EXPRESSED SILENCE:
A STUDY OF THE METAPHORICS OF WORD
IN SELECTED NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN TEXTS

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of English)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
April 1994
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Date 20 April 1994
ABSTRACT

Expressed Silence: A Study of the Metaphorics of Word
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This dissertation explores the patterned use of certain "metaphors of word"—images of reading, writing, listening, and speaking—in four American texts: Emerson’s Nature, Thoreau’s Walden, Hawthorne’s Scarlet Letter, and Melville’s Moby Dick. Assumed in my discussion is the modern view of metaphor as a cognitive device used, not for mere stylistic ornament, but for creating a certain mental perspective. Based on the perspectival view and on the experiential–gestalt account of metaphor, the structures of these metaphors of word are examined in order to discern the systematic nature of their argument and to determine the cultural and historical reasons why language imagery, and not some other type of imagery, was chosen to represent this argument. After surveying the cultural influences of democracy, mercantilism, Romanticism, and Calvinism, I characterize the metaphoric systems of each text and then move on to a closer study of the role of silence within these systems.

From this analysis, I conclude that these nineteenth-century texts reflect a shift away from the book toward the voice as a predominant symbol, and away from writing toward speaking as a privileged metaphor. Language imagery works to represent ways of knowing, so that linguistic and epistemic concerns become inextricably intertwined. The process of using
language operates as a metaphor for the process of gaining knowledge. In this metaphorics of word, silence emerges as a particularly striking metaphor in the way that it expresses the coalescence of being and knowing, the realization that we know what we know. In this scheme, metaphors of word structure ways of understanding, and the expressed silence metaphor highlights the way interior speech can function in the discernment of knowledge. Ultimately, I contend that the perspective provided by this nineteenth-century metaphorics of word forecasts the modern view of rhetoric as epistemic. By employing linguistic action as a figure for representing epistemic action, a metaphorics of word promotes an understanding of rhetoric’s primary purpose as the interrogation of truth.
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Acknowledgments

First of all, I am grateful to the University of British Columbia for the fellowship that aided in the completion of this dissertation.

I appreciate all the people who have assisted in the development of this study, especially the following colleagues and mentors. I thank Father Steven Rowan from Seattle University for our conversations about how a culture of the book became a culture of the voice. Several people from Western Washington University deserve my gratitude as well: Roberta Buck, for generous and expeditious delivery of my drafts; Kathleen Lundeen for enlightening references to silence in British Romantic texts; Lynne Masland, for the clarifying discussions about my texts; and Barbara Sylvester, for her generous intellectual and emotional support over many years.

The faculty on my supervising committee have been important influences on my work throughout its stages. I thank Judy Segal for her stimulating and pointed questions about the rhetorical nature of my study. I appreciate Grosvenor Powell for his expert and pertinent comments about literary history and American literature. And I owe a special debt to Mava Jo Powell for her inspiring seminar on linguistic theories of metaphor which launched this dissertation and for her judicious guidance every step of the way. Her scholarly and humane direction of my work has been a blessing, and I am deeply grateful.

I am also thankful to my friends and family, especially to those who have seen me through the last two years: my dear friend, Peggy Bridgman, for her unconditional support; my parents, Frank and Corinne Werder and Marie Woodward, for their constant encouragement; my sons Joseph and Fritz, and daughter Melissa, for their continuing interest in my ideas.

Most of all, I acknowledge my husband, Richard, whose insight, creativity, and affection have sustained not only this dissertation, but all my work.
CHAPTER 1
AN INTRODUCTION TO A METAPHORICS OF WORD

The 'Cognitive Force' of Metaphor

"Man's reach must exceed his grasp or what's a metaphor?"

This query-answer by Marshall McLuhan playfully suggests that a metaphor provides for some kind of mental stretching and serves to extend our usual human capacity in some way. Although scholars in earlier centuries stressed the stylistic and decorative aspects of metaphor, many twentieth-century theories emphasize that metaphoric extension has serious cognitive import.¹ Many of these latter theorists would answer McLuhan by saying, "Metaphor is for the discovery of truth." Instead of mere ornament, metaphor is now primarily studied for what Eva Kittay (1987) has called its "cognitive force."²

This modern view of metaphor as a cognitive mechanism rests on the work of such diverse thinkers as Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1817) who portrayed metaphor as the linguistic means by which thoughts are unified (qtd. in Kittay 6), Friedrich Nietzsche (1911) who argued for metaphor as a thought process by which we make sense of reality,³ I.A. Richards (1936) who said that we think by means of metaphors,⁴ and Kenneth Burke (1941) who described metaphor as one of the four "master tropes" which have a "role in the discovery and description of 'the truth'."⁵ More
recently, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) have affirmed this relationship between metaphor and thought by examining the "metaphors we live by," contending that "metaphor is not just a matter of language. . . . On the contrary, human thought processes are largely metaphorical" (emphasis added). This modern view identifies using metaphor with thinking and insists that metaphor should be examined "not for its affective and rhetorical efficacy, but for its cognitive contribution" (Kittay 2).

Therefore, this study of literary metaphor seeks to discern the cognitive legacy of certain texts by examining their metaphors. The perspectival view of metaphor, as developed by theorists such as I.A. Richards and Max Black and formalized by Kittay, is helpful in determining the cognitive contributions of these texts. By describing metaphor as a way of creating a certain "perspective," these theorists have proposed that it is this resulting perspective which has a cognitive influence. To explore these perspectives for recurring patterns is to explore patterns of thought. By examining writers' metaphorical habits, then, we can learn about their habits of mind.

A Metaphorics of Word

Based on this crucial view of metaphor as a cognitive device, this study focuses on the metaphorics of American literature in the nineteenth century. I use "metaphorics" to mean the study of certain metaphorical patterns which recur within a text as well as across a body of literature and a
certain time period. With this approach, I follow the work of E.R. Curtius who examined the metaphorics of European literature in the Latin Middle Ages, identifying five recurring imagery clusters: nautical, personal, alimentary, corporal, and theatrical. More to the point of my investigation, he traces various writing metaphors and presents an overview of how the book served as a symbol in the literature.7 While Curtius was concerned with cataloguing metaphors as part of his larger attempt to show how the devices of classical rhetoric (both topoi and tropes) served to unify the literature in terms of literary method, I am primarily interested in investigating the metaphorics of nineteenth-century American literature to see how the patterned use of language imagery served to unify the literature in terms of a common theme. Whereas an intuitive reading of selected texts written in this time period suggests that these American writers used similar images and shared common cognitive pursuits, metaphorics ensures a more systematic and formal study of this relationship.

The focus here will be on "metaphors of word," that is, images involving reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Taken together, these metaphors of word construct language itself as the domain from which to view and understand other domains. I will trace the use of these language metaphors in four American texts: Emerson's Nature (1836), Thoreau's Walden (1854), Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter (1850), and Melville's Moby Dick (1851). These texts were selected not only because they
are representative of a particularly important literary period, but also because the writers of these works profess a common view of language, make it a constant subject of their writing, and use it as a way of understanding the world. In discussing these works, I will represent some of the basic impulses of the traditionally defined canon of nineteenth-century American literature and intimate how these inclinations were culturally defined. Specifically, I want to emphasize that at the same time as the writers of this century express frustration with the limits of language, their writing reveals an acknowledgement of its value and of its primacy in their lives. While the American writers of the eighteenth century tended to generate public manifestos, defining the spirit and struggles of a young country searching for independence, the writers of the nineteenth century turned increasingly to matters of the individual. Their texts show how much they valued language for the way it could give expression to one person's search for inner truth within a nation of searchers. In short, they demonstrate a tendency to rely on language, above everything else, for their individual quests.

In his study of style in American literature (1966), Richard Poirier states that for many American writers (including the four under study here), language represented a site of liberation: "American books are often written as if historical forces cannot possibly provide such an environment, as if history can give no life to 'freedom', and as if only language
can create the liberated place" (emphasis added). It is in this liberating spirit that these American writers use language metaphors—metaphors of word—to create a space for themselves: as individuals within a maturing democratic nation, as craftsmen within an expanding market economy, as writers within an evolving Romantic tradition, and as spiritualists within an increasingly secularized Calvinistic theology.

A Rhetorical Basis

While this study of metaphors of word draws on understandings from literary history, criticism, and linguistics, it is fundamentally a rhetorical analysis, in which attention is directed to the effects of the figurative language employed in the texts, with the discussion phrased more in terms of the traditional canon of invention than of style. In other words, instead of examining the patterned use of certain figures for the way that they contribute to an overall literary voice, metaphorical patterns will be studied as recurring ideas. These means will facilitate a focus upon the systematic meaning(s), rather than upon the aesthetic appeal, of these figures. Relying on Kenneth Burke's expanded definition of persuasion to include works of literature, I want to discern the "lines of argument" provided in the language metaphors of these literary texts. Sonja Foss has described the basis for this kind of rhetorical venture: "metaphor serves an argumentative function in a very basic way; metaphor constitutes argument. Metaphor does not simply provide support to an argument; the structure of
the metaphor itself argues." My aim is to discover the structure of these metaphors of word in order to determine the systematic structure of their arguments and to explore the culturally- and historically-specific reasons why language imagery, and not some other type of imagery, was chosen to represent these arguments.

In classical rhetorical terms, these texts can be viewed as epideictic in the way that they both censure language for its inability to access some truths, and also celebrate the process of language as a metaphor for knowing. In modern rhetorical terms, these texts demonstrate how rhetoric is epistemic, how the arguments presented in their metaphors of word create a new understanding of the relationship between language and thought. This epistemic perspective, as acknowledged by Robert L. Scott in 1967, presupposes the understanding, as Foss et al. have put it, "that all knowledge-creating enterprises have rhetorical aspects." Grounded in this modern understanding of rhetoric, this study is also rhetorical simply because of its central concern with figures of speech.

Metaphor and Symbol

Norman Friedman’s "Theory of Symbolism" (1975) is helpful here in the way that it proposes three general approaches to imagery: (1) mental, where the focus is on what happens in the reader’s mind; (2) rhetorical, where the concern is with the figures of speech in the language itself; and (3) symbolic, where the attention is drawn to the meaning and significance of
these images. While these three labels point to contrasting concerns, they are not mutually exclusive since figurative language simply does not operate on such discrete levels. In other words, what happens in the reader's mind is a function of the language itself and of the significance of the imagery used, both within the text and in the larger context of the culture. As both Curtius and Friedman have observed, an examination of recurring metaphor inevitably involves an examination of symbol, which inevitably involves a discussion of prevailing cultural values. The challenge here is to provide for some distinction between metaphor and symbol within a larger discussion of nineteenth-century ideas and culture.

From the Greek word meaning "a turn," a trope in traditional rhetoric refers to a rhetorical device which creates a shift in the meaning of words. A metaphor is considered one kind of trope by which language is used with a "turn" or extension of its literal meaning. Important to note is that the turn involves an extension of meaning and not simply a transference of one word for another. Furthermore, in the contemporary view, neither the word nor the sentence is considered an adequate linguistic unit of metaphor, in that an analysis of metaphorical meaning often requires examining the larger linguistic/extralinguistic context. As Kittay states, "a unit of metaphor is any unit of discourse in which some conceptual or conversational incongruity emerges" (24); thus, metaphorical meaning is a function of the immediate linguistic/
extralinguistic context, but can emerge from a unit larger than the word or sentence.

In contrast to metaphor, a symbol has been taken to be something which means itself and something beyond itself. In his discussion of the "symbolic mode," Angus Fletcher reminds us that a symbol may or may not be a matter of explicit expression, but that a metaphor always involves some explicit term.\(^{15}\) In this tradition, Coleridge made a distinction between allegory and symbol by noting that with the symbol, "it is very possible that the general truth may be unconsciously in the writer's mind during the construction of the symbol," (qtd. in Fletcher 17) while with the allegory (and by analogy, the metaphor), the correspondence is always consciously made by the writer.\(^{16}\) Since the associations behind a symbol may be unconscious, the ideas being linked are not always given or understood in a specific context. For example, a cross—the icon by itself—is a symbol of Christianity, whether a word or expression accompanies it or not because the associations between the cross and Christianity have been established over time. In contrast with symbolism, since metaphorical meaning is a function of literal meaning, a metaphor always requires some explicit linguistic expression. While one of the paired terms of a metaphor may be implied, there is always some trace of the metaphorical transfer evident in the immediate linguistic context.

A way of describing this distinction between metaphor and
symbol is to acknowledge that the metaphor relies more on the immediate context for its meaning, while the symbol draws more on associations already established in a larger context both within the text and outside the text. As Friedman puts it, "Thus it can be said that a recurring metaphor is symbolic, because repetition establishes larger relationships, and that a symbol is an expanded metaphor" (291). Because symbolic meaning accrues, then, Friedman calls it the most complex level of figurative meaning and the most difficult kind of meaning to trace. Also, since metaphorical and symbolic levels can overlap, a specific linguistic item can involve both metaphorical and symbolic meanings.

The crucial point is that an image can acquire symbolic meaning only by some kind of repeated use: in the real world of a culture/within the literary world of a specific text. For example, the white whale in Moby Dick and the red "A" in The Scarlet Letter acquire powerful symbolic meaning because of their use in the literature, both by repeated literal use and by recurring metaphorical use. In contrast, the voice exists as a powerful symbol in both of these texts because of its use not only in the literature, both literally and figuratively, but also because of its role in the American culture of the nineteenth century. In Burkean terms, voicing as "symbolic action," is the object of this study because the concern is with both the textual applications and also with a broader application to the cultural symbol systems.
It should be noted here that both the book and the voice are being considered as images in my discussion of metaphors of word. While the word "image" can be somewhat misleading since it suggests only visual objects, I am using "image" to refer to anything which can be received by any of the senses.

A question which remains is whether the literary or the cultural context is the most fruitful place for an investigation of imagery. Since metaphor is always a conscious construct and always involves some explicit expression by the writer, it is tempting to begin with the metaphorical use of images in literature and then to consider their symbolic import. And yet, as Curtius suggests, a pervasive cultural symbol, such as a book, sometimes generates metaphors in literature. In his chapter "The Book as Symbol," Curtius shows how the book, which had assumed a central place as an esteemed object in the culture, gave rise to countless writing metaphors in the literature.

Relying on Goethe's premise that only subject matter which is "value-charged" can serve as a source of figurative language, Curtius demonstrates that it is only when the book possessed the necessary cultural value as a symbol that it had the necessary "life-relation" to prompt literary metaphors. He contends that "The use of writing and the book in figurative language occurs in all periods of world literature, but with characteristic differences which are determined by the course of the culture in general" (303, emphasis added). Because the potential for a
genuine life-relation between people and books was manifestly greater during some periods than others, it was during these peak periods when writers were more motivated to choose writing metaphors. In illustration, Curtius traces recurring writing metaphors in European literature, such as "the book of experience," "the red ink of martyrs' blood," and a "book binding as a human face" and emphasizes how their use varies with the times. He asserts that such writing metaphors were conspicuous and significant in the literature during those periods when the book was a valued symbol and were inconsequential when the book was not as highly regarded.

Furthermore, Curtius contends that "after the Enlightenment shattered the authority of the book and the Technological Age changed all the relations of life," the book lost its place as an esteemed symbol and writing imagery lost its significance in the literature (347). My interest stems partially from this contention by Curtius that the book was no longer a pervasive symbol after the eighteenth century and from the questions it poses. What happened to the book as a symbol in America in the nineteenth century? If it did lose its place of honor, what symbol, if any, took its place? And, most importantly, what do the writing metaphors of American writers in the nineteenth century reveal about their habits of mind? If Curtius is right that the characteristic way writing is used as figurative language is culturally determined, and I believe that he is, then we might hypothesize something about the writing metaphors
used in this body of literature by first examining the values of the nineteenth-century culture and then test this hypothesis by studying the literary metaphors themselves. The questions and conclusions that Curtius provides with reference to European literature serve as a backdrop for my explorations of American literature. Like Curtius, I contend that a study of recurring tropes allows for a unified perspective on a body of literature.

**Linguistic and Epistemic Action**

Given this background, I am asserting that American literature of the nineteenth century reflects a shift away from the book toward the VOICE as a predominant symbol, and away from writing toward speaking as a pervasive metaphor. As part of this overall claim, I am arguing that a particularly striking metaphor of word that pairs speech and silence, which I am terming "expressed silence," merits special attention in the way that it reveals a significant attitude about the relationship between language and knowledge. Basic to my discussion is the contention that metaphors selectively highlight ideas so that "If an idea is important to a person or culture, it will find its way to imagery."18 Because language, especially speech, was such an important topic in the writings of the nineteenth-century, it is inevitable that it would find its way into the imagery in the literature.

Furthermore, it is the process by which language provides epistemic access that is being highlighted by these metaphors of word, namely, that the process of using language is a useful
perspective for viewing the process of knowing. Assumed in my discussion is the belief that the metaphorical habits of these writers reflect an attitude about language that existed in their culture: Using language is a way of thinking. While these writers might have been more vocal about this attitude toward language than the common person, they reflect the nineteenth-century's cognitive inclinations. These writers had a life-relation with words, and even though they were aware of linguistic limitations, they were preoccupied with language and its primacy; it follows that they would make language the main subject matter of their writing and use the domain of language itself as a source of their figurative expressions. Their metaphors of word employ language as vehicle and knowledge as tenor, so that the domain of language provides the perspective for viewing the domain of knowledge. Drawing on metaphors of language to represent cognition, they highlight the relationship between the process of using language and the process of gaining knowledge. The result is the creation of literary texts in which linguistic and epistemic concerns are inextricably intertwined.

An investigation of these metaphors of word will show how these American writers use language both as the subject matter of their writing and as a source of figurative language. Using metaphors of word enabled them both to affirm what they understood about the relationship between using language and thinking and to explore that relationship further. The
metaphorics of this literature will show that theirs was an epistemic search: they sought to understand how we come to know what we know. Underwriting these metaphors of word was the belief that the process by which we use language could provide a perspective for examining the process by which we discern truth. While the particular kind of truth sought by each writer was distinct, they were all absorbed with the epistemic process and the way language informs this process. In their minds, thinking and using language were inextricably linked, and the metaphorics of their texts reveals this bond. Their metaphors of word served to provide a cognitive perch from which to view the ways they came to understand themselves and their world. Furthermore, that these writers choose metaphors of word as cognitive devices for understanding the epistemic process suggests how their nineteenth-century audience might also have regarded the relationship between language and knowledge.

This shift from writing to speaking as the privileged source of literary metaphor is decisive, involving an ongoing depreciation of the written text alongside the continual privileging of the spoken word. It is my contention that speech imagery is preferred over writing imagery because the voice was valued over the book in the nineteenth-century culture. As part of this claim, I will show that these metaphors of word are aligned with ways of discovering truth, so that writing imagery is paired with reason and speaking imagery is linked with intuition. At the same time that the voice was valued over the
book, there was a preference for intuition over reason as a source of truth.

Furthermore, at times these writers resorted to an expressed silence metaphor to represent the relationship between metacognition and interior speech. In this alignment, a self-conscious understanding of some ideas (like God, the self, human passion, and death) is associated with silent internal speech. In this metaphor, attending to silence reflects the self-conscious attempt to understand particularly elusive truths. This expressed silence metaphor highlights the way we can use unarticulated speech—interior speech—to consider those eternally troublesome truths that we can never really access and further points to those elusive moments when knowing and being coalesce. Lev Vygotsky has described the function of the "inner speech" of an adult as "'thinking for himself' rather than for social adaptation"\(^9\) and characterizes it as "a dynamic, shifting, unstable thing, fluttering between word and thought" (149). In the metaphorics of word, silence marks this "fluttering" state when we are aware of our thinking.

I believe that it is this expressed silence metaphor of word that is the most significant feature of the metaphorics of nineteenth-century American literature because of the way it highlights how this culture valued a private logos. While language was appreciated for its capacity to proclaim ideas publicly, or these writers would not have written at all, it is the capacity that language has for helping them to be aware that
they know what they know that these writers most valued. In its capacity for pointing simultaneously to both language and thought, expressed silence emerges as a metaphor for metacognition.

For these nineteenth-century writers, language provided epistemic access; it was through the process of making meaning with words that they came to understand truth. Theirs was a private logos because they valued words more for the way they enabled personal pursuits of truth than for the way they enabled public declaration of these truths. For them, using language was a way of thinking, and that is why they spent so much time talking about language and drawing on it as a source of their metaphors. Because these writers were so preoccupied with the use of language for the active sorting through of ideas, it follows that they would look to speech, rather than writing, as the most appropriate source of imagery. The book, with its implied public audience, was rejected; speech, with its associations of more private audiences, such as in personal conversations, was preferred. Speech implies some kind of dialogue, some kind of immediate exchange between speaker and listener in a way that writing does not. The book, once written, can simply lie there, waiting for the reader to engage with it; but the voice, once spoken, necessarily means that any listener within hearing range has been engaged, no matter how slightly. The book represents a finished product, the results of thinking, while the voice represents the ongoing process of
thinking, a process of call and response by which a writer could even take both parts, as both speaker and listener. With its potential for expressing the boundless nature of truth, the voice is an attractive literary image.

Method of Analysis

In supporting these assertions, I will provide a discussion in three parts: the cultural context of nineteenth-century America, the metaphoric system within each subject text, and the role of the expressed silence metaphor within these metaphoric systems. Since I contend that the voice is one of those images that has acquired symbolic meaning both by its use in the culture and in the literature, in chapter two I will discuss the political, economic, aesthetic, and religious features of nineteenth-century American culture which would have resulted in a high regard for the human voice and which help account for its symbolic import. In this discussion of the cultural context, attention will be drawn to four main factors which contributed to the voice being so value-charged: democracy and its emphasis on the individual, mercantilism and its commodifying of the book, Romanticism and its view of the writer as seer, and Calvinism and its theological provisions for both the book and the voice. In discussing these four cultural features, I will show how the voice acquired symbolic meaning outside of the literary texts.

Following this discussion of the cultural context, in chapters three, four, and five I will take up the four literary
texts and their metaphoric systems for the purpose of discerning the metaphors of word used and of observing how they contribute to a common perspective. In this metaphoric study, I will use the procedures as outlined by Foss as typical of a rhetorical approach: an investigation of the literary artifact as a whole, a classification of metaphors into various clusters or groups, an identification of specific metaphors within these basic groups, an analysis of these specific metaphors, and an evaluation of the metaphoric system of each text (191-194). While Foss places identification of specific metaphors second in the sequence, I have chosen to discuss the classification of the metaphor groups before examining specific metaphors. Although my original line of inquiry followed Foss' sequence, I believe that the discussion of my findings will profit from an earlier exposition of the metaphor types because my intent is to emphasize the commonality of metaphors used and, thus, to highlight the similarity of basic metaphor types.

In investigating each literary artifact as a whole, I will examine how the images of the voice and the book operate in the four texts both as literal components and as sources of figurative expression. While I aim to focus attention on the way the domain of language is used as a source of figurative expression, it is also necessary to spend some time acknowledging how language operates literally in these texts. In order to discern how the domain of language serves metaphorical meaning, we need to see how it serves literal
meaning in each text. This need for establishing overall literary context is crucial in understanding how a particular metaphor operates in the overall literary experience of a text. As Philip Stambovsky explains, an image obtains metaphorical meaning in terms of the whole experience of reading the text and discovering certain themes: A "depictive image" is a "field phenomenon" which acquires its meaning "in the unfolding of literary themes that occur in the medium of the reader's consciousness."\(^{20}\) We experience specific metaphors within a text in terms of the overall literary experience; we understand certain images in terms of the unfolding themes, and we understand literary themes in terms of both literal and figurative action. After establishing the overall thematic directions within a text, I will then move on to a closer look at how the metaphors of word relate to those themes. In discussing the figurative uses, I will show how the metaphors of word operate similarly in all four texts and how the speaking metaphors assume special significance. I want to demonstrate that there is a pronounced progression away from writing metaphors, to speaking metaphors, until we get to Moby Dick where "silence reigns."

In the classification, identification, analysis, and evaluation of the metaphors in each text, I will rely on the theoretical framework provided by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) in their experiential-gestalt approach to the investigation of metaphors. Because I am more interested in
identifying the patterns of metaphors and how they are culturally influenced than in explaining how they are obtained linguistically, the experiential approach is pertinent in the way that it accounts for what Lakoff and Johnson call the "systematicity" evident in the common metaphors we encounter daily. They argue that metaphor is not a mere matter of words, but of thoughts. They assert that metaphor is a conceptual phenomenon that results from the way we experience the world and that these resulting gestalts serve to structure both our thinking and our language and become the "metaphors we live by." Because they are concerned with showing the conceptual schemes inherent in various metaphors and discerning the systematic nature of these schemes, their approach will be helpful in revealing the systematicity that I believe is operating in the metaphors of word under study here. Their account identifies coherency across metaphors when they are viewed as a system. Thus different metaphors can be coherent if they highlight different aspects of a concept while not contradicting each other (94-95). Furthermore, their emphasis on how these metaphors are culturally based is fundamental to my investigation as well (9).

Essentially, the experiential theory seeks to demonstrate the systematic nature of our metaphorical usage by identifying the common patterns of metaphor used within our culture. Critical to their discussion is the contention that it is the metaphor in the mind that they are most interested in
discerning, so that when they speak of metaphor, "it should be understood that metaphor means metaphorical concept" (6). Their classification system establishes an index to those metaphorical concepts that provide the basic mental gestalts which serve to structure our experiences and which are articulated by a variety of linguistic expressions (5). It is to these basic conceptual metaphors that they give priority in their discussion, and that I am using as a guide in sorting the basic metaphors of word that operate in the subject texts.

Although Lakoff and Johnson are not concerned with poetic metaphors so much as with those that are used in everyday speech, they do propose a view of metaphor that can be applied to literary metaphor and which George Lakoff and Mark Turner use at greater length in their guide to poetic metaphor, More Than Cool Reason. The experiential-gestalt view establishes three main kinds of basic conceptual metaphors which we use to understand life: structural, orientational, and ontological. The structural metaphor refers to one concept which is metaphorically structured in terms of another, such as "ARGUMENT IS WAR" (Lakoff and Johnson 4). The orientational metaphor organizes a whole system of metaphors with respect to one another and usually involves a spatial relationship, such as "HAPPY IS UP" (14). The ontological metaphor represents a non-discrete item as a discrete entity, such as "THE MIND IS AN ENTITY" (26). I will use these three metaphor types, then, to survey the basic metaphors that I observe in my subject texts.
As Lakoff and Turner have noted, these basic metaphors are the ones that are fundamental to a culture and that we use automatically and frequently.22

Using the categories of the experiential catalogue in studying the metaphors of word in the subject texts, I have identified two recurring structural metaphors: UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING (Lakoff and Johnson 48, Lakoff and Turner 94) and UNDERSTANDING IS HEARING. These metaphors, as Eve Sweetser notes, are basic metaphors and are universal or near-universal features in all Indo-European lexical systems.23 These metaphors, she explains, are based on their etymologies and on the close connections that the perception verbs "see" and "hear" have with understanding (31-35). Her explanation reinforces the experiential account because since we tend to base our understanding on data obtained by the eyes and ears, our experience causes us to structure the domain of understanding in terms of the domains of sight and hearing.

The naming of these two basic structural metaphors prompts a question about the difference between them: how is the understanding associated with seeing different from the understanding associated with hearing? Sweetser observes that both hearing and sight are associated with intellectual processing, but that hearing is more restricted to a communicative kind of understanding, as in "I hear what you're saying," rather than in the broad kind of intellection associated with seeing, as in "I see what you mean." She says
that "It would be a novelty for a verb meaning 'hear' to develop a usage meaning 'know' rather than 'understand', whereas such a usage is common for verbs meaning 'see'. In this way, UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING would seem to have more applications since it applies to a general kind of understanding, and not just mental reception. However, Sweetser identifies another difference: hearing, in contrast with seeing, is also used to represent the kind of understanding that leads to obedience (42-43). With these linguistic considerations in mind, we can consider how these two basic structural metaphors operate in the subject texts.

To be in keeping with my portrayal of these as metaphors of word which structure ways of understanding, and to reflect their use more accurately in the texts I am studying, I will use a more text-specific version of these two structural metaphors and restate them as RATIONAL UNDERSTANDING IS READING and INTUITIVE UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING. In these two metaphors, the process of understanding rationally is structured by the process of reading, and the process of understanding intuitively is structured by the process of listening. I take them to be variations of the two more generally-stated metaphors discussed above. In addition, I have observed a third basic metaphor that is related to the structural metaphor RATIONAL UNDERSTANDING IS READING, but which is an ontological metaphor: RATIONAL KNOWLEDGE IS A BOOK. I will show how these three metaphors are coherent within the metaphoric systems of these texts because
they highlight different, but compatible, features of the process of knowing. It is important to note that there is no corresponding ontological voice metaphor. Before the advent of tape recorders, the human voice could not be objectively recorded in a way that was comparable to the physically determinate covers of a bound book. I would argue that these writers' elevation of the hearing structural metaphor, rather than a related ontological metaphor, signals their concern with both the linguistic and epistemic processes more than with their resulting products. Having identified these three basic metaphors of word, I will use them in succeeding chapters to analyze and evaluate the metaphoric systems of each text.

Chapter six of my discussion will focus on the role that the expressed silence metaphor plays in these metaphoric systems. This metaphor is a complex variation of the basic metaphors RATIONAL UNDERSTANDING IS READING and INTUITIVE UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING which results in a new structural metaphor: SELF-CONSCIOUS UNDERSTANDING IS READING/LISTENING TO SILENCE. The process of intuitive understanding is structured in this metaphor by the process of attending to silent, interior voices. Important to note is that this metaphor is NOT coherent with the other three metaphors of word discussed so far because it introduces a basic contradiction that does not fit with the other structural metaphors: attending to silence. In all four texts, this expressed silence metaphor highlights what interior speech can provide to an understanding of certain ideas.
that can not be understood in any other way.

