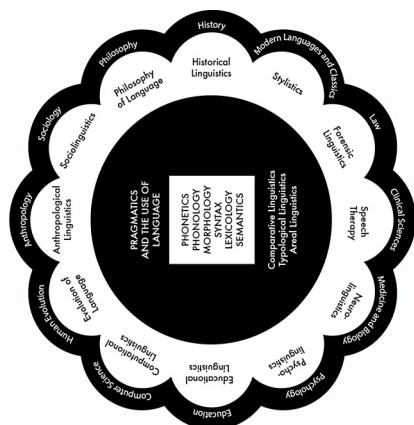# The Interdisciplinary Linguistic Program (ILP) at the University of Winnipeg (UW)

ILP Faculty: The ILP is anchored in the Department of Anthropology; the core of the Linguistic Faculty resides at that Department, as well as in English, Modern Languages and Classics:

Ivan Roksandic (Anthropology) teaches *Languages of the World*, *Morphology* and *Indo-European Linguistics*. His main research interests are language typology and indigenous languages of South America. His current project focuses on the indigenous toponymy in the Caribbean.

Jane Cahill (Classics) teaches courses in Latin and Greek, as well as *Greek and Latin in Today's English* and *The Classical Roots of Medical Terminology.*

Amy Desroches (Psychology) uses cognitive and brain imaging methods to examine reading and language development. In particular, her work focuses on the role of phonology in learning to read, and the impact that reading development has on spoken language processing.

George Fulford is an Anthropological linguist, specializing in Cree and Algonquian languages. He is especially interested in problems related to grammaticalization, language origins, and semiotics and structuralism.

Zbigniew Izydorczyk teaches at the Department of English. His areas of special interest include Old and Middle English, history of English, history of Latin, and palaeography.

Kristin Lovrien-Meuwese (Modern Languages) is interested in language learning in general and second language acquisition in particular, but has most recently worked on a sociolinguistic study of German in Manitoba.

Jorge Machín-Lucas (Modern Languages) is a specialist in XXth and XXIst Century Spanish Literature, and teaches courses in Spanish Normative Grammar and History of the Spanish Language.

During her career in linguistics **Karen Malcolm** (English) has used Communication Linguistics (a development of Halliday's System Functional Grammar) and its descriptive framework, phasal analysis, to analyze and explore a great variety of texts: spoken and written, literary and non-literary.

Liliane Rodriguez (Modern Languages) teaches Linguistics, Comparative Stylistics and Translation. Her main research is in Lexicometry, Geolinguistics and Bilingualism. She is the author of several books and of many articles in Linguistics and Translation Studies.

In addition, several courses included in the ILP curriculum are taught at other Departments: Conflict Resolution Studies (**Lois Edmund**); Classics (**Samantha Booth**); Rhetoric (**Tracy Whalen**). Other UW faculty members associated with the ILP include **Linda Dietrick** (Modern Languages), **Jeffrey Newmark** (Religion and Culture), and no less than two Deans: **Glenn Moulaison**, the Dean of Arts, teaches *History of the French Language*, whereas **James Currie**, the Dean of Science, works on mathematical models of language.

The ILP at UW provides a vibrant environment for teaching, study and research, offering a 3-year BA, a 4-year BA, and an Honours BA degrees in Interdisciplinary Linguistics, through a variety of courses offered at several different departments. Linguistics is defined as the branch of knowledge whose subject-matter includes both language as a general property of human species, and particular languages. Since human language is both a biological phenomenon (language faculty is innate), and a socio-cultural one (language is the main carrier of all human culture), linguistics is necessarily an interdisciplinary field covering the academic divisions of Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences. We invite you to join us in this magic adventure that is the study of human language in all its protean forms, from conventional to quirky.

Students:

Admissions: Students interested in majoring in Linguistics should contact the Coordinator of the ILP.

Colloquium: Every year in April, after the exam period, the Annual Student Colloquium is held, offering to students an opportunity to present the results of their research to the audience of their colleagues. In 2013/14, the XV Annual Student Colloquium in Linguistics will take place on Thursday, April 24th, from 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM, in room 3D01, on main campus.

Award: The Angela Mattiacci Memorial Scholarship in Interdisciplinary Linguistics is awarded every October to a student majoring in linguistics with a distinguished performance in ILP courses.

