in my soul or without striving to dialogue. The first human thought is hence in its very essence a preparation for the possibility of dialoguing with others! The first characteristic mark which I conceive is a characteristic word for me and a word of communication for others!" (SW 5:47/Herder 1966:128). *Besonnenheit* is thus doubly reflexive: a consciousness of one's own consciousness is inherently bound up with a striving for dialogue with others. Language, thought, and communication are all rooted in *Besonnenheit*.

Of course, the original human language that consists of onomatopoeic imitations of distinguishing sonic characteristics bears little apparent relation to language as we now know it. From its first emergence in this rudimentary form, language—and with it the human species—embarks upon a process of development that is intrinsic to its nature. The precise processes of change that Herder sets forth with regard to the formal structure of language are clearly untenable from the standpoint of current linguistic knowledge and need not concern us too closely. In Herder's understanding, for example, grammar is an emergent superaddition to language and "the more primordial a language is, the less grammar there must be in it, and the oldest language is no more than the aforementioned dictionary of nature" (SW 5:82–83/Herder 1966:159). Verbs develop prior to nouns because things are named initially for the actions by which they produce their distinguishing sounds (sheep is "bleater"); primitive languages are characterized by abundant synonymy because they have not yet developed general categories which require the capacity for abstraction; and so on (see, for example, SW 5:9–10/Herder 1966:91; SW 11:228–29/Herder 1833[1]:31).

The forces and mechanisms of development that Herder outlines, however, are important to our argument. He states these in a series of "natural laws" in the second part of the essay *On the Origin of Language*, focusing on linguistic development in the individual, in social interaction, and in the nation, or *Volk*.⁷

The first natural law is as follows: "Man is a freely thinking and active being whose powers work on in progressive continuity, for which reason he is a creature of language" (SW 5:93/Herder 1966:173). The motive force of this development derives again from the human power

of reflection. The more reflective thought is exercised in the apprehension of the world, the more developed language becomes; it grows by experience. Better thinking makes for better speaking in the progressive realization of human potential.

By the same token, language develops continuously by virtue of our social nature: "Man is by destiny a creature of the herd, that is, of society; and the continuous development of his language is hence natural, essential, and necessary to him" (SW 5:112/Herder 1966:173). As explained in *On the Origin of Language*, the social development of language takes place first within the family as knowledge is shared between spouses and passed on to offspring, thus making for cumulative growth through the generations. But elsewhere Herder generalizes the process: "Language and speech are developed most intensely through conversations...Language originated through intercourse and not in solitude; through conversation every expression is sharpened and polished" (SW 30:223/English translation quoted from Ergang 1966:158). Thus, for Herder, as for Locke, the social use of language as an instrument of social interaction is not only part of the natural essence of language itself but also the inherent means of its progressive cultivation.

From the individual to small groups in conversational interaction, Herder's third natural law carries the process of development to social units of still broader scope, namely nations, *Völker*: "As it was impossible for the entire human race to remain one herd, so it could not remain restricted to one language. There ensued the development of diverse national languages" (SW 5:123–24/Herder 1966:173). Indeed, Herder's entire understanding of the social organization of language is founded on a recognition of linguistic diversification at every level of integration from the individual to the international. Because of individual differences of experience and learning, no two individuals speak exactly the same language. In like manner, every family, every group shapes language in its own distinctive way. In turn, these social forces, in interaction with environmental differences which—Herder believed—induce modifications of the organs of speech, give rise to dialects and eventually to national languages. Indeed, in Herder's conception, it is the possession of its own distinctive language that constitutes the touchstone of a people or *Volk*, the sine qua non of its national identity and spirit. And it is with this relationship of language to *Volk*

that Herder is most centrally concerned.

In one of his earliest writings, Herder articulated this fundamental principle: "Every nation has its own storehouse of thought rendered into signs," he wrote. "[T]his is its national language: a store to which the centuries have added, and that has waxed and waned like the moon, that...has experienced revolutions and transformations...—the treasury of the thought of an entire people" (SW 2:13/English translation quoted from Morton 1989:135). The quotations from Herder's writings marshaled by Robert Ergang establish the radical centrality of language to national identity especially emphatically:

"Has a nationality," a character in one of Herder's dramas asks, "anything more precious than the language of its fathers? In this language dwell its whole world of tradition, history, religion and principles of life, its whole heart and soul" [SW 17:58]. Language "is the bond of souls, the vehicle of education, the medium of our best pleasures, nay of all social pastimes" [SW 18:384]; "it expresses the most distinguishing traits of the character of each nationality, and is the mirror of its history, its deeds, joys and sorrows" [SW 11:225; 18:337]; "it is generally acknowledged to be the means for transmitting human ideas, inclinations and deeds; by means of it we bequeath the treasure of former times to later generations; through a common language all the members of a social group participate one in another to a greater or lesser degree" [SW 16:46]. (English translation quoted from Ergang 1966:149–150)

We will pursue the further implications of all of these dimensions of relationship between language and nation in the course of our discussion, but for the moment we would simply underscore the affirmative tone that colors Herder's observations: the complex anchoring of language in national character, history, and society is to be celebrated. What for Locke is an impediment to true knowledge is for Herder a quality to be treasured.

In order to comprehend more fully how it is that language comes to be "the treasury of the thought of an entire people," we must consider in some detail Herder's poetics as a central component of his ideology of language. Herder employs the term poetry (*Poesie*) in two

related senses. In the first and primary sense, poetry designates a quality of language, intrinsic to its nature; in the second, the term takes on a textual component as well, comprehending all genres of verbal art, including proverbs, fables, *Märchen* (fairy tales), myths, legends, and various dramatic forms as well as forms of verse such as songs, odes, ballads, and epics.

For Herder, the foundation of poetry, its essence, is inherent in the origin of human language itself. Let us recall the nature of the first human language—"a dictionary of significant names, and expressions full of imagery and feeling" (SW 12:7/Herder 1833(2):7). "Imitation it was of sounding, acting, stirring nature! Taken from the interjections of all beings and animated by the interjections of human emotion! The natural language of all beings fashioned by reason into sounds, into images of action, passion, and living impact!" (SW 5:56/Herder 1966:135). But then, Herder goes on, "What else is poetry?" (SW 5:57/Herder 1966:136). That is, this first human language is "a collection of elements of poetry" (SW 5:56/Herder 1966:135).

The identification of feeling as essential to the poetic quality of this first human language stems clearly from the constitution of the language itself as built up of imitations of the natural language of feeling. In this conception, feeling and reference are inescapably joined. But the prominence of feeling in Herder's formulations makes it all the more necessary to emphasize that the original human language—and thus poetry as well—consists of an integration of feeling and form. The sensory impressions that flow in upon the first speaker have discernible form, and the first human utterances are shaped by that form as well as by feeling.

From without, the forms of sense flow into the soul, which puts upon them the impress of its own feeling, and seeks to express them outwardly by gestures, tones, and other significant indications. The whole universe with its movements and forms is for the outward intuition of man... Thus what flows in on him from without, according as he feels it and impresses his own feeling upon it, forms the genius of his poetry in its original elements. (SW 12:6/Herder 1833[2]:6)

Thus, from the beginning, form plays a key role in Herder's

philosophy of language. We shall have more to say on this below.

Given the identity of language and poetry, at least in their origins, we must expect that poetry, like language, undergoes transformation over time. One significant developmental factor that affects the role of poetry is the functional differentiation of language, which, in Herder's speculative history of language, is bound up with the evolution of grammatical forms.

For as the first vocabulary of the human soul was a living epic of sounding and acting nature, so the first grammar was almost nothing but a philosophical attempt to develop that epic into a more regularized history. Thus it works itself down with verbs and more verbs and keeps working in a chaos which is inexhaustible for poetry, which is very rich—when subjected to a little more order—for the fixing of history, and which becomes usable only much later for axioms and demonstrations. (SW 5:84/Herder 1966:161)

First poetry, then history, then formal philosophy, as verb forms (especially past tenses) and noun inflections are progressively systematized (SW 5:84–85/Herder 1966:161–62).