While the silence metaphor is common to all four texts, it is expressed differently in each one and is used to represent a self-conscious awareness of different elusive ideas: God, the self, human passion, and death. In Nature, "mute gospel" is one linguistic expression of this metaphor and represents the way that listening to the silent voice of nature can reveal the "god within." In Walden, speaking silence finds expression in the phrase "silent harmony" and points to the way the individual comes to hear his own unique inner voice in the company of nature. In The Scarlet Letter, the pairing of "unuttered" with "sympathy" expresses an understanding of how people come to know the truths of the heart by listening to their own inner voices. And in Moby Dick, Melville's phrase "pyramidical silence" conveys the expressed silence metaphor and acknowledges the way that language cannot access truths, like death, and can only enable each person to name for himself what it is that he does not understand.

It is this expressed silence metaphor and its variations that I find most significant in the metaphors of nineteenth-century American literature because it calls attention to their view of language in such a novel way. It highlights the power of interior speech and its potential for making us aware of our powers of understanding while recognizing an ultimate limit: language can take us only so far. The expressed silence metaphor satisfies a need that other metaphors of word can not
accomplish: the need for voicelessness, for it is the silence that so effectively represents the place where being and knowing merge.

To summarize, then, my overall method of analysis will be to move from an overview of the cultural context, to a description of the metaphoric systems in each text, to a discussion of the role of expressed silence in these metaphoric systems. This three-part analysis comprises the five remaining chapters. Chapter two, "From The Culture of the Book to the Culture of the Voice," traces four features of nineteenth-century America which together influenced the shift from book to voice: democracy, mercantilism, Romanticism, and Calvinism. Chapter three, "The Voice of the Translator in Nature and Walden," describes the similar way in which Emerson and Thoreau look to language for transcendental knowledge. Chapter four, "The Tongue of Flame in The Scarlet Letter," concerns Hawthorne's attention to language as a way of understanding human passion. Chapter five, "Voices of Negation in Moby Dick," focuses on the ultimate failure of language to account for human suffering and death. Chapter six, "The Literacy of Silence," presents a discussion of the expressed silence metaphor in all four texts and of how it contributes to the metaphors of word.
Chapter 1 Notes


6. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Metaphors We Live By, p. 6. All subsequent page citations are in the text.

7. See E.R. Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, pp. 128-144, for a general discussion of metaphorics and pp. 302-347 for a discussion of "The Book as Symbol." All subsequent page citations are in the text.


10. Sonja K. Foss, Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice, p. 190. All subsequent page citations are in the text.

11. See Lane Cooper, The Rhetoric of Aristotle, p. 17, for a discussion of epideictic rhetoric as one of the three kinds of discourse.

12. See Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present, pp. 901-902, for a discussion of how modern theorists such as Michael Foucault and Jacques Derrida demonstrate this theme that rhetoric is epistemic.


15. See Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode*, p. 17, notes 30 and 31, for a discussion of how allegory and metaphor are expressed linguistically and how "symbol is supralinguistic." All subsequent citations are in the text.

16. See S.T. Coleridge, *Miscellaneous Criticism*, p. 29, for original discussion of this distinction between allegory and symbol.

17. See Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action*, p. 2, for a discussion of this general concern with 'symbolic action'.


19. Lev Vygotsky, *Thought and Action*, p. 18. All subsequent page citations are in the text.


21. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*. Note how the experiential account poses rhetorical concerns in its regard for the cultural context of language use, pp. 22-24, and in its intimation that language is epistemic, p. 68.


23. See Eve Sweetser, *From Etymology to Pragmatics: Metaphorical and Cultural Aspects of Semantic Structure*, p. 33, for a discussion of UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING and pp. 41-43, for a discussion of UNDERSTANDING IS HEARING. All subsequent page citations are in the text.

24. See Lakoff and Turner, p. 71, for a discussion of the "conceptual power of poetic metaphor." They might explain the silence metaphor as a "novel extension" of UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING, but the experiential challenges of "listening to silence" would make this explanation problematic.
Cultural Spheres of Influence

Moving from a belief that a metaphorics of word operates in nineteenth-century American literature and reveals a unified attitude toward writing and speaking imagery, I am seeking details of this perceived unity. Assumed in this search is the understanding that typically there is a coherency between the fundamental values of a culture and its literary imagery, and given this assumed coherency, a consideration of cultural norms is in order. Surveying cultural values in a certain time period necessarily involves an equivocating spirit or at least a willingness to distil patterns from selected details because the distances of both time and place require that one rely on certain generalizations and establish certain qualifications.

My focus will be on the first half of the nineteenth century; however, I acknowledge that references will need to be made to events and attitudes evident for years and even centuries earlier. The specific time frame under consideration is the one that often emerges in any discussion of American literature during this century: 1830 to 1855: a time span which includes the years which are referenced by F. O. Matthiessen in his study of the "American Renaissance" and which embraces the publishing of the four subject texts. My aim is
to identify certain societal patterns which emerge during this time period and which are compatible with an esteem for the voice as a cultural and literary symbol. Since cultural values are inherently dynamic and elude any monolithic description, I do not purport to enumerate absolutes. Furthermore, my focus is deliberately narrow, and the cultural trends of interest here are only those which I believe have a significant link to the language imagery under study. An historical overview of the pertinent cultural inclinations of this time will thus provide a grounding for the discussion of the metaphorical systems to follow.

As René Wellek and Austin Warren observed about this kind of historical overview, "While a period is thus a section of time to which some sort of unity is ascribed, it is obvious that this unity can be only relative. It merely means that during this period a certain scheme of norms has been realized most fully" (qtd. in Clark). Since I am assuming that there is a metaphorical system operating in these texts, it is a cultural "scheme" that I want to explore because of its advantages for metaphoric analysis. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that I am not interested in establishing the precise nature of the relationship between discourse and social practices, as many modern philosophers have done. Instead, I am considering the cultural situation as a gloss on the literary texts. Just as discourse can be viewed as a social act, so too can social activity be viewed as discourse, as another text to be
interpreted. Given my assumptions about the relationship between metaphor and symbol, this study is necessarily "intertextual" in this way.

This approach is similar to that taken by Jesse Gillrich in his exploration of how the "idea of the Book" provided a "structuring principle" in the middle ages. Based on Foucault's idea of a cultural "episteme," Gellrich contends that the Book represents an episteme evident in such cultural forms as architecture and music from the fourth century to the fourteenth. Just as he presents his discussion as a "consideration of the conditions of signifying that produced the great books of the middle ages" (19), so too do I mean to examine the 'conditions of signifying' that produced the great books of the nineteenth century.

Four spheres of influence in nineteenth-century culture emerge as having particular importance to this metaphoric study: political, economic, aesthetic, and religious. The intent of the following discussion is to suggest how certain features of each sphere resonate with the imagery used in the texts under study. While each area could be viewed as continuous with another, the purpose here is to emphasize each one as a separate cultural form. Relying on an historical footing, I will then suggest how these cultural patterns support the voice as a valued symbol. The rhetorical focus in this section is on the audience and on how prevailing cultural values might have influenced their expectations as readers. My major contention
is that the confluence of these four cultural spheres reflects a degradation of the written text and an elevation of the spoken word as a source of authority, a shift that corresponds to a devaluation of writing imagery and a revaluation of speaking imagery in the literature. In short, by 1830 in America, a culture of the book had become a culture of the voice.

The Influence of Democracy

As a fledgling democracy in the early 1800's, America was experiencing an acute tension between the public good of the nation and the private need of the citizen. The cultural resolution of this tension was to place in background the collective consciousness and to put in foreground a sense of the individual. While historians range considerably in their identification of prevailing norms during this period, most would agree that individualism, released by the profession of democratic ideals, was preeminent. In such documents as the Declaration of Independence, a commitment to the "inherent and inalienable rights" of the individual had been declared. Furthermore, since these democratic credos had proclaimed that governments derive their power "from the consent of the governed," the primary authority for governing became vested in the individual citizen.

This confidence in the capacity of the individual was strengthened by the influence of figures such as Benjamin Franklin, who declared his belief in human perfectability and made obvious attempts to realize this potential. Not only were
there citizens like Franklin who justified this trust in the human potential, but also there were more and more citizens in the nineteenth century who became active in human rights programs and, as Harry Hayden Clark has noted, "the individualism of the age is expressed by its external reform movements" (123). Such movements as Abolitionism and Women's Rights manifested this concern with individual worth and with the growing inclination to talk about how to improve the lot of the common person. For example, in 1839, the anti-slavery view entered politics with the formation of the Liberty Party by moderate abolitionists, and in 1848, the Seneca Falls Convention for women's rights was called to order.6 By mid-century, social reforms such as these signaled the shift of emphasis from colonial rights to human rights.

More than half a century earlier, the break from England had called for a tipping of the scales on the side of the collective good, and revolutionary rhetoric had reflected the readiness to count a liberated state above a human life: "Give me liberty or give me death." But the Revolution was over and Franklin's call for self-improvement prompted others to respond, so that a need emerged for talk of singular people, not just model citizen types, but ordinary citizens as well. The democratic context prompted a concern with people, taken one at a time, and an interest in the person--the inner person--in addition to the public citizen taken en masse. Larzer Ziff quotes Alexis de Tocqueville in his prediction that such would
be the predominant theme of any democratic nation: "man himself taken aloof from his country and his age and standing in the presence of Nature and of God" (260). In the evolving democratic state, the focus shifted from the Declaration of Independence to the independent human spirit itself, from the liberating document to the liberated person. The extent to which stated democratic ideals were actually being realized during this time is not the issue so much as the consensus that the democratic valuing of the individual was paramount in the society. In other words, the emphasis had moved from the printed texts' publishing of human rights to the human capacity for proclaiming these rights—to the voicing itself.

That the writers of this time period were particularly attentive to the political reality of their country can be assumed. As F. O. Matthiessen remarks, "the one common denominator" that these four writers shared "was their devotion to the possibilities of democracy" (viii). This democratic insistence on the individual's voice in the midst of the public clamor is illustrated by Whitman's inscription added to the 1867 edition of Leaves of Grass: "One's self I sing, a simple, separate Person; yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse" (qtd. in Ziff 244). As H.H. Clark notes, democratic authors were more immediately concerned with themselves as liberated individuals than they were with the freedom of the state (123). This longing to tell of the separate person and yet affirm the masses challenged all writers during these years.
Tocqueville's prediction that writers in a democracy would attend to the individual heart and mind is certainly supported by the texts of Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, and Melville.

So it was that this yearning to speak of the individual "aloof from his country" and yet to affirm support for that country provided the challenge facing writers of this time, just as it created an expectation for all citizens. And not only did the young democracy call for talk about the private individual, it provided more opportunities for speaking by individuals. Because the whole concept of democracy and its faith in the individual implied that there would be more attention paid to the voice of the common person, more forums were created for their voices to be heard. The Revolution had afforded statesmen and military leaders platforms for issuing urgent calls to arms, and now more speaking opportunities were provided to ordinary citizens. America already had a strong tradition of oratory, and the elocutionary movement of the early eighteenth century had revived an interest in public speaking. Clark has acknowledged how the creation and rapid growth of the lyceum in the late 1820's provided a lecture bureau which facilitated opportunities for more speakers, as traveling orators became more active (180). Given this oral tradition and the belief that the democratic center of authority resided in the body politic, the voice of the common person resounded with new authority. This increased regard for orality in America, as a function of its burgeoning democratic values, echoes the
situation in the Greek city-state of fifth-century B.C., when the new democratic principles afforded ordinary people with new forums for speaking, such as the courts. Whether the voice of the people in a democracy carries real influence in policymaking does not seem to matter so much as the fact that the democratic platform inherently connotes a valuing of the individual voice. There is an obligation implicit in democratic rhetoric to value the voice of the common person and to provide opportunities for this voicing.

The Influence of Mercantilism

Alongside this democratic attention to the individual citizen’s voice, there was an economic shift occurring in America during these years, a shift which resulted in a corresponding re-evaluation of individual labor. Between 1820 and 1830, the factory system grew dramatically, prompting a shift from a sustenance economy to a marketing economy. People no longer raised crops and made things strictly for their own use but, instead, began marketing them for money. As a result, an individual’s effort was rewarded, not only with a sense of satisfaction, but also with monetary benefits. Faith in the potential for self-government was accompanied by a growing faith in personal enterprise, as individual initiative paid off. This emerging mercantilism resulted in a new measure for assessing individual productivity: The worth of a person’s work was equal to its marketplace value.

As part of this economic expansion, the new mercantile
economy made the writing of literature a commercial venture and resulted in a depreciation of the book as an aesthetic object. As Michael Gilmore contends, "Literature itself became an article of commerce at this time (1832-1860), as improvements in manufacture, distribution, and promotion helped to create a national audience for letters." Improved printing techniques and lower paper costs meant that books cost less to buy and, with a 90% literacy rate and more leisure time, a growing audience of American readers provided a ready market for these lower priced books (3-4). The cheaper price and the increased number of consumers meant that books sold in greater quantities. Although books were now more affordable and available, they became less valuable. In a marketplace economy where selling price equates with worth, the higher the price and the rarer the item, the more valuable it is; the lower the price and the more available the item, the less valuable it is. This depreciation was acknowledged by Tocqueville in 1840: "The ever increasing crowd of readers and their continual craving for something new ensure the sale of books that nobody much esteems" (emphasis added). In this way, the book became cheapened both economically and aesthetically. Books were no longer considered artistic expressions of a writer's mind and soul, shared with like-minded readers, so much as marketable products to be peddled along with other wares. Unlike the cherished, carefully crafted artifact of earlier centuries, the book became just one more commodity competing for the consumer's attention.
Furthermore, because of the competition with cheaper books published abroad, the books written by American writers were devalued even further. Since copyright laws protected American books but did not govern foreign books, printers profited much more from printing the ones written by foreign authors. Clark has emphasized how in 1820, the majority of books purchased and read in America were actually written/printed abroad (182). As a consumer good, then, the American book did not rank highly because the margin of profit was smaller than for its foreign counterpart.

Noteworthy is the fact that American books by male writers were even further demeaned during this period of rapid commercialization of literature. The sales of many women writers so far surpassed those of men on the popular market that the mid-century years have been dubbed the 'feminine fifties'. Domestic novels written by women had far larger sales than books written by the Romantic writers under consideration here. For example, of two books published in 1850, Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* sold between five and six thousand copies, while Susan B. Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* sold forty thousand copies in less than a year. Given that Hawthorne had a larger audience than the other Romantics, these male writers clearly did not profit financially from the sale of their books (Gilmore 7). As a result, the books of the American writers under study here would have come to be associated with their diminished value in the American marketplace. In general, as the book became more and
more of a commodity and continued to drop in market value, so too did it depreciate as a valued symbol in the American culture.

The Influence of Romanticism

Besides the influences of the democratic state and of the marketplace, aesthetic values were being profoundly affected by the rise of Romanticism. Given the availability of European books, the tenets of British Romanticism, which had been generated in the late 1700's and early 1800's, were readily available to American audiences. In general, Romanticism transformed aesthetic principles by shifting the focus from the work of art to the creative process. In contrast with the marketplace concern with the final product, the Romantic aesthetic valued the process. Given this context, Romanticism resulted in a resuscitation of the literary process and an elevation of the individual writer at the same time that it prompted a further depreciation of the book. The fundamental principles of Romanticism called for a shift away from the written product toward the literary process, and away from the written product toward the human writer. Three primary features of the Romantic theory are at issue here: the alignment of the imagination, the superior faculty, with the process of intuition; the equation of the poem with the poet; and the preference for inner sight (insight) over mere sight (observation).

By displacing rational reasoning with intuition as the
favored source of truth, British Romantic theory placed product in the background and foregrounded process. Because of its associations with the imagination, the intuitive process became aligned with the creative process. In distinguishing between the Fancy and the Imagination, Samuel Taylor Coleridge articulated the Romantic definition of the literary process as one by which the poet unified "opposite or discordant qualities." In his introduction to Coleridge's treatise, editor John Shawcross acknowledges that this imaginative, unifying process was understood as a "direct intuitive act" (xxx). In this way, the Romantic tradition identified intuition as the primary poetic act and proclaimed it superior to any other cognitive approach. Logical reasoning (Understanding) was viewed as a linear, static way of thinking in contrast to the organic, dynamic process of intuition. Because it was understood as a direct apprehension of truth by the individual mind through the senses or imagination without the mediation of a linear process of reasoning, intuition was deemed superior. Furthermore, because intuition did not involve a standard syllogistic form, it was a process unique to each writer and, thus, acquired additional value from its originality. By elevating the imaginative process, the whole literary process was rejuvenated as well.

Since the site of the imaginative, intuitive process was placed in the mind of the poet, not in the written product itself, the increased appreciation for the literary process was
accompanied by a new appreciation for the writer. In Biographia Literaria, Coleridge provides for this equation between the poem and the poet: "What is poetry? is so nearly the same question with, what is a poet? that the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other" (XIV. 12). Equating the poem (product) with the poet (person) prompted a keen interest in the individual perspective. Furthermore, it was the poet's Imagination in action that was celebrated, not some static poetic essence, so that both the person of the writer and the imaginative (intuitive) process were elevated above any resulting literary product. Because of the value placed on the intuitive process, there was a corresponding heightened appreciation for the particular insight of each individual writer. Furthermore, as Coleridge notes, because of individual knowledge and quality of feeling, each person spoke a unique language (XVI. 41). This Romantic preoccupation with the originality of each person's creative process displaced an interest in product and served to further demean the book. It was the poet's individual mind in progress that was central to Romantic theory, not the resulting product. In this scheme, the book was valued only as a marker of the imaginative process, rather than as an aesthetic object in itself.

Moreover, the Romantic portrayal of the writer as seer called for a new characterization of the literary process, so that the writer was defined as a reader. The seer-poet was described as an unusually adept reader, as one with the capacity
to perceive the unity in "discordant qualities." The resulting shift was from a regard for mere sight (observation) to an even higher regard for inner sight (insight). The writer was valued not for simply observing the discord, but for the ability to see in a new way, to understand without direct sight, and to unify in the process of seeing. This conception of the writer as one gifted in seeing interiorly was basic to the Romantic definition of writer-as-seer. Tony Tanner has described this superior angle of vision as a naive kind of looking, a "habit of wonder," involving unanalyzed seeing. Quoting Thoreau, Tanner notes that in this kind of sight, "The sauntering innocent eye sees without looking." In one way, it would seem that the stress placed on writer-as-seer would have prompted an increased valuing of writing imagery because of its visual quality. However, it is important to emphasize here that this was an altogether different kind of seeing that was being advocated. Furthermore, because this Romantic vision called for an inner perception, it provided for a connection with the human voice, which is generated from within and then issues forth. While the Romantics certainly paid attention to vision, their fundamental precepts implied that the sense of hearing be valued in a new and profound way.

Tanner has noted how the English Romantics valued the auditory sense and portrayed the visual perception alone as inadequate and deprived (30). The Romantic characterization of the writer as inner seer, not as observer, calls for—perhaps
even insists on—the central role of hearing. In the exposition of the basic principles of their creed, Romantics often relied on auditory imagery. In outlining the writer's relationship to the natural world in his essay "On Poesy and Art," Coleridge describes how the poet must learn to hear the silent voice of Nature: "he must therefore absent himself for a season from her (nature), in order that his own spirit . . . may learn her unspoken language in its radicals" (lxxix). And in "The Dejection Ode" (1802), Coleridge characterizes the process by which the writer hears his own inner self in the voice of Nature but emphasizes that it is the voice of the human soul that needs attention: "And from the soul itself thus must be sent a sweet and powerful voice, of its own birth, Of all sweet sounds the life and element!" (xxxviii). Here the elemental life force issues forth from the individual soul as a resounding voice from which all other forces receive their 'sounds' and energy. In the Romantic scheme, the ability to hear this powerful voice (even when 'unspoken') is essential to both successful living and effective writing.

Wordsworth also described how Nature has a living voice that at times humans can hear. In Book XIV of The Prelude, at lines 70-74, he suggests how hearing and seeing merge into a new mode of perception, a kind of sixth sense, when he describes how Nature's voice speaks to us through the creative mind when he sees in the moon "the emblem of a mind / That feeds upon infinity, that broods / Over the dark abyss, intent to hear /
Its voices issuing forth to silent light / In one continuous stream." Here the poet sees the visual emblem of a mind that is listening to Nature's voices, and the phrase "silent light" calls attention to the way that the creative process calls for a kind of "seeing with the ears." More will be said in chapter six of how silence operates in this remarkable kind of listening. While Tanner has questioned whether the American Romantics demonstrate this same high estimation of the auditory sense, I would argue that their most privileged images imply this same deep regard for hearing and perhaps an even stronger distrust of mere sight. Tanner himself calls attention to this link between the Romantic vision and hearing when he quotes Emerson, "things will sing themselves if we learn to listen in the right way" (38). This is the same view that Whitman vocalizes later on in the century when he boasts at line 564 in "Song of Myself": "My voice goes after what my eyes cannot reach." Both of these American Romantics are emphasizing the way that the voice serves their expressive needs in a way that the book can not. Like their British counterparts, American Romantics demonstrate their reliance on auditory imagery to portray their inner vision.

By privileging the artist's capacity for insight, the Romantics fostered a corresponding regard for the human voice. Not only was this affinity for the voice evident in the imagery of those writers who articulated the principles of Romantic poetry, it was demonstrated in the increased attention to music
and song in general during this century. With its associations of call and response, the speaking/listening process provided an objective correlative for the creative process. Since intuition implies that the source of truth is inside the individual, no external object--like the book--can appropriately represent this internal source. As Curtius has noted, the "book of reason" had been used by philosophers and theologians since the twelfth century (320), and its use reflected a view of reason as the primary source of truth. By replacing reason with intuition as the epistemic process of choice, however, the Romantics generated a need for some image that more fittingly reflected this cognitive view. The voice, with its capacity for being both internal (generated inside) and external (heard outside), could accommodate this attitude. Furthermore, the displacement of reason with intuition provided for a more complex portrayal of truth. As H. Clark notes about the Romantic tradition, truth became more difficult to communicate (154). Knowledge was no longer considered simply the result of a rational, linear process; it now was characterized as an intuitive, organic process. This epistemic process could no longer be accommodated by visual imagery alone because it called for some way to represent the dynamic nature of its workings, and thus it required a new reliance on auditory imagery. In this way, the book of reason gave way to the voice of intuition.

The Influence of Calvinism

While democracy, mercantilism, and Romanticism all
influenced the shift from a culture of the book to a culture of
the voice, perhaps no other single feature of American
nineteenth-century life had as much effect on the roles of these
symbols as the tradition of English Calvinism. While Calvinism
and Puritanism began in the sixteenth century as separate
strains, they quickly merged in America. Rooted in the early
sixteenth century when Calvin established its basic tenets, the
Calvinist tradition provided a context for the other three
cultural influences discussed so far. Given the tension
generated by their conflicting principles, Calvinism should be
viewed as the trend and democracy, mercantilism, and Romanticism
as countertrends. In other words, it was the deliberate effort
to resist the Calvinistic hold on all areas of life and the
pervasive attempt to secularize American society in the
nineteenth century that prompted the rejection of Calvinism’s
basic source of authority: the Bible. Before examining how the
decline of Calvinism was compatible with the decline of the book
as symbol, I want to acknowledge briefly how the other three
social spheres discussed so far operated in tension with the
religious influence.

Democracy was at odds with Calvinism. The capacity of the
individual to self-rule, a democratic ideal, conflicted with the
Calvinist portrayal of God as Divine Monarch and its mandate
that humans defer to a divine ruler. As Perry Miller concludes,
the one attribute of God that Calvinism most emphasized was
sovereignty. Thus Calvinism was compatible with English rule
and the divine right of kings, but was directly opposed to the basic democratic precept of self-government. For the good citizen, democracy required an acknowledgement of self-worth and a sense of confidence in the common person’s ability to govern. Part of this confidence resulted from the democratic contention that humans were inherently free and had control over their destiny. In his discussion of Calvinism, T. Herbert notes how the believer must be willing to acknowledge total depravity and submission in exchange for a joyous reconciliation with God.17 Despite ongoing attempts to adjust church doctrine to provide for some allowance for human free will, the efforts were continually rejected as heresy (Arminian).18 With God as governing ruler, it followed that the Bible, as a divinely inspired document, would be designated as the primary source of authority. This religious precept also necessarily undermined the status of any of the political manifestos composed by humans and meant that the only written document with real authority was the Bible. Regard for the Bible as the sole authority precluded the authority of any other written texts, resulting in an elevation of the Book, but a denigration of the book.

Mercantilism also clashed with Calvinism. Like the democratic state, the marketplace called for a confidence in the individual’s potential for achievement. Calvinism and its principle of Manifest Destiny meant that God’s grace, not individual effort, resulted in heavenly reward; in contrast, the market economy provided for a personal work ethic and rewarded
individual labor with monetary profit. The profit motive generated an individual aggressiveness that was in tension with an obedient resignation to Divine Providence. The interest in material goods in itself ran counter to the call to resist this physical world and to seek a better, spiritual world. Working for individual economic gain was fundamentally in conflict with the believer's reliance on God as provider. In the mercantile system, profit was earned by individual achievement; in the Calvinist system, merit was bestowed by God.

Romanticism ran counter to Calvinism, too. In the Calvinistic design, Divine Providence was inscrutable; in the Romantic scheme, truth was knowable. Calvinism insisted on the Bible as the chief authority, with Nature as a secondary source; Romanticism replaced written Scripture with Nature as the sacred, unwritten text. While the Bible represented the record of final definitive Truth, Romantic texts purported to be records of process, of truth-in-the-making. Calvinism provided for a universal priesthood; Romanticism established the writer as priest-prophet-seer, whose mission it was to interpret the natural text. The Romantic artist even seemed to assume the role of a cultural redeemer at times, implying a blasphemous arrogance in clear defiance of the Church's insistence on human depravity. Morse Peckham has remarked that the result of Romanticism was that it created art as an alternative to religion. The dogmas were merely presented differently: Calvinists expressed their beliefs in theocentric terms, and
Romantics offered their creeds in secular language.

By the 1800's then, the political, economic, and aesthetic trends were running in obvious opposition to the religious tradition. Instead of total human depravity, the apparently boundless individual potential for goodness was being emphasized. Rather than divine sovereignty, human authority was being touted. And instead of the Bible, Nature was being studied as the text of truth. These emerging values served to weaken a religious tradition that was already in decline. By this time, the contradictions that existed within Calvinist theology itself were undermining its strength as an institution. Primarily, it became increasingly difficult to reconcile the Calvinist doctrines of God's omniscience and the denial of human free will with the orthodox beliefs in the human expectation to willfully follow Christ and repudiate sin. The ongoing effort both to deny human free will and yet simultaneously to call for willful acts ultimately could not be sustained. Its own internal inconsistencies, along with the prevalence of the other counterforces, have prompted many scholars to say that Calvinism had died out by the nineteenth century. This evident rejection of Calvinist dogma and its reliance on the Bible certainly support the view of a shift away from the culture of the book. That the book was the most conspicuous symbol associated with Calvinism is undisputable. As Alan Simpson has remarked, "Puritanism was the religion of a Book, and, without opportunity to master the Book and to engage in mutual criticism and
edification around it, it was hard to make any progress."22 Rejection of Calvinism implied a rejection of the book as a cultural symbol.

Calvinism, Christianity, and the Voice

While it is certain that Calvinism did not have the predominant cultural hold that it did before the emergence of democracy, mercantilism, and Romanticism, there is adequate reason to believe that its influence lingered. Some scholars have insisted that Calvinism persisted as a cultural determiner long after its supposed demise and was a pervasive influence into the twentieth century.23 Since secularization was certainly on the move in the early 1800's, no organized church had the apparent power it once had; and the many forces running counter to Calvinism would have resulted in its role being less perceptible than it once was. If Calvinism continued to shape cultural values into the nineteenth century, and there is sufficient reason to believe that it did, how can the symbol of the voice be reconciled with the Calvinist reliance on the Bible?

A closer look at Calvinism reveals how it provided a place for the voice. Calvin's own words in the Institutes of the Christian Religion (1536) establish a striking analogy between the book and the voice. First, he establishes the role of Scripture to be like eyeglasses for the human understanding. Then in the very next sentence, he presents the Bible as a metaphor for God's voice:
Just as old or bleary-eyed men and those with weak vision, if you thrust before them a most beautiful volume, even if they recognize it to be some sort of writing, yet can scarcely construe two words, but with the aid of spectacles will begin to read distinctly; so Scripture, gathering up the otherwise confused knowledge of God in our minds, having dispersed our dullness, clearly shows us the true God. This [Scripture], therefore, is a special gift, where God, to instruct the church, not merely uses mute teachers but also opens his own most hallowed lips.24

In this passage, Calvin suggests that the divine voice is primary, but since God and His works (Nature) are mute, the Bible articulates the guide for living. The book becomes a substitute for God’s voice. Not only does Calvin’s language here privilege the symbol of the voice, but Calvinist dogma and practices provide for the role of orality—curiously perverse though it sometimes is.

The perversity of orality’s role in Calvinism results from its being both a source of grace and a source of damnation. As a source of grace, speaking enabled ministers to spread the word of God and church members to confess their sins. Although church members were bound by the revealed word of Scripture, the word was typically heard by the congregation and was mouthed by human ministers. Homilists often urged their hearers to listen as if they were listening to God’s very voice. Jonathan Edwards, for example, refers to the eagerness with which hearers “drank in the words of the minister as they came from his mouth.”25 Simpson has observed how in Puritan texts, God’s voice was characterized as heard both internally by the heart and externally by the ear (76). A high regard for God’s voice
in this way was certainly compatible with a religion that put more stock in the invisible than in the visible and which urged its members, as Ziff reminds us, to "read the visible as symbolic of the hidden" (141). In this way, the voice as a symbol of invisible speech was more in keeping with Calvinist theology than the visible book.