For more information visit our website: http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/ interdisciplinary-linguistics

How knowledge of morphology can enhance teaching Cree as an additional language

George Fulford, Anthropology

Cree is an Algonquian language reported as the mother tongue by approximately 83,000 people in Canada. It is a polysynthetic language with free word order and consists of nine dialects. During the 1980s and 90s the number of speakers identifying Cree as their mother tongue showed a steady pattern of decline, but in the last decade there has been a net growth of 3,000 new speakers, the majority of whom learned Cree at school as an additional language.

Provincial and territorial governments have important roles in supporting Indigenous languages and cultures. Good progress has been made by Western-Canadian Ministries of Education to develop policies and curricula that incorporate Indigenous values into the teaching of Indigenous Studies. But so far they have made limited progress in developing effective parctices to teach Indigenous languages. The few guidelines on Indigenous language teaching that do exist seem to rely heavily on English Language Arts models.

Linguists can help to fill the "Indigenous language gap" in provincial curricula. In the case of Cree there is a large corpus of texts, as well as good lexicons and teaching grammars for a number of dialects. The principles of Cree morphosyntax are well documented and scholars have explored how these principles influence worldview. These resources complement those developed by fluent Cree speakers and elders.

Derivational morphology is one area where Linguistics can contribute to develope effective ways to teach Cree as an additional language. Cree stems are derived from nearly 500 "roots" which convey information about movement, shape, relative position, and other salient qualities about the world from a Cree perspective. A consequence of

Anisko 'joining together'

aniskowask 'cattail'

aniskiwinohkom 'great grandmother'

aniskohikan 'splice'

aniskowikan 'joint'

aniskotaapan 'great grandchild'

(e) aniskopitaman '(while) he/she is tying a knot'

Image schema for the Cree initial *anisko-*. Introducing Cree words sharing an image schema encoded in the initial root is an engaging and productive way for students to learn new vocabulary.

stem formation is that Cree words are more descriptive and much longer than their English counterparts. In addition, Cree words sharing the same root share an underlying meaning that often has a highly visual quality. For example, the Cree root *anisko-* conveys the idea of "joining together". The five images in Figure 1 demonstrate this clearly. Begin with the elbow joint. Note its bulbous shape and how it functions as a point of articulation. Now look at the analogous shape of the splice, which also has a "joining" function. Tying a knot joins things and produces the

tell-tale bulbous shape at the join. This is also evident in the cattail-head. *Anisko-* extends to the idea of great-grandchildren and great-grandparents as metaphorical knots at each end of a string symbolizing life (Ellis 1995:12). It is an "image schema". Technically speaking, image schemas are analog patterns based on shape and movement. They are embodied and projected out into the external world through metaphor and visual imagination (Johnson 1987, Lakoff 1987, Gibbs and Colson 2006).

Cree-language teachers can select words sharing image schemas when teaching vocabulary. For example, before introducing words beginning with *anisko-* use PowerPoint or a similar program to introduce images of a "joint", "reed", "knot", and "splice". Demonstrate the actions of "joining" and "tying" with pieces of braided cord. To explore the underlying image schema of "joining together" divide students into groups of about five and ask them to explore how the objects depicted in the slide are the same and different. After a period of discussion ask members of each group to report their findings. Once a consensus is achieved introduce the root *anisko-*, repeating it out loud while highlighting the key feature of each object denoted by the image schema. Ask the class to repeat the root together to practice pronunciation. Then, using the animation function, make the words

aniskowikan, *aniskohikan*, *aniskowask*, and *aniskopitaman* appear in text boxes below each corresponding image in the slide. Instruct students to join you in repeating the words out loud. Finally, make the words *aniskiwinohkom* and *aniskotaapan* appear beside the image of these relatives. Repeat the words out loud with the students. At the end of class, as a homework assignment, ask students to each write a short essay about what *anisko-* and its variant *aniskiwi-* mean. Ask them to explain why the same root is used in the Cree words for "tying a knot", "great-grandmother", and "great-grandchild". Pick up the assignments at the beginning of the next class on Tuesday. Review vocabulary and introduce the distinction between inanimate and animate forms. Then expand the basic vocabulary introduced on Monday with at least ten new words for different kinds of joints in the body and forms in nature, as well as knots, splices, and generationally-distant relatives. Remember to indicate each new word's animacy and to provide time to practice pronunciation. At the end of Tuesday's class divide students into groups. Ask each student to procure digital pictures of objects representing a word that begins with *anisko-*. Allocate time over the next two classes for students to insert pictures into their group presentation, and assist them in labelling each with the appropriate Cree word. Assignments should be submitted to the teacher electronically to be discussed in Friday's class. On Wednesday and Thursday show students how to make simple sentences. Practice pronunciation.