It is not only grammar, however, that evolves in relation to functional differentiation, but communicative style as well. As language develops still further, in Herder's view, the uses to which it is put continue to have a shaping effect on its formal organization. "Then, through poetry," he writes, "come into being syllabic meter, choice of expressive words and colors, order and impact of imagery; through history, come differentiation of tenses, precision of expression, then, through oratory, comes finally the perfect rounding of periodic speech" (SW 5:88/Herder 1966:165). Note that we have here arrived at a transition from the first to the second sense of poetry distinguished just above: features such as meter, order of imagery, or the rounding of periodic speech are features of *discourse*, formal devices that organize the discursive structure. From poetry as a quality of language, Herder's developmental schema has led us to the emergence of poetry as characterized by formal regimentation at the level of discourse. Ultimately, then, in the long course of language development, poetry recedes from being coterminous with language to being one among a range of func-

tional varieties marked by special discursive regimentation. At the same time, poetry (like other functional varieties) is itself multifunctional. With it, the poet "instructs, reproves, consoles, directs, commands, contemplates the past, and discloses the future" (SW 12:22/Herder 1833(2):26).

Although the unfolding of this historical process, as Herder envisions it, does expand the communicative capacities of language, it also entails a potential loss. As the sphere of philosophy is extended and reason plays an ever increasing role in the shaping of language, it can impinge upon poetry, leading to increasing formalism, mechanical "counting of syllables and scanning of verses" (SW 5:189), and "delicate and overwrought refinement" (SW 11:230/Herder 1833(1):32). Again, it is not formal patterning to which Herder objects (as we shall see in more detail below) but the increasing insistence on formalistic regimentation. In this process, poetry can be distanced from natural feeling, with a concurrent diminution of its expressive capacity, its vitality, and its affecting power (SW 1:53–55/Herder 1992:106–7; Kamenetsky 1973:837). "What is it that works miracles in the assemblies of people," Herder asks, "that pierces hearts, and upsets souls? Is it intellectual speech and metaphysics? Is it similes and figures of speech? Is it art [artifice] and coldly convincing reason?" These can be effective, but they do not suffice (SW 5:16/Herder 1966:98). Poetry must strive to retain its ties to the language of nature: "[E]ven with us, where reason to be sure often displaces emotion, where the sounds of nature are possessed by the artificial language of society—do not with us to the highest thunders of rhetoric, the mightiest bolts of poetry, and the magic moments of action come close to this language of nature by imitating it?" (SW 5:16/Herder 1966:97–98). What Herder is expressing here is summed up by his distinction between *Naturpoesie* and *Kunstpoesie*, the poetry of nature versus the poetry of art, which is to say, of artifice (SW 32:73/Herder 1992:44; see also Kamenetsky 1973). Nature is not to be constrained, vexed, squeezed, molded, or rendered artificial, as Bacon would have it, but imitated, experienced as fully as possible. One must strive not to penetrate nature, but to be open and attuned to its sounding influence.

Nor is it only grammatical, stylistic, and functional differentiation that diminish the vitality and affecting power of poetry. A further critical

development that may work to this end is the advent of writing. "The more distant a people is from artful cultivated thinking, language and letters," Herder observes, "the less will its songs be written for paper—dead literary verse." What is lost to the written word is the fullness of "animated representation" (SW 14:105/Herder 1968:178), the expressive power of performance. For Herder, the power of poetry resides maximally in the energy and immediacy (that is, unmediatedness, *Unmittelbarkeit*) of performance, both of which are diminished as poetry is dissociated from movement and music and rendered on the printed page (Fugate 1966:246). For Herder, the full power of poetry is a power of presence: "[T]he poems of ancient and savage peoples arise to a great extent from immediate presence, from immediate excitation of the senses, and of the imagination" (SW 5:185; see also SW 32:74/1992:45). The more expression is informed by immediate sensory experience, the more true, genuine, and effective it will be. In foregrounding sensory experience and presence, Herder's view converges with the sensualist orientation of Locke. The critical difference, of course, lies in Herder's valorization of the emotional component of sensory experience, in marked contrast with Locke's insistence that sensory experience must be disciplined in the service of reason.

For Herder, the essence of poetry—as of language—lies in the union of feeling and form, born in immediate sensate experience. The external stimuli that flow in upon the senses and the imagination possess a natural form that is answered by the reflexive shaping capacities that render experience into human language and into poetry. From this formative moment, both language and poetry are set upon a course of further human development, but the essence and efficacy of poetry continue to reside in the union of living, present experience and expressive form:

Upon the lyrical, upon the living yet at the same time dance-like rhythm of song, upon the living presence of images, upon the coherence yet at the same time upon the demanding urgency of the content, of perception, upon the symmetry of words, syllables, many times even of letters [i.e., of sounds], upon the cadence of the melody, and upon a hundred other things, which belong to the living world...upon these, and upon these

alone depend the essence, the purpose, all of the wonder-working power, which these songs have, to be the magic spell, the mainspring, the eternal heritage and joy in song of the people! ...The longer a song should last, the stronger, the more sensual must these wakers of souls be, that they should spite the power of time and the changes of centuries. (SW 5:164)

This resonant inventory of elements that are constitutive of poetry, with its insistence on the present, living immediacy of inspiration and its balancing of experiential and linguistic form, establishes clearly Herder's conception of *Naturpoesie*.

Note, however, that it is not solely the immediacy of poetic expression that is at issue here, but its durability, its capacity to "spite the power of time" and to constitute "the eternal heritage...of the people." But how are the two principles to be reconciled? How can the ephemerality of the living inspirational moment "spite the power of time?"

Strength and genuineness of feeling clearly play a role: "The more true, the more recognizable and stronger the imprint of our sentiments proves to be, and the more genuine the poetry is, the stronger and truer her mark, effect, and duration will be" (SW 8:339). But feeling alone will not suffice, however strong it may be. The other necessary element, as we might expect, is form. Celebrating the great poets of all times, the Moseses and Homers, Herder proclaims, "You sang from inspiration! You planted what you sang in eternal metre, in which it was held fast; and thus it could be sung again for as long as men wanted to sing it" (SW 4:460/Herder 1969:85). Herder recognizes here the entextualizing force of formalization—variously "metre," "rhythm," "cadence," or "symmetry" in his terms—which makes poetic discourse memorable, repeatable, persistent. In like manner, formal patterning renders poetry pleasing and persuasive. In his extended appreciation of parallelism in *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, Herder asks "Does not all rhythm, and the metrical harmony both of motion and sound, I might say, all that delights in forms of sounds, depend upon symmetry?" (SW 11:236/Herder 1833[1]:39), observing further that "It changes the figure and exhibits the thought in another light. It varies the precept, and explains it, or impresses it upon the heart" (SW 11:238/Herder 1833(1):41). Most importantly, Herder's observations on translation

make clear that he saw form, content, and meaning as mutually constitutive and sustaining. The "meaning" or "internal feeling" of a poetic work depends on "the external, ... the sensual, in form, sound, tone, melody" (SW 5:163).

Thus rendered meaningful, memorable, pleasing, and persuasive, the poetic texts created in the moment of inspiration are taken up by the people; they "share them with each other like reflected rays of the sun" (SW 8:340). The immediacy of poetic creation and performance thus gives rise to an *intertextually constituted tradition* as the people learn, remember, and pass on the texts: "The poet saw what he sang or he heard it alive ... The circle around him was amazed, listened, learned, sang, and never forgot the proverbs about the gods; they were fashioned into the soul with nails of song" (SW 8:369). In this process of poetic continuity, form and tradition are mutually sustaining. Formal regimentation makes traditional continuity possible at the same time that particular formal structures—both linguistic structures and the artistic structures of poetry—become traditionalized through "acclimation of the ear," by repetition, imitation, and socialization (SW 5:165; SW 18:462): "He who has the sound of the Italian stanza or the Scottish 'Chevy Chase' song in his ear will, after ninety-nine stanzas and strophes be able to hear the hundredth. His ear desires the repeating cadence" (SW 18:462). Thus the poetic tradition is shaped by multiple dimensions of intertextual relationships. Poetic *texts* are passed on in a chain of transmission, while at the same time poetic *forms* become conventionalized and serve as orienting frameworks for the production and reception of new texts.