Another advantage of orality was the confession of saving grace, which was a voiced spiritual biography required of any candidate for sainthood, and which was a mainstay of Puritan faith. For a time, American Puritans were required to make a public confession for Church membership. While the public confession could be a source of grace, it was also a source of damnation for those accused of witchcraft. In the New England witch trials, the bewitched who confessed were self-damned and then executed. In a curious twist, the alleged witches in the Salem witch trials who confessed to complicity with the devil were "saved" from death, though eternally damned.26 In this way, the voice could be a source of both salvation and of damnation, and its dual associations reflected the contradictions within Calvinist dogma.

Although orality operated in this perversely dual way at times within Calvinism, generally it played a positive role and provided church members with their main source of saving grace. Furthermore, it should be emphasized here that the voice had always enjoyed a favored place as a Christian symbol of divine presence. In the Bible, all three members of the God-head
speak. The authoritative voice of God the Father often is heard speaking from a cloud or from a burning bush. Christ, as the word made flesh and the "mouth of the Father" (Revelations 19:13), speaks throughout the New Testament. And the Holy Spirit, in the midst of Pentecostal eloquence, speaks in many tongues. The word of God is usually referred to as the spoken word, and the invitation to believers has always been to "listen to the word of God," rather than to "read" it. God's word is issued by mouth, and its hearers often receive it by mouth as well: "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103). Not only is God's word sweet, though, it provides essential nourishment: "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deuteronomy 8:3). Here God's spoken word is represented not only as a source of grace but as the source of spiritual life. Furthermore, the invitation to be a follower of Christ was usually described as a "vocation," a "calling" to which the faithful Christian was expected to answer.

In surveying the use of metaphors in his Tropologia or Key to Open Scripture Metaphors (1729), Benjamin Keach discusses the significant role of the voice in the Bible. His catalogue of Biblical metaphor demonstrates how visual imagery and auditory imagery represent two different kinds of divine knowledge. Seeing is associated more with omniscience, while hearing is aligned more with understanding. The book as a metaphor is used
by Biblical writers to represent a record of God's "exact knowledge" and judgment, such as Jerome's mention of two Books of Judgment: one for believers and one for unbelievers. In contrast, the mouth is used as the instrument of speech by which God's will is understood. The eyes of God are used to show his precise foreknowledge of human nature, especially in knowing who will be damned and who will be saved: "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (Timothy 2:2, 72). However, God's ears denote not only his knowledge of all earthly actions, but also, as Keach remarks, that "he understands, approves, and gives gracious response to the prayers of His people" (44). When God sees, it is usually to acknowledge what He already knows; when God writes, it is to convey a final determination, either in terms of judgment or law. When God hears, however, it is usually to acknowledge the concern He has for people, so that when God speaks, it is to convey a compassionate regard for humankind. "He knows the sins of men, which are said to cry, and enter into the ears of the Lord" (James 5:4).

In the Bible, therefore, seeing is usually attributed to God to emphasize His divine power of observation, while hearing is used to call attention to His grace and benevolence in responding to the needs of His people. There is a difference in the kind of knowledge and the nature of the response given: "When the Ear heard, then it blessed me, and when the Eye saw, it gave witness to me" (Job 29:11, Keach 92). This difference in divine perception is similar to the Romantic contrast in the
human ability to reason (associated with seeing and the book) and insight (aligned with hearing and the voice). In both the Biblical and Romantic schemes, the book is associated with an external product, a divine decree; while the voice is associated with an interior process, an exchange between God and humans. Furthermore, in the Biblical tradition, the images of book and voice are used both to suggest and also to deny human free will: The book highlights God’s omniscience and the human submission to it, while the voice calls attention to God’s compassion and the human response to it. The human voice, with its accompanying association of inner knowledge, is celebrated in Romantic texts; both the book, with its link to divine judgment, and the voice, with its connection to divine compassion, are valued in the Biblical tradition.

This investigation of the roles of the book and the voice in Calvinist practices and in Biblical tradition suggests that it was possible to resist Calvinist "book tenents," such as the beliefs in manifest destiny and predestination, and yet continue to be swayed by some of its "voice tenents," such as the beliefs in saving grace and God’s compassionate call to a spiritual life. Since Calvinism valued the voice and also esteemed the book, a continued influence of Calvinist principles could still be reconciled in a culture that no longer had the same life-relation with the book. Interpreted in this way, both the decline of Calvinism and its persistence support the role of the voice as a predominant cultural symbol.
The Voice as Literary Symbol

Taken together, the four major cultural influences which have been discussed here—democracy, mercantilism, Romanticism, and Calvinism—were not only compatible with the voice as an esteemed cultural symbol, they provided for its status and fostered its regard. Given the evolving American ethos during the first half of the nineteenth century, the voice was a most fitting symbol of these dominant cultural impulses. Democracy insisted on hearing the "voice of the common person"; mercantilism gave the individual a voice in the marketplace; Romanticism established the poet-prophet as a "voice crying in the wilderness," and Calvinism allowed for the sound of God's call and the amazing grace of the human response. In all four spheres of influence, the voice accrued symbolic import.

Given that the prevailing cultural values reflected a genuine life-relationship with the voice, one would expect that this relationship would generate corresponding literary imagery. We have already observed how the Romantic writers turned to voice imagery to present their aesthetic principles, and it is inevitable that this imagery would operate significantly in other literature from the period as well. The purpose of the next three chapters is to support that contention with details from the four subject texts themselves. After first characterizing each literary text in terms of its overall thematic effect, I will establish how the metaphoric system of each text supports a view of the voice as a predominant literary
symbol.

Therefore, the next three chapters will demonstrate how the symbolic meaning of the voice as cultural symbol is echoed and enhanced by its symbolic meaning as literary symbol and how the voice as cultural and literary symbol motivates its use in a metaphorics of word. In Chapter three, I will discuss Nature and Walden, to show how the poet’s voice, which serves to translate the natural world, represents an understanding of the inner self in similar, yet distinct, ways in these two texts. Chapter four takes up The Scarlet Letter, and how the voice of the human heart, which speaks in the "tongue of flame" represents an understanding of human passion. Chapter five investigates Moby Dick and how the voices of negation, which ultimately silence each other, represent an understanding of the human limits of understanding mortality. In all four texts, I will show how the language process operates in a metaphorics of word to represent the epistemic process.
Chapter 2 Notes

1. See Lawrence Buell, Literary Transcendentalism: Style and Vision in the American Renaissance, p.3, for a discussion of this time span.

2. See F.O. Matthiessen, American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman for a discussion of these time parameters, p. vii. All subsequent page citations are in the text.

3. See Harry Hayden Clark, ed., Transitions in American Literary History, p. ix. for a discussion of this quote. All subsequent page citations are in the text.

4. See Michael Foucault's The Archaeology of Knowledge (1969) and "The Order of Discourse" (1971) for a treatment of discourse as a practice, an action; Jacques Derrida's "Signature Event Context" (1971, 1972) for a critique of the role of context; and Mikhail Bakhtin's The Dialogic Imagination (1981) for a discussion of the "heteroglossia" of speech and texts. These philosophers present a representative sampling of the recent concern with the problematic of historicism.

5. Jesse M. Gillrich, The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages: Language Theory, Mythology, and Fiction, p. 20. All subsequent citations are in the text. Gillrich's reference to Michael Foucault's idea of cultural "episteme" is from The Archaeology of Knowing, Chapter two.

6. See Larzer Ziff, Literary Democracy: The Declaration of Cultural Independence in America, pp. xxi and xxiii. All subsequent page citations are in the text.

7. See E.R. Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, p. 304, for a discussion of how a disparagement of writing and an esteem for speaking were "typically Greek."


11. Tony Tanner, The Reign of Wonder: Naivety and Reality in American Literature, p. 57. All subsequent page citations are in the text.


19. See Morse Peckham, *Romanticism and Behavior*, p. 28, for a discussion of the poet as seer.


27. Benjamin Keach, *Tropologia or Key to Open Scripture Metaphors*, p. 72. All subsequent citations are in the text.
CHAPTER 3
THE VOICE OF THE TRANSLATOR IN NATURE AND WALDEN

Common Concerns

Given the significance of the voice as a cultural symbol in nineteenth-century America, its prevalence as a literary symbol was inevitable. Because of these cultural reverberations and because of common themes centering on the inner person, the voice emerges as a controlling image in the metaphoric systems of the texts under consideration here. Specifically, it is the shift from the book to the voice as primary image that underwrites the metaphorics of word in all four texts in this study. The resulting reliance on voice imagery furthers the literary designs of Emerson and Thoreau where the central concern is with the relationship among God, self, and Nature; it serves Hawthorne’s expanded scheme where the focus is on the relationship between the self and others; and it can even accommodate the dimensions of Melville’s grand scheme where attention turns to all peoples and their regard for mortality. I want to begin examining this progression by first tracing the Transcendental venture.

Based on a tradition established by the British Romantics, American Transcendentalists were involved in a common translative project: To articulate the inner Spirit in terms of the "language" of Nature, which could then be proclaimed in the
language of convention. That Emerson and Thoreau share this interpretive pursuit is evidenced by their explicit concern with the topic of language and its potential to access knowledge. Turning to Nature as their inspiration, they speak of language as a vehicle for achieving transcendental knowledge. However, while their motives and modes are similar, the particular kinds of understanding that they pursue are distinct. Emerson seeks to understand the divine potential that he perceives residing in every individual person, and Thoreau works at coming to terms with the individual's powerful inner self that he perceives competing with external social pressures. Emerson characterizes this inner self in more traditionally theocentric terms, while Thoreau describes this interior presence in more personally human terms. Both attempt to articulate these distinct epistemic quests by employing similar metaphoric designs which draw on the symbols of the book and the voice. Ultimately, these metaphoric systems are marked by the inclination to turn to voice imagery in highlighting the individual's search for transcendental truth.

For Emerson and Thoreau, whose writings were preoccupied with the inner self and its active relationship to Nature, the voice was a particularly fitting image because of its associations with the living, breathing person. As writers within the Romantic tradition, their use of voice imagery in characterizing the relationship between the inner Spirit and the outer Spirit echoes Coleridge's portrayal of the relationship
between the imaginative energy within the person and that force within Nature. In the poem "Dejection," Coleridge describes how the imaginative force, which originates within the person, issues forth from the interior self and is heard to echo in external Nature: "And from the soul itself thus must be sent / A sweet and powerful voice, of its own birth, / Of all sweet sounds the life and element!" Noteworthy in this description is the way that the imaginative energy is represented as a voice that springs from the human soul and resounds in Nature. For Coleridge, the image of the voice works to highlight this transfer of spiritual, imaginative power; for Emerson and Thoreau, the voice also serves to emphasize this profound flow of spiritual energy between the inner self and Nature. My specific contention is that as writers, Emerson and Thoreau share Coleridge's perception of poets as interpreters of self via the language of Nature and often align this hermeneutic role with the act of listening.

In the Romantic scheme, the poet is the one responsible for staying attuned to this spiritual exchange between the inner self and Nature in the human pursuit of knowledge. As John Shawcross explains in his Introduction to Biographia Literaria, the writer's particular talents meant that he was most suited to the role of interpreting Nature:

Both in virtue of his supreme self-knowledge and of his peculiar power of sympathy and intercommunion with nature, his is the mind best fitted to penetrate her hidden meaning, to understand her mute appeal, and to make it intelligible to others. . . . (lxxxii)
In the essay "On Poesy or Art," Coleridge stipulates the credentials required for this interpretive act:

> He [the artist] must therefore absend himself for a season from her [nature], in order that his own spirit, which has the same ground with nature, may learn her unspoken language in its radicals, before he approaches to her endless composition of them. (qtd. in Shawcross lxxix)

The Romantic portrayal of this interpretive process implies that the poet must experience the internal Spirit before he can understand the language of the external Spirit. Striking is the fact that until the inner self is grounded in the Spirit, Nature remains mute. In this way, the spiritual force originates within the person and then resounds in the natural world. The shift from book to voice as primary image reflects this shift in the source of primary authority--from outside the individual to within the self. The visible book was displaced by the invisible voice when the locus of power moved from outside to within the person.

This act of understanding the inner Spirit in terms of the outer natural world was regarded by the Romantics as an original creative act. In reading the natural text, these writers did not regard themselves as merely observing natural wonders and in listening to the soul's voice echo forth into the natural world, they did not consider themselves as only communing with nature; instead, they thought themselves to be involved in the same creative act by which the world came to be. The human act of perception could echo the divine act of creation. Coleridge sets forth this analogue in defining the Primary Imagination as
"the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal action of creation in the infinite I AM" and in defining the Secondary Imagination in terms of the voice "as an echo of the former" (202, emphasis added). Just as God exercised the Primary Imagination by creating the potential for human perception, so too does the individual poet exercise the Secondary Imagination by perceiving unity in discordance. This human process of perception involves the same kind of unification as the original act of divine creation and thus constitutes a kind of recreation. It is in representing this unifying kind of perception--this intuitive translation of the spirit--that voice imagery proves so useful to these writers.

Because the Romantics, in general, and the Transcendentalists, in particular, were concerned with the individual's role in gaining aesthetic, moral, and intellectual knowledge via intuition, they looked to another essentially human activity for a way of understanding this epistemic process. A likely cognitive source was the domain of language itself. Given an interest in the process of accessing knowledge through intuition, it was reasonable that they would turn to the language processes for representing the intuitive process. For this reason, reading, considered a basically passive activity at this time, required redefinition so that the idea of insight could be understood. The resulting definition of "reading" as "seeing with the inner eye" provided a way of explaining how the
person intuited the inner Spirit without sensory cues. However, understanding how the person perceived this interior spiritual self called for a different language process—one that could accommodate an understanding of the unmediated process of intuition as a spiritual flow originating from within. The speaking/listening process was especially useful for representing the way that the divine Spirit dwelled within the person, issued forth from the inner self, and resonated in the exterior Spirit of Nature. The Voice of God issued forth from the human soul, a voice which could then be heard to echo in the natural world. Listening to this profound voicing was a way of understanding the spiritual exchange occurring in the intuitive process. By portraying the dynamics of this intuitive transaction in terms of the voice, these texts acknowledge the capacity of the language process to represent this epistemic process. By calling for an unmediated, intuitive relationship with the Spirit, these texts also negate the value of language as a medium of exchange. The resulting rhetorical effect is that of a critique of language.

I want to examine the details of how this voice imagery operated in a metaphors of word to represent the intuitive process by observing the translativ efforts in Nature and Walden. Based on George Lakoff and Mark Turner’s provision for a global reading of a literary text, I will show how the same two structural metaphors operate as controlling concepts in these texts. Two basic metaphors provide a unifying principle:
RATIONAL UNDERSTANDING IS READING and INTUITIVE UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING. Like Lakoff and Turner, I am using "basic" here to refer to those metaphors which are used so frequently that they become fundamental to a conceptual framework (5). Of these two basic metaphorical concepts, INTUITIVE UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING operates as the favored metaphor because it privileges the voice and the intuitive way of knowing. Recalling my introductory discussion of imagery, I am considering the shift from the book to the voice here in terms of literary symbolism, as well as the expression of this shift in terms of metaphorics to emphasize how the voice accrues literary symbolic meaning in addition to its cultural import by virtue of its privileged metaphorical place in these texts.

With their metaphorical systems, both texts argue that the writer's role is to interpret Spirit as echoed in the natural world in an effort to gain transcendental knowledge of the inner self. Both texts demonstrate that in order to interpret the items in the natural world, language needs to be used in a special way: transcendental truth requires concrete particulars rather than abstract concepts. As Emerson explains in section IV of Nature ("Language"), material items in the world provide the symbols for understanding matters of the Spirit. Since "every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact," Nature as material fact provides a language for understanding spiritual facts. And since every word which expresses a spiritual fact originates in some material appearance, this correspondence
allows words to provide for an intuitive understanding of the Spirit without direct sensory mediation. The language of convention thus enables the material items of the natural world to provide the language of the Spirit which these writers translate into transcendental truths. In this way, they act as translators of Nature, which is itself a translator of the divine life force. While they highlight different understandings about the inner self, these texts are engaged in this same interpretive project. That the metaphoric systems could be so similar and yet offer distinct views is compatible with the unique process of each writer. Thoreau even questions the possibility of a single perspective: "As if Nature could support but one order of understandings" (324). Having established their common concerns, I will examine how each text appropriates the voice as predominant symbol and then go on to analyze their metaphoric systems—but first an historical note.

On 'American Hieroglyphics'  
The discovery of the Rosetta stone in 1799 was a world event that prompted a keen interest in language and would have influenced the use of the reading metaphor because it was part of the nineteenth-century understanding of the reading process. John Irwin is helpful here in documenting the pervasive influence that the discovery and decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphics was having during the time that these Americans were writing. This deciphering activity will help explain why all four writers in this study use linguistic expressions
referring to hieroglyphics. Beginning in the 1820's, scholars such as Jean Francois Champollion were using the bilingual text of the Rosetta stone to decode ancient writings and were demonstrating some success. This phenomenon served to foreground a particular kind of reading: the methodical translation of mysterious hieroglyphic writings by expert interpreters who were using other linguistic resources to assist their decoding.

Therefore, the interpretive work in decoding these Egyptian writings paralleled, to some extent, the American interpretive project of translating the text of Nature. Especially noteworthy in Irwin's discussion is his acknowledgement that the ultimate mystery of hieroglyphs was traditionally attractive. That some codes can not be cracked and that some texts can never be read was an appealing idea and was, of course, compatible with the Calvinist belief in the inscrutability of Divine Providence. In this tradition, the texts of Nature and the Bible were regarded as hieroglyphs which needed translation, but which were assumed to be eternally elusive; and in this same tradition, Irwin quotes Oegger's view of man as the "true hieroglyph of the Divinity." Therefore, inscrutability had a lingering appeal, and any efforts at decipherment would have operated in tension with that appeal. In other words, too much interpretation could detract from the divine quality in these visible symbols. Any advances in decoding the Egyptian holy writings would have diminished their sacred appeal and further
demeaned the book as symbol at the same time as it would have
devalued the role of the interpreter— at least of visible texts.
Therefore, writers like Emerson and Thoreau, who were operating
as interpreters in the Romantic tradition, were under the stress
of needing to maintain the sacred quality of certain mysteries
at the same time as they were attempting to solve them. One way
of resolving this tension was to portray Nature as having a
voice, thus providing a much more elusive text.

Before examining Nature's metaphoric system, I want to
establish an overview of what Samuel Levin has called the text's
"metaphoric world" and to get a sense of its larger 'order of
understanding'.

Nature and the God Within

Unlike many of Emerson's essays, which were first delivered
as lectures, Nature was intended for a reading audience, yet it
has an overall oral quality. Just as the title of another one
of his works forecasts, in Nature the "Young Emerson Speaks"
(emphasis added), and the resulting speech act is a secular
prayer, which ranges from a petition of need to a psalm of
praise. In the Introduction, Emerson uses the first person
plural and joins with the reader in asking, "Let us interrogate
the great apparition, that shines so peacefully around us. Let
us inquire to what end is nature?" (7). In the succeeding seven
sections, Emerson proceeds to answer this query with a litany of
beliefs. While its logical development and length mark the
discourse as a formal essay, its devout, dignified tone makes
the piece more religious oratory. The sublime subjects of Nature, creation, God, and destiny deserve sublime treatment, which they dutifully receive. Emerson is confident in explicating man's relationship to God and believes that "undoubtedly we have no questions . . . which are unanswerable" (7).

His faith in intuition is strong, and his attitude earnest as he goes about reducing vast abstractions to simple truths: man and Nature are kindred spirits; Nature serves man with daily necessities, beauty, a symbolic language, and a discipline of the highest faculty; and it is the relationship between man and Nature that prompts truth. In calling for "an original relation to the universe" and "a Poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition" (7), Emerson insists on the unmediated process of intuition and rejects a reliance on sensory information or rational reasoning. Since his contentions are often expressed aphoristically, they emerge as dogmas and, taken together, they form the Emersonian creed. From the initial warning that "Our age is retrospective" to the summary judgment that "A man is a god in ruins," there is a chanting effect obtained. The form of Emerson's essay works like Nature itself: It inspires like a prayerful poem, and it gives instruction like a scriptural reading. In both cases, the overall effect is that of the spoken word.

In keeping with its devout voice, the essay proposes spiritual themes. Although it is written mostly in secular language, Nature testifies to a "religion by revelation" and to
a belief in the "Me," that part of human nature which shares in
the divine--the God within (7-8). Although Emerson emphasizes
the potential that language has for accessing knowledge of this
inner, divine self because language provides a way of
interpreting "particular natural facts [which] are symbols of
particular spiritual facts" (17), he admits its inadequacy to
completely convey spiritual truth. In his Introduction, he
points to the unreliability of human language and acknowledges
its mystery when he names some of the phenomena that "are
thought not only unexplained but inexplicable; as language,
sleep, madness, dreams, beasts, [and] sex" (8). Language's
placement first in the sequence indicates its primacy in
Emerson's view, and the nature of the other items in this list
accentuates its enigmatic quality. He characterizes language
as unreliable and not subject to human control.

Furthermore, words can not completely convey the kind of
intuited truth that he seeks because they can not precisely
translate the inner Spirit which must be experienced directly,
without any mediating agent. As Emerson admits, "Words are
finite organs of the infinite mind. They cannot cover the
dimensions of what is in truth. They break, chop, and
impoverish it" (28). Therefore, he faces the dilemma of
arguing that by interpreting the text of the natural world using
the language of convention, man has a gloss for understanding
the God within, at the same time that he acknowledges the
ultimate inadequacy of language to perform this translation of
the Spirit.

In creating a metaphoric system that revolves around two basic metaphors of word, Emerson works to resolve this dilemma of how to reconcile language’s epistemic merit with its inadequacy. My aim is to use the experiential-gestalt account of metaphor, as established by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, to demonstrate how his use of two coherent metaphors provides textual systematicity. The structural metaphor RATIONAL UNDERSTANDING IS READING argues for the rational interpretation of the natural text, and the analogous structural metaphor INTUITIVE UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING argues for an intuited interpretation of the natural text. While the reading metaphor draws on the symbolic authority of the book, the listening metaphor taps into the symbolic authority of the voice and thus is privileged in Emerson’s scheme.

In analyzing these two basic metaphors, I am relying on Lakoff and Johnson’s provision for viewing metaphor as part of a conceptual system and language as a source of evidence for this conceptual framework (3). I will continue to adopt their convention of using all capitals to indicate conceptual metaphors and of using quotation marks and block quotations for particular linguistic items drawn verbatim from the texts. From now on, instead of including "emphasis added" each time I cite a linguistic form that expresses a metaphor of word, I will simply italicize all the quoted expressions which refer to language imagery. Important to keep in mind is the premise that
conceptual metaphors emerge from experiencing a whole discourse and not merely from single linguistic units. As the experiential theory proposes, the linguistic expressions simply provide a source of evidence for a whole cognitive system. I am employing Lakoff and Johnson's practice of using the most specific metaphorical concept—in this case the two basic metaphors—to characterize a whole conceptual system (9). Through subcategorization, I will investigate those metaphors which are entailed by the basic metaphors, what Levin has termed "satellite metaphors", and which, when taken together, constitute a coherent metaphorical system, as provided for by Lakoff and Johnson (9).

Given this theoretical foundation, I will continue this experiential analysis of the metaphorics of word in Nature by examining the reading structural metaphor more closely. In RATIONAL UNDERSTANDING IS READING, what we know about the process of reading structures how we think about the process of logical reasoning. This metaphor allows Emerson to describe how we can understand the natural world, the past, and human nature in terms of how we read. Therefore, RATIONAL UNDERSTANDING IS READING entails that NATURE, HISTORY, and HUMAN LIVES ARE BOOKS, which entails that THE WRITER IS A READER. Together, these metaphors highlight the acquisition of knowledge through sensory information and logical reasoning.

Let us consider RATIONAL UNDERSTANDING IS READING as it operates as a structural metaphor, allowing us to think of one
experience in terms of another. Therefore, RATIONAL UNDERSTANDING IS READING allows us to conceptualize the reasoning process in terms of the reading process, so that our conception of reasoning is grounded in our experience of reading. Noteworthy is the fact that twentieth-century orality/literacy theorists have confirmed this connection between abstract reasoning and literacy. Adopting the experiential vocabulary as used by Lakoff and Turner, I will trace how certain aspects of the source domain (reading) are mapped onto the target domain (reasoning) in order to discern what understanding is gained about the nature of rational thinking. Such a mapping assumes certain knowledge about the source domain, so I will begin with a discussion of this presupposed knowledge by examining the mental framework of the reading process and some aspects of that conceptual domain.

To understand reasoning as a reading process is to keep in mind certain basic correspondences: between a thinker and a reader, between the truth and the text, and between the mind and the eyes. As Lakoff and Turner remark, such mental correspondences may be conscious but are more likely unconscious, at least for the receiver of the metaphor. However, as I note in my first chapter, Coleridge suggests that these correspondences more likely are conscious for the user of the metaphor. Either way, the metaphor relies on them, and understanding the metaphor relies on understanding the structure of the source domain. At first glance, reading seems like a
simple enough domain. Important to emphasize here, however, is that the nineteenth-century understanding of the reading process was much different from ours. Before reader-response theory and before we understood that reading is a transactive process, reading was perceived as a matter of mere decoding. Certain information existed in the text, on the page, and it was the reader's task to find it. Reading was understood as a strict linear process where the eyes moved from left to right, and all information was received in that order. In contrast with our modern understanding, reading was perceived as a tidy, linear process by which a reader obtained meaning from the language of the printed text, but did not bring meaning to it. In this view, readers were considered passive recipients of meaning contained in books. It is this nineteenth-century perception of reading that was operant in the texts under study here.

With this scheme in mind, let us consider RATIONAL UNDERSTANDING IS READING as it is reflected in Nature and how it implies a criticism of the prevailing cognitive model. The role of this metaphor is signaled right away in the epigram which describes a process by which "The eye reads omens where it goes," thus eliciting the reading domain. Then in the very first line of the Introduction, Emerson establishes the premise of his essay by appropriating the aspect of the thinker-as-reader in the expression "Our age is retrospective" (7), which works metonymically. Here the metonymy provides for a time period to represent a whole nation of readers who take as their
text the past and who read backwards. Emerson's use of this metonymy suggests a critique of the prevailing reading process. Since the current reading process provided for moving sequentially, forwards not backwards, Emerson is criticizing the thinkers of his age for improper reading by looking to the past. Evident is the satellite ontological metaphor HISTORY IS A BOOK, which is coherent with UNDERSTANDING IS READING. In this way, Emerson begins his essay with an indictment of his "readers" for looking to history as a source of truth and suggests that a better text exists, setting the stage for his reading of Nature as that text.

NATURE IS A WRITING/BOOK is reflected in many expressions:

Every man's condition is a solution in hieroglyphic 
(7)

We mean the integrity of impression made by manifold natural objects (9)

Forms [in nature] . . . furnish man with the dictionary and grammar of his municipal speech (21)

A life in harmony with nature . . . will purge the eyes to understand her text (23)

so that the world shall be to us an open book (23)

Therefore the soul holds itself off from a too trivial and microscopic study of the universal tablet (36)

The ruin or the blank, that we see when we look at nature, is in our own eye. (43)

Interesting here is the fact that except for the first expression which refers to human nature, all the other items represent the truth of the natural world as an understandable text--"an open book"--to the careful reader. In contrast, the
first expression, which refers to the truth about human nature, is represented as undecipherable—a "hieroglyphic." This metaphor entails unreadability and, thus, suggests that understanding human nature calls for some other process besides the rational/reading one.

Useful here in discerning what that superior process might be is a consideration of the mind-as-eyes correspondence which is evident in Emerson's expression "The eye reads omens where it goes" (7). This synecdochic relationship between the eye and the reader highlights the idea of part-for-whole, suggesting that the eyes represent only part of the whole reader's faculties and, therefore, that the mind represents only part of the human's capacity for understanding. Given the tone and theme of Emerson's work, the use of synecdoche reinforces the inadequacy of a process which uses only part of a person's potential in seeking truth. In highlighting this inadequacy, the metaphor forecasts the need for some kind of process that will involve more than just reasoning.

Emerson uses eye imagery again to point to a superior, unifying process when he describes the poet as one "whose eye can integrate all the parts" (9). The reading metaphor works to create a contrast between the masses who use their eyes merely to observe the past, and the poet who sees and reconciles discordances simultaneously. The poet, in his role as interpreter, is represented as the most skillful reader because of the unusual way his eyes work. This characterization of the
writer as adept reader is also evident in the expression "as the eye is the best composer" (12). With this expression, Emerson distinguishes between the ineffective way the common person reads and the successful literacy of the poet. Since "few adult persons can see nature" (9), it is up to the poet to read the natural text correctly and ultimately to decipher the human hieroglyph. By undermining the definition of "reading," Emerson also undermines the stability of UNDERSTANDING IS READING because the Emersonian kind of reading calls for something besides the traditional understanding of sequential reading and intimates an epistemic need for something besides logical reasoning.

In addition to extending the meaning of UNDERSTANDING IS READING, Emerson also uses a second structural metaphor to accommodate his conceptual scheme: UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING, where understanding is intuitive. Drawing on the symbolic import of the voice, this metaphor provides for a perception of intuition as an oral exchange and establishes correspondences between a thinker and a listener, between truth and speech, and between the mind and the ears. In contrast to the reading metaphor, this listening metaphor provides for a more complicated mapping. While the reading process entails a visible, written text, the listening process entails an invisible exchange between speaker and listener and does not result in a visible text. This contrast is evident in the difference between the satellite ontological metaphors that
result: In one, NATURE IS A BOOK; in the other, NATURE IS A SPEAKER. As Lakoff and Johnson point out, personifications like this one are extended ontological metaphors, and they enable us to understand the world in human terms (34). As a result, the listening metaphor highlights the human being in a way that the reading metaphor does not, and NATURE IS A SPEAKER calls attention to the human capacity to use language.