A Living, Evolving Language
Liliane Rodriguez, Modern Languages and Literatures

The foundations of a language are embedded in a child's vocabulary by the time he or she reaches the age of 12. At this age, language is still free of the jargon and trendy expressions that tend to contaminate language in adults. To Professor Liliane Rodriguez, Manitoba's bilingual children are a living repository of historical French language.

Rodriguez studies the history, current use, and future of French language in Manitoba. She shares her research not only in the teaching classroom, but also in her books, *Mots d'Hier, Mots d'Aujourd'hui* and soon to be published, *La Langue Francaise au Manitoba*. In Rodriguez's field of research, known as lexicometry, she measures French vocabulary in bilingual children, aged 10 to 12 years. She has found that the Manitoba children share a vocabulary of about 20,000 words covering 16 fields, such as "clothing" or "electricity." Twenty-thousand words is a respectable vocabulary, but children know more words in some fields than others.

"You can see strengths and gaps in their vocabulary," says Rodriguez. "From my research I can tell the teachers, 'Maybe you should have a little lesson to increase their vocabulary in a certain lexical field.'"

Rodriguez also compares the language she finds today with that in historical documents such as Hudson's Bay records and archived letters. She traces unusual words to their origins, which are mainly in northern and western France. "What's really exciting is that children are still using very old, beautiful French words that have disappeared in France," says Rodriguez.

So, in Manitoba "vêtements" which is the modern French word for clothing, is still "habit," an 18th century synonym. Some children still call their clothing "butin," a medieval word that was lost from the language and dictionaries in France in the 17th century. "Carcajou," which means "wolverine," is a distinctly Canadian word and is found in the letters of early explorer La Verendrye.

"This is so powerful because you can see how a language lives and how it's transmitted from generation to generation," says Rodriguez. "So my research is also on the history of the language, to see that synonyms are not dying."

Through her research, Rodriguez has found that the more French language synonyms a child knows, the less likely he or she will substitute with English words. A strong vocabulary keeps language alive.

"Language carries history and heritage," says Rodriguez. "It should be cherished and passed down from one generation to the next."

Guilty?

Karen Malcolm, English

One day last summer I was quietly working on a paper in my office when I heard a rather upset man charging up and down the hall outside. He knocked on my open door and said "Can you help me?" His words did not carry the predictable phonological tone of someone looking for a particular room on campus, but they carried the emotional desperation of someone needing serious help. To be honest, I felt a tad intimidated. He did not look like a student, and I didn't know what to expect. Should I be opening my door to him, or calling security?

I went to the door, and asked if I could help him. Once he calmed down enough to tell me his story, it appeared that I could. He told me that he had had a fight with his girlfriend. This had led to his moving out, and her placing a restraining order on him to keep him away. I felt quite out of my depth, until he started to tell me about several emails she was currently submitting as evidence in some additional charges. He told me that although she said that he had written them; in fact, he assured me he had not. I told him

that as a linguist I might be able to help establish the true authorship of these documents if he could get me other writing samples of his and hers. Still feeling uncomfortable entering a situation and world that I knew nothing about, I asked him to submit the requested documents to his lawyer who would then contact me officially.

That is what happened. His lawyer sent me copies of the questionable emails as well as a few emails by both the man and woman involved. I was prepared to do an in depth linguistic analysis of each in order to compare them and determine who wrote the threatening emails. However, as it turned out, a thorough detailed analysis was not necessary in this particular case. When I considered the man's written emails, what I suspected from his casual conversation became even clearer. English was not his first language, and both his spoken and written discourse revealed numerous EFL errors (English as a foreign language). I compared his emails to other texts by EFL writers and saw they had much in common. The woman, on the oth-

er hand, was a native English speaker, and her emails included no EFL errors. The threatening emails were written by a native English speaker not an EFL writer.

I told the man's lawyer that I could prove that the accused had not written the offending emails. However, if he wanted me to prove the man's girlfriend had written them, I would need to complete the full analysis I had originally anticipated doing. He informed me that that would not be necessary. If I could prove that his client was not responsible for the threatening emails, that was enough.

I do not have a great deal of experience in forensic linguistic research. However, establishing authorship of ransom notes and alleged confessions are areas of forensic research in which linguists participate. No, I do not advise taking on the linguistic issues of strange men walking from the hall. I was fortunate that everything worked out. I am grateful I was able to help someone using linguistic analysis, but I continue to consider forensic linguistics a serious responsibility.