The poetic tradition was, for Herder, not simply a treasury of artistic diversions but rather the very foundation of culture itself. The central argument of his essay "On the Effects of Poetry on the Customs and Morals of Nations in Ancient and Modern Times" (1778) builds upon the conception of poetry that we have traced above:

If poetry is what she should be, then according to her essence, she is influential. How could she not exert influence when she is the language of the senses and of first powerful impressions, the language of passion and of everything that passion created, of imagination, action, of memory, of joy or of pain, lived, seen,

enjoyed, worked, received, and of the hope and fear to do so in the future—how could she not influence? Nature, perception, and man's entire soul flowed into the language and impressed itself into it, into this body, and therefore it affects everything which is nature including all like tuned and compassionate souls. (SW 8:338–39)

A people's poetry, then, becomes "the whole treasure of their life," giving voice to "teachings and history, law and morality, delight, joy and comfort" (SW 8:392). Like language, poetry stores up culture; it is "the archive of the folk" (SW 9:532).

The same process of socialization that imprints the formal patterns of poetic expression upon the minds of successive generations of hearers also imparts to them the culture of their nation:

The ignorant child listens with curiosity to the tales, which flow into his mind like his mother's milk, like the choice wine of his father, and form its nutriment. They seem to him to explain what he has seen: to the youth they account for the way of life of his tribe, and stamp the renown of his ancestors: the man they introduce to the employment suited to his nation and climate, and thus they become inseparable from his whole life. (SW 13:304/Herder 1968:45)

The tradition, then, molds the worldview, the ways of life, the values, and the aspirations of a people, shaping the lives of children and adults alike. Its reflexive capacity allows a people to "portray themselves, and see themselves, as they are" (SW 9:532). Where Locke denigrates tradition as inimical to truth, Herder celebrates it as foundational to cultural identity.

There are, to be sure, certain fundamental enabling conditions that a poetic tradition must meet in order to be maximally efficacious and authentic. As we have established, true national poetry must be *Naturpoesie*, passionate, inspired, and natural. It must be consonant with the spirit of the people (*volksmässig* [SW 5:189; SW 9:529]), with time, and with place; it must be "created for these people and therefore ... in the language, the morals, the way of thinking of the people and of no others in no other time" (SW 8:360). That is to say, once again, that

Herder's vision is popular and relativist in its principles, both culturally and linguistically, and firmly anchored in history. The true folk poet must articulate a *collective* spirit, a *collective* genius, must give expression to thoughts and feelings deeply shared by all. The folk poet may, it is true, be a named individual; Herder celebrates Moses, David, Homer, Ossian, and Shakespeare as great folk poets who articulate with special power the collective spirit of their people. Nevertheless, the demand of *Volksmässigkeit* foregrounds the shared, collective quality of the folk spirit, and for the most part Herder speaks of folk poetry as the collective and anonymous expression of a people. We will return to the further implications of this homogenizing tendency later in our discussion.

The necessary quality of *Volksmässigkeit*, which demands that authentic poetry be grounded in the historical moment and "no other time," might seem to be incompatible with the capacity of tradition to "spite the power of time." How can this apparent contradiction be reconciled? The answer lies in Herder's understanding of cultural continuity as shaped not only by the conserving power of tradition but also by a second human capacity that he terms "organic powers." "All education arises from imitation and exercise," he writes, "by means of which the model passes into the copy. What better word is there for this transmission than tradition?" He goes on, "[T]he imitator must have powers to receive and convert into his own nature what has been transmitted to him, just like the food he eats." Thus the traditional inheritance is creatively transformed: "Education, which performs the function of transmitting social traditions, can be said to be *genetic*, by virtue of the manner in which the transmission takes place, and *organic*, by virtue of the manner in which that which is being transmitted is assimilated and applied" (SW 13:347-48/Herder 1993:51). That is to say that a viable, productive, active tradition is a dynamic process insofar as the teachings of the elders are adapted anew by each successive generation. Tradition itself thus may be rendered *volksmässig*, consonant with the historical change that was so central to Herder's philosophy of history.

To identify poetic tradition as *the* constitutive cultural process is to vest great responsibility in the poet. In Herder's vision of culture, poets are the culture makers: "A poet is the creator of a nation around him."

he shows them a world and has their souls in his hand to lead them there. That is how it should be" (SW 8:433). Moreover, the culture's continued viability rests on the poet's shoulders: "As long as there were bard, the cultural spirit of [a] people was invincible, their morals and customs could not be extinguished" (SW 8:392).

In identifying poets as "lawgivers" (*Gesetzgeber*), Herder recognizes a centrally *political* dimension of the poet's role as culture maker. Thus Moses, for Herder the great poetic founder of the Hebrew nation (on Moses as poet, see, e.g., SW 11:309-10/Herder 1833[I]:108), is the "liberator and lawgiver" of the nation, and in ancient Greece, "The oldest lawgivers, judges of secrets and intimate worship, even, according to legend, the inventors of the most beautiful objects and customs made for morality of life, they were all poets" (SW 8:366). It follows that tradition, the process by which the poetic forms of a culture "are passed down from the earliest times, from the founders of the tribe" (SW 1:263/Herder 1992:179), is itself an essentially political process. The socialization of the child, the basic mechanism of tradition and cultural continuity, is, accordingly, the foundation of political culture. "Man is born under the very mild government of father and mother," Herder writes, "and since no authority transcends the parental authority, no wisdom the parental wisdom, no kindness the parental kindness, this government in miniature is the most perfect which can be found" (SW 9:313-14/Herder 1969:229). Here again, Herder makes explicit that it is poetic forms, manifested as "powerful sayings and proverbs...fables, genealogies, songs celebrating great deeds or virtues," and the like, by which this political authority is established: "all these are imprints of early paternal rule" (SW 9:313-14/Herder 1969:229-30).

Herder regarded the paternal and domestic government of the family, in which authority rests on the acquired wisdom of poetic tradition, as the most natural form of political order, the "most perfect which can be found" (SW 13:375/Herder 1969:317-18). Beyond the stage of family government, nature leaves off, and "it was left to man how to construct a polity" (SW 13:382/Herder 1969:322). The best of such polities, in Herder's view, were those in which the natural principles of family government were extended, allowing the people to choose the best and wisest of their number, the poet-legislators, to lead them. Herder admired especially the democracy and freedom of the

Greek republic: "All public affairs concerning the people were openly discussed and matters were decided on the spot according to the feeling of the meeting... The orator spoke to his own people, to a circle he knew... a multitude who were educated through poetry, songs, art, drama in the finest language in the world" (SW 9:325/Herder 1969:236-37). Consider what is being affirmed here: political community, founded in a sense of cultural cohesion, a shared set of understandings, mutual familiarity, and a sense of common purpose, in which political discussion is open and public, and action is based upon consensus, all resting on education through poetry, songs, art, drama, and language, that is, on a poetic tradition. Herder would never insist that any historical or cultural precedent should be erected as a standard for replication in another place or another period. Even the best of the republics he so admired "had aspects which we would not wish to bring back even for the sake of their orators and poets" (SW 9:377/Herder 1969:252). Still, the foundational principles that enabled these earlier polities to flower were, in his view, worthy of emulation in a form adapted to the particularities of German conditions, needs, and aspirations (SW 9:377/Herder 1969:252).