A survey of the expressions that Emerson chooses to reflect the listening metaphor will help to point up additional differences between the two controlling metaphors. Along with eliciting the reading metaphor in the epigram, Emerson also evokes the listening metaphor so that "The eye reads omens where it goes, / And speaks all languages the rose" (7). Here Nature, in the form of the rose, is personified as an omnilingual speaker. And in the Introduction, when Emerson directs his inquiry to "the great apparition that shines so peacefully around us" (7), Emerson implies that his question is addressed to some "great," divine force in Nature, as indicated by the traditional Biblical associations between God and a shining light. The result is that God is represented as a voice that speaks through Nature.

Furthermore, Emerson’s expressions provide much evidence that this process involves a conversation between God and man, via Nature:

His [the human’s] intercourse with heaven and earth, becomes part of his daily food (I.9)
Thus is nature an interpreter, by whose means man converses with his fellow men (IV.20)

She [Nature] pardons no mistakes. Her yea is yea, and her nay is nay (V.24)

every animal function . . . shall . . . echo the Ten Commandments (V.26)

It [the Spirit] says . . . (V.28)

It [Nature] is the great organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual. (VII.37)

These expressions reflect a cognitive model in which the human being comes to understand spiritual truths through an exchange with the divine force embodied in nature. The Spirit in the external world speaks to the Spirit in the internal world through the mouth of Nature. Thus, Emerson provides for the poet as a translator of Nature, which is a translator of the Spirit.

This three-way exchange is represented not only as speech, but also as song in expressions such as these:

the power to produce this delight, does not reside in nature, but in man, or in a harmony of both (I.10)

a life in harmony with nature . . . will purge the eyes (IV.23)

The law of harmonic sounds reappears in the harmonic colors (V.27)

Some traditions of man and nature, which a certain poet sang to me (VIII.41)

Thus my Orphic poet sang (VIII.42)

So shall the advancing spirit . . . carry with it the beauty of its visits, and the song which enchants it. (VIII.45)

The structure of the listening metaphor UNDERSTANDING IS
LISTENING highlights the dynamics of an exchange and thus shifts the emphasis from the source of truth to the process of discovering truth. Furthermore, because Emerson's listening expressions do not call attention to the ears in the way that the analogous reading expressions focus on the eyes, attention is called not to the auditory apparatus, but rather to the whole process of perception. The implication here is that the kind of understanding entailed by UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING involves the whole person, not just the ears/mind. For this reason, the listening metaphor works to structure a way of understanding the intuitive process by which truth is apprehended directly, without any mediating apparatus.

While UNDERSTANDING IS READING highlights the sense of order that results from viewing the world rationally, UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING accentuates the sense of harmony that comes from attending to the world intuitively. Specifically, the reading metaphor portrays truth as a bounded entity that can be scanned and interpreted, and the listening metaphor represents truth as a dynamic exchange between God, Nature, and man where truth "does not reside" in any one of them, but rather emerges from the translative process. The reading metaphor relies on the integrity of the written record; the listening metaphor relies on the authority of the inner Spirit of the poet to translate, not a finished record, but an evolving text. That Emerson extends the listening metaphor to music, with its associations of lyricism and harmony, suggests his preference
for this intuitive model of understanding. While the coherency of the two metaphors affirms that both kinds of understanding are compatible and useful in coming to terms with the world, the listening metaphor is more in keeping with the tenets of Romanticism as it applies to the Transcendental epistemic view. In Emerson's metaphoric scheme, listening affords better access to the God within because it highlights intuitive insight.

Emerson's elevation of the spoken word via the listening metaphor is compatible with his general denigration of the written word. In "The American Scholar," he expresses his disdain for the worship of books as a kind of corruption. In advocating "Man Thinking," Emerson questions a reliance on books and scorns "man reading" as the "bookworm."12 He elevates the spoken word by associating the speaking poet with God: "The poet chanting was felt to be a divine and; henceforth the chant is divine also."13 In Emerson's scheme, since the book of reason is replaced by the voice of intuition as the primary epistemic authority, reading is displaced by listening as the primary metaphor.

However, not even the listening metaphor can compensate for the inadequacy of language to completely represent the process of understanding spiritual truth. Emerson points to the fragility of the translatative process in describing how man "forges the subtile and delicate air into wise and melodious words and gives them wing as angels of persuasion" (293). Translation of the divine life force is an interpretive move
which results in some new form, and words provide that alternate form. Words can point to the discovery of spiritual truth, but they do not constitute that truth.

_Walden and the 'Private Ail'_

Like Emerson, Thoreau assumes the interpretive role and looks to the concrete particulars of the natural world for symbols to translate the inner spirit. Like Emerson, he values the language of convention for the way that it corresponds to the language of Nature. And like Emerson, he portrays his hermeneutic role in terms of the listening process. However, the epistemic theme is realized differently by Thoreau because while Emerson highlights the divine potential for moral insight in man, Thoreau emphasizes the human capacity for self-liberation. Troubled by the "lives of quiet desperation" that he witnesses around him, he addresses the "mass of men who are discontented" and who "have forged their own golden or silver fetters." It is these self-imposed restrictions that he urges his readers to cast aside in coming to terms with the powerful inner Spirit because "Public opinion is a weak tyrant compared with our own private opinion" (7). Using his own act of liberation at Walden Pond as an exemplum, he outlines a process of self-emancipation, but insists that each person must find his own way.

Author of his own spiritual declaration of independence, Thoreau believes that what is at the heart of his country's
anguish is the individual's pain: "that what so saddens the reformer is not his sympathy with his fellows in distress, but though he be the holiest son of God, is his private ail" (78). In Thoreau's view, this private anguish can be assuaged only by attending to the self as the source of authority. When he says, "I hear an irresistible voice which invites me away from all that" (10-11), he suggests that his source of spiritual power is an internal voice, rather than the external voices of his neighbors.

He characterizes his Transcendental role as a searcher of self in terms of listening. Many of his days, he says, were spent "trying to hear what was in the wind, to hear and carry it express!" (17). He provides an analogue for this interpretive role of the listening poet when he describes hearing the sound of church bells reverberating through the woods. He notes that "at a sufficient distance over the woods this sound acquires a certain vibratory hum" which came to him as "a melody which the air had strained, and which had conversed with every leaf and needle of the wood" (123). Just as the sound of the bells issues forth from the Church and resounds in harmony with the natural world, so too does the power of the person emanate outward to mingle with Nature—a melody which can be heard by those receptive to its 'vibratory hum'. Thoreau affirms the creative nature of this interpretive role when he describes how the sound heard in the natural world is somehow original with the listener: "The echo is, to some extent, an original sound,
and therein is the magic and charm of it. It is not merely a repetition of what was worth repeating in the bell, but partly the voice of the wood" (123). Being able to hear these echoes throughout the natural world so clearly that "they were at length one articulation of Nature" is Thoreau’s special creative faculty. Magically as it were, hearing the sound as one unified melody constitutes a creative act in itself and the main work of the intuitive poet.

Throughout, *Walden* provides for an elevation of the personal spoken word and a diminishment of the public written word. While he professes an admiration for books, Thoreau’s comments continually undermine that esteem. He devotes an entire chapter to "Reading," and spends considerable time criticizing the common method of "easy reading." Instead of reading the best literature, most people content themselves with light reading—a habit which Thoreau discounts as just another form of illiteracy. Despite Thoreau’s campaign for reading the great works of literature, however, and though he calls "a written word the choicest of relics" and "the work of art nearest to life itself" (118), he admits that he spends little or no time reading. In the days after moving into Walden, he notes that he "read but little" and the scraps of paper which he found on the ground "answered the same purpose as the Iliad" (45). Curiously, he condemns others for easy reading but counts these scraps of paper as having the same effect as the classic Greek poem, and that effect, he says, is "entertainment." In
this way, reading is portrayed only as an entertaining diversion.

In contrast, throughout the account of his days on Walden Pond, he attends to the sounds of his world and implies that listening is his main occupation. When he listens from his window seat to the sound of birds which "gives a voice to the air" (114), he affirms his talent for hearing the "one articulation of Nature." Not only does he listen attentively to the voice of Nature, he also records his alertness to human nature and often tells of his conversations with others. For example, his frequent visits with a Canadian wood-chopper illustrate how books are not nearly as important as the talk about them. Even though the woodsman does not even read the books he professes to admire, Thoreau enjoys their talks about literature and at times he even reads Homer aloud to the woodsman (144-145). Elsewhere, he expresses his delight in talking with nearby farmers to each of whom he "took his word for his deed, for I dearly love to talk," he admits (81). His high regard for conversation is revealed humorously in his complaint about the problem of a small house because it restricts the space for conversations with his visitors, for "when we began to utter the big thoughts in big words" (140). Unlike written correspondence which is usually not worth its postage and unlike the newspaper which delivers all the same news (94), talking is important to Thoreau.

These recurring references to the value of conversations
are not merely incidental to *Walden*; they constitute one of its fundamental themes. In his role as interpreter, Thoreau seeks to articulate his personal sojourn into the self by listening to the living sounds around him. In his search to release the inner person from self-tyranny, Thoreau wants a guiding text that can "not only be read but actually breathed from all human lips" (102). This insistence on vocalizing the living, breathing spirit is one way to express the liberation process. Therefore, despite his stated regard for the written word, his effort to soothe the private ail necessarily leads him to the living spoken word and to the voice as a controlling symbol.

Given this overview of the text, I want to examine how UNDERSTANDING IS READING works in *Walden* to structure the role of rational thinking in Thoreau's project of self-liberation. Because this emancipation process requires rejecting the imposition of external authority, reading imagery becomes associated with attending to some influence outside of the self. Thoreau urges his readers to transcend the role of mere observer by using insight, and his challenge implies a rejection of traditional reasoning: "Will you be a reader, a student merely, or a seer?" (111). With this expression Thoreau indicates his concern with intuition and evokes the reading metaphor and, like Emerson, calls for some process besides ordinary reading, some kind of interior reading.

Alluding to the decoding of Egyptian writings, Thoreau questions whether anyone, expert or not, can interpret someone
else’s inner Spirit: "The Maker of this earth but patented a
leaf. What Champollion will decipher this hieroglyphic for us,
that we may turn over a new leaf at last?" (308). In mapping
the reading process onto the domain of self-knowledge,
correspondences emerge between Champollion and Thoreau as
decoders, between a hieroglyphic and a sense of self, and
between turning a page and making a life change. Echoing
Emerson’s description of "Every man’s condition" as "a solution
in hieroglyphic," Thoreau characterizes the human puzzle as
ultimately undecipherable. However, while Emerson emphasizes
the inability to access satisfactorily the divine aspect of man,
Thoreau highlights the challenge of discerning personal destiny.
By questioning the authority of any outside interpreter, Thoreau
reinforces his contention that we are our own best experts and
that no external authority can do the deciphering for us.

In this same passage, Thoreau uses writing imagery to
demean the rational view even further by displacing the
ontological metaphor NATURE IS A BOOK: "The earth is not a mere
fragment of dead history, stratum upon stratum like the leaves
of a book . . . but living poetry" (309). In calling the
natural world a "living" text, he evokes a listening metaphor,
saying that the word may "not only be read but actually breathed
from all human lips" (102). In this scheme, UNDERSTANDING IS
LISTENING and NATURE IS A VOICE. Curiously, it is in a passage
ostensibly praising the written word as the "choicest of relics"
that he implies a privileging of speech because he argues that
the value of the written word is that it is "carved out of the breath of life itself" (102). Echoing Calvin’s praise of the Bible in terms of God’s voice, Thoreau implies that the written word is to be treasured because it represents the living, human voice. Once again, Thoreau’s professed regard for books is undermined by imagery which points to the primacy of the spoken word.

The alignment between listening and the process of acquiring a sense of self is revealed in a striking way in Chapter Two, when Thoreau describes being awakened by the lyrical sounds of morning. In this analogue, the listening metaphor serves to portray the liberation of the sleeping self. This renewal process is termed a "religious exercise"—thus pointing to the spiritual awakening that transpires, and the voice imagery highlights the intuitive process at work:

I was as much affected by the faint hum of a mosquito making its invisible and unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when I was sitting with door and widows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer’s requiem; itself an Iliad and Odyssey in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings. There was something cosmical about it. . . . The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening hour. . . . Little is to be expected of that day . . . to which we are not awakened by our Genius . . . , are not awakened by our own newly-acquired force and aspirations from within, accompanied by the undulations of celestial music. . . . All poets and heroes, like Memnon, are the children of Aurora and emit their music at sunrise. (89)

In this passage, self-awareness is portrayed as a process of listening to the voice from within in the midst of the surrounding cosmic music. The listening metaphor works to
represent how spiritual truth issues from the inner self and harmonizes with a similar force in the natural world. Like Emerson, Thoreau uses musical expressions to reflect the kind of "life in harmony with nature" that results from attending to the inner Spirit as voiced in the exterior world (23).

This same kind of harmony recurs in a passage in the chapter "Higher Laws" when Thoreau recalls the incident of John Farmer. Farmer, who sits down in the doorway of his house "to recreate his intellectual man," is described as if he were a fabricated embodiment of intuition, an Everyman engaged in the process of discerning his place in the world by listening to the outer music of the material world and the inner voice of revealed truth:

He had not attended to the train of his thoughts long when he heard someone playing on a flute, and that sound harmonized with his mood. . . . But the notes of the flute came home to his ears out of a different sphere from that he worked in, and suggested work for certain faculties which slumbered in him. . . . A voice said to him, --Why do you stay here and live this mean moiling life, when a glorious existence is possible for you? (222)

Once again, the listening metaphor is appropriated to express the highest form of understanding which results from careful attention to the inner and outer voices.

To the careful listener, Nature speaks in harmonious tones. The harmony, however, does not reside in natural sounds; rather it results from a perceptive listening. Like Emerson's poet who can read with an integrative eye, Thoreau's Farmer can listen with a unifying ear. Just as listening to the sound of the
bells in the woods resulted in an echo that was "original," so too does each person's individual perception of outside influences prompt an original inward response. And it is this unique echo that Thoreau insists upon when he says that "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away" (326).

Thoreau's privileging of the listening metaphor is evident in the ongoing attention he pays to natural sounds. In the chapter devoted to "Sounds," he begins with a caution about attending only to the book of Nature and a challenge to remember her voice: "But while we are confined to books, though the most select and classic, . . . we are in danger of forgetting the language which all things and events speak" (emphasis mine, 111). In continually evoking the listening process, Thoreau reminds us of certain correspondences: between the poet-interpreter and the listener, between truth and the voice, and between the ears and the mind.

The frequent expressions involving the voices of natural creatures remind us to heed these sounds as echoes of spiritual truth:

such a sound [hooting owl's] as the frozen earth would yield if struck with a suitable plectrum, the very lingua vernacula of Walden Wood (272)

he [a squirrel] would be soliloquizing and talking to all the universe (274)

He [the hunter] stood still and listened to their [the hounds'] music, so sweet to a hunter's ear. (278)
Since Thoreau spends more time listening to these ordinary, everyday utterances than he does reading books, the voice emerges as the valued symbol both in the wooded world of Walden and in the metaphorical world of Walden. Thoreau’s translativer process calls for attending to the voice of Nature because the process of listening is so closely associated with the intuitive process. And it is the listening process, not the ears or the listener, that is highlighted in Thoreau’s choice of words.

Thoreau’s autobiographical account constitutes a model of self-emancipation, by which a person can translate natural facts into spiritual facts, as a way of coming to terms with the inner self and of understanding the individual’s place in relationship to the world. UNDERSTANDING IS READING entails a logical, reasoned view of these external forces and while such a view does provide information, it is epistemologically dissatisfying because the world is not like a book but is "living poetry." Therefore, this perspective is displaced by UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING which provides a mental framework for tapping into the intuitive process by which the vitality of natural forces can be attended to. The very difference between the physical nature of eyes and that of ears highlights a contrast between these two processes. Because the ears are actual openings, they seem to provide more of a direct entry into the interior self. In this way, listening more accurately represents the intuitive process of unmediated perception. Furthermore, listening, with its associations to obedience, more closely aligns itself with the
human's need to stay true to the self: "to maintain himself in whatever attitude he finds himself through obedience to the laws of his being" (323). Intuition, as represented by listening, prompts such an 'attitude'.

Overall, Thoreau's metaphoric system gives priority to the voice as symbol and to listening as controlling metaphor. He states a philosophical rationale for his linguistic choices when he discusses his need for "Extra vagrancce." Because he worries that his expression "may not wander far enough beyond the narrow limits" of his personal experience, he desires to speak "without bounds," to be "extra vagrant." He indicates that a writer's manner of expression should reflect the elusive nature of truth: "The volatile truth of our words should continually betray the inadequacy of the residual statement" (325). For this reason, the bounded book is too confining an image to convey Thoreau's liberation project. Instead, the voice is more fitting; it allows for the necessary extra vagrancce because it has no visible boundaries and, thus, it contributes to a more accurate representation of the dynamic process of spiritual emancipation. Self-liberation, in Thoreau's portrayal, requires speaking imagery because it leaves no trace—no 'residual statement'—and thus must be re-enacted by each sojourning soul. 

Translation and the Dilemma of Expressed Language

An analysis of the metaphorics of Nature and Walden has revealed how the two structural metaphors of reading and listening operate to represent the transative process, by which
we come to understand the nature of the interior Spirit by attending to its expression in the exterior world. This hermeneutic task involves two kinds of thinking: reasoning and intuiting. The rational process is understood via UNDERSTANDING IS READING, and the intuitive process is presented via UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING. As a function of these two metaphors, the process of using language serves as a source domain for the process of understanding the self, thus highlighting the discovery process. For Emerson and Thoreau, the main value of language is in terms of this epistemic process, a role which Emerson describes in "The Poet": "All language is vehicular and transitive, and is good, as ferries and horses are, for conveyance, not as farms and houses are, for homestead." Emerson repeats this emphasis on process when he says of Nature (in the section titled "Commodity"): "Nature, in its ministry to man, is not only the material, but is also the process and the result" (111, emphasis added). Because of the established correspondence between the language of Nature and the language of convention, this same emphasis on process applies to both symbol systems. Therefore, the process of using language is appropriate for representing the ongoing process of articulating the human Spirit. The final effect of this metaphorical system is to portray truth as inaccessible, as well as to represent language as epistemic. Both knowledge and language are forever on the move.

One feature of this metaphorics of word that has not been
accounted for is the role of metacognition. Since in the Romantic portrayal of the translative process, the Spirit is evident in the outward world only if it is first realized within the self, how is this original self-awareness of the Soul knowing itself to be represented? Once the Spirit is sent forth from the individual soul, it has an audible quality—an echo. How can the self-realization of the Spirit be represented before it issues forth? In Emersonian terms, how does a metaphorics of word portray the recognition of the "Me" by the "Me"? In Thoreavian terms, how does a metaphorics of word represent the Soul listening to itself singing? Since the listening metaphor entails that sounds need to be audible in order to be heard, this mental scheme is strained to provide for any representation of self-conscious self-knowledge. A resolution to this dilemma lies in the references to "mute" Nature. It is not the voice in Nature that is silent, but rather the understanding of the poet that is inexpressible and hence silent. Chapter six will be devoted to discussing how this satellite of the listening metaphor, which I am terming "expressed silence" and which operates in all four texts, provides for representing this self-awareness. But first, I want to move on to how Hawthorne’s text appropriates the same two structural metaphors in his literary project, as he shifts the thematic focus to the relationship between the self and others.
Chapter 3 Notes

1. Quoted by John Shawcross in his Introduction to Biographia Literaria, p. xxxviii. All subsequent page citations are in the text.

2. George Lakoff and Mark Turner, More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor, p. 146. All subsequent page citations are in the text.


4. See John Irwin, American Hieroglyphics: The Symbol of the Egyptian Hieroglyphic in the American Renaissance, pp. 9-13, for a summary of this activity.


7. See Samuel Levin, Metaphoric Worlds: Conceptions of a Romantic Nature, pp. ix-x, for a discussion of this term "metaphoric world."

8. See my Chapter 1, pp 19-21, for a discussion of how these two basic metaphors of word emerge as text-specific versions of the root metaphor UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING.


10. See Erik Havelock, Origins of Western Literacy, for a discussion of how the Greek alphabet restructured Greek thinking. See Walter Ong, Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word, for a comprehensive treatment of how literacy is aligned with analytical, abstract thinking and how orality is connected with aggregate, concrete thinking.

11. See Frank Smith’s Understanding Reading and Reading Without Nonsense for discussions of the twentieth-century transactive model of the reading process.


15. It is striking how Thoreau's discussion of "extra vagrancce" forecasts William Covino's description of rhetoric as "the art of wondering." An acknowledgement to Judy Segal (University of British Columbia) for mentioning this connection. See *The Art of Wondering: A Revisionist Return to the History of Rhetoric*, p. 128, for a definition of rhetoric "as a theory of discourse that devalues certainty and closure while it celebrates the generative power of the imagination."

CHAPTER 4

'THE TONGUE OF FLAME' IN THE SCARLET LETTER

A Human Rubric

While the literary voices of Emerson and Thoreau serve as translators of the Spirit via the natural world, Hawthorne's sympathy lies more with human nature. As he notes in his introductory chapter of The Scarlet Letter, during the time when he wrote the novel, he felt an indifference for worldly things--for books and even "Nature,—except it were human nature."1 As its conspicuous placement in the title suggests, the image of the scarlet letter serves as the controlling symbol of his work and signals a concern with both language and people. Relying on the original meaning of "text," he uses the "woven" fabric of the letter to interlace both linguistic and human forms: the embroidered "A" in the cloth that Hester wore and the embodied one in the child that she bore. Since his concerns are both aesthetic and epistemic and, as the etymology of "rubric" (originally, "rubrica" for "red writing" used for both decoration and emphasis) suggests, Hawthorne fashions a moral and emotional rubric.2

His Scarlet Letter, inscribed on the written pages of the novel and illustrated in the human texts of its characters, symbolizes human passion and is meant to be red/read for both pleasure and instruction. He professes an hermeneutic role when
he calls attention to the significance of the cloth letter found in "The Custom House": "Certainly, there was some deep meaning in it, most worthy of interpretation, and which, as it were, streamed forth from the mystic symbol, subtly communicating itself to my sensibilities, but evading the analysis of my mind" (28). Like his Transcendental predecessors, he exhibits what Matthiessen has called the "tendency of mind" in these American writers to privilege spiritual meaning and an "American bias" to search for spiritual significance in every material fact (242).

As Matthiessen also points out, this tendency came "from the Christian habit of mind that saw the hand of God in all manifestations of life," and it became exaggerated in the Calvinist preoccupation with reading all phenomena for signs of predestination (243). Furthermore, Charles Feidelson has emphasized that this American proclivity for symbolism "is a governing principle: not a stylistic device, but a point of view" thus making interpretation itself the essential theme of these texts. However, while Emerson and Thoreau seek to interpret material signs as symbols of the Spirit, Hawthorne seeks to understand the human heart and how emotional integrity requires a sympathy for self and for others. My main contention, in terms of metaphorics, is that the displacement of the reading metaphor by the listening metaphor in The Scarlet Letter calls for an adjustment of the whole interpretive project by highlighting the dangers of an over-reliance on visible signs as symbols of spiritual meaning.
Just as the Transcendental role of translator required a knowledge of self and of the language of Nature, Hawthorne's interpretive role required certain credentials as well. This background knowledge is indicated when he remarks on the cryptic nature of the scarlet cloth: "the stitch . . . gives evidence of a now forgotten art" and not even "ladies conversant with such mysteries could unravel it" (27), making its decipherment reliant on some expertise. Instead of a knowledge of natural facts, though, required here is a knowledge of the language of the heart: the "tongue of flame," a language based on a knowledge of self and a sympathy with the human situation. Like his two Transcendental predecessors, Hawthorne acknowledges his linguistic credentials and professes a translatative project.

Reflecting the Calvinist inclination to read people for visible signs of salvation or damnation, Hawthorne explores human texts for indications of how they exchange emotional messages with one another. The resulting novel provides a descriptive grammar and dictionary for a language of the heart. With language itself emerging as a metaphor for the interpretive process, the overall effect of The Scarlet Letter is a self-referential demonstration of how rhetoric is epistemic. The synecdochic use of the letter "A" to represent language prompts an understanding of how using language results in changing interpretations of meaning. Just as the scarlet letter assumes varying significations, so too does language in use generate varying perspectives.
This evolving meaning is a function of interpersonal relationships. In the opening Custom House chapter, Hawthorne creates a sense of orality by establishing a relationship with his audience that is more informal than formal, more conversational than bookish. He is uncomfortable with using the written word as a vehicle for autobiographical self-indulgences addressed to the public and, instead, names his audience "the few who will understand him" (6-7). He insists on an honest approach: "Thoughts are frozen and utterance benumbed, unless the speaker stand in some true relationship with his audience" at the same time that he intends to "still keep the inmost Me behind its veil" (7). With this statement of intent, he establishes not only his own authorial stance, but also characterizes the appropriate attitude for the speaker who wishes to speak from the heart: "Be true."

Hawthorne's preference for an honest spoken voice over an artificial literary style is reflected in his choice of topics as well. In addition to describing the value of a direct, conversational style, the first chapter demonstrates a degradation of the written word, including an account of his thwarted literary career, a denigration of public documents, and a regret over the low esteem of imaginative literature. He has found writing a disappointing venture and has given up any hopes of turning the letters "to gold upon the page," apparently confirming his failed literary career and his place as a mere "scribbler" (37). He laments the amount of worthless writing in
official documents, like the Custom House papers, especially in contrast with the creative manuscripts that other writers have done and which have brought them no remuneration. With this declared aversion to official accounts, he implies a need to transcend the letter of the law and to search for the personal human story behind the public records--to seek the true account.

**Metaphors of Word in Action**

This disparagement of the written word in the introduction prepares the reader for a story whose action is composed almost solely of language acts. Important to my discussion of this text is the understanding that the fictional form of this novel is given meaning by its operant metaphors of word. As Lakoff and Johnson contend, certain spatialization metaphors exist in our conceptualization system so that "MORE OF FORM IS MORE OF CONTENT" (127). Therefore, by extension to the metaphorics of fiction, I am proposing that more of a certain language form stands for more of that language content, so that both in the characterization in the novel and in the action, listening displaces reading, and intuition displaces reasoning. The action of the story is driven by the tension between writing/reading and speaking/listening, with a corresponding tension between the letter of the law and the spirit of the law, thus reflecting the moral/emotional dilemma which operates throughout the novel. Initially, most of the members of the community are constrained by writing, by the letter of the law, by Hester's visible scarlet letter. As the story proceeds,
however, their interpretive skills are enhanced, and they become "able" to discern the quality of her heart by listening to oral testimony about her and by observing her actions.

Scott Harshbarger (1994) has termed Hawthorne’s narrative technique the "rhetoric of rumor," saying that "it is through the process of legend making, begun in rumor, that the scarlet letter gathers its symbolic resonance." By characterizing the narrative in these terms, Harshbarger affirms the essential orality of the fictional action. Just as the townspeople piece together the truth about the anguished threesome by listening to gossip, so too do readers stitch together the fabric of The Scarlet Letter by sorting through the rumors.

Given this privileging of orality, the two structural metaphors of word, RATIONAL UNDERSTANDING IS READING and INTUITIVE UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING, are given expression in the actions of the fictional characters. Taken together, their actions demonstrate a disparagement of literacy and an elevation of orality, resulting in a corresponding devaluing of rational understanding and a privileging of intuitive understanding. As Hawthorne observes when he is contemplating the scarlet cloth, its meaning communicated itself subtly without "the analysis" of his mind. Furthermore, the value of intuition here is to facilitate not so much a cognitive understanding as an affective one. While Emerson and Thoreau search for knowledge of the inner self, Hawthorne’s concern is with knowledge of the emotional relationship between people, and his fictional scheme
highlights the value of an intuitive process for coming to terms with human passion. Therefore, MORE OF LISTENING STANDS FOR MORE OF INTUITIVE UNDERSTANDING. Throughout the novel, there is an insistence on people talking, with countless imperatives to "speak" and thus, for others, to listen. In the first scene, Governor Wilson commands Dimmesdale to "Speak to the woman" (52) and then more strongly to Hester says, "Speak out the name!" Then another voice from the crowd demands, "Speak, woman... Speak and give your child a father!" (52-53). Noteworthy here is the confidence expressed in the speech act itself, as if Hester's very articulation of Dimmesdale's name would in itself function as an act of conception. The entire plot of the story relies on this need to SPEAK OUT: for Hester to name the father of her child, for Chillingworth to tell his true identity, and for Dimmesdale to reveal the secret that destroys them all. The dramatic and metaphorical tension in the story often results from the reluctance to speak in the face of these expectations. Understanding alone is insufficient in the scheme of the novel, and there is an insistence on articulation.

THE VOICE FOR THE PERSON

In the metaphoric system of the story, people's voices represent their essential characters. As Lakoff and Johnson explain, our conceptual system has a special case of the metonymy THE PART FOR THE WHOLE, specifically, THE FACE FOR THE PERSON (37). Similarly, in the metaphorical system of The Scarlet Letter, THE VOICE FOR THE PERSON serves to structure our
understanding of characters and their corresponding qualities. This representation is evident from the very first chapter when the venerable old Custom house officials are described as talking "in voices between speech and a snore" (9), revealing a general assessment of these men as unenergetic bores. Attention is called to Chillingworth’s voice early on when he expresses his concern to Hester that Pearl will not recognize his voice, as if his voice stood for his entire self (55). From the very beginning, Dimmesdale is characterized in terms of the quality of his voice. Even before he appears, we are told that his effect on people is "like the speech of an angel," and when he first speaks, most of the description is of his voice, which "was tremulously sweet, rich, deep, and broken" (52). The extent of the descriptions of voice in the novel signals its significance generally and its importance in character revelation.

THE VOICE FOR THE PERSON is especially evident in the description of Pearl’s voice, which is often her most conspicuous trait. She is first described as having "one baby-voice" that served a multitude of imaginary personages, enabling her to mimic other voices. Pearl’s mimicry, then, enables her to represent all the children of passion, all those who struggle to voice their anguish, and the broad scope of her utterances demonstrates the extent of human attempts to articulate that emotion. Her speech ranges wildly—from shrieking to silence. For example, "with a terrific volume of
sound," she routs two urchins who are harassing her (75), and in "The Governor's Hall," she responds to her mother with "an eldritch scream, and then became silent" (79). Her response to seeing Hester, Chillingsworth, and Dimmesdale together for the first time is silence, followed by loud laughing and shouts (98). In the woods, she responds to her mother's coaxing with "piercing shrieks" and wildly insists that the scarlet letter be put back on. In the joyous spirit of the "New England Holiday," Pearl's response to the festivities is to break out "continually into shouts of a wild, inarticulate, and sometimes piercing music" (162). Her frequently distorted speech indicates the intensity of emotional chaos that can seize the human heart, and the range of her vocalizing reflects the scope of human attempts to articulate passion.

In addition to Pearl's characterization as Every-voice, the three main characters are portrayed in terms of a tension between writing and speaking, between the book and the voice. Chillingworth is associated with the book; Hester with the voice, and Dimmesdale with a vacillation between the two, as he yearns to speak out, but keeps reverting to his bookish ways.

The character of Chillingworth is aligned with writing imagery, as he embodies a perverse reliance on the letter of the law. The first description of the physician, when Hester stands on the scaffold and sees into the past, points to his identification with books: a "pale, thin, scholar-like visage, with eyes dim and bleared by the lamplight that had served them
to pore over many ponderous books" (46). Even Chillingworth deprecates his own book-learning when he stands talking to a townsman and says that Hester's husband should have known better how to care for his wife: "should have learned thus too in his books" (48). Even he seems to understand that books do not provide the kind of understanding needed in this human challenge, but still he is incapable of acting otherwise. In his interview with Hester in prison, he acknowledges that he is "the book-worm of great libraries,--a man already in decay" (56). Although he vows to use "other senses" than do the prying multitudes, his concern is only with visible texts and he is incapable of hearing the language of the heart, as he promises to seek out the truth of Pearl's paternity just as he has "sought truth in books" (57). He is portrayed as a demonic book-worm attempting to decipher the human hieroglyphics before him, but constrained by the visible signs. Lacking the Thoreavian sense of "extra vagrancce," he is confined by his literacy; his learning is limited to the printed page, and he is emotionally illiterate when it comes to the text of the heart. In addition to the degradation associated with Chillingworth, he appears less frequently in the story, pointing to the devaluing of writing imagery: LESS OF A CHARACTER STANDS FOR LESS OF HIS CONTENT.

In contrast with Chillingworth, Hester represents the spirit of the law and is aligned with speaking imagery. She seems to understand that the scarlet "A" does not account for
all that she is, but is a mere "token" of her experience, not the whole truth of it. She seems to know that the written word is incapable of articulating the passion of the heart, that "The scarlet letter had not done its office" (120). Her attempts to create her own text in her decorative needle work, both on garments she sews for the socially prominent and on Pearl's clothes, demonstrate her dissatisfaction with visible texts. And yet, for much of the novel, she struggles to speak. When she first appears in "The Market Place," the scene metaphorically depicts her pre-verbal state. The crowd is silent or nearly so, but Hester "felt, at moments, as if she must needs shriek out with the full power of her lungs" (45). But she is unable to voice her grief.

Throughout the story, Hester's emotional anguish is represented by tortured attempts to speak. Often while gazing at Pearl, Hester would cry out "with an agony which she would fain hath hidden, but which made utterance for itself, betwixt speech and a groan" (71). This mixed utterance is an anguished kind of speech that comes uncontrolled and works as a mixed metaphor to represent the struggle to understand in the midst of pain. Later, when she implores Dimmesdale to "Speak though for me!" so that she might retain custody of Pearl, her speech is characterized as wild and only "a little less than madness" (83). Again, the altered speech works to represent the uncontrolled passion.

It is not until the private conversation that she has with
Dimmesdale in the woods that she is able to speak her mind and her heart. It is in this scene that the most honest exchange in the story takes place, and it is here that Hester is most articulate. Determined to talk with her beloved, she waits anxiously until she "could gather voice enough" to speak to him. "When they found voice to speak," they gradually begin a heartfelt talk. Noteworthy here is the way that the word "voice" is used as a mass noun and seems to reflect emotional honesty; it is only when they are true enough to their passion that they find voice "enough" to express it. Not only does Hester increase her reading competency during this forest talk and "now read his heart more accurately," she also realizes the strength of her love for Dimmesdale and questions, "why should we not speak it?" It is at this point that she is able to cry out Chillingworth's sinister secret. At Hester's urging, Dimmesdale also becomes more vocal and candidly expresses both his forgiveness and his love for her. Even though Dimmesdale tries to "hush" Hester up when her talk becomes too direct for him, Hester insists on speaking her heart and encourages him to do likewise.

While Chillingworth represents the bookish, rational mind and Hester the speaking, intuitive heart; Dimmesdale embodies the continual shift back and forth as he moves between writing and speech. He spends most of his energy making valiant attempts to break away from the constraints of his book-learning. He is described as a person who occasionally enjoyed
"the relief of looking at the universe through the medium of another kind of intellect than those with which he habitually held converse," namely, with a freer atmosphere than that exuded by the "musty fragrance . . . from books" (90). Unlike Hester, the woman of the cloth, who could survive in a freer atmosphere, Dimmesdale, the man of the cloth, seems unable to reject a narrow-minded orthodoxy and is capable of only occasional lapses from his books. As the action continues, though, it becomes increasingly clear that the Reverend's books could not provide the remedy for his emotional pain. In the scene where he has fallen asleep in his chair "with a large black-letter volume open before him on the table" (100), the juxtaposition of the sleeping figure with the open tome demonstrates the uselessness of book knowledge in the face of emotional need.

However, Dimmesdale is not only a man of books, for he is known as a successful speaker. Furthermore, his emotional deterioration is reflected in his voice: "his voice, though still rich and sweet, had a certain melancholy prophecy of decay in it" (88), and as he deteriorates further: "his voice [became] more tremulous than before" (89). Even before Dimmesdale becomes overwrought though, his eloquence is only in the public forum; he speaks haltingly in private and struggles to tell of the secret pain in his heart. Like other church men who were gifted but lacked the ability to speak with human sympathy, Dimmesdale lacked the tongue of flame:

the gift that descended upon the chosen disciples at Pentecost, in tongues of flame; symbolizing, it would
seem, not the power of speech in foreign and unknown languages, but that of addressing the whole human brotherhood in the heart's native language. (103)

He can speak with a "persuasive eloquence" that impresses all who hear him, and he is viewed as "the mouth-piece of Heaven's messages of wisdom, and rebuke, and love"; yet he yearns to articulate his secrets and speak the "heart's native language." He "longed to speak out, from his own pulpit, at the full height of his voice and tell the people what he was" (104); but he could not. The day after his vigil on the scaffold, "he preached a discourse which was held to be the richest and most powerful, and the most replete with heavenly influences, that had ever proceeded from his lips" (115); but he still can't voice his private pain.

Despite his public eloquence, he even struggles to express his emotion privately to Hester in their forest talk. His hesitancy seems to be prompted by his inability to feel sympathy for Hester as the woman he has loved, an inability demonstrated when he first steps into the woods and admits to seeing not Hester the person, but "the scarlet letter." Preoccupied with his own suffering, he is unsympathetic to hers and is unable to see inside to her anguish. Although he is the one with a reputation for eloquence, he lacks Hester's compassion, and he is in awe of her because she is able to voice "what he vaguely hinted at, but dared not speak" (143).

After his conversation in the woods with Hester, Dimmesdale seems to understand the need for something besides the visible
text. When he walks into his study, he is struck by the presence of the written texts in his room: the Hebrew Bible, the unfinished sermon on his desk, "with a sentence broken in the midst." Furthermore, he is conscious of his authorship and seems remorseful: "He knew that it was himself . . . who had done these things, and written thus far in to the Election Sermon!" Apologetic for his writing, he views it with a new awareness: "Another man had returned out of the forest; a wiser one; with a knowledge of hidden mysteries which the simplicity of the former never could have reached" (159). Apparently, his conversation with Hester has prompted a new perspective, one calling for a rejection of the simplistic written text. However, his enlightenment is short-lived. When he and Hester are reunited on the scaffold, he tries to "hush" her up when she talks of them being together again one day and reminds her of the law they broke. Still constrained by the letter of the law, he is bound by the printed word. Chillingworth is right when he calls Dimmesdale and himself "men of study, whose heads are in our books" and cautions the Minister against "these books,—these books!" and urges him to "study less" (114). Repeatedly, Dimmesdale reverts to this reliance on the written word, and his impulse reflects an inclination to depend on visible texts for verification of truth.

However, after Dimmesdale's wooded conversation with Hester, his linguistic ability is profoundly affected, and his eloquence enhanced. When he gives his Election Sermon,
attention is called to the nature of "the minister's very peculiar voice" and to his newly acquired language. The author emphasizes that the minister's "vocal organ was in itself a rich endowment" and "Like all other music, it breathed passion and pathos . . . in a tongue native to the human heart." Finally, Dimmesdale is able to articulate his passion; it is Dimmesdale's emotional honesty that provides his linguistic fluency, and "it was this proud and continual undertone that gave the clergyman his most appropriate power." His sympathy with Hester has enabled him to speak the tongue of flame and afterwards to reveal his sin. Even though his confession is in a voice that "had always a tremor through it, and sometimes a shriek" (180), revealing the ongoing anguish, it is emotionally eloquent and represents his most heroic fictional moment. Unfortunately, it is fleeting, because he reverts to his rigidly literal ways just before his death. Once again, he tells Hester to "hush" when she speaks of her hope for an eternity together; once again, he reminds her of the law they broke; once again, he is bound by the letter of the law and by his emotional ineptness. In the portrayal of Dimmesdale, an over-reliance on literacy is depicted as a character flaw and the mark of an emotionally immature heart.

The Human Text and the Voice of 'Suffering Humanity'

Besides the degradation of the book and of rational understanding via the character flaws of Chillingworth and Dimmesdale, there is a recurring ontological metaphor which
operates as a satellite of UNDERSTANDING IS READING and which serves to further demean the written text: A HUMAN LIFE IS A BOOK. This metaphor is used to reflect a perverse kind of literacy by which the reader attempts to interpret the mystery of other people by analyzing the outward actions of their lives. Hawthorne first uses it in self-deprecation to describe his own attitude: "The page of life that was spread out before me seemed dull and commonplace" (32). Here, the outward signs of daily life are portrayed as tedious, with the implication that what is most interesting about our lives is not visible. The suggestion is that it takes a special talent to discern these invisible secrets of life. When Chillingworth asks the townsman who the father of Hester's babe is, the citizen says that the "matter remaineth a riddle; and the Daniel who shall expound it is yet a-waiting" (48). Here is the idea that deciphering the hieroglyphics of life requires some wise man to do the decoding. Just as the prophet Daniel deciphered the cryptic writing that appeared on the wall during Belshazzar's feast, so too is there a need for some seer to solve the mystery of Pearl's paternity. Implied here is the fact that Chillingworth, in his insistence on reading only visible texts, is not this seer. To see a human life as a book is to disregard the real clues to the human enigma.

A HUMAN LIFE IS A BOOK is also used in reference to the way others try to read Hester and Pearl:

Thus she [Hester] will be a living sermon against sin (63)
It was often her [Hester's] mishap to find herself the text of the discourse (64)

It [Pearl's appearance] was the scarlet letter in another form; the scarlet letter endowed with life! (75)

She [Pearl] had been offered to the world . . . as the living hieroglyphic . . . all written in this symbol . . . had there been a prophet or magician skilled to read the character of flame! (148)

Just as Chillingworth is unable to discern the identity of Pearl's father and just as Dimmesdale is unable to see into Hester's heart and only sees the scarlet letter, so too does the emotionally incompetent person attend to mere outward appearances.

The perversity of reading only external signs is echoed in another ontological metaphor that pairs evil with writing: EVIL IS A BOOK/SIN IS A MARK, as revealed in several expressions referring to Satan's book:

I [Hester] would willingly have . . . signed my name in the Black Man's book too (86)

this ugly Black Man offers his book and an iron pen to everybody . . . and they are to write their names with their own blood. And then he sets his mark on their bosoms! . . . the old dame said that this scarlet letter was the Black Man's mark on thee. . . . (133)

This letter is his [the Black Man's] mark! (134)

There is something perverse about those who look for signs of sin in other people. Mistress Hibbins, who is thought to be a witch, is often the one who either refers to the mark of evil or the one others tell about it. When Hibbins invites Hester and Pearl into the forest as they leave the Governor's house, Hester says that if she had lost Pearl, she would have readily signed
her name in the Black book. Here the temptation to commit the sin of despair is associated with writing, along with the suggestion that searching for signs of evil can be the symptom of a sinister reader. It is the evil Hibbins who assures Hester that the Black Man will disclose his mark on Dimmesdale (172). Once again, the visible text is maligned, and both those who record their names in the Book of evil and those who read the marks there are sinful. Also in evidence here is the conflict between the Calvinistic inclination to look for visible markers of salvation, along with the opposing tendency to distrust those visible signs, for only God could know the secrets of the heart.

The danger of relying on visible signifiers can even apply to the natural text, which can be a source of faulty interpretation if read egotistically. When, in his increasingly anxious state, Dimmesdale searches frantically for a written sign while on his midnight vigil on the scaffold, he sees an immense letter "A" in the sky and tries to read his destiny from it. The author comments on the minister's vision by saying that it was a common belief at the time that "the destiny of nations should be revealed, in these awful hieroglyphics, on the cope of heaven. A scroll so wide might not be deemed too expansive for providence to write a people's doom upon." However, Hawthorne cautions, it was quite another thing for an individual to read his destiny in such grandiose terms:

In such a case, it could only be the symptom of a highly disordered mental state, when a man, rendered morbidly self-contemplative by long, intense, and secret pain, had extended his egotism over the whole
expanse of nature, until the firmament itself should appear no more than a fitting page for his soul's history and fate. (113)

In this case, reading the book of nature is perverse and arrogant. Implied here is the understanding that the visible text of nature could not alone enlighten the human heart, and that to use it as the sole source for understanding human passion is even pathological. Furthermore, to read without regard for other people in our lives is the sign of a "disordered mental state."

While visible texts, such as human actions and natural signs, are portrayed as inferior sources of emotional understanding, another ontological metaphor THE HEART IS A BOOK is used to point to a superior kind of perceptive process. This metaphor highlights an interior kind of reading, prompting the insight necessary for having a heart-to-heart exchange. It takes a gifted reader—one who who can see past the visible text—to understand human passion. Hester shows her fear that Chillingworth might have this kind of expertise when she "clasped her hands over her heart, dreading lest he should read the secret there at once" (58). But if the embittered scholar does possess a "native sagacity," it is of a limited mental type that results from his attempt to "bring his mind into such an affinity with his patient's"; it does not involve a heartfelt receptiveness. Chillingworth lacks the necessary emotional expertise to feel sympathy for another person, and it is only when he thinks he sees some visible sign on Dimmesdale's chest
that he feels enlightened. His emotional illiteracy results from attending only to visible texts and from relying on rational analysis only.

Since visible texts are necessarily inadequate for representing emotional understanding in the metaphorical scheme of *The Scarlet Letter*, speech emerges as a vehicle for representing the intuitive process necessary for human compassion. It is Dimmesdale's Election Sermon that provides the model of the language of the heart. Speaking in the tongue of flame, his voice has a

> low undertone . . . and yet, majestic as the voice sometimes became, there was forever in it an essential character of plaintiveness. A loud or low expression of anguish,--the whisper, or the shriek, as it might be conceived of suffering humanity. . . . The complaint of a human heart, sorrow-laden, perchance guilty, telling its secret . . . to the great heart of mankind. . . . It was this profound and continual undertone that gave the clergyman his most appropriate power. (172-73)

Here is the voice of a human heart in pain. Here is the voice of someone who summons up the necessary emotional honesty to let his sinful sadness be heard. And here is the one voice representing all of "suffering humanity." The resulting communication is between hearts, as the words cannot be heard; it is the undertone that subtly communicates. Hester's hearing is especially keen because, even though the sound was muffled, she "listened with such intentness, and sympathized so intimately, that the sermon had throughout a meaning for her, entirely apart from its indistinguishable words" (172). The crowd's response to this "high strain of eloquence" is a "mighty
swell of many voices, blended into one great voice by the universal impulse which makes likewise one vast heart out of the many" (177). Recalling Thoreau's "one articulation" of Nature, Hawthorne's voice imagery represents how the proper kind of interpretation implies a unifying process, how the proper kind of emotional sympathy prompts a unified response. As in Emerson's and Thoreau's epistemic scheme, truth does not reside in one thing or another, but rather in the exchange between them. The harmony resulting from the tongue of flame does not reside in one person or the other, but in the sympathetic dialogue between them.

This sympathetic exchange also can occur with the natural elements. If a person approaches the process of understanding emotional truths in the proper intuitive spirit, then the natural world can speak to the individual heart. Although Dimmesdale unsuccessfully tries to interpret the visible signs of nature written on the parchment of the sky, Pearl is able to perceive the spirit of Nature in its voice. Here NATURE IS A SPEAKER, and acquiring emotional understanding entails listening to her voice. Pearl is the only character who is described as having such a refined sensibility to Nature's calling. Because Pearl has acquired an empathy from her own suffering, she can hear the anguished voice of another wild spirit. Modeling her mother's ability to hear Dimmesdale's undertone of suffering, Pearl is being guided in the sympathy necessary to hear and understand the pain of another. Many linguistic expressions
reflect how NATURE IS A SPEAKER and how Pearl enters into a dialogue with this natural voice. She can hear the voice of the brook: "with its never ceasing loquacity, it should whisper tales out of the heart of the old forest." She can hear this streamlet as it keeps up "a babble, kind, quiet, soothing, but melancholy, like the voice of a young child that was spending its infancy without playfulness. . . . After listening awhile to its talk," Pearl tries to cheer up the murmuring stream "but the brook . . . had gone though so solemn an experience that it could not help talking about it, and seemed to have nothing else to say" (134). The irrepressible, sad babbling of the brook corresponds to Pearl's own rantings; both voices reflect life's suffering--one in terms of the natural world and the other in terms of "suffering humanity."

Other expressions which reflect NATURE IS A SPEAKER also highlight the sadness and the mystery in the situation:

the melancholy voice of the brook . . . kept telling its unintelligible secret . . . or making a prophetic lamentation (135)

dark, old trees, which, with their multitudinous tongues, would whisper long what had passed there. . . . And the melancholy brook would add this other tale to the mystery with which its little heart was already overburdened, and whereof it still kept up a murmuring babble, with not a whit more cheerfulness of tone. (152)

Here is a melancholy rhapsody, telling of life's pain, the sad lyrics of which are paradoxically stitched together by the written text of the novel. While the tale of suffering presented here is in terms of Nature's voices, it is important
to note that their sad story echoes the human saga as well. The harmonics of the novel provide for these natural voices to blend with human ones just as Hester and Dimmesdale "had mingled their sad and passionate talk with the melancholy murmur of the brook" (170). Taken together, these voices join into one articulation and resound with the anguish of life. Also significant is the way that the metaphor of listening highlights the dynamics of the exchange, so that the voices are usually heard in dialogue with one another. As the linguistic expressions show, understanding emotional truths is an ongoing process, a reciprocal conversation of sympathy.

The many shouts, shrieks, and other labored verbal attempts throughout the novel reflect anguished efforts to express both human passion and compassion. In this way, human emotion is personified so that PASSION IS A SPEAKER and its voice often manifested in uncontrolled verbal outbursts. While Pearl’s vocal irregularities are most often associated with sadness, Dimmesdale’s speech aberrations often hint of some evil etiology. During his midnight vigil, "Without any effort of his will, or power to restrain himself, he shrieked aloud," and the sound reverberates across the hills "as if a company of devils . . . had made a plaything of the sound" (108). Not only does this description suggest the uncontrollable nature of his speech and its wildness, but also its alliance with evil. We are told that his shriek is heard by Governor Bellingham and Mistress Hibbins, so that evil hears evil. Also while on the
scaffold in the dark, Dimmesdale inexplicably "and to his own infinite alarm, burst into a great peal of laughter" which Pearl responded to with laughter of her own (110-111). In its wildness, the laughter seems to reflect the perverse nature of uncontrolled human passion and the way it often threatens to voice itself. The continual attempt to control speech mirrors the human effort to control the emotional forces within us. When Dimmesdale watches Hester and Pearl walk below him on the scaffold, he works at "suppressing his voice," and his attempt to stifle speech results in a whispered response to Pearl's insistent inquiries (111). This repeated effort to hush or muffle speech intimates some preternatural force in human passion that is so powerful it can speak itself.

Furthermore, this voice of passion bespeaks a perversity at times; if uncontrolled, passion can exert an evil influence. The experience that Dimmesdale has after leaving Hester in the woods is significant in the way that it demonstrates the evil that lurks in uncontrolled passion. Some sinister force seems to be trying to voice itself through Dimmesdale as he encounters several temptations—all verbal ones. First, he feels an impulse to utter certain blasphemies about the communion supper to a deacon. Feeling out of control, "He absolutely trembled and turned pale as ashes, lest his tongue should wag itself, in utterance of these horrible matters" (155). Then, he meets a pious widow from his congregation and is tempted to quote a line of Scripture arguing against the mortality of the human soul, a
line which would have distressed the devout old woman. Instead, thanks to "a fortunate disorder of his utterance," he mumbles something else and saves the woman from scandal. Next, he is tempted by the archfiend himself to whisper some suggestive word into the ear of a trusting young virgin, but he resists the urge and passes her without speaking, choosing silence over a lewd comment. Then, he feels an impulse to stop and "teach some very wicked words" to some little Puritan children at play, but stops himself. Finally, he longs to shake hands with a drunken seaman and exchange some "heaven defying" oaths with him, but manages to forego this temptation as well (156-7). All of these occasions of sin are with the spoken word, and they all accompany what he feels is a "revolution in the sphere of thought and feeling" within him (155). Here passion works to speak itself, and the human voice box is left to modulate the emotional volume and regulate the articulations.

The many deviations from normal speech deserve reflection, for they demonstrate the intensity of human passion and the degree of human effort needed to suppress this emotional vehemence. With its curious mix of voices, the scene during "The Minister's Vigil" is especially representative of the whole novel's vocal quality. When Chillingworth comes into range of the scaffold, he hears Hester's silence, Dimmesdale's muttering, gasping, and whispering; while Pearl speaks in a tongue that "sounded, indeed, like human language, but was only such gibberish as children may be heard amusing themselves with" and
"in a tongue unknown to the erudite clergyman" (114). This Pentecostal scene is filled with the voices of the characters, all speaking in tongues, and their chaotic language reflects their moral and emotional chaos. The efforts to speak and to modulate speech, which constitute the primary action of the story, reach a crescendo in this scene and reveal how human passion sometimes expresses itself in pathological ways.

Whether the scene is uproarious or subdued, though, the fictional action resides in the words exchanged between people. While the utterances are sometimes passionate outbursts as in the midnight vigil scene, there are also the quiet conversations like Hester and Dimmesdale's all important forest talk. Just before this conversation, we learn that Hester "hesitated to speak" but it is Dimmesdale's anguished utterances which move her: "his words here offered her the very point of circumstances in which to interpose what she came to say," and then "Again she hesitated, but brought out the words with an effort" (138). Articulating the pains of the heart is agonizing, and we need to be in dialogue with another heart if we are to be successful. We need to talk with one another and not just vent our emotions. It is this kind of heart-to-heart talk that constitutes the most valued speech in the book, as private conversations tend to be more honest than public declarations. Just as Hester cautions Pearl not to talk about what happened in the forest because "We must not always talk in the market-place of what happens to us in the forest" (170), the
metaphorical action cautions against relying on public expressions. The private, forest talk always rings truer than the public, marketplace discourse.

The 'Tongue of Flame' and the Inadequacy of Language

So it is that the real "Revelation of the Scarlet Letter" is the understanding that emotional harmony results from an honest and sympathetic exchange between two people. To become fluent in this tongue of flame is to know both the relief that comes from the disclosure of intense suffering, and the transcendence that comes from someone else's sympathetic listening, from being attentive to another person's passion. Both Dimmesdale's emotional honesty and Hester's capacity for hearing the undertone of suffering result in the emotional eloquence of the Election speech. Neither one alone is sufficient. Although they may not achieve the spiritual salvation of the elect, they do achieve an emotional revival. Just as the power of Dimmesdale's speech transcends the written text by "continually lifting him out of the written discourse that lay before him" (176), so too does his emotional honesty lift him out of his confined emotional restraints. Voice transcends book, and the intuitive heart transcends the rational mind, just as UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING displaces UNDERSTANDING IS READING.

Therefore, what is being highlighted by the metaphorical action is that emotional fluency is not a function of interpreting visible signs, but rather of attending to audible
signals. Understanding human passion is a matter not of the book, but of the voice. The real revelation is not of sin, but of suffering. The value of the scarlet letter is that it serves merely as a marker of human transgression, and the significance of Dimmesdale's confession is that it voices this pain and provides some relief from human anguish and some insight into the human enigma. As Dimmesdale tells Chillingworth, "these revelations...are meant merely to promote the intellectual satisfaction of all intelligent beings, to see the dark problem of this life made plain. A knowledge of men's hearts will be needful to the completest solution to that problem" (96). Therefore, making a public account of our sins can provide some knowledge of emotional truths and some intellectual relief, but the pang of suffering remains inside.

The two structural metaphors UNDERSTANDING IS READING and UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING emerge to provide a unifying principle in The Scarlet Letter, as they work to demonstrate that in order to understand emotional truths, we need to move beyond a reliance on visible signs and be sensitive to the voice of suffering. This metaphorical framework results in a privileging of intuitive understanding as reflected in the voice imagery. Hawthorne remarks on his own need to attend to that inner voice: "There was always a prophetic instinct, a low voice in my ear" (23). The reading metaphor points to the inadequacy of the intellect to discern emotional truth, and the listening metaphor confirms the value of the heart to provide
the sympathy necessary for genuine understanding. The main characters in the novel never do completely transcend the constraints of the letter of the law, and even Hester resumes wearing the scarlet letter, indicating the human inclination to seek affirmation in visible signs. However, the larger community does seem to achieve some emotional triumph:

When an uninstructed multitude attempts to see with its eyes, it is exceedingly apt to be deceived. When, however, it forms its judgment, as it usually does, on the intuitions of its great warm heart, the conclusions thus attained are often so profound and so unerring, as to possess the character of truths supernaturally revealed. (93)

By relying on their intuitive powers, rather than on visible signs, the multitude resolves the narrative’s hermeneutical tension between reading print and hearing the human heart.

While listening to the voice of suffering humanity can provide some relief from the anguish of hidden sin and repressed passion, there is still some unresolved tension lingering, for the disclosure of human pain sometimes cannot do justice to the extent of the suffering. As Dimmesdale tells Chillingworth, "There can be . . . no power, short of the Divine mercy, to disclose, whether by uttered words, or by type or emblem, the secrets that may be buried with a human heart" (96). In other words, there is some pain so enormous that no expression of it can be adequate. Given this gap, language is ultimately inadequate for voicing the extent of human agony, and no metaphor of word can sufficiently represent the anguish experienced. The many shrieks, whispers, and shouts throughout
the novel reflect the ongoing human attempt to articulate grief and passion. However, language can never adequately communicate human suffering; it can only provide a rubric and a form to contain it. Hawthorne's black, red, and gold text improves on a strictly literal account, a black and white version, by suggesting the complexities of human suffering; ultimately, though, it can only point to the truth. Just as there are limits to what can be expressed in language, so too are there epistemic limits. As Hawthorne suggests right from the beginning, any public account is necessarily inadequate and the only "true" account is the private, unuttered one. Verbal accounts can provide some "intellectual satisfaction," but knowledge of the heart remains elusive. In chapter six, I will treat this lingering tension by discussing how the metaphor of expressed silence provides for some representation of this inexpressible emotional meaning.
Chapter 4 Notes

1. Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter: An Annotated Text, Backgrounds and Sources, Essays in Criticism, p. 23. All subsequent page citations are in the text.


3. Charles Feidelson, Jr., Symbolism and American Literature, p. 43.

CHAPTER 5

VOICES IN NEGATION IN MOBY DICK

An Epistemic Log

A book about a whaling voyage, Moby Dick can be viewed as an epistemic journey whose ship is language. An examination of its metaphorics of word will reveal a self-absorption with the relationship between language and knowing and, as in the other works in this study, the processes of reading and listening provide conceptual frameworks for structuring the process of understanding. However, Melville's metacognitive design is much grander than any discussed so far in that it moves the site of discovery out of the inner self (Emerson and Thoreau) and away from the human heart (Hawthorne) onto the high seas and into the wide world—assuming cosmic dimensions.

Furthermore, rather than demonstrating the role of interpreter, Melville's text reveals the work of a cataloguer, one who constructs a single text by assembling many texts as well as bits and pieces of texts. Preferring to compile, rather than to connect, Melville works to gather information, so that Ishmael's cetological project functions as a metaphor for Melville's own effort to collect as much relevant data as possible about the enigma of death. In contrast with the other systems discussed so far which highlight various kinds of understanding sought through language, Melville's system
emphasizes the way in which the limits of language represent the limits of our human understanding.