But Herder carries his naturalization of government from familial (and paternal) principles still further:

It is nature which educates families: the most natural state is, therefore, *one* nation, an extended family with one national character... Nothing, therefore, is more manifestly contrary to the purpose of political government than the unnatural enlargement of states, the wild mixing of various races and nationalities under one sceptre... Such states are but patched-up contraptions, fragile machines, appropriately called *state-machines*, for they are wholly devoid of inner life, and their component parts are connected through mechanical contrivance instead of bonds of sentiment. (SW 13:384-85/Herder 1969:324)

Although this is at one level a condemnation of imperial conquest and domination, it is at the same time a clear affirmation of the need for organic purity as the only natural basis for a viable polity. The implication is unmistakable: a *Volk*, a nation, a culture, a polity must be

homogeneous; diversity is unnatural and destructive of the bonds of sentiment that hold a people together. In this declaration, Herder has suppressed decisively the acknowledgment of diversity within the nation that we find in his essay *On the Origin of Language*, discussed above. Acceptable diversity, whether linguistic or cultural, begins at the national boundary. Here we encounter once again, this time in stronger terms, the homogenizing, standardizing thrust that we identified earlier as inherent in the principle of *Volksmässigkeit*.

Like all organisms, governments, no matter how perfectly they may be constructed, will ultimately decline, according to Herder's philosophy of history. "Each state has its period of growth, maturity, and decay" (SW 9:375/Herder 1969:250). Philosophical overrefinement and rational regimentation rob language of its expressive vitality; artifice, printing, and commodification rob poetry of its "living effect" (SW 8:411); the advent of despotic hereditary rule makes for a "warping of traditions" (SW 9:375/Herder 1969:251); and ultimately the nation sinks into the oblivion of history.

It is crucial to an understanding of Herder's philosophy of history and language to recognize that this trajectory of growth, maturity, and eventual decay, in his view, is neither uniform nor inexorable in its operation from one nation to the next. Perhaps most important, the course of development is susceptible to human intervention (SW 9:360/Herder 1969:360), and this is what motivates much of Herder's writings on poetry. In the larger interest of cultural revitalization and political reform, one of his principal instrumental goals was to reinvigorate German literature, weakened not only by an unbalanced reliance on reason at the expense of emotion but also by the misguided imitation of Greek and Latin literary models and—worse yet—by the adoption of French among the German intellectuals and nobility, who thereby distanced themselves from their own national tradition (SW 5:551/Herder 1969:209; SW 18:136/Herder 1993:142-43; cf. Wilson 1973:824). Herder's program for the revitalization of German literature consisted of two complementary elements, both centering on folk poetry, *Volksdichtung*: the study and celebration of the poetry of other peoples among whom it displayed its full expressive vigor, and the retrieval and revalorization of the remnants of vital poetic expression still to be found in those sectors of his own society least affected by the

changes that had robbed cultivated poetry of its emotional power and efficacy.

The former enterprise led to Herder's celebration of the language and poetry of those he classified as primitive peoples, who included the ancient Hebrews and Greeks as well as Hurons, Brazilian Indians, Iroquois, Eskimos, and Tahitians. "What do you consider the most essential to poetic language?" asks Euthyphron, one of the interlocutors in the dialogue that constitutes the first volume of his *Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*. "No matter whether it belongs to the Hurons or Oraheitans. Is it not action, imagery, passion, music, rhythm?"

"Undoubtedly," replies Alciphron.

"And the language that exhibits these in the highest perfection is the most peculiarly poetical," responds Euthyphron. "Now you are aware that the languages of people but partially cultivated may have this characteristic in a high degree," he continues, "and are in fact in the particular superior to many of the too refined modern languages. I need not remind you among what people Ossian, or at what period even the Grecian Homer sang" (SW 11:225/Herder 1833[1]:27). Euthyphron goes on to say of the Hebrews that "Their [poetic] productions are not loaded with delicate and overwrought refinement, but vigorous, entire, instinct with life and spirit... [T]he language seems to me, I confess, more poetical than any other language on earth" (SW 11:230/Herder 1833[1]:32-33).

Alciphron is not fully persuaded. When Euthyphron observes that "In this union of feeling from within and form from without... the Oriental languages [among which he includes Hebrew]... are the best models" (SW 11:231/Herder 1833[1]:34), Alciphron demurs. "Is it possible you are speaking of those barbarous and uncouth gutturals? And do you venture to compare them with the silvery tones of the Greek?" (SW 11:230/Herder 1833[1]:34).

"I make no comparison," Euthyphron replies. "Every language suffers by being thus compared with another. Nothing is more exclusively national and individual than the modes of gratifying the ear, and the characteristic habitudes of the organs of speech" (SW 11:231/Herder 1833[1]:34). This disclaimer is of the utmost importance, an expression of Herder's relativist vision, his respect for all languages and cultures in their own terms. In fundamental opposition to the universalist

aesthetic of Kant, Herder insisted that the language and poetry of every people be assessed "with respect to time and place" (SW 14:98/Herder 1968:172); for each *Volk*, the authenticity and vitality of its poetry rested only on its faithfulness to "The genius of their nature, their country, their way of life, the period in which they lived, and the character of their progenitors" (SW 14:98-99/Herder 1968:172). Only by entering sympathetically into the spirit of a nation can one hope to achieve an understanding of its culture (SW 5:502/Herder 1969:181). This is in fact an extension and full generalization of hermeneutic and text-critical principles developed by eighteenth-century classical and biblical philologists such as Thomas Blackwell, Robert Lowth, and Robert Wood, all of whom influenced Herder.

In accordance with this insistence on rootedness in time and place as the touchstone of authentic poetic expression and interpretation, Herder did not valorize the poetry of other *Völker* in order to hold them up to his fellow Germans as models for imitation, for this would have undermined the very foundation of an authentic national literature (SW 1:140-41/Herder 1992:94): "if we mimic practices that are borrowed from foreign peoples and times, that are foreign to our inner sense, then we damn ourselves to Hades as we live and breathe" (SW 24:44/Herder 1993:102). Rather, he celebrated the poetic forms of other nations as demonstrations of how such authentic expression might be constituted (SW 1:444/Herder 1992:228); this was the principal motivation for his influential collection of *Volkslieder*, published in 1778-79. For Germany, the corrective to a poetry of artifice must be sought in the German national tradition itself—in German folksongs, folktales, myths, and other poetic forms. "I am familiar with folksongs in more than one province," he proclaimed,

provincial songs, peasant songs, which would certainly hold their own in liveliness and rhythm, in naive character and strength of language; but who is it who collects them? who concerns himself with them? with the songs of the people? in streets, and alleys, and fishmarkets? in the untutored round-lays of the country folk? with songs, which frequently do not scan, and are often poorly rhymed? who would collect them—who would print romances in handsome volumes? (SW 5:189)

Here, among the peasants and ordinary people of the towns, those "whom our ways have not yet fully deprived of their language and songs and customs, only to give them in return something misshapen or nothing at all" (SW 5:170), Herder found an authentic German folk voice, crude, perhaps, by the mechanical, formal standards of cultivated critics, but full of the emotional energy and *Volksmässigkeit* he so valued as the essence of poetry (Schütze 1921:117). These songs are endangered by the privileging of foreign models and standards and the encroachments of a mediating literacy, but they must be saved: "I cry out to my German brothers! just now! The remnants of all living folk imagination are rolling precipitously toward a final plunge into the abyss of oblivion...the light of so-called culture is devouring everything about it like a cancer" (SW 25:11). A preoccupation with absence, a fear of imminent loss, suffuses Herder's writings on German folk poetry. The revitalization of German culture, the restoration of its vital balance, demands the recuperation of authentic folk culture to counter the "so-called culture" of a universalizing Enlightenment rationalism (SW 9:530).

Herder's rallying cry to his German brothers stands as a critical moment in the symbolic construction of what we might call, drawing upon Susan Stewart's felicitous notion, the rhetoric and poetics of distress that has attached to folklore since the term was first invented (Stewart 1991; see also Briggs 1993). Herder frames the poetry of the peasants, market traders, country people as multiply distressed: it is formally flawed and survives only in remnants, which are tumbling toward oblivion with no one to save them. The implication is that the people who still actively sing the songs cannot themselves hold them back from the abyss; others must intervene.