While the Transcendental project called for knowledge of the self and of Nature, and Hawthorne's venture required a sympathy with human suffering, Melville's effort at taxonomy demands other credentials. Here the need is to be encyclopedic and comprehensive. Just as Ishmael composes his own cetology to help explain the whale since no existing book does it justice, so too does Melville compose his own *Moby Dick* to deal with the mystery of death; however, both attempts can only result in catalogues of information because language can provide no certain explanations, only a glossary of possible ones. Ishmael describes the task of drafting a systematization of cetology as "a ponderous task; no ordinary letter-sorter in the Post-office is equal to it": a description that fits Melville's eschatological venture as well. Moreover, much of the narrative results from Ishmael's attempt to discover himself by discovering the meaning of the whaling voyage; by composing the tale, he works to compose himself. Here again, rhetoric is epistemic in the way that each re-telling of the story provides a re-creation of truth. As Bruce Grenberg puts it, "Ishmael discovers what happened to him on the voyage only as he writes" (emphasis added). Each linguistic rendering suggests a new epistemic effort.

Symbolizing the elusive and vast mysteries of life, particularly the enigma of death, the whale emerges as the
controlling symbol of the work and provides the living text and object of study. The whale is an appropriate representative of unobtainable truth in the way that "its mighty bulk . . . affords a most congenial theme whereon to enlarge, amplify, and generally expatiate. Would you, you could not compress him" (465). A useful symbol of truth which can not be compressed, the whale has the necessary vastness. However, since the whale's is "an unwritten life" (135, emphasis added), the cetologist must observe it in action, for "only on the profound unbounded sea, can the full invested whale be truly and livingly found out" (464). Like Thoreau's desire for "living poetry," Melville's scheme insists on the superiority of the living text and thus calls for special attention to the image of the living voice. Therefore, in its comprehensiveness, the metaphorics of Moby Dick provides for many voices, including "half-articulations" that finally work to cancel each other out, with this result: a significant kind of silence.

Melville's design acknowledges the relentless human need to find meaning in life, and it is this inevitable interpretive lure that underwrites his text and preoccupies his characters, compelling them to search for significance. While Hawthorne advises against a preoccupation with visible signs, Melville warns against the compulsion to interpret signs at all. As Father Mapple says in telling the story of Jonah, "There lurks, perhaps, a hitherto unheeded meaning here" and even more forcefully declares later that it is "full of meaning" (44-5).
Ahab demonstrates this hermeneutic persistence when he pauses to examine the figures on the doubloon "to interpret for himself in some monomaniac way whatever significance might lurk in them" for "some certain significance lurks in all things" (44), and his obsession to track Moby Dick illustrates the interpretive impulse taken to its evil extreme.

It is this epistemic lurking that haunts these characters, and the lingering belief that some certain meaning can be found that prompts Ishmael to keep trying to account for what happens. Even though the Pequod's voyage comes to an end, we know that Ishmael, as the representative of us all, will continue to go whaling, will keep telling his story, and will keep trying to make sense of it. In this fated scheme, language is useful, not because it solves life's mysteries; but because it allows us continually to name our epistemic boundaries, to identify what we cannot know, and most important of all, to keep on creating a catalogue of explanations to life's mysteries—ultimately acknowledging that none of them is certain. What is inevitable here is the process of meaning-making, not the destination, but the relentless voyage of discovery. Like a ship's log that records all relevant information without interpreting it, Moby Dick provides an epistemic log of an endless voyage, one on which humans are fated to embark again and again, as long as they seek to understand life's enigmas.

That Melville had misgivings about the adequacy of any system to explain these elusive truths is evident. Not only
does he reject the Transcendental confidence in accessing the
spiritual truth of the inner self, he suggests that a full
experience of Transcendentalist truth is fatal. The "sunken-
eyed young Platonist," contemplating nature from his perch on
the mast-head, who falls first into a mystical trance and then
to his death in the ocean, exemplifies the transcendentalist
whose "merging" with nature is death (152-63).

Melville also refers to the difficulties with Calvinism as
a system for discerning God's will. For example, when Starbuck
makes his last attempt to appeal to Ahab's reason, the captain's
reply is to identify his own perverse obsession with the will of
God, thus confirming the Calvinist denial of free will. Ahab
points to a Calvinist God who appears to be the spirit of evil
in the universe: "What . . . inscrutable, unearthly thing
. . . commands me . . . making me ready to do what in my own
proper, natural heart, I durst not so much as dare? . . . Is
it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm?" (546). By aligning
Ahab's maniacal quest with Divine Providence, Melville calls
into question the entire Calvinist scheme. References such as
these serve to undermine all philosophical systems and result in
Melville's intimation that certain truths, such as the nature of
God, the human potential for transcendence, and the role of
suffering and death, are ultimately unobtainable and defy 'some
certain significance'. That none of the signs in Moby Dick,
neither visual nor auditory, can be satisfactorily interpreted
confirms Melville's epistemic comment: the only truth is in the
telling.

While the tone cultivated in *Nature*, *Walden*, and *The Scarlet Letter* echoes the shift away from the more literary style of the book to the more personal style of the voice, Melville's text is marked by a curious anonymity. The overall tone of the work defies a single descriptor because in its comprehensiveness, *Moby Dick* includes so many genres and points of view that it lacks any distinctive persona. Composed of many texts, it ranges from novel to documentary, from drama to scientific treatise, from philosophical essay to poetry. At times, the narrative voice of Ishmael presents the point of view directly; at other times, Ishmael reports conversations indirectly; at still other times Ishmael's voice is silent, and we overhear the story in soliloquies, asides, and stage directions. As Michael Gilmore has remarked, "One has no sense that Ishmael--or indeed, anyone--has written these pages; lacking a mediating point of view, they produce the illusion of a text without an author."³ By creating such an illusion, Melville intimates that there are many versions of truth, without endorsing any one of them. Ultimately, these voices of explanation become voices in negation as they effectively cancel each other out, leaving only the written text and the lingering questions. In the absence of a single mediated point of view, the text functions anonymously. Like whiteness which "is not so much a color as the visible absence of color, and at the same time the concrete of all colors" (198), the text seems generated
by no one and, at the same time, by everyone.

Like the ship's carpenter who constructs his work out of bits and pieces of materials, Melville constructs his text out of various genres and presents the prefabricated form without initial introduction or comment, in authorial anonymity. Instead of direct commentary, the work begins with a collection of mini-texts. First is an "Etymology" that has been "supplied by a late consumptive usher to a grammar school" followed by "the Extracts," excerpted comments about whales gathered by a "sub-sub librarian" (ix). This opening compendium forecasts the overall intent of the text: to compile and catalogue information, but not to analyze it directly, for that move is left up to the reader. In this way, the overall structure functions iconically to demonstrate how language can be used to name and classify life's mysteries, but it cannot solve them. By deliberately assembling pieces of texts here at the beginning with little or no connecting threads, Melville resists the book as a form. Instead, he prefers to compile data and acknowledges that "This whole book is a draught--nay, but a draught of a draught" (148). By resisting the book as a unifying form, his resulting assemblage works to reinforce the shift away from the image of the book as a satisfying embodiment of truth.

The Tower of Babel and the Pyramid

As the early references to grammar, the lexicon, and the library signal, Moby Dick is concerned with the topic of language itself. Furthermore, the fact that most of the authors
of these initial excerpts are dead immediately pairs language with death, an association that is threaded throughout the work. The marble tablets in the Whalers' Chapel, inscribed with epitaphs of dead sailors, point to the way we use language to explain death. However, language proves to be no match for the powers of death, for the "frigid inscriptions" reveal no secrets: "What bitter blanks in those black-bordered marbles" (38). Later, using the Tower of Babel and the pyramid to elicit associations between language and death, Melville suggests the primacy and ultimate nature of death. In discussing the progenitors of mast-head builders, Ishmael emphasizes that the pyramid builders must be given priority over the builders of the Tower of Babel because the Tower fell, implying that death, as marked by the pyramid, is more enduring (powerful) than language, as represented by the Tower of Babel. This same association between language and death is transferred to the whale, which is characterized as being marked with "mystic hieroglyphics" (207), like the "mysterious cyphers on the walls of pyramids" (315). Just as the whale ultimately is undecipherable, so too is the mystery of death finally incapable of being interpreted by human language.

'Explain Myself I Must'

In tension with Melville's comment that language is ultimately inadequate for solving the mystery of death is his contention that humans are compelled to keep on trying to use language to crack the eschatological code. Despite the failure
of human attempts to interpret either the "mysterious cyphers" on the walls of pyramids or the ones on the surface of whales, he demonstrates the human obsession with the ongoing attempt. When Ahab declares, "That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate" (168), he is acknowledging the controlling passion of the work: the hatred of the inaccessibility of truth. And when Ishmael says, "it was the whiteness of the whale that above all appalled me," he not only echoes Ahab's hatred of the elusive nature of truth, he also vents his "despair of putting it in a comprehensible form" (189). For Ahab, the overwhelming desire is to understand; for Ishmael (and Melville), the compulsion is to articulate that understanding: "in some dim, random way explain myself I must, else all these chapters might be naught" (189-190). In this way, the tension between the need to understand and the need to articulate that understanding in words drives the action of Moby Dick and provides the thematic underpinning of its metaphorical system.

Both UNDERSTANDING IS READING and UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING operate to demonstrate that literacy and orality can only help us to understand that there are limits to what humans can know. Language acts can only provide epistemic relief by allowing us to keep on trying to explain, rather than to publish any certain explanations. As the only survivor of the Pequod and the designated narrator, Ishmael is the one who will metaphorically continue the attempt to account for the mystery of death. He represents the human compulsion to keep on
explaining those terrifying forces that we do not comprehend until we can understand what we mean, or at least until we can name them. To explain something is somehow to subdue its force over us, and Ishmael’s effort to account for the "nameless phantom" from his childhood reflects the human attempt to explain away our fears.

Furthermore, like the insistence on the dangers of the visible text reflected in The Scarlet Letter, the action of Moby Dick points to the dangers of relying on visible signs. UNDERSTANDING IS READING is used to reflect the continual disparagement of the visible text. Right at the beginning, there is a caveat to readers advising them of the dangers of taking the written text too seriously, cautioning them not to "take the higgledy-piggledy whale statements, however authentic, in these extracts, for veritable gospel cetology" (ix). Written records are unreliable, and this warning is placed in front of readers straightaway and throughout the work. When everyone in "The Chapel" (except the illiterate Queequeg) is reading the inscriptions written on the marble tablets recounting the deaths at sea, Ishmael recognizes the limitations of print when he notes that many accidents are never recorded and that these "bleak tablets" do little to explain the deaths; they merely cause readers to grieve anew. He terms these texts "bitter blanks" and "deadly voids" and even "unbidden infidelities in the lines that seem to gnaw upon all Faith." Not only are these writings incomplete, then, they fail to enlighten, and their
every existence prompts a loss of faith: "What despair in these immovable inscriptions!" (39). The incompleteness of these epitaphs reflects the inadequacy of the written word to record the whole truth.

Just as written records fail to explain death, so too do books fail to explain life adequately. Ishmael argues that out of the many books about whales, most provide no real knowledge and only two even pretend to portray the living whale (134). Since the whale's is "an unwritten life" (135), books cannot capture its vast meaning. Books are inadequate in their portrayal of both the enigma of death and the mystery of life. Like the pictures of whales found in ancient books which are only primitive intimations of the real creatures, the written text supplies only a partial, imprecise view. Like the letter intended for the drowned Jeroboam crew member, "most letters never reach their mark" (327): the written word simply cannot accurately access truth.

Despite the obvious inadequacies of the printed word, few can resist the temptation to search for truth in writing. The way that each crew member carefully reads the markings on the doubloon that Ahab nails up as a reward for first sighting Moby Dick highlights the irresistible lure of the written text. And Stubb reminds us of the idiosyncratic nature of reading by observing that "There's another rendering now; but still one text" (444). At one point, even Queequeg looks to the printed text for enlightenment. In the parlor of the Spouter-Inn,
Ishmael watches the illiterate harpooner "wholly occupied with counting the pages of the marvelous book" he has picked up. Since he cannot read the volume in the traditional way, Queequeg measures its contents by counting out the pages fifty at a time. His unusual method of reading echoes the variety of ways to interpret text and also calls into question both the traditional mode of reading and a reliance on the written word as a source of truth. As Stubb later remarks, "you books must know your places. You'll do to give us the bare words and facts, but we come in to supply the thoughts" (443). Reading the written word can supply only the fundamental facts and reflects a limited kind of understanding, but the inclination to rely on print is powerful.

In every case, the visible text confounds us. Like the markings on the stone walls of pyramids, like the etchings on the exterior of whales, and like the wrinkles on Ahab’s brow; "all visible objects ... are but as pasteboard masks" (220) denying us access to what truth may lurk behind them. Therefore, UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING works to suggest a more accurate source of knowledge: the human voice. Throughout the work, there is a reliance on the human voice to reveal truth. In this way, listening represents an understanding of the living truth. It is Ishmael’s recollected story told aloud that constitutes much of the text. Much of the significant action of the story, like the dismasting of Ahab’s leg, occurs out of sight, and we learn of it from Ishmael’s retelling, rather than
from direct exposition.

Furthermore, most of the tension in the story results from waiting to hear the call that Moby Dick has been sighted or to hear some news of the whale yelled across the water from passing boats. Throughout the voyage, and particularly as the chase begins, the crew strains to hear the voice that announces the whale's sighting. Because the doubloon goes to the one who shouts first, it matters who first calls it out loud. Despite Tashtego's protests, Ahab insists that he is the first one to sight Moby Dick and then continues to cry out "There she blows!" repeatedly, not so much for information about the whale's appearance as for verification of its existence (548). "Fired by the cry which seemed simultaneously taken up by the three look-outs," the crew begins its assault (548). When Ahab reminds the crew to "sing out for every spout though he spout ten times a second!" (555), he is pointing to the need for their voices. Once again, he needs their voices to affirm the reality of the great whale, even though they do not provide an explanation of its mystery. The human voice can provide verification of life's mysteries, even though it does not explicate them. On the Pequod, the shouts of whale sightings and the cries of response provide the most stirring events in the story, and the anticipation of these oral warnings sustains a belief in the mysterious white whale when it is out of sight.

Conversations also constitute a large portion of the text and sometimes prove to be a useful source of information. When
Ishmael narrates "The Town Ho's Story," he interweaves his narration with the actual conversations exchanged, so that the story emerges within the dialogue (247 ff). After the killing of a right whale, Stubb and Flask discuss the significance of having a sperm whale hoisted on one side of the boat and a right whale's on the other; together, they talk through an explanation (332 ff). Furthermore, the conversations that Ahab has with the crews of many other boats (the Albatross, Town Ho, Jeroboam, Virgin, Rose Bud, Samuel Enderby, Bachelor, Rachel, Delight) provide his main source of information about the whereabouts of Moby Dick. Like the accumulated rumors in The Scarlet Letter, the conversations across the water in Moby Dick constitute much of the story's action.

'Half-articulated Wailings' and Truthful Gibberish

While human voices are more important to the crew of the Pequod than books, these vocalizations are not always reliable either, as there are many garbled and semi-articulate voices. As they struggle to figure out truth, sometimes people talk gibberish, as Queequeg describes the talk of Christians whom he tries to emulate (58). Stubb often responds with queer laughter, and Starbuck with strange whispers. Some of the most conspicuous vocalizations, however, are the "sobs," "shouts," "wails," and "shrieks" of distress. As in The Scarlet Letter, these cries of alarm reflect the human struggle to articulate anguish, specifically the agonizing effort to explain death. In answer to whether or not Moby Dick was the whale that dismasted
him, Ahab responds "with a terrific, loud, animal sob" and then with "a half sob and a half shout" (167). The intensity of his voice points to the intensity of the epistemic struggle, and the partial quality of the utterance reflects the impossibility of articulating the whole truth.

After Ahab is retrieved from the water following his first day's assault by Moby Dick, "nameless wails came from him, as desolate sounds from out ravines," demonstrating again his strained efforts to voice the awful truth (553). On the second day of the chase, "Ahab's unearthly slogan tore every other cry but his to shreds," emphasizing the terror of the truth and the power of his obsession to voice it. Just before Moby Dick is sighted for the final time, "from the three mast-heads three shrieks went up as if the tongues of fire had voiced it" (566). Again, alarming voices reflect an intimation of the impending, terrifying truth. Then on the final day of the chase, there is a conspicuous conflict of voices. A voice cries from the low cabin window warning Ahab of sharks, but Ahab hears nothing, "for his own voice was high-lifted then" (568). The voice of doom negates the voice of caution.

While these cries of anguish and impending doom are chillingly audible throughout the story, the voices of the dead, though less frequently heard, are even more disturbing. Before the disastrous encounter with Moby Dick, the crew hears cries so wild that they sound "like half-articulated wailings of the ghosts of all Herod's murdered innocents," and the old Manxman
declares that they are "the voices of newly drowned men in the sea" (527). The voices of the dead scream out in shrieks and sobs and intimate the terrifying reality of death. Important to note here is that these voices of the dead are also characterized as "half-articulated," indicating the extent of the struggle and the failure of language ever to understand fully or to express fully what we do know—even when the knowledge comes from direct experience. All human attempts to express the nature of death are necessarily incomplete and inevitably only half-articulated. Furthermore, the many cries of alarm in the story jar us from complacency and remind us of the lurking presence of death. Just as Ishmael warns of the deceptive lull of a sailing ship and its dream-like state because with one false move and "with one half-throttled shriek you drop through that transparent air into the summer sea, no more to rise forever" (163), so too do the recurring distressing articulations in the story remind us that human language is ultimately powerless against the force of death.

In addition to the aberrant speech heard throughout the voyage, sometimes what may sound at first like nonsense turns out to be truthful. The disreputable-looking stranger named Elijah who seems to be talking "gibberish" warns Ishmael and Queequeg of impending disaster before they embark on the Pequod, and he should have been heeded as a prophetic voice, but is ignored instead (97). He sounds like a crazed voice crying out in the wilderness, but turns out to be a true prophet. In the
same way, the voice of the deranged cabin boy, Pip, sounds crazy but sometimes reveals wisdom. When he addresses Queequeg in his coffin, Pip’s speech is both lyrical and wild, prompting Starbuck to observe that sometimes:

in violent fevers, men, all ignorance, have talked in ancient tongues, and that when the mystery is probed, it turns out always that in their wholly forgotten childhood those ancient tongues had really been spoken in their hearing by some lofty scholars. (488)

Starbuck suggests that what sometimes sounds like lunacy is a sophisticated language that we once knew but have forgotten. Like the "tongue of flame" in The Scarlet Letter, this is an ancient language that the truly wise and eloquent can speak, a language sometimes spoken more fluently by children and mad men who are more sensitive to human suffering. However, while Hawthorne’s 'tongue of flame' is associated with human passion, Melville’s fiery language is identified with violence.

By demeaning writing and shifting the attention to speaking, the action of Moby Dick metaphorically reflects the shift from the authority of the book to the authority of the voice. However, ultimately, neither books nor voices can be relied on as sources of knowledge, for truth is ever on the move and finally inaccessible. All that written and oral language can do is remind us of life’s mysteries.

Character as Linguistic-Epistemic Philosophy

Just as the action reflects the relationship between language and knowing, so too does the characterization reveal evidence of this dynamic. Three characters are especially
important because of their pivotal roles and because they can be defined in terms of their stance toward language and knowledge. Ishmael and Ahab represent the two most contrastive approaches to the use of language: Ishmael reflects the human urge to use language to express our understandings publicly, while Ahab reflects the inclination to use language to generate our understandings privately. Queequeg points to the use of language for creating social identity and consensus.

In historical terms, these characters embody the long-time tension between rhetoric and philosophy—a tension initially prompted by Plato’s concern with rhetoric’s relativistic view of truth. In 1828 the rhetorician Richard Whately expressed an insistence on keeping these domains separate, saying that the purpose of philosophy was "the ascertainment of the truth by investigation," while the function of rhetoric was "the establishment of it." It is in the character of Ishmael that the distinction between philosophy and rhetoric completely collapses because he uses language to ascertain truth in the process of establishing it. Furthermore, the character of Queequeg is interesting in the way that it represents a modern variation of this epistemic theme: the social construction of truth by means of a dialogue with others. An examination of these three figures will reveal how their characterizations can be defined in terms of these views of the role of language in the discovery of truth.

Ishmael illustrates both a philosophical and a rhetorical
stance in the way that he voices the human inclination to use language both to investigate and to articulate life's mysteries. The character of Ishmael embodies the view of life characterized by a preoccupation with explaining the enigmas we encounter. In his role as narrator, he introduces himself as someone not only inclined to go to sea, but also as someone compelled to explain what he sees. He knows that when the "hypos" get the best of him, he must "account it high time to get to sea" (2). Prompted by this need to "account" for life, Ishmael represents the rational thinker who constructs a text of logical explication as he goes along. As part of this construction, he gathers other accounts along the way. Insistent on getting at the truth, he pushes the landlord of the Spouter Inn to get past his bamboozling stories in telling of Queequeg's whereabouts. When the landlord finally does explain that Queequeg is out peddling his shrunken heads, "this account cleared up the otherwise unaccountable mystery" (20), and Ishmael is satisfied for the time being.

Ishmael's search for verbal explanations, however, is relentless and never-ending. When he is lying in bed recalling the terrifying experience he had as a child who was sent to bed and woke up to sense a supernatural presence in the room, the most frightening part of this memory seems to be that he was unable to talk about it accurately. The "nameless" phantom remains terrifying mainly because it is an unspeakable terror (28), one that can not be articulated in words. That it cannot
be named and accounted for is Ishmael's greatest fear. It is no accident that Ishmael is the only one to survive, for, like Job, he has been designated as the one to live and tell about it. Melville uses Ishmael to acknowledge the human impulse to seek a public logos, to proclaim and publish what we know. That Ishmael is never able to explain the mystery of the whale completely, but is destined to re-tell the story indefinitely demonstrates the linguistic dilemma: No matter how much we keep writing or talking, words can only re-name those "unspeakable phantoms"; they can never adequately explain them.

In addition to representing the inclination to articulate publicly as we seek to understand privately, Ishmael also stands for the human propensity to revert to a reliance on visible texts. Even though Ishmael cautions us against a dependency on books, he is always on the look-out for visible markers of meaning. He notes the tatoos on Queequeg's cheeks and arms, their cryptic quality "an interminable Cretan labyrinth" (27); he can not resist reading them even while acknowledging their hieroglyphic nature. He observes how Ahab's brow is "dented" like the planks of the deck and like the brow of the whale. These dents assume significance and echo correspondences for him: Not mere wrinkles these, but rather signifiers "full of meaning" (200). Even though Ishmael confronts continual reminders that visible text inadequately conveys truth, he keeps looking to visible signs for guidance. Even though he admits that "there is no Champollion to decipher the Egypt of every
man's and every being's face" and questions "how may unlettered Ishmael hope to read the awful Chaldee of the Sperm Whale's brow?" (358), he keeps trying to read these visible texts.

While Ishmael exemplifies the use of language to articulate the ways of the world for himself and others, Ahab demonstrates the use of language to make sense of the ways of the world only for himself. His maniacal compulsion to understand Moby Dick, to get at that "inscrutable thing," propels his entire existence, but the understanding he seeks is private. Ahab is described from the outset as a man who "doesn't speak much" (84), who is given to prolonged silences, and who is frequently described as sitting "mutely." Cabin meals are described as solemn affairs "eaten in awful silence" and conducted by Ahab, "dumb" and presiding like "a mute, maned sealion" (152–3). The silence at the Captain's table is so pervasive that it causes Flask to feel uncomfortable while sitting "dumfoundered before awful Ahab" (154). Ahab's search for understanding is a silent, interior process in which he consults only himself, resisting conversations with others.

In his propensity for silence, the figure of Ahab represents a private logos, the use of interior speech to understand the enigma of death without regard for sharing that information with others. In contrast with Ishmael, he seeks to understand Moby Dick not so that he can account for the mystery to others, but so that he can calm the passion that burns within him. His monomaniacal behavior is exerted in an effort to slash
at the pasteboard masks of truth, so that when he is jerked "voicelessly" to his death, we cannot be sure what he does or does not understand.

While Ishmael seeks to provide a public account and Ahab searches for a personal understanding, Queequeg is a sociable fellow who seems more interested in collaborating on a construction of truth. Since he is illiterate, he must rely on his experiences and conversations with others for information. He prepares sacrifices and converses with his gods (24), and later receives some kind of oracular response regarding the choice of a whaling vessel (69). Apparently, he is conversant with divine voices and seems well-informed of spiritual truths, so that his illiteracy provides him some advantages. After Queequeg examines the book in the inn parlor by counting its pages rather than by reading its print, Ishmael tries to explain to him the meaning of the print and of the pictures in it. This conversation seems to bring the two closer together, as they end the session pressing foreheads together in friendship, and later having a cozy "chat" in bed (54-55). While literacy would have allowed Queequeg to read the pages on his own, his conversation with Ishmael proves beneficial to them both and creates a kind of marriage of minds. Queequeg represents the attempt to discern truth by constructing it via a dialogue with others, thus suggesting that it is the process of interpretation that unites us all. The fact that it is Queequeg's coffin that serves as a lifesaving buoy for Ishmael further suggests that
any public expression of truth relies on a social construction of that which is individually articulated.

In addition to these three basic philosophical stances toward the function of language in the epistemic process, most of the other characters can be defined by the texts that they choose to use as glosses in reading the meaning of life. UNDERSTANDING IS READING works as the controlling metaphor so that these characters operate metaphorically as readers, and the texts they select merit inspection. Important to note here is the way that the three mates all look to visible texts as glosses for their interpretive efforts: Starbuck to Christian symbols, Stubb to natural signs, and Flask to monetary markers. Their attempts to decipher the text of the doubloon demonstrates these various hermeneutic approaches, and their respective places in the crew's chain of command suggests the hierarchy of these approaches.

When the first mate, Starbuck, reads the coin, he sees the Christian symbol of the trinity and observes a wise and sad truth (442). For Starbuck, the Bible is still the primary source of authority and Christian symbols the most important signifiers. This reliance on Scripture as a source of truth is demonstrated to an even greater degree in the character of Captain Bildad, who is portrayed as a student of the Scriptures and a man who abides by the letter of the law. When he talks with Captain Peleg about Ishmael's wages, he has his head in his Bible and keeps "mumbling to himself out of his book," unable to
free himself from the constraints of print. His unrealistic wage offer reflects how out of touch he is, and his perverse literalness, like Dimmesdale's, suggests the inadequacy of the Bible as a source of truth. Just as his sister Charity's parting gift of a Bible fails to save the Pequod from destruction, and just as Starbuck's attention to only Christian symbols fails to save his life, so too does Holy Scripture fail to provide a sufficient gloss for deciphering the enigmas of life.

When the second mate, Stubb, reads the same coin, he interprets it according to the zodiac and consults his almanac for the appropriate constellations. For Stubb, NATURE IS A BOOK and he searches the skies for clues, insisting that "There's a sermon now, writ in high heaven" (443). This same ontological metaphor is reflected in the many expressions that Ishamel resorts to in describing the whale as a piece of writing. In citing his credentials for composing a cetology, he notes that the whale-ship has been his "Yale College" and "Harvard" (115), and that his experience was gained as he "swam through libraries" (135), implying that the whale itself has been his primary textbook. Other expressions used in reference to whales also reflect the WHALE AS A BOOK:

thou Chilian whale, marked like an old tortoise with mystic hieroglyphics upon the back! (207)

It was Moby Dick's open mouth and scrolled jaw (550)

how may unlettered Ishmael hope to read the awful Chaldee of the Sperm Whale's brow? I but put that brow before you. Read it if you can. (358)
In this way, UNDERSTANDING IS READING entails that whales are written texts with marks that are to be read, at the same time that these marks are acknowledged to be cryptic. The markings on the whales' exteriors are like "those mysterious cyphers on the walls of pyramids"; they are ultimately undecipherable (315).

Just as reading the marble tablets in the chapel does not explain the deaths of the sailors lost at sea, neither does reading the living text of Moby Dick account for the tragedies surrounding him. Although the "scrolled" quality of the great whale's jaw, as its "mouth yawned beneath the boat like an open-doored marble tomb" (550), suggests the revelation of some imperial decree, some kind of authorial account, the creature serves only as a marbled entry into death, not as an explanation of it. Ultimately, the natural text, like every other visible text, is inscrutable—despite Ishmael's taunt to "Read it if you can" (358). Even though the "waves are storied" (270), no reader is expert enough to translate their tales, so that some gloss other than the natural text is required.

The third mate, Flask, looks at the doubloon and sees "nothing here but a round thing made of gold" and immediately translates it into the commodities it would buy, specifically, 960 cigars. Here we have the mercantile view, which uses the marketplace as the source of authority; monetary worth is the touchstone of value (444); LIFE IS A PRECIOUS POSSESSION, and death is understood as the loss of that wealth.6 In this view,
the whale is more of a product to be peddled and, like the book in the nineteenth-century economy, a commodity to be used. Furthermore, Flask's lowest rank in the chain-of-command intimates Melville's ranking of this economic view of life.

In addition to the glosses of Christianity, Nature, and the marketplace, a fourth text sometimes chosen is the human one, where A HUMAN LIFE IS A BOOK. Ahab and Queequeg often serve as human texts that are "full of meaning" but, like the whale, finally undecipherable. Ahab's text is described as "full of riddles" (129) and sinister where SIN IS A MARK, as reflected in the description of his scar as a "brand"/"mark" (125). In contrast to the human author, some supernatural writer composes this cryptic text so that at one point "it almost seemed that while he [Ahab] himself was marking out lines and courses on the wrinkled charts, some invisible pencil was also tracing lines and courses upon the deeply marked chart of his forehead" (200). Here then is a human work in progress--if only some Champollion could decipher the marks. Queequeg is also portrayed as a text:

so Queequeg in his own proper person was a riddle to unfold; a wondrous work in one volume; but whose mysteries not even himself could read . . . and these mysteries were therefore destined in the end to moulder away with the living parchment whereon they were inscribed. (490)

And like Ahab, what Queequeg writes sometimes replicates the text on his own person, so that when he carves certain "hieroglyphic marks" on his coffin lid "it seemed that hereby he was striving, in his rude way, to copy parts of the twisted tattooing on his body." Furthermore, the tattooing on both the
coffin lid and on Queequeg's person seems to comprise some "mystical treatise on the art of attaining truth"—if only someone could decipher it (490). Finally, though, the human text is inadequate as a source of truth because there is no one able to decode it successfully. None of these glosses is sufficient.

**Profound and Intertextual Silence**

So we see that, as in the other three works in this study, UNDERSTANDING IS READING emerges as a controlling metaphor and reflects the disparagement of the visible text as a tempting, but inadequate, source of truth. Operating in tension with the reading metaphor is UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING. However, unlike the other three metaphorical designs, in the figurative scheme of *Moby Dick*, NATURE IS A LISTENER more often than a speaker. In contrasting the whale's breathing apparatus with that of humans, Ishmael calls attention to the fact that "the whale has no voice" and implies an admiration for the capacity of this "profound being" to be silent. This ability to listen, rather than to speak, is associated with the natural world: "happy that the world is such an excellent listener!" (381).

*Moby Dick*, like Ahab, is associated with silence. Unlike Ishmael who is eager to articulate, they are characterized as incommunicative. However, as the cloud of vapor which hangs over the whale's head and which is "engendered by his incommunicable contemplations" indicates, silence does not necessarily mean a void. In fact, Melville seems to be
addressing the reader directly when he states an association between being silent and being profound: "Seldom have I known any profound being that has anything to say to this world, unless forced to stammer out something by way of getting a living" (381). In this way, silence is often associated with a depth of thinking, and the mark of a profound creature is often that it understands that it cannot understand, and thus has sense enough to be quiet. If only "certain" truths bear articulation, then what is there to say? Moby Dick may be silent, "But then again, what has the whale to say?"—when nothing can be known for certain.

Silence is also used in connection with weaving images, which recalls Hawthorne’s fabric imagery in the way that it draws on the meaning of "text" as "weaving." The first time that this weaving imagery is noticeable is when Queequeg and Ishmael are working together to weave a "sword-mat," with Ishmael using his hand as a shuttle and Queequeg his sword as a beater. Here TIME IS A LOOM and HUMAN DESTINY IS A WEAVING, with a warp of "necessity" and a woof of "free will"—all packed down with "chance." Noteworthy here is the way that these weavers work in silence and in a context with "such an incantation of revery [that] lurked in the air, that each silent sailor seemed resolved into his own invisible self" (218). Although their weaving is termed a "sword mat," the association with "word mat" is worth noting, and the conspicuous absence of words calls attention to itself. This silent weaving continues
until Tashtego's "unearthly" cry alerts them to the first sighting of sperm whales. In this scene, the action and the imagery work metaphorically to demonstrate how humans spin their (silent) texts of explanation until some supernatural force reminds them of the inexplicable forces that surround them. While the sailors seem to be creating an internal text of explanation, the external text is created silently.

Another cluster of weaving images is even more noteworthy in the way that it interrelates human and natural texts together with words. In this figurative scheme, God is portrayed as a weaver. When Pip falls overboard and "is carried down alive to wondrous depths," he goes to where Wisdom "revealed his hoarded heaps" and sees "God's foot on the treadle of the loom, and spoke it" (425). The syntax is noticeably ambiguous here with no clear antecedent for the "it" that Pip spoke. We are left to puzzle over what weaving he saw on this divine loom, what "It" he spoke, and how he "spoke" something visual. We are left wondering because even though Pip is privy to the divine text and even articulates it, he is called mad and no one attends to his words.

This weaving imagery assumes even greater significance later when Ishmael recalls "A Bower in the Arsacides," which provides a coda for both the images of weaving and of silence. Ishmael relates how a certain friend of his, King Tranquo, had created a kind of temple from the skeleton of a beached whale. In describing this unusual whale temple, Ishmael tells how the
earth beneath the skeleton was like a weaver's loom with the
ground vines forming the warp and woof and the flowers the
figures on the weaving. The trees, ferns, shrubs, and grasses
were all part of the verdant pattern, and even the message-
carrying air was active in the fabric, as the sun served as a
flying shuttle weaving all the natural world together. Although
the loom and weaving are visible, the divine weaver is invisible
and silent. The natural loom produces a lush fabric, but the
creative project exacts a toll of deafness on its creator.

This weaving metaphor provides an epistemic analogue to the
process of making meaning and discerning it. The creative force
behind the universe mechanically produces all visible objects
without reflection or comment--like the ship's carpenter--"by a
kind of deaf and dumb, spontaneous literal process" (477). This
creative force does not hear human inquiries into truth, nor
does it explain its workings to the earth's inhabitants.
Moreover, mortals within this system are incapable of hearing
any explanations anyway. The description here is of a world
where the forces are furiously at work, and no one within the
world can hear the woven voices of explanation:

The weaver-god, he weaves; and by that weaving is he
deafened, that he hears no mortal voice; and by that
humming, we, too, who look on the loom are deafened;
and only when we escape it shall we hear the thousand
voices that speak through it. . . . The spoken words
that are inaudible among the flying spindles; those
same words are plainly heard without the walls,
bursting from the opened casements. . . . Ah, mortal!
then, be heedful; for so, in all this din of the great
world's loom, thy subtlest thoughts may be overheard
afar. (459-460)
As it is in the skeletal temple, so too is it in the human realm where truth is inaccessible, so that we can only hear the voice of truth if we are outside the world of its speaker. Since we can only know and understand if we are apart from that creation, only death can bring true knowledge.

Embedded in this woven imagery of the bower is a warning about the danger of thinking that either writing or speech can create understanding. The imagery points to the temptation to see the visible text as a creative force in itself. Just as the priests kept a flame going within the whale's head in the bower to make it look as if he were still sending forth a living spout, we humans sometimes mistake visible signs as the gods, the creative forces, when they are merely idle participants in life's text. Similarly, the speaking imagery reflects how there may be communicative forces at work, but they are "inaudible" to us because we are too close to the sounds of truth to hear them. And by a curious synesthetic twist, what we see can deafen us.

Pyramidical Silence and the Inadequacy of Language

The combination of visual and auditory imagery in the weaving metaphor generates this mixed sensation of a sight that, though inaudible, can communicate with us. Though silent, it can signify. Furthermore, like the pyramid with its hieroglyphic exterior markings that provide clues but no solution, it is both significant and cryptic in its silence. In this way, UNDERSTANDING IS READING and UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING combine to generate KNOWLEDGE IS SILENCE. Although we
often take "understanding" and "knowledge" to be the same thing, I am accentuating a distinction between them here. With an emphasis on its gerundive form, "understanding" refers to the **process** by which we come to know, just as reading and listening are language processes. In contrast, "knowledge" here refers to the **product** of this epistemic process, just as silence results from a deliberate cessation in the language process. As an ontological metaphor, KNOWLEDGE IS SILENCE highlights knowledge as a distinct state of being and thus provides for an identification of that aspect of the epistemic process when there is a pause, when there is some ultimate moment of insight. Since these processes are continuous and recursive, the image of silence allows us to understand knowledge by perceiving it as a discrete entity. While the two structural metaphors help us to understand the process of coming to know in terms of the processes of reading and writing, the ontological metaphor helps us to understand the result of this process in terms of silence.

KNOWLEDGE IS SILENCE is reflected in a notable way in the description of the great whale’s mark of genius: "Genius in the Sperm Whale? Has the Sperm Whale ever written a book, spoken a speech? No, his great genius is declared in his pyramidal silence" (356). Pyramidal silence is the silence of Moby Dick and of Ahab. It is the **result** of understanding that we can not understand. Like the hieroglyphics on the pyramid walls, silence marks the place where knowledge is, but it does not communicate it. In the metaphorical scheme of *Moby Dick*, much
energy is spent demonstrating the inadequacy of language either to investigate or to express truth. Writing, in the form of hieroglyphic texts, only records the mysteries; even speech, as represented by the way the many voices cancel each other out, cannot completely retrieve or express truth. Half-articulations and voices in conflict can intimate the process, but only silence can demonstrate the result: the knowledge that we know that we can not know. As a medium both of communication and of investigation, expressed language is flawed. Ultimately, the only image that can satisfactorily help us structure the elusive nature of truth is silence. To extend Burke's definition of literary form in terms of arousing and gratifying desires, the metaphoricsof word generates a figurative need and then provides the image to satisfy it: silence.

In this scheme, silence is the auditory counterpart to whiteness, where whiteness is the absence of color and silence the absence of sound. At the same time, both whiteness and silence are "full of meaning" and yet, in their simultaneous fullness and emptiness, cannot be completely understood. "It was the whiteness of the whale that above all things appalled" Ishmael (189) because the whiteness represents both the presence and the inaccessibility of truth. It is not a void, but a blank; it is not a nothing, but a something. Whiteness is terrifying because it represents the place where a recognition of truth resides, but where it cannot be reached.

Similarly, pyramidal silence represents both the presence
and absence of truth. It points to a silence that is so substantial that it is curiously visible. A phrase like "the sounds of silence" indicates this same kind of auditory quality that is characterized by the imperceptible presence of something. In this metaphorical scheme, paradoxically, the blanks and pauses represent the most meaningful clues we have, and the only final understanding is the one voiced by Ahab before the sphynx of the whale’s head: "O Nature, and 0 soul of man! how far beyond all utterance are your linked analogies" (321).

The value of the mixed metaphor, as reflected in the phrase "pyramidical silence," is that it combines both the visual and auditory images and collapses the reading and listening metaphors into one. If this collapse were expressed as a structural metaphor, it would be KNOWING IS READING SILENCE. And it is this oxymoronic metaphor of expressed silence which emerges from the metaphorics of word as the most creative metaphor and one that deserves further treatment. Although used most conspicuously by Melville, it operates in all four texts in this study and is the subject of my next chapter.
Chapter 5 Notes

1. Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick; Or, The Whale*, p. 135. All subsequent page citations are in the text.


4. See Sander Gilman, Carole Blair, and David J. Parent's Introduction to *Friedrich Nietzsche on Rhetoric and Language*, p. xiv, for a discussion of Nietzsche's view in *The Will to Power* "that to interpret a thing was to become master of it."


6. See George Lakoff and Mark Turner, *More Than Cool Reason*, pp. 29-30, for a discussion of this metaphor, LIFE IS A PRECIOUS POSSESSION.

Chapter 6

THE LITERACY OF SILENCE

Expressed Silence

Thus far, my study of a metaphorics of word has focused on the way that expressed language—both written and oral—functions metaphorically in the selected nineteenth-century American texts. With (RATIONAL) UNDERSTANDING IS READING and (INTUITIVE) UNDERSTANDING IS LISTENING designated as the two controlling metaphors of word, this discussion has demonstrated how language processes serve as source domains for understanding epistemic processes. Given this metaphorical structure, I have concentrated on the way in which speaking imagery is aligned with intuition—the mode of knowing preferred by this culture—and on the way that the voice occupies a privileged place in this metaphorical system. However, another significant aspect of this metaphorical action, alluded to but not yet accounted for and not as readily explained, is the role of expressed silence. Moreover, it is the nature and use of this expressed silence as a metaphor of word that I find most intriguing in the texts under investigation.

Frequently in the subject texts, attention is called to silence and to the expressive quality of this silence, the way in which it seems to convey meaning. Noticeable is the way that this silence does not seem to be construed as a void—a total
absence of language--so much as the presence of the absence of language. Furthermore, silence is often accompanied by literary contexts in which self-revelation takes place. Here silence functions as a marker of self-knowledge, and attending to silence represents a state of self-consciousness, a state of being, where the self regressively attends to what the self knows about the self.\(^1\) Metaphorically, then, **SELF-KNOWLEDGE IS SILENCE** and **CONSCIOUS SELF-KNOWING IS READING/LISTENING TO SILENCE**. Since silence is a constituent in both writing and speaking, this silence structural metaphor and its related ontological metaphor can be viewed as satellites of both the reading and the listening structural metaphors.

In identifying this silence metaphor in which silence and the self are involved, I have replaced the word *understanding*, which is used to express the reading and listening metaphors, with *knowing*. As I mentioned at the conclusion of the last chapter, *understanding* and *knowing* are often used synonymously, but I am using them to describe a distinction that I believe emerges in the metaphorical worlds of these literary texts; namely, that *understanding* refers to an epistemic process of discovering truth, with *knowledge* as the resulting product, and that *conscious knowing* refers to a state of *being* (however transitory) when the epistemic search ceases. The phrase *conscious knowing*, then, refers to a heightened state of self-consciousness where understanding and being merge. I use "knowing" here to call attention to the way that the metaphor of
silence emerging in these texts highlights self-knowledge. In this system, the image of silence is a way of representing both the epistemic process itself and those fleeting moments of self-revelation that are sometimes achieved.

In order to illustrate how this unusual silence metaphor is realized in the metaphorical systems of each text, I have chosen a particular linguistic expression from each text simply as a way of distinguishing them: from Nature--"mute gospel," from Walden--"a harmony inaudible," from The Scarlet Letter--"a voice...which could not as yet find utterance," and from Moby Dick--"pyramidal silence." In all of the texts, silence marks the knowledge of some particularly elusive truth regarding the self: for Emerson, it is knowledge of the 'God within'; for Thoreau, of the potential for self-liberation in the company of others; for Hawthorne, of personal passion and suffering; and for Melville, of the limits of what we can know about our own destiny. Important here is the contrast between a public logos where expressed language is used to discover and articulate truth and a private logos where expressed silence is associated with interior speech and is used to mark that inaccessible state of being where epistemic activity pauses and self-consciousness emerges. Therefore, in this metaphorics of word, the process of reading and listening to silence operates metaphorically to represent the process by which an individual’s epistemic quest merges with self-awareness: CONSCIOUS SELF-KNOWING IS READING/LISTENING TO SILENCE.
Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that when the silence metaphor is realized in structural terms (KNOWING IS READING/LISTENING TO SILENCE), it entails seeing something invisible and hearing something inaudible, prompting an interpretive dilemma that is resolved differently in each text. There is a progression in the figurative use of silence in the four subject texts so that the silence moves from being audible to being visible, and the process of consciousness moves from hearing silence to seeing silence. In the first three texts, the key figurative expression of silence is made more in auditory terms, as sounds of silence: "a MUTE GOSPEL," "HARMONY INAUDIBLE," and "a VOICE . . . which could not as yet find UTTERANCE" all highlight the auditory nature of the silence. However, in Moby Dick, the silence is so substantial that it is expressed in visual terms, as solid as a tomb: "PYRAMIDICAL silence."

The lexical categories used to express the silence in these key phrases also reflect this increasingly significant role so that in Nature and Walden, the silence is expressed in adjectival forms: "mute" and "inaudible"; in The Scarlet Letter, it is evident as a verb: "could not as yet find utterance"; and in Moby Dick, the silence is expressed lexically as a noun: "pyramidical silence." In its adjectival form, the silence plays a modifying role, describing a prominent noun; in its verbal form, the silence plays a more central syntactical role, providing the action; and in its nominal form, the silence
achieves ontological status—naming an entity. Before examining these text-specific expressions of expressed silence more closely, I want to establish certain observations about the nature of expressed silence.

'The Semantics of Silence'

Although the experiential theorists Lakoff, Johnson, and Turner do not address silence as a metaphor per se, I will continue to rely on their treatment of metaphor because it affords a way of discerning the systematic way that silence functions conceptually in a metaphorics of word. By focusing on the use of silence as a metaphor, I mean to suggest what its use indicates about the reading and listening metaphors as well. As Jeff Verschueren has noted, silence is a "usually unnoticed and rarely appreciated" kind of linguistic action at the same time as it is the most deserving of further attention because of what it reveals about the rest of the system. Silence, as a metaphor of word, is deserving of further attention because it reveals to what an extent these texts were engaged with the relationship between language and knowledge, especially in terms of self-revelation. My main assumption about silence is that it is meaningful and that it accrues multiple meanings as a function of its recurring use in various contexts involving the self. As I examine its patterned use in each text, I will suggest how silence functions in a metaphorics of word.

Before examining particular linguistic expressions of the silence metaphor in each text, a distinction needs to be drawn
between the two main categories of silence under perusal here. I use "speaking silence" to refer to those situations in which words are used, but the overall effect is inaudible, and "unspeaking silence" to refer to those places where no words or sounds of any kind are evident. Speaking silence operates as inner speech, when the active investigation of truth seems prominent; unspeaking silence emerges when a more passive state of knowing prevails. However, it is important to note that this distinction, like Vygotsky's characterization of inner speech itself, is a "fluttering" one because the metaphorical effect emerges over the discourse and does not reside in any single linguistic unit. Both kinds of silence reflect a private logos, an individual's epistemic status, but they differ in the way that they emphasize either a time of active exploration or a state of being. The overall rhetorical effect is that one kind of silence influences another so that the relationship between language and knowing becomes associated with all silence. In discussing the silence in each text, I will draw upon this distinction between speaking and unspeaking silence whenever it serves to clarify the metaphorical action.

Emerson indicates his inclination toward solitude and silence when he admits at the beginning of Chapter One that he is not solitary as long as he reads and writes and encourages his audience to retire from all linguistic contacts with others (8). Later on, in chapter seven, he clarifies the value of silence when he advises that "Of that ineffable essence which we
call Spirit, he that thinks most will say least" (37). In calling for solitude and encouraging silence, he aligns serious thinking with silence and, if we want to interpret the "ineffable" spirit both within the natural world and within ourselves, suggests that we would do well to keep still. In the metaphorical action of Nature, KNOWLEDGE OF THE INNER SPIRIT IS SILENCE and SELF-CONSCIOUSLY KNOWING THE INNER SPIRIT IS LISTENING TO SILENCE. For Emerson's translative project, seeking silence is akin to seeking knowledge of that divine Spirit that exists in both Nature and in the individual. In Nature, therefore, silence accrues positive associations in its link with the pursuit of knowing about the "God within."

Such a quest requires a regard for silence and an understanding of its value—an attitude which Emerson implies when he describes looking out at the "silent sea" and taking in its "active enchantment." In linguistic expressions such as this, unspeaking silence points to an interior calm in the face of an exterior "active" meaning. Instead of portraying silence as a void, Emerson suggests that silence can be vitally meaningful and can even be more significant than expressed language when he asks, "Was there no meaning in the live repose of the valley behind the mill, and which Homer or Shakespeare could not re-form for me in words?" With this rhetorical question, he acknowledges that even though silence can not be "re-formed" into words, it is meaningful. There is no need for verbal action here; the symbolic action occurs in the landscape
itself. He calls further attention to the significance of this silent scene when he notes that "every withered stem and stubble rimed with frost, contribute something to the mute music" (14). Attuned to the expressed silence in Nature, Emerson can hear its harmony and urges us to listen, too. All of the natural world is "contributing" to a concert that is curiously "mute," and any observer who has the self-knowledge to understand intuitively can hear this sound. The muteness marks the poet's intuitive understanding--conscious knowing that cannot be expressed. One kind of silence image, then, is this paradoxical one that provides for an unspeaking silence, a mute sound that can, nevertheless, be heard. Since knowledge of the inner Spirit is not available to the individual through the traditional kinds of linguistic action, it requires an unorthodox, oxymoronic image by which silence resonates and is heard.

Moreover, it is not the voice of Nature that instructs humans as much as the interior, silent dialogue between the Spirit in the natural world and the Spirit within the self. The Spirit in the self says, "In such as this, have I found and beheld myself. I will speak to it. It can speak again" (28). In this exchange, speaking silence occurs so that the "I" and the "it" speak as voices of the Spirit, conversing in an inner conversation and reflecting the soul's active effort to realize its own divine self. It is from this silent dialogue that the self says, "'From such as this, have I drawn joy and knowledge . . . . It can yield me thought already formed and alive'"
Highlighted here is the epistemic function of silence in allowing the individual to know the Spirit; normal linguistic action cannot adequately represent the influence of the "Me" on the "Me," so silence works metaphorically to reflect this active process of self-awareness. And "Thus is the unspeakable but intelligible and practicable meaning of the world conveyed to man" (29) in terms of speaking silence. As a singular metaphor of word, expressed silence provides a way for language—even when it is expressed inaudibly in the form of speaking silence—to represent the epistemic process.

For Emerson, silence is a useful figure in representing his distress over the inadequacy of language in translating the "God within," in demonstrating that "when we try to define and describe himself [God], both language and thought desert us" (37). As Emerson acknowledges elsewhere, "Good as is discourse, SILENCE IS BETTER, and shames it"—at least when it comes to representing knowledge of the individual Spirit. The challenge of expressing this invisible and inaudible "God within" requires some image that is conspicuous in its absence; silence is just the image. This need for something besides the usual modes of discourse is evident in Emerson's continual call for a kind of sixth sense. In describing the "integrity of impression" found in Nature, Emerson implies that it cannot be perceived by one sense only and must be discerned by integrating the senses to form a single, unified impression. From the beginning to the end of Nature, Emerson insists that normal sight is inadequate
and calls for a new kind of inner sight (7), a perception like
the sight of children by which the sun "shines into the eye and
the heart" (9). In rejecting mere sight, Emerson envisions some
dependent ideal:

The kingdom of man over nature, which cometh not with
observation,—a dominion such as now is beyond his
dream of God,—he shall enter without more wonder than
the blind man feels who is gradually restored to
perfect sight. (45)

In order to incorporate the outer and inner spiritual realms and
experience the wonder characteristic of such perfect perception,
Emerson proposes the need for an ability to receive sights
interiorly, as if they were sounds—to see with an inner ear.

This connection between visual and auditory perception is
established more formally in one of Emerson's more striking
correspondences: "The law of harmonic sounds reappears in the
harmonic colors," providing for a resemblance between the
impression created by sounds and that created by colors. In
this way, musical notes can be perceived as both sounds and
visual images. This synesthetic image, blending the visual and
the auditory, provides some relief to the tension prompted by
Emerson's frequent advice to use picturesque language at the
same time as he sometimes resorts to the language of silence.
Sound, when portrayed as both a visible and auditory phenomenon,
provides a way for silence (as the absence of sound) to be
represented as both visible and audible.

Such a regard for the simultaneous use of both senses,
seeing and hearing, often results in these synesthetic
expressions involving silence. In the description of the silent scene mentioned above, there is evidence of this synesthetic imagery: "From the earth, as a shore, I look out into that silent sea" (13). In this way, he calls attention to the fact that he looks and sees silence. And when he describes the "mute music" in this natural scene, he notes how each natural sight contributes to its lyrical silence (14). Similarly, the natural flora create a visible timepiece that is also capable of communicating silently: "The succession of native plants in the pastures and road-sides, which make the silent clock by which time tells the summer hours, will make even the divisions of the day sensible to a keen observer" (14). Here the visible, natural clock silently "tells" the time to an "observer" who is capable of both hearing and seeing the silence. The synesthetic quality of the imagery even involves the simultaneous use of sight, hearing, and touch so that "The western clouds divided and subdivided themselves into pink flakes modulated with tints of unspeakable softness" (14). For the truly expert translator, the "lesson of worship" provided by the natural world (37) is that a superior kind of mixed sensory perception is required "since every object rightly seen, unlocks a new faculty of the soul" (23), and such a mixed faculty requires a mixed metaphor.

The combined visual and auditory imagery in terms of silence works to define the superior sense that is required for perceiving the "God within." However, Emerson emphasizes the remarkable nature of this perception in saying that "When in
fortunate hours we ponder this miracle [the relation between mind and matter], the wise man doubts, if, at all other times, he is not blind and deaf" (22). We are advised, then, that this knowledge of the Spirit is elusive and reserved for those special moments and for those special people who can both see and hear the divine silence— for those mystical moments when humans are allowed to glimpse the 'God within'. In this way, the silences in Nature seem to be under God's control, and fortunate are those moments when humans are allowed to hear them. Like God's word, silence is divinely revealed in these instances. Emerson implies the sacred association with silence when he advises that "All things with which we deal, preach to us: What is a farm but a mute gospel?" (26). Here, unspeaking silence suggests how every natural object conveys the intuited moral law, but these moral lessons are silent sermons and cannot be conveyed/received through usual linguistic means. When the individual experiences this awareness of the Spirit in the outer and inner worlds, no words are necessary, for the process is divinely facilitated. The Spirit in the outer world communicates with the Spirit in the inner world, and silence marks these divine exchanges.

Nature is represented as the mouthpiece of the "God without," the voice of the preacher, and its "muteness" requires an active receiver in the human ear, in the "God within." This reliance on the human potential for attending to the silent sounds articulated through natural objects is evident when
Emerson states that "Words and actions are not the attributes of mute and brute nature" and when he describes humans as "far different from the deaf and dumb nature around them" (28). Only humans possess the potential for seeing and hearing the homilies preached around them and within them because only humans possess the ability to be God-like and to know about the Spirit, and it is the human capacity both to be and know that Emerson praises. Therefore, humans need to resort to inner speech at times in order to realize this potential. As the epigram taken from Plotinus which Robert Spiller chooses for his Introduction to Nature states, "Nature is but an image or imitation of wisdom, the last thing of the soul; nature being a thing which doth only do, but not know" (1). Nature is put in its epistemological place here, for it can "not know" as humans can, and it is this human capacity both for knowing and for knowing that we know that Emerson cares so much about.

This epistemic duality relies on the individual potential to intuit the Spirit independent of the usual sensory information, a faculty which Emerson philosophically terms "the eye of Reason" (30); religiously calls the "Supreme Being" acting from within (38); and poetically describes as the ability to "tread on air" (35). While complete knowledge is reserved for the mind of God, Emerson's metaphorical scheme provides for those fleeting and "fortunate" moments when individuals can see and hear silence, when the Spirit intimates itself, and the individual can simultaneously be and know. While not all human
beings may possess the faculty to translate this mute gospel, they are sometimes allowed to hear it and should strain to do so.

In "The American Scholar," Emerson echoes this need for attending to silence when he describes the ideal student:

> In silence . . . let him hold by himself. . . . He then learns that in going down into the secrets of his own mind, he has descended into the secrets of all minds. He learns that he who has mastered any law in his private thoughts, is master to that extent of all men whose language he speaks, and of all into whose language his own can be translated.

In this passage, speaking silence reflects the idea that by attending to our own silent, interior dialogues, we can be confident that this private logos is primary and can be translated into a public logos when necessary.

Emerson further cautions the scholar that even though he distrusts at first the fitness of his frank confessions . . . the deeper he dives into his privatest secretest presentiment,—to his wonder he finds, this is the most acceptable, most public, and universally true. . . . This is my music; this is myself. (63)

By calling these talks with the self "confessions," Emerson highlights the spiritual nature of these inner dialogues and the importance of this speaking silence.

At the same time, by calling this private speech a musical version of the self, he elicits a correspondence with the "mute music" of the natural world. This conversation of the self in dialogue with the Spirit, as described in "The American Scholar," is marked by the same lyrical quality which characterizes the movement of the Spirit in Nature: "so shall
the advancing spirit create its ornaments along its path, and carry with it the beauty it visits, and the song which enchants it" (45). Just as the Spirit in Nature advances by means of its song, it is our inner music that moves us along. Moreover, "it is certain that the power to produce this delight, does not reside in nature, but in man, or in a harmony of both" (10). In Nature, the presence of the "God within" is marked by this musical imagery, and the self-conscious recognition of its presence is expressed by attending to the accompanying silence. In the next section, I will explore how this silent harmony also resounds in the metaphorical world of Walden.

Like Emerson, Thoreau expresses a high regard for silence—except that Thoreau urges that it be cultivated in the presence of others. When he insists on the need for adequate space in conversing with visitors at his home on Walden Pond, he underscores the need for silence in the company of others:

If we would enjoy the most intimate society with that in each of us which is without, or above, being spoken to, we must not only be silent, but commonly so far apart bodily that we cannot possibly hear each other's voice in any case. (141)

In this curiously intimate exchange, the participants are urged to sit at an adequate distance from one another and to be silent. Here, unspeaking silence points to the epistemic state of calm that exists when two people simply "be" together. Furthermore, the silence is a natural part of this exchange, since "speech is for the convenience of those who are hard of hearing" (141), and silence for the pleasure of those who have
already heard, who already "know."

Of further interest in this passage is the way that speaking silence also operates so that the "intimate society" being enjoyed here refers to the relationship between the self and the self, "with that in each of us which is without" (emphasis added) at the same time as it suggests the relationship between the self and another person. Thoreau seems to be describing an exchange where the individual is talking to himself in the presence of someone else. The effect of using both kinds of silence here is to recommend an exchange which allows the person the freedom to attend to internal speech while ostensibly attending to the external world. The silence marks the knowledge of this inner liberated self, and hearing the silence signals an awareness of this inner freedom. In the metaphors of Walden, KNOWLEDGE OF PERSONAL FREEDOM IS SILENCE and SELF-CONSCIOUSLY KNOWING PERSONAL FREEDOM IS LISTENING TO SILENCE.

While this hypothetical dialogue with its metaphorical implications might seem just a curiosity presented in Thoreau's typically whimsical style, he also illustrates this same silent model with an example of an exchange that he sometimes had with a man who fished on a nearby pond. This situation provided the necessary space: The fisherman sat at one end of the boat, and Thoreau at the other. It also involved the necessary silence: Because the fisherman had gone deaf, he would occasionally hum a psalm, while Thoreau sat in silence. While we might be
tempted to think of this absence of speech as simply a pause in the conversation, Thoreau emphasizes his admiration for its unbroken silence: "Our intercourse was thus altogether one of unbroken harmony, far more pleasing to remember than if it had been carried on by speech" (174). In this passage, it is the unspeaking silence that is valued, and it is the silence which provides the pleasing harmony--intimating the epistemic calm of simply being.