We encounter in this context a further dimension of Herder's usage of the term *Volk* (see Barnard 1965:73-75; Gaier 1990). In its most general sense, *Volk* designates a nation, a people, but it may also designate that portion of a more complex, stratified society that remains most firmly grounded in its inherited language and traditions and is still open to feeling, as distinct from those who have been distanced from their roots and their feelings by overrational refinement or the adoption of foreign languages and alien ways. Herder is not always consistent in his usage, but in this more marked sense, the *Volk* is

"the largest," "most useful," "most venerable," and "most feeling" segment of a populace: peasants, artisans, burghers—essentially, the bourgeoisie (*das Volk der Bürger*) (SW 1:392, 6:104, 7:265, 32:60). The members of the *Volk* are closer to nature than the intellectuals (SW 32:41). Intellectuals may remain part of the *Volk* (*das Volk der Gelehrsamkeit*) as long as they remain faithful to the *Volk* character, but the overrational, over-refined intellectual (*der Gröbler*) is removed from the *Volk* (SW 7:265). Likewise, as also in Justus Möser's conception of *Volk*, which influenced Herder's own, the nobility (*der erste Stand*) are set apart (see, for example, SW 17:391; on Möser, see Sheldon 1970). Also excluded are the rabble (*der Pöbel*). Herder does not make entirely clear what he means by this term—perhaps the dispossessed vagrants and urban poor whose numbers were increasing in late eighteenth-century Germany (Braunschwig 1974:106-16)—though his most explicit statement, "*Volk* does not mean the rabble on the streets, who never sing and create poetry, but shout and mutilate" (SW 25:323), does differentiate them from the *Volk* in terms of poetic creation and performance.

Clearly, however, Herder's extended view of the *Volk* implicates structures of inequality. When he speaks of a *Volk* in general, collective terms as a nation or a people, the discursive and metadiscursive practices by which an authentic, vital cultural tradition is constituted emanate from the social formation as a whole. From the more immediate perspective of his own society, though, the true folk spirit is unevenly distributed. The autocratic and cosmopolitan nobility is detached from folk culture—they speak French!—and the dispossessed rabble, with their distorted, mutilated, and pathological discourse, are incapable of participation in the authentic poetic discourse of the *Volk*. The discursive practices that are fully authorized by Herder are those of the bourgeoisie, the landed peasants, artisans, people of the marketplace. (It is interesting to note, parenthetically, that Herder celebrates in the discourse of the marketplace precisely what Bacon and Locke distrust. In addition to these members of *das Volk der Bürger*, Herder also provides a place among the true *Volk* for certain intellectuals, those in fully sympathy with the *Volksgeist*, among whom, by implication, he would number himself and those who would join in his mission for the rescue and nurture of German folk song.)

But note the interventionist and recuperative role assumed by

these members of *das Volk der Gelehrsamkeit*. It is the task of *intellectuals* to recover, collect, and preserve the folk poetry and to foster the use of the German language, to develop the educational and literary institutions that would sustain the authentic folk culture. It lies also with *das Volk der Gelehrsamkeit* to create the poetry that will renew the folk spirit of the German nation and carry it into the future. The simple folk alone cannot do it. They lack the ability to treat their own means of expression analytically, to recognize the reflexive capacity of language, or "to separate the *thought* from the *expression*." "[I]t would appear ridiculous," Herder suggests, "to see a peasant explicating words" (SW 1:387/Herder 1992:197). The unlearned "common man," at least, can be educated to scholarly pursuits; this requires that "I...speak *his language* and gradually accustom him *to mine*; I must not speak to him as if I were in the clouds, but stand on his level and slowly raise him to my sphere" (SW 1:390/Herder 1992:199). Women, however, differ in this regard. If a woman "is to develop herself into what *she is meant to be*, so that she may enhance her soul and be the delight of the male species, so that she may grow to attain the dignity of the burgher's estate, of motherhood, of a spouse, and of an educator," her "education must not reflect the *male* view or, still less, the *scholarly* view." Rather, it "must accommodate her mind," "her sphere," that is, "the *good common sense of life* ... the *common sense of the house and kitchen*" (SW 1:393-94/Herder 1992:201-2).

In recognizing *das Volk der Gelehrsamkeit*, Herder thus authorizes a metadiscursive regime of intellectual intervention in folk culture, founded on intellectual and gender inequality, the influence of which continues to be felt to this day. We will reserve further discussion of this metadiscursive regime for the conclusion of our paper.

Consistent with his self-assigned role, Herder repeatedly castigates his countrymen for selling out the culture of their fathers for a bloodless and overrefined cosmopolitanism. "Perhaps we could ask the flatterers of this century," he suggests, "what is this greater virtue that Europe is supposed to have acquired through enlightenment? Enlightenment! We know so much more nowadays, hear and read so much, that we have become tranquilized, patient, meek and inactive" (SW 5:555/Herder 1969:212; see also 1774:192). With bitter irony he observes:

With us, thank God, national character is no more! ... To be sure, we no longer have a fatherland or any kinship feelings; instead, we are all philanthropic citizens of the world. The princes speak French, and soon everybody will follow their example; and, then, behold, perfect bliss: the golden age, when all the world will speak one tongue, one universal language, is dawning again! There will be one flock and one shepherd! National cultures, where are you? (SW 5:550-51/Herder 1969:209)

Especially pernicious is the neglect of Germany's own national poets in favor of foreign models. Reproaching his countrymen "for the unwavering indifference with which they neglect and ignore the best poets of their own language in their schools and in the education of their young in general" (SW 18:136/Herder 1993:143), Herder warns of the linguistic and cultural consequences of such national indifference:

Through what means is our taste, our style of writing, supposed to develop? Through what means is our language supposed to take on structure and rules? How else except through the best writers of our nation? Through what means are we supposed to acquire patriotism and love of country except through our country's language, except through the most excellent thoughts and feelings that are expressed in this language and lie like a treasure within it? (SW 18:136/Herder 1993:143)

It is in this spirit that Herder hopes that his writings on folk poetry will encourage his readers to recover what is left of the treasure of German folksong, so that Germany will be able to listen again "to the voice of its own poetry" (SW 8:392; see also 8:428).

In the political arena, Herder submits, this authentic national voice of the poets might offer a powerful corrective to the etiolated political discourse of the present, "corrupted through artifices, slavish expectations, fawning sneaky politics, and bewildering intentions" (SW 5:181). This critical inventory of political ills, in turn, points us toward the contemporary grounding of Herder's political ideology and reformist program. While we do not have the space here—nor is it our purpose—to describe fully, much less explicate, the broader contours

of Herder's political theory in its historical context (see Barnard 1965, 1969), a brief account will help to clarify the grounding and implications of his emphasis on linguistic and poetic traditions as the foundations of an authentic political culture.

Late-eighteenth-century Germany existed as a unified entity in name only. Prussia, under Frederick the Great, dominated the political landscape, but in reality the empire consisted of more than three hundred essentially autonomous states, a significant common feature of which was the personal absolutism of their sovereign rulers. The concentration of absolute power in the hands of the ruling aristocracy diminished the status of the nonsovereign nobility, while the middle classes, lacking economic vigor and unified political consciousness, had no effective political presence.