Like Emerson's use of "mute music," Thoreau employs an oxymoronic image of silent harmony by which the individual is urged to hear an inner silence expressed as a song with no words. However, unlike Emerson, Thoreau does not need to retire from other people in order to hear the soundless harmony. In fact, he suggests that our most intimate exchanges with the self can be made in the company of others--if we listen to our own mute music. For Thoreau, silence marks the knowledge of our individual potential to be free, and hearing this silence is a way of representing the individual's recognition of this power for self-liberation. Since Walden centers on this theme of liberating oneself from the influences of others, it stands to reason that silence in the presence of others is valued.

Thoreau's use of silence reflects his concern with a higher order of understanding than that which human language can convey and than that which most people can articulate. While people are capable of recognizing the extent of their personal liberty, most do not. Instead of attending to their own potential, most
people work to exert their influence over others, so that

The only cooperation which is commonly possible is exceedingly partial and superficial; and what little true cooperation there is, is as if it were not, being a harmony inaudible to men. (71)

Here again, unspeaking silence in the image of a silent song is used to represent the self-knowledge that remains imperceptible to most people: being free means resisting the tyranny of others, but it does not preclude cooperation.

Even though this silent truth eludes most of us, the metaphors of Walden continually privileges a private logos by which the individual attempts to hearken to an inner, silent voice. In recalling the incident of John Farmer who sits down in the doorway of his house "to recreate his intellectual man," Thoreau embodies in this character, who seems more mythical than real, a recommendation of the benefits of silent speech. Farmer is described hearing a voice speak to him, asking why he continues to stay in such a mean life. Here the inner voice, the one unheard by the rest of the world, speaks inaudibly as a simple man tries to find a sense of his place in the world. This anecdote is noteworthy in the way that Farmer represents Everyman's attempt to recognize self-worth via a private talk with the self. Furthermore, Farmer's inner voice is characterized by that same pleasing, harmonious tone that marked Thoreau's silent conversation with the fisherman:

He [Farmer] had not attended to the train of his thoughts long when he heard some one playing on a flute, and that sound harmonized with his mood. . . . But the notes of the flute came home to his ears out of a different sphere from that he worked in, and
suggested work for certain faculties which slumbered in him. (222)

Significant, too, is the way that this ability to hear the flute's music in his mind represents a faculty which had been lying dormant, a "new faculty," like Emerson's extrasensory one. Once again, an attention to inaudible inner speech reflects an active epistemic effort and results in an harmonious state marked by a new understanding of the exterior world. It is an extraordinary kind of literacy which emerges in the imagery here and which allows one to listen to silence, as Thoreau describes a way of using language interiorly, so that there is no residue, no textual trace, only a silent harmonious tone—detectible only by those free to hear it.

This same well-developed sense of hearing is evident in the march of the liberated person:

If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. (326)

Attention to this same kind of lyrical sound, no matter how imperceptible it is to others, is what marks Thoreau's own habit of singing. When he is first building his house, he talks about going on for days just singing to himself and "not having many communicable or scholar-like thoughts" (42). In this way, he sets singing to himself, a private logos, in contrast with a more public logos, like the telegraph. Significantly, he finds this private singing so satisfying that he continues it for days at a time, while he dismisses human efforts to build a telegraph.
from Maine to Texas as ridiculous because people "have nothing important to communicate" (52). In this scheme, the highest truths are expressed and recognized in silence, and "Perhaps the facts most astounding and most real are never communicated by man to man," but rather by man to self. In *Walden*, public speech lacks the harmony and, thus, the truth value of private, inaudible speech. This association between inner speech and honesty becomes even more pronounced in the metaphorics of *The Scarlet Letter*.

Hawthorne generates a metaphorical system like that created by Emerson and Thoreau which is characterized by a literacy of silence and which values a private logos. However, in contrast with the metaphorical designs of Emerson and Thoreau who usually portray silence as a powerful lyrical force, the metaphorics of *The Scarlet Letter* reveals a silence which is equally powerful but which has a grim quality about it--sometimes solemn, sometimes sinister. Frequently, it is a sobering, unspeaking silence which marks the realization of unutterable human anguish--the voice of suffering which cannot be articulated in words. Dimmesdale describes this unvoiceable pain when he advises Chillingworth that no "uttered words" can express "the secrets that may be buried with a human heart" and that "The heart . . . must perforce hold them, until the day when all hidden things shall be revealed" (96). Only unspeaking silence, expressed as "unsound," can represent these secrets of the heart and can reflect the "unutterable torment" that people feel when
they choose to be silent about their passions or their sins (97). While there is an insistence on articulation in *The Scarlet Letter*, there is also a need for silence because we must first be aware of our pain before we can verbalize it and before we can attend to it in others. An attention to silence, to the presence of the absence of language, reflects this self-conscious recognition of personal suffering. Silence, like human torment, is unutterable and yet expressive.

Furthermore, while the unspeaking silences in *Nature* and *Walden* seem more fortuitous than controlled, more divinely inspired than humanly motivated, these silences in *The Scarlet Letter* are more often deliberate refusals to speak. Despite the many urgings to "speak out," the characters continually resist speech. In the metaphors of *The Scarlet Letter*, genuine human sympathy calls for an ability to hear others when they are unable to voice their pain—an ability which relies on first achieving a personal emotional integrity. In order to hear the unuttered suffering of others, we must first hear our own. In the novel's literal and metaphorical action, unspeaking silence often signals a knowledge of this personal pain, and an attention to this silence marks a self-consciousness of inner suffering, so that KNOWLEDGE OF PERSONAL SUFFERING IS SILENCE and SELF-CONSCIOUSLY KNOWING PERSONAL SUFFERING IS LISTENING TO/READING SILENCE. In this metaphoricsof word, expressed language represents an understanding of "suffering humanity," and expressed silence represents the self-conscious knowledge of
the suffering self. Fluency in the 'tongue of flame' is prompted by such a literacy, a capacity for reading beyond the emblazoned letter of the law and for listening to the silent sound of private pain. Public eloquence is set in contrast to private silence in order to demonstrate the novel's resounding theme: To "be true" to others, we must first "be true" to ourselves.

This necessary sequence is indicated in a common pattern in the novel's action, where vocalizations are often preceded by conspicuous silences. The "revelation of the scarlet letter" emerges in those deliberate silences which reflect an awareness of personal passion. In the metaphoricis of the novel's action, unspeaking silences often represent times of emotional truth. For example, when the four main characters see each other together for the first time, Hester and Pearl look up to see Dimmesdale and Chillingworth in the window above them, and "all these four persons, old and young, regarded one another in silence" (98). In this scene, even though no words are spoken, some kind of active exchange takes place. They did not ignore one another; they "regarded" each other "in silence," as if all four people are realizing the extent of their anguish in the company of one another at the same time as they are exchanging these realizations with one another. The silence is both revealing and telling in the way that it accompanies an exchange of self-realizations.

Because Dimmesdale's guilt provides such an "unspeakable
misery," and thus cause for self-reflection, often the silences
surround his actions and precede his public speeches. Before
Dimmesdale goes forward to address Hester publicly for the first
time, attention is called to the fact that he "bent his head, in
silent prayer, as it seemed." In this expression, the
juxtaposition of "silent" with "prayer" suggests that Dimmesdale
is speaking to God interiorly in an effort to come to terms with
his sin. Then he appears to incriminate himself by urging
Hester to proclaim the name of her fellow-sinner, and his
eloquence is noteworthy as he speaks in a voice "tremulously
sweet." By the end of this scene, he does not confess his own
sin, and his silent prayer apparently does not result in
emotional truth but, rather, reflects an inner struggle to
understand his sin.

In his second appearance on the scaffold during his
midnight vigil, speaking silence again signals an inner dialogue
associated with the pursuit of emotional truth. Dimmesdale
imagines that he has spoken out to Reverend Wilson who walks
below, but his speech is soundless--"uttered within his
imagination"; his silent, imagined utterance signals the effort
to recognize his dark secret even though he is unable to voice
it aloud (109-110). Dimmesdale yearns to be true to his heart
and his attempts at "suppressing his voice" demonstrate his
inclinations toward silence, toward privately acknowledging his
sinful self at the same time as he tries to publicly confess his
sin. Noteworthy is the way his dilemma echoes the Calvinistic
bind: To choose to articulate a sinful nature is to suggest human free will; to be silent about it is to deny human depravity.

So it is that silence provides epistemic and emotional relief, for it marks those spaces of human understanding between the recognition of a sobering truth and the articulation of it. While Dimmesdale tries to be true to his own heart, he struggles to bridge the gaps between the times he recognizes his sin and the opportunities he has to voice it. When Dimmesdale encounters Chillingworth in his study after learning of the vengeful physician's real identity, instead of voicing his anguish, the minister stands "white and speechless, with one hand on the Hebrew Scriptures, and the other spread upon his breast" (159). The unspeaking silence affirms the fact that neither his own speech nor the written sacred word can articulate his grim realization. During this delay in talk, the author interjects that "It is singular, however, how long a time often passes before words embody things." The recognition of truths (the "things") exists before there are words to express them, and pointing to the silence is a way of pointing to this epistemic space and to the extent of it required before it can be embodied in words. When characters are noticeably silent, it is often because they are residing in this epistemic territory of self-awareness, and such knowledge sometimes requires a long period of residency.

Silence also points to the way in which Dimmesdale needs
time to recognize the depth of his love, while Hester is ready much earlier to acknowledge her passion. In the midnight vigil scene, Hester is described as moving in silence. When Dimmesdale calls out to her and Pearl to join him on the scaffold, she "silently ascended the steps," and he felt "as if the mother and the child were communicating their vital warmth to his half-torpid system" even though they do not speak to each other (111). The unspeaking silence here indicates a fleeting state of emotional honesty, a state broken as soon as "the dread of public exposure" returns and Dimmesdale reverts to professing his stock ministerial line. Although it takes Dimmesdale a particularly long time before he is able to realize the nature of his own passion, a turning point comes when he meets Hester in the forest. They move back into the shadow of the woods, where they sit "without a word more spoken," and it is this shared unspeaking silence with Hester that seems to give Dimmesdale the power to voice his suffering and to speak "with a deep utterance out of an abyss of sadness," as he forgives her for not revealing Chillingworth's identity sooner (140).

Conscious of his passion, he experiences "the exhilarating effect—upon a prisoner just escaped from the dungeon of his own heart" (140), and the excitement of his feelings, "as he returned from his interview with Hester, lent him unaccustomed physical energy" (154), an energy which he sustains long enough to make his public confession. And when Dimmesdale, Hester, and Pearl ascend the scaffold together for the last time, we are
told that they "remained silent"—all apparently acutely conscious of their private suffering (179).

Along with these solemn silences are sinister ones as well. Most notably, the silences associated with Chillingworth are often portrayed as perverse because they represent the recognition of an evil heart. With revenge in his heart, the malign physician works to "bring his mind into such affinity with his patient's" that he can destroy it. Operating here is a perverse kind of intuition, by which Chillingworth responds to Dimmesdale "not so often by an uttered sympathy, as by silence, an inarticulate breath" (91). This insidious kind of unspeaking silence reflects the self-conscious recognition of a perverse heart, a person who relies more on his thoughts than his feelings—more on books than human voices. Silence, for Chillingworth, reflects a confrontation with the terrible blackness of his revenge, and since he never abandons his evil motive nor does he attend to the suffering of others, the silences surrounding him remain sinister.

In contrast with Chillingworth, the attitude of the community progresses from an initial preoccupation with the letter of the law to a compassionate regard for the spirit of the person, and a change in the nature of the silence surrounding the multitude demonstrates this emotional change. For example, when Hester is first banished by her community, the silence is expressive and hurtful: "Every gesture, every word, and even the silence of those with whom she came in contact,
implied, and often expressed, that she was banished" (63). Here
the unspeaking silence reflects the multitude's early
consciousness, when they respond only to the scarlet letter of
her sin and ignore the suffering of her heart. However, after
the eloquent voice of Dimmesdale ceases following the Election
Sermon the crowd's response demonstrates a change of heart:
"there was a momentary silence, profound as what should follow
the utterance of oracles. Then ensued a murmur and half-hushed
tumult; as if the auditors, released from the high spell that
had transported them into the region of another's mind, were
returning into themselves" (175). The profound silence, 
momentary though it is, represents a return to the self, a self-
conscious recognition by each heart of its own suffering (175).
Striking is the way that the crowd is described as "auditors"
here--listeners to their own silence.

This pattern in the story's action, where pronounced
silence precipitates vocalization, works metaphorically to
represent the way in which a state of self-awareness of personal
suffering precedes an expressed sympathy with the suffering of
others. There is one particularly conspicuous instance of this
progression at the climax of the story's action. When
Dimmesdale takes his dying breath, the silence of the community
precipitates their vocalized compassion:

The multitude, silent until then, broke out in a
strange, deep voice of awe and wonder, which could not
as yet find utterance, save in this murmur that rolled
so heavily after the departed spirit. (182)

Aware of their own emotional vulnerability, the people struggle
to voice the sympathy they feel for the suffering minister, and the resulting sound is a strange kind of "not-yet" utterance. This almost-utterance, halfway between silence and speech, expresses the human attempt both to know and to articulate the unutterable secrets that are buried in the human heart. The people who heed the silent sounds of their own pain are in a position to hear the silent cries of suffering humanity. In the metaphorical design of The Scarlet Letter, a deliberate attention to silence reflects this need first to be emotionally honest before we can know, as well as first to know before we can say. And since there are often emotional and epistemic lapses in this process, silence is metaphorically useful in representing these spaces. Now we will examine how these silences which are noticeable in Hawthorne’s text, become predominant in Melville’s.

The prevalence of unspeaking silence in Moby Dick reflects an overriding concern with a self-conscious sense of what we can not know. In this scheme, KNOWLEDGE OF PERSONAL DESTINY IS SILENCE and SELF-CONSCIOUS KNOWING OF PERSONAL DESTINY IS READING SILENCE. Specifically, silence is closely aligned with death, and an attention to silence reflects an awareness that there are limits to what we can know about our own mortality. As a metaphor for living, whaling insists on a conscious regard for death. The marble tablets in the Whalemen’s Chapel remind Ishmael of this link between silence, death, and whaling: "There is death in this business of whaling—a speechlessly quick
chaotic bundling of man into eternity" (39). Unspeaking silence, like death, marks a state of being where the effort to understand stops, and this set of relationships is represented by the "pyramidical silence" of the whale.

Furthermore, this state of being seems to acquire an ironic epistemic elevation in this text, so that being aware of the limits of our knowledge is accorded more value than striving to understand. Full knowledge of personal destiny is possible only with death, and a complete articulation of death is possible only with silence. In this way, death is given primacy over life, and silence is given primacy over speech. This determination is illustrated in the alignment of death with the pyramids and speech with the Tower of Babel. In saying that "we cannot give these Babel builders priority over the Egyptians" (156), Ishmael suggests that death and silence must be given priority over life and language in terms of the knowledge they can afford us. That is why "the genius of the whale is its silence," and this "pyramidical silence" is portrayed as the perfect epistemic state.

I use "perfect" here in Kenneth Burke's ironic sense to describe the linguistic inclination to seek ultimate states, to attain the fullest and most complete realization of a term, to be "rotten with perfection." This perfectionist streak, says Burke, is the impulse to satisfy the human need to name, "a kind of 'terministic compulsion' to carry out the implications of one's terminology" (19). We are moved by this perfectionism,
"in the sense of total language gratification" (19), to succumb to the lure of form and to take metaphors as far as they will go. Therefore, by using the language process as a source domain for representing the process of discovery, a metaphors of word necessarily generates a place for the absence of language—a need for silence. The metaphorical role of silence might also be explained in Burkean terms as the principle of the negative, which is not a thing but an idea which calls attention to what is not there (9-11). As a negative principle, the image of silence insists that we notice the absence of expressed language and its metaphorical implications as well. The result is that silence emphasizes the realization that something expected is missing. In the metaphorical system of *Moby Dick*, the recurring silences draw attention to the absence of language; since linguistic action is associated with epistemic action, the silences also highlight lapses in the discovery process as well.

By extending the associations concerning silence to their logical and linguistic conclusions, Melville creates a metaphors in which silence, as perfected linguistic action, represents the perfected epistemic state at the same time as it represents death. The meanings of silence, both positive and negative, are always value-charged extreme states. With the language processes of reading and listening reflecting the epistemic processes of discovery, unspeaking silence represents the cessation of that discovery process. By equating silence with death, this design highlights epistemic limits. The only
way to perfect our knowledge of death is to die; the only way to articulate our knowledge of death completely is to be silent.

In this metaphorics of perfection, Melville intimates a critique of current epistemic systems as well. The failure of Transcendentalism, as a system, is reflected in the way that silence assumes a negative and sinister aspect, rather than only the uplifting, spiritual association that it had in *Nature* and *Walden*. For example, when the "sunken-eyed young Platonist" falls from a mystical reverie from his perch on the masthead to his death in the sea below, he manages only "one half-throttled shriek" before a fatal silence (162-163). And when Ahab is jerked to his death by his own line "voicelessly as Turkish mutes bowstring their victim" (575), the same final silence marks his fatal merging with Nature. Here, becoming one with Nature and entering into the transcendental silence has fatal consequences, so that a full realization of the transcendental theme requires silence and death. Perhaps the difficulties with Transcendentalism are highlighted most conspicuously in the character of Ahab who mutely meditates on his relationship with Nature and then pursues his obsession with a perverse individualism and evil self-reliance.

Calvinism, too, is portrayed as a failing system in the figures of silent Ahab and voiceless Moby Dick. Given to silences, Ahab is frequently described as a man driven by a perverse religious zeal. For example, after lightning strikes the *Pequod*, Ahab proclaims his vow to continue his obsessive
pursuit as if he were on a divinely appointed mission: "I now know that thy right worship is defiance. . . . I own thy speechless, placeless power" (512). He even suggests that his compulsion is part of God’s preordained plan when he asks, "What is it, what nameless, inscrutable, unearthly thing is it . . . making me ready to do what in my own proper, natural heart, I durst not so much as dare? . . . Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm?" (546). Here the Calvinist God who allows no human free will is held responsible for Ahab’s crazed quest. Similarly, Moby Dick with his "pyramidical silence" is aligned with the Calvinist God in the way that he is described as a supernatural force, "not only ubiquitous, but immortal" (184) and whose actions are held to be inscrutable. In this way, silence continues to possess its positive associations at the same time as it accrues negative features; in the process, any system aligned with silence becomes problematic.

In Moby Dick, silence assumes the same multiple meanings as its visual counterpart, whiteness. Like whiteness, silence is sometimes associated with the sacred. During his story of Jonah, Father Mapple stops and is described "as he silently turned over the leaves of the Books once more; and . . . seemed communing with God and himself" (49). This divine dialogue is characterized by silence. When the crew is being presided over by the mute Ahab at the dinner table, Ishmael notes that they would not "have profaned that moment [of silence] with the slightest observation," thus implying that speech is profane and
silence somehow sacred (153). When Ishmael describes the experience of standing watch in the mast-head high above the "silent decks," he describes how the look-out is in a "meditative" state, uninterrupted by speech, and it is the silence which provides the "sublime uneventfulness" (159). Just as silence provides the "harmony" in Thoreau's ideal conversations, so too does silence here provide the sublimity. When the white squid surfaces during the voyage, "a stillness almost preternatural spread over the sea . . . in this profound hush" (282). And in acknowledging the devoutness of whales, Ishmael compares them to the elephants of antiquity who often greeted the morning with their trunks raised in "the profoundest silence" (388). In many instances like these, unspeaking silence is aligned with a supernatural, spiritual state of consciousness.

However, like whiteness, silence can also be associated with the terrifying. For example, the mariner who is awakened at midnight to see a sea of "milky whiteness" also "feels a silent, superstitious dread" and is doubly frightened (196). Unlike Emerson, who gazed out on the silent sea and was only consoled, Melville portrays a silence that is often tinged with alarm. Frequently, silence accompanies the presence of an invisible terror nearby. Like the "nameless terror" that haunts Ishmael from his childhood, wordlessness can be dreadful. When the crew comes across the Albatross, for example, they feel uneasy and "in various silent ways the seamen of the Pequod were
evincing their observance of this ominous incidence" (242). Here, unspeaking silence accompanies their recognition of evil.

These sacred and terrifying aspects of silence come together in the image of the "weaver-god." Here is a god who is portrayed as the deaf creator of the universe who weaves without regard for the voices of its inhabitants: "The weaver-god, he weaves; and by that weaving is he deafened, that he hears no mortal voice" (459). The weaving imagery represents a world where truth about our personal destinies is unavailable, a world full of silence and fury, signifying nothing. Here is the Calvinistic God taken to the extreme, a God who mechanically weaves the fabric of life and whose ways remain inscrutable because no one can hear the inaudible explanation "and only when we escape it shall we hear the thousand voices that speak through it" (459-460). So it is that the "mute gospel" of Nature has taken an ironic turn in the imagery of Moby Dick; instead of the unspeaking silence representing recognition of the divine spirit within the individual, the silent text/weaving metaphor encodes the certain uncertainty that is divinely created.

Part of the terrifying aspect of silence in Moby Dick, then, is that sometimes it seems both motivated and random. During the time that the crew is following Moby Dick, Ishmael notes how they are "allured by the perfidious silences" at the same time as they choose to wait in stillness:

Few or no words were spoken; and the silent ship, as if manned by painted sailors in wax, day after day
tore on through all the swift madness and gladness of the demoniac waves. By night the same muteness of humanity before the shrieks of the ocean prevailed; still in silence the men swung in the bowlines; still wordless Ahab stood up to the blast. (239-240)

The sustained unspeaking silence is at once deliberate and inevitable in a situation where words are useless in the face of an invisible, unknowable terror. Even though knowledge of death will always elude us, the silent forces of its mystery seductively draw us in silent pursuit.

Like mute humanity in the face of death, the whale is also characterized as silent at the prospect of impending death. In watching the agony of a dying whale, Ishmael comments on the striking feature of its voicelessness: "The fear of this vast dumb brute of the sea, was chained up and enchanted in him; he had no voice" (364-365). In the face of death, neither human being nor natural creature can articulate its mystery; both can only exist like silent pyramids, closer and closer to its secret, but unable to reveal it. What distinguishes Ahab and Moby Dick, however, is that their silence is inherent. The whale is born tongueless, and Ahab is described as being constitutionally silent. In other words, their sense of epistemic limits is more natural than learned, a characteristic that is marked by a silence, accompanied by a strange humming. For example, after Ahab has called his crew together to post the gold doubloon, he stands "without speaking . . . without using any words was meanwhile lowly humming to himself, producing a sound so strangely muffled and inarticulate that it seemed the
mechanical humming of the wheels of vitality in him" (165). Ahab's pervasive silence demonstrates his almost total existence in a state of self-consciousness—fixed on his own epistemic limits. The humming, which had a lyrical and spiritual quality in Walden, here reveals the negligible humanity left in Ahab, and the muffled quality of his speech demonstrates his feeble attempts to articulate his knowledge. Like the weaver god who weaves in a humming kind of silence, Ahab seems to be involved in both a creative and yet doomed pursuit of truth.

Another aspect of the complex nature of the silence in Moby Dick is that both death and silence are portrayed as active states of being where some kind of consciousness continues. When Ishmael first visits the Whalemens' Chapel, he is aware of this kind of active silence:

A muffled silence reigned, only broken at times by the shrieks of the storm. Each silent worshipper seemed purposely sitting apart from the other, as if each silent grief were insular and incommunicable. The chaplain had not yet arrived; and there these silent islands of men and women sat steadfastly eyeing several marble tablets. (36)

As we contemplate death, at some point we are left with the silent and lonely realization that we can never explain it. The "muffled" quality of the silence here reflects the human inclination to want to voice some explanation of our grieving at the same time as we look futilely to past human attempts to explain the enigma of death. Ultimately, "silence reigns," and we are left with the knowledge that we can never know and with the intimation that both silence and death involve the presence
of some active consciousness and not just merely a void.

While this knowledge of our epistemic limits is haunting, it also has a curiously calming effect. For example, after the crew behead a whale and go below to dinner, the silence is reassuring:

_Silence reigned over the before tumultous but now deserted deck, an intense copper calm, like a universal yellow lotus, was more and more unfolding its noiseless measureless leaves upon the sea._ (320)

As in the earlier chapel scene, the "silence reigns," controls the situation, and reassures us simultaneously. Here, the awareness of our epistemic limits is described "unfolding" like a blossoming lotus and, like "measureless" truth which exists despite its lack of visual traces, this "noiseless" knowledge exists despite the absence of audible cues and prompts a sense of peacefulness. Furthermore, this unspeaking silence is portrayed as a state of being so that "up into this noiselessness came Ahab alone," suggesting that this state of consciousness can be deliberately entered. Even though silence represents a knowledge of the inability to know anything for sure, it is comforting in its certainty. In Melville's "perfect" scheme, this knowledge of our epistemic limits is the only "certain significance," and it is a state of consciousness that each person must enter into alone.

**Expressed Silence and a Private Logos**

Although traditional rhetoric has always stressed the relationship of the speaker to an external audience, we also use language to persuade ourselves. Even in the fourth century
B.C., the rhetorician Isocrates refers to this self-persuasion when he says that "the same arguments which we use in persuading others when we speak in public, we employ also when we deliberate in our own thoughts" (emphasis added). He calls attention here to a private logos, the power of interior speech, and its potential for assisting the epistemic process. In the metaphorics of word emerging in these four nineteenth-century texts, the use of silence as a metaphor for self-knowledge implies this notion of a private logos and the powerful influence of an inner voice. As a kind of "symbolic action," self-persuasion is described by Kenneth Burke as the "Rhetoric of Address (to the Individual Soul)," and he considers this self-persuasion an important kind of language use, for "Only those voices from without are effective which can speak in the language of the voice within" (39). Resulting from a private act of translation, this self-addressed rhetoric deserves attention because it highlights the function of a private logos in both the discernment and articulation of knowledge.

With speaking silence operating as a metaphor for an active discovery of self-knowledge and unspeaking silence working as a metaphor for a state of self-consciousness, silence emerges in a metaphorics of word to represent an individual's epistemological status. By highlighting the role of inner speech, this metaphorical system emphasizes the value of using language for self-revelation, whether we publish such understanding or not. Furthermore, as Melville's perfected
silence illustrates, the silence metaphor results in a more expansive metaphorical system, one that allows for the representation of good and evil rhetoric, whether addressed to others or to the self.

A Metaphorics of Word as Prophetic

Striking is the way that this perspective forecasts the modern view of rhetoric as epistemic. By employing linguistic action as a figure for representing epistemic action, a metaphorics of word promotes an understanding of rhetoric's primary purpose as the interrogation of truth. In his discussion of "symbolic inducement and knowing," Richard Gregg quotes Wayne Booth in characterizing this contemporary understanding: "From this perspective . . . the supreme purpose of rhetoric would not be to persuade others to preconceived points of view, but 'to engage in mutual inquiry or exploration'."8 In addition to highlighting the value of a private logos through the use of silence, by using language processes as the source domain for structuring epistemic processes, these American writers evince a perception of language as both a process and a result and thus extend our understanding of knowing as both a process and a result.

It is worth noting that for these nineteenth-century writers, language itself assumed metaphorical significance relative to a prevailing conceptual framework. As Kittay states, "an expression is not metaphorical in an absolute sense . . . [but] only relative to a given conceptual organization"
in which certain ideas are considered "salient for that language community" (19). For this nineteenth-century language community, language and knowing were not only preeminent topics but also inextricably linked. Just as Nietzsche has been applauded for his "anticipation of the twentieth-century focus upon language" as well as "his almost prophetic statements on rhetoric's relation to knowledge,"9 so too should these American writers be acknowledged for their even earlier forecasting of these themes.

Given this prophetic view of language, it is not surprising that Kittay has remarked that "with the notable exception of the Romantics," pre-twentieth-century thinkers have regarded metaphor merely as a stylistic adornment (xi). Given these nineteenth-century writers' implied view of language as epistemic, it follows that they would also have regarded metaphor as a cognitive device and thus have constructed a metaphorics in which language imagery is used to provide a perspective on epistemology. Just as the voice replaced the book as a privileged symbol in the culture, so too does the voice replace the book as a privileged symbol in the symbolic system of the literature. The remarkable achievement of their metaphorics of word, especially with its provision for silence, is that it points to the inadequacy of language at the same time as it prompts a confidence in its power and a reverence for its mystery. In this system, language can never adequately ascertain or establish truth, and it is this very inadequacy
which makes language such a useful figure for representing the process of knowing. By using language—both in its presence and in its absence—as a metaphor for truth, these writers extend our understanding of both domains.
Chapter 6 Notes

1. See Grosvenor Powell, "Coleridge's 'Imagination' and the Infinite Regress of Consciousness," for a discussion of how Coleridge's metaphysical system provided for self-consciousness (the state of being and knowing) as the highest state, p. 277.

2. Jeff Verschueren, What People Say They Do With Words: Prolegomena to an Empirical-Conceptual Approach to Linguistic Action, p. 74. See Verschueren's discussion of silence verbals ("silence verbials" or "verba tacendi") and how their mere presence reflects the predominance of orality in the discourse, pp. 83 and 119.

3. See my chapter one, p. 14, for a discussion of Vygotsky's description of inner speech.


6. Kenneth Burke, Language as Symbolic Action, p. 16-18. All subsequent page citations are in the text.


LITERARY PRIMARY:


**LITERARY SECONDARY:**


RHETORIC PRIMARY


RHETORIC, CRITICAL THEORY, AND LANGUAGE


Keach, Benjamin. *Tropologia or Key to Open Scripture Metaphors.* Cornhill, England: John Richardson and John Darby for Enoch Prosser, 1681.