Absolutism, to be sure, does not preclude political reform; in the aftermath of the Seven Years War, Frederick devoted great effort to reforming the machinery of government, and the commanding presence of Prussia in the political environment drew other rulers to emulate his example. Under conditions of absolute rule, however, reform can only be instituted from above, "enlightened" though it may be. One of Frederick's own administrators, in suggesting that Frederick's administrative accomplishment "could serve as a model and as an example to be striven after by the rest of the German states," observes as well that "everything was done by autocracy, there was no Estates constitution and no active state council to give unifying force; there were no institutions in which a community spirit, a comprehensive view and fixed administrative maxims could develop. Every activity awaited initiative from above, independence and self-confidence were lacking..." (quoted in Hubatsch 1975:233). The prevailing thrust of reform efforts centered on the progressive enlightenment of the rulers; the solutions put forward, founded on solid, rational, Enlightenment principles, recommended such reforms as the acceptance by the rulers of constitutional restraint and the rationalization of the administrative apparatus of government (Barnard 1965:19-22; Hubatsch 1975:148-68).

The ideology of the German *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment) accorded well with top-down programs of political reform. Henri Braunschwig, in his classic study of the Enlightenment in eighteenth-century Prussia, offers a trenchant characterization:

In the case of the *Aufklärung*, culture... comes from above and moves downward, for the elite minds at the upper levels are often barely intelligible... The enlightened minority is conscious of its merit; it has "raised itself" above the crowd, but in doing so it has parted company with the masses. Its ideal is to radiate above the masses and gradually to penetrate them, not to reflect them. It is not this minority which expresses the community, but the community which painfully spells out a new alphabet of ideas which are alien to it. (Braunschwig 1974 [1947]:90-91)

Herder, however, placed no faith in the corrective potential of nobility-down political reform, especially if it amounted to little more than hopeful tinkering with the administrative machinery and remained dependent in the end on the personal will of an autocratic sovereign. He believed deeply in the moral implications of the principles on which the reformers based their programs—that government should be based on consent rather than coercion, that it should be moved by law and reason rather than arbitrariness and the whim of rulers, that the state should exist for the good of its members and not the reverse—if not in the principles themselves. His conviction that the natural foundations of government lay in the paternal authority of the family, for example, led him to reject the principle of social contract as a basis or justification for political organization. Likewise, his radical historical and cultural relativism made him fundamentally unsympathetic to universalistic notions of absolute individual rights and like abstract ideals (Barnard 1965:141-42). Rather, Herder drew inspiration from Rousseau's philosophy of the natural man, with its celebration of sentiment and emotion, its valorization of education on familial principles, its advocacy of popular sovereignty; from Justus Möser's vision of political life as emergent out of custom, tradition and local patriotism; and from champions of the intellectual, artistic, and spiritual power of the German language, such as Christian Thomasius, Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, and Johann Christian Gottsched (Barnard 1965:18-29). As we have seen, he believed passionately that the true foundations of political community and political culture lay in the organic culture of a Volk, rooted in history,

sustained by tradition, and manifested in language and poetry.

For our purposes, it is especially important to emphasize that in Herder's view, this authentic political culture is discursively constituted. His sustained and passionate celebration of national languages and poetic traditions, his language ideology, vested authority in the metadiscursive practices that gave life to the language, poetry, and tradition of a people, to the living expression of their *Volksgeist*. In his vision, as we have attempted to establish, this spirit of a people resided in its most authentic form in that social formation he identified as a *Volk*—either a whole “uncultivated” society with a unified linguistic and cultural tradition or that segment of modern complex society that was least corrupted by modern overrefinement and that best sustained custom and tradition, that is, the peasants, artisans, and tradespeople of the farms, towns, and marketplaces. This was not simply a matter of according recognition and value to a suppressed voice in the social chorus. In authorizing the metadiscursive practices that were constitutive of folk-poetic tradition, Herder was in fact contributing powerfully to the creation of the Volk as a social formation and of folk poetry as the essence of folk culture.

CONCLUSION

We suggested in the introduction to this paper that our purpose in examining closely the philosophical writings on language of Locke and Herder is to elucidate the ways in which their respective ideologies of language establish a relationship between metadiscursive practices governing the production and reception of discourse and the establishment and operation of structures of authority, legitimacy, and social inequality. Our warrant for focusing on Locke and Herder is that they offer and are widely known for foundational articulations of contrasting linguistic ideologies that have had a deeply formative influence on subsequent thought and practice in regard to language. (Note that “foundational” here does not imply exclusive, fully original, or directly ancestral to all subsequent articulations of similar ideas.)

Hans Aarsleff, who has called Locke “the most influential philosopher of modern times” (1994:252), credits him with laying “the foundation of the modern study of language” (1982:24). Though we would not want to take such all-star rankings too seriously, Aarsleff's own emi-

nence as an intellectual historian of linguistics gives weight to his assessment. Locke's theory of language, as developed in Book 3 of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, stands as a cornerstone of “scientific” conceptions of language that rest upon the conventionality of the linguistic sign, the cognitivist linking of the linguistic sign to ideas, the privileging of the referential and propositional functions of language in the service of rational, philosophically rigorous thought and expression as against everyday “civil” discourse, and the suppression of indexicality (including prominently intertextuality) as inimical to pure reference (see, for example, Aarsleff 1982, 1984; Guyer 1994; Volton 1970, 1993:115–20). These ideas occupy a wide space in modern linguistics; one index of their dominance is that the sociopolitical aspects of Locke's ideology of language do not figure in intellectual histories of linguistics, Aarsleff's included, although as we have endeavored to show, they are radically bound up with his overall language ideology.

For Herder, the reverse is true. Jakob Grimm, as early as 1851 (1984), used Herder as a foil against which to mark the break between older, unscientific conceptions of language and modern scientific linguistics. Even as sympathetic a reader as Sapir (1908) dismisses most of Herder's theory of language, valuing only the suggestiveness of his ideas concerning the nexus of form and feeling, ideas which have not figured prominently in subsequent linguistic theory. Rather, it is precisely for the sociopolitical aspects of his work on language that Herder is acknowledged: the populist celebration of ordinary people's language and poetry, the relativist insistence on the distinctiveness of national languages, their indexical grounding in time and place, their linkage to the worldview and ways of thinking and feeling of a people, and their essential role in maintaining national identity and cohesion (see, for example, Barnard 1969; Berlin 1976; Robins 1990). Herder is accorded a far more influential role in the development of disciplines outside linguistics, principally anthropology (in its Americanist guise) and folklore (see, for example, Broce 1981; Cocchiara 1981; Kamenetsky 1973; Murray 1985; Wilson 1973). Here it is the literary, philological, and expressive dimensions of his thought that are of principal significance: the idea that a people's culture is encoded in its traditional artistic texts and that these intertextually constituted traditions are the principal mechanisms of cultural continuity.

In playing up the contrasts between the Lockean and Herderian views, our aim is not to posit two mutually incompatible intellectual traditions or to align Locke and Herder exclusively with separate disciplines. Indeed, the very enterprise of linguistic anthropology, the intellectual field with which we identify ourselves, is incompatible with such an oppositional vision, lying as it does at the intersection of linguistics, anthropology, and folklore, all of which have contributed to its intellectual foundations. Already in Wilhelm von Humboldt (1988) there are strong resonances both with Locke (for instance, on the semiotic linkage of the linguistic sign with ideas [pp. 56–59]) and with Herder (for instance, on language and poetry as the expression of the spirit of a people [pp. 42–46, 60]), and mixed strains may be found in varying degrees in much subsequent work. However, the core principles around which Locke's and Herder's respective language ideologies cohere contrast markedly in certain fundamental respects. Compare Locke's antipathy toward traditional authority with Herder's valorization of tradition; Locke's abstract and universalizing scientific rationalism with Herder's concrete, relativizing aesthetic particularism; Locke's suppression of indexicality and intertextuality with Herder's celebration of these associational principles as constitutive of culture; Locke's distrust of emotion with Herder's celebration of feeling and passion; Locke's primary focus on the word with Herder's emphasis on the text; Locke's rejection of the value of poetry and rhetoric with Herder's exaltation of poetic expression and its affecting power. Such fundamental epistemological and axiological differences cannot help but lead in different intellectual and ideological directions. Nevertheless it is important to take direct account of certain key areas of correspondence between the language ideologies of Locke and Herder and their implications for linguistic theory and practice. We focus especially on the structures of inequality that we have found to occupy a significant place in these ideologies.

For Locke, the referential precision and consistency that are essential to rational philosophical discourse are an inherent property of language. But the achievement of a fully realized language of reason demands reflexive effort on the part of its speakers, who must attend constantly and rigorously to the cultivation of a pure, plain language. In Locke's view, although every person is endowed from birth with the

faculties and powers necessary to such reflexive awareness, the ability to exercise those capacities to the fullest is limited by social factors such as occupation, class, and gender. Manual laborers, those of "low breeding," and women do not have access to the experience, education, company, time, or opportunities for practice that the reflexive cultivation of thought and language demands; they are effectively barred from those metadiscursive practices that might allow them to perfect their faculties and thus their language. For such people, ordinary "civil" discourse will suffice, and under ordinary conditions, this will do no harm.

But Locke also saw in uncultivated language the potential for social disorder and disruption, as people fall victim to the imperfections to which language and linguistic practice are susceptible: the distortion of reference and meaning that results from lexicosemantic ambiguity, poetic frivolity, dependency on the authoritative words of others, the rhetoric of ornament, self- or partisan interest, and disputation, all of which may yield confusion, untruth, wastefulness, and even outright conflict. The remedy, in Locke's view, is to extend rational discourse into the arena of public affairs. The plain, direct, disinterested language of reason, which allows us to know things as they are, will inevitably have a unifying effect because truth is unitary and universal. Truly reasonable men will ultimately agree. Moreover, the language of this rational public discourse must be a purified, standardized, plain variety of the national language—for public affairs in England, English. Thus, in Locke's language ideology, the ideal metadiscursive order of the public sphere rests on a public discourse of one voice in one language, even as Locke recognizes that differences of opinion will inevitably exist and advocates toleration of this diversity.

Herder, as we have established, advocates a very different metadiscursive order, placing highest value on the inherent poetic quality of language and on poetic expression grounded in *Besonnenheit*, the unitary reflexive capacity that comprehends feeling, reason, will, all the human faculties. Again, all people are endowed with *Besonnenheit*—it is the quality above all others that makes us human. The means and forms of expression, however—be they languages, genres, or formal structures—are all variably shaped by differential experience, history, environmental factors, and cultural inheritance among the world's peoples. The most salient linguistic contrasts, in Herder's view, are

those that differentiate national languages, which are at the same time the reservoirs for and the means of giving expression to the distinctive spirit of a people, its *Volksgeist*. The process is one of mutual reinforcement: the highest and most potent expression gives voice to the *Volksgeist*, and in so doing contributes as well to its progressive cultivation.

The chief means of this cultural realization are the poetic traditions that encode, preserve, and transmit the most powerful and distinctive meanings and values of a people. The best speakers, therefore, are poets, but all can participate in the cultivation of the folk spirit by learning and passing on the poetic traditions the poets have created and made memorable, affecting, and persuasive by giving them form. In the course of history, however, language and modes of expression are susceptible to potentially damaging influences—abstract and dispassionate philosophizing, artifice, the mediation of writing and print, which distance people from the sensuous experience of affecting performance, and cosmopolitanism—that rob the nation of its vitality. In Herder's own day, he felt, the vital traditions of the German people were fragmenting, sustained only in distressed remnants by the peasants, artisans, and market traders—*das Volk der Bürger*—who still sang the songs and told the tales that had been abandoned by the cosmopolitan nobility, the overrefined philosophers, and the rabble. Significantly, however, the very reflexive capacities of *Besonnenheit* that are so essential to human existence appear no longer to operate in this context as Herder depicts it. Those among whom the folk traditions are still to be found are unable to treat their own means of expression analytically, to reflect upon their language and poetry, or to stem their decline. The capacity for linguistic reflexivity is reserved to the intellectuals of *das Volk der Gelehrsamkeit*, who must intervene in the process if folk culture is to be revitalized. The male intellectuals, we might add, for Herder too felt that women are unsuited for the intellectual task.

Herder's language ideology, like Locke's, involved the extension of the metadiscursive practices he valued most highly into the public arena. The poetic traditions and their constituent expressive forms that give voice to the national spirit represent the authoritative basis for the cultural cohesion necessary to the establishment and maintenance of a viable polity. The desired goal of unification rests upon discursive unity, provided by the authority of tradition and a unified adherence to the

national spirit. Here too, linguistic homogeneity is a necessary condition; in Herder's vision, a viable polity can only be founded on a national language resistant to the penetration of foreign tongues. Once again, a sphere of public discourse characterized by one voice in one language.

And so we arrive at convergent positions, whether we follow the path of Locke or of Herder. We conclude with two sets of implications to be drawn from these convergences, one scholarly, one more broadly political.

In the construction of their language ideologies, as we have seen, both Locke and Herder deny to common people and women the capacity for reflexive understanding of their own language and modes of linguistic expression; only the cultivated male intellectual can penetrate to the level of true linguistic understanding. The ideological legacy of this position has been deeply rooted in linguistic science. We hear it in Boas's insistence that "linguistic phenomena never rise into the consciousness of primitive man" (Boas 1966:59); it echoes through Bloomfield's stringent dismissal of secondary and tertiary responses to language (Bloomfield 1944); and we find it even in Hoenigswald's advocacy of the study of folk linguistics when he observes, "There is a habit, in itself honorable, indispensable, and deeply ingrained, of discounting informants' pronouncements on their language" (Hoenigswald 1966:17). One implication of this principled regimen of discounting is that the scholarly study of language has systematically organized itself around precisely those aspects of linguistic form and practice that are, or are assumed to be, most inaccessible to folk awareness or valid insight. People's pronouncements on their own language are either invalid or have to do with matters outside the proper province of linguistics as we conceive it. To be sure, there are larger epistemological problems at issue here that lie at a deeper level than we can tackle in this essay, including the principle that theory only stands as such if it is explicitly verbalized and framed in general, abstract terms; theory as manifested in practice is a contradiction in terms. Our point, though, is that modern Western ideologies of language, differ though they may in other fundamental aspects, repeatedly relegate folk linguistic knowledge to or beyond the margins of linguistic inquiry.⁸

We might add that much the same denial of the validity or even the

existence of lay reflexivity has also guided conceptions of folklore, whether in the rationalist or the romantic mode. The Grimms (1987:2) made the argument early, in characterizing the *Märchen*: "Where they still exist, they live on in such a way that no one thinks about whether they are good or bad, poetic or (for intelligent people) vulgar." Kaarle Krohn (1971:26), the great codifier of the philological method in folklore, is more succinct: "The essence of folklore disappears with the development of contemplation." Stith Thompson (1946:451), the compiler of the authoritative reference works for the comparative study of the folktale, is more negative: "[T]he unlettered story-teller and his audience... may well insist upon their own distinctions which may seem quite arbitrary or illogical." Only the scholar is capable of valid analytical reflection—or perhaps any reflection at all—concerning folk discourse. And if the scholar can withhold validation, he or she can also confer it. One of the ideological underpinnings of the burgeoning movement toward staged public presentations of folklore in folklife festivals and allied forms of folklorized display is explicitly "the validation of... traditional cultures" (Santino 1988:122). The scholar is the ultimate arbiter of validity, legitimacy, and authenticity (see, for example, Staub 1988).

A further political implication of Locke's and Herder's language ideologies has to do with the nature and discursive organization of the public sphere. Locke has an established place in the Habermasian conception of the rational public sphere that has oriented much recent discussion (Habermas 1989), as in the broader historiography of modern democratic political ideology. As a number of critics have observed, the image of open participation in a public discourse that spans society has always coexisted with if not facilitated the exclusion of particular groups, issues, and forms of discourse (Calhoun 1992; Fraser 1993; Hansen 1993; Landes 1988; Negt and Kluge 1993). Our discussion of Locke suggests that tension between an ideally open public sphere and practices of exclusion and marginalization did not simply arise from some sort of gap between "theory" and "practice" or "ideology" and "action." By way of providing a theoretical basis of assertions of the social and political necessity of rational, disinterested, and dispassionate discourse, Locke theorized the exclusion of most of the population from this discursive realm and urged the institutionalization of

metadiscursive practices that would naturalize and sustain the use of public discourse in preserving social inequality.

In contrast, Herder does not figure in considerations of the public sphere within the Habermasian frame of reference, notwithstanding his lifelong interest in the political public.⁹ Certainly the conformation of the public sphere that Herder offers us is very different from that of Locke. It is a public sphere of poetic performance in which the vox populi gives voice to the authoritative traditions in which political community is grounded and political values are proclaimed. It offers a character less for the political ideology of modern state democracy than for cultural nationalism in which language and folklore are key symbols of cultural identity and persistence; indeed, this romantic nationalism is taken as Herder's chief contribution to modern political ideology. But although Herder is justifiably celebrated as the populist champion of the common people, we have suggested that his populism is tempered by a politics of culture that demands intervention from above in the metadiscursive management of the public sphere. The structure of inequality that is masked in most historical appreciations of Herder, as in articulations of romantic nationalist ideologies influenced by his, is readily apparent in one of the last of his writings, published posthumously in 1803: "Vox populi, vox dei" it once was said; and although this praise must not be extended beyond the limits of what the folk can articulate, it does at least point out that in those things that concern the folk their sense of truth demands respect" (SW 24:271–72). The limits of what the folk can articulate establish the interventionist baseline for those players in the arena of public affairs who are not so limited.

In addition to legitimating structures of inequality in the public sphere, the language ideologies of Locke and Herder converge in regard to the legitimacy of multiple voices and multiple languages in public discourse. Herder's vision of political community and national interest is clear in its principled insistence on linguistic and discursive standardization: social and political cohesion demand one language, one metadiscursive order, one voice. In the case of Locke, the situation is more complex. Locke's tolerationist principles allow a significant space for the protection of multiple voices, especially in domains with epistemological or practical limits to certain knowledge. In those domains where reasoned certainty is within the reach of human understanding,

however, a similar ideology of one language and one metadiscursive order should prevail. The stronger and broader the claims for the reach of reasoned, certain knowledge, then, the stronger the press toward a monoglot and monologic standard as an ideal for the maintenance of social order. This ideology of a monoglot and monologic standard has provided a charter not only for homogenizing national policies of language standardization and the regulation of public discourse, but also for theoretical frameworks that normalize and often essentialize one society-one culture-one language conceptions of the relationships among language, culture, and society. We have argued here that the writings of both Locke and Herder, including the latter's relativist orientation, played key roles in validating this equation as both a philosophical charter and a political principle.

It is not our purpose here to offer an exposé of Locke's and Herder's ideological feet of clay any more than it is to worship at them. Our goal, rather, is to increase our reflexive understanding of the historical foundations of modern ideologies of language and metadiscursive practices more generally, toward providing a critical vantage point on our own work. Our examination of the philosophical writings of Locke and Herder in ideological terms might seem to represent a departure in certain key respects from the approach that characterizes most work on language ideology by linguistic anthropologists. For the most part, in such work, the cultural frame of reference selects for collectivist perspectives that emphasize "commonsense notions" (Rumsey 1990:346), "self-evident ideas and objectives a group holds" (Heath 1977:53), "cultural system[s] of ideas" (Irvine 1989:255), and the like. Locke and Herder, one might argue, are members of an intellectual elite whose highly cultivated philosophical formulations are anything but commonsense notions or self-evident ideas. We submit, however, that to exclude such classical European philosophy from the purview of linguistic anthropology is to acquiesce to the very language ideologies that Locke and Herder promulgated. To the extent that the notion of language ideology helps us to attain this critical recognition of the factors that underlie an ideology of separation between ourselves as modern Western intellectuals and those who are our objects of study, it is a valuable addition to our conceptual repertoire. Philosophy is language ideology insofar as its regimentation of the

field of metadiscursive practice amounts as well to a regimentation of power relations and hierarchies of inequality.

Notes

1. We have used the Alexander Campbell Fraser edition of the *Essay* (Locke 1959[1690]). Citations follow the convention of Locke scholarship, with a succession of numerals designating internal divisions (book in upper-case Roman numerals, chapter in lower-case Roman numerals, section in Arabic numerals); references to Locke's "Epistle to the Reader" and "Introduction" cite the relevant portion of the work followed by volume and page number. This system facilitates the location of citations in any edition of the *Essay*. All italics are in the original.
2. Locke (1989:253) similarly notes that music ranks last on the list of educational priorities in view of the amount of time consumed in mastering an instrument, its unproductiveness, and the way it places an individual "in such odd Company."
3. Locke does note, however, that workers are so consumed by hard labor and a hand-to-mouth existence that they are largely incapable of reflecting on their condition. He thus lays more emphasis on socially and materially based limitations on the use of reason in the *Two Treatises* than he does in the characterization of rational examinations of signs in the *Essay*. As MacPherson (1962:245-46) notes, however, Locke suggests that since all persons are equally endowed with reason and that observed inequalities arise from the failure on the part of some to use their reason, social inequality can be deemed both natural and morally justifiable. See also Formigari (1988, 1993) on Locke's philosophy of language and its historical context.
4. See also Blackall's valuable survey of critical and bibliographical resources (1978:526-60).
5. References to Herder's works are keyed to the 1967 facsimile reprint of the standard Suphan edition (Herder 1967[1877-1913]), cited in the text as SW (for *Sämtliche Werke*). When we have drawn quotations from published translations, we cite those works as well. We have also drawn upon unpublished translations of the following: *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker* (1773), translated by John Cash; *Über die Wirkung der Dichtkunst auf die Sitten der Völker in alten und neuen Zeiten* (1778), translated by Barbara Hummel; *Von Ähnlichkeit der mittlern englischen und deutschen Dichtkunst* (1777), translated by Clover Williams; and *Homer und Ossian* (1795), translated by Peter Bixby. We are

grateful to these colleagues for allowing us to use their work. The remaining translations are our own. All italics are in the original.

6. Herder was Kant's student at Königsberg but later became a strong critic of Kant's philosophy. On the relationship between Herder and Kant, see Clark (1969:41–46, 390–413).

7. The fourth natural law deals with the monogenesis of language and is not relevant to our discussion here.

8. Chomsky (1965:18–24) might appear exceptional here in granting importance to native speaker intuitions in the justification of grammars. Note, though, that he considers such “tacit” linguistic knowledge to be “obscured,” “elusive,” and “not...immediately available to the user of the language.” In order for such intuitions to be activated and brought to consciousness, the linguist must intervene.

9. The political public is the subject of one of Herder's earliest published works, “Do we still have the Public and the Fatherland of yore?,” first published in 1765 (SW 1:13–28/Herder 1992:53–64), as well as of the essay (SW 24:271–72) published posthumously in 1803.

5

Indonesian('s) Authority

Joseph Errington

In the afterglow of the Asian Pacific Economic Conference it had hosted the previous year, Indonesia celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1995 as a newly visible power on the international scene. Some saw the event as doubly vindicating for President Suharto, whose New Order regime had engineered this conspicuously successful project of national development (in Indonesian, *pembangunan nasional*). But the economic implosion of 1998, followed by Suharto's retirement, public unrest, and economic hardship, made some other aspects of the New Order's modus operandi—authoritarian intolerance of dissent, widespread patrimonialism, and entrenched corruption—too obvious for even Suharto's strongest supporters to ignore. The New Order's demise brought to the fore what critics had long seen as its “Javanist” cast: the colonial-era, ethnic-elite tradition that was reinvented to straddle the gap between “modern” and “traditional” modes of New Order authority and governmentality.¹

My aim in this chapter is to examine the authority of the Indonesian language as “perhaps the most important single ingredient in the shaping of the modern [Indonesian] culture” (Liddle 1988:1)