A word from an **ILP STUDENT:** Stephen Kesselman

I am in my fourth year of honours study in linguistics here at the University of Winnipeg. I believe the study of linguistics, in all its scientific, historical and artistic considerations has ubiquitous value. It is through language that our social, cultural and intellectual heritage is endlessly stored and constantly created – a phenomenon of diversity and universality people the world over participate in each day. I am very proud to be part of this quaint little department and incredibly grateful to all those who were involved in the decision to offer me this award. I count myself among the fortunate to have spent my university years studying under the mentors I have and alongside the classmates I have, many of whom are equally, if not more, deserving of this honour than I.

Stephen Kesselman is the recipient of the Angela Mattiacci Memorial Scholarship in Interdisciplinary Linguistics for the year 2013/2014. This Scholarship is awarded every October to a student majoring in linguistics with a distinguished performance in ILP courses.

FIRST MEDITATION ON LANGUAGE

Ivan Roksandic, Anthropology

Out of many possible ways to define a human being — such as 'the thinking reed', *Homo faber*, 'the naked ape', 'a divine spark captured in a lump of mud', or even the unlikely *Homo sapiens* — all of which strive to grasp and express that essential quality that makes us indisputably different from all other kinds of reeds or lumps of mud, perhaps none comes closer to the mark than the one laying stress on our propensity to voice ourselves and communicate by means of language, defining the human animal as *Homo loquens*. It is no wonder that the fundamentals of language have always been at the core of philosophical investigations and propositions about the world and human nature, and that so many great thinkers from Plato to Foucault have been obsessed — and at times even depressed — by the question of language and devoted a significant part of their mental endeavors to attempts to comprehend its hidden structures, to penetrate the deep underground caves where its roots first developed, to throw light upon the sources of meaning, to establish some control over the spontaneous flow of words and metaphors, to measure the depth of its current and follow it upstream, downstream and — hopefully — into the sea of transcendence. Most of our interactions with the Other — be it nature, the universe, other humans, immortal gods, or even our inner self — develop through the medium of language, just as it is language that enables us to acquire our learning, develop our creativity and establish our relations with the outer world. Accordingly, whenever I think of language I remember the old Buddhist parable in which the person asking about the nature of Zen is likened to a little fish wondering about the nature of ocean. The little guy who was born in the ocean, has been living all his life in the ocean, eating, sleeping and playing in it, does not understand what or where ocean is, and gets really puzzled when bigger fish discuss it. So he decides to go and visit the oldest and most knowledgeable fish of them all; it takes him a whole month to swim that far, but he finally arrives and – eyes wide open in anticipation – timidly asks: What is ocean? And then, even that sagacious underwater fountain of wisdom hesitates, and says: Ocean is the first thing you see in the morning and the last one you see before you fall asleep, but even then it is around you and also inside your body; there is nothing you can do without it and no place you can go to outside of it.

We are, just like that little fish, surrounded by language throughout our lives, it is within us and without us, we depend on it to support us in our drifting through life, and we find in it morsels of food for our thoughts. It is impossible to imagine any situation in human life that is not associated with language, and that is not learned and understood through language. Any other activity can wear us out after a while, but not language use: we can spend a whole day chatting with friends and not get tired at all. When we invent new things and develop new ideas, we immediately need new words to express and describe them, as if naming things is the only path towards knowing them and interacting with them. Language is a tool to comprehend the world and a way to influence it. We are inevitably and for all eternities — that is, as long as we remain human beings — captured within language, without any chance of escaping from it. Therefore, instead of being pessimistic about its relation to truth – whatever we mean by "truth," about the differentiality of its structure, or the bewildering variety of human tongues, we should rather indulge in and enjoy the endless possibilities for free play it provides us with. And the rest — of course — is silence.

Photo M.R

PRE-COLUMBIAN TOPONYMY IN THE WESTERN CARIBBEAN   Ivan Roksandic,   Anthropology

Toponyms are place names, denoting both names given to different features of the landscape (hydronyms – names for bodies of water; oronyms – names for mountains; etc) and names of human habitations. In human culture and history in general, toponyms are significant on many different levels (for example, Keith H. Basso conducted the famous study examining the significance of native place names in the culture of the Western Apache and their connection with the Apache conceptions of wisdom, morality and history). In this text, I will focus on only two of those levels and on their application in the Western Caribbean: 1) their importance for the study of endangered or dead languages, and 2) their usefulness for reconstructing the historical geography of a specific region.

As regards the study of endangered or lost languages, place names can not be overlooked because they often give us the key to linguistic affiliation and basic structure of a particular little-known language. In fact, according to Willem Adelaar, examination of such languages is most commonly based on analysis of place names, as well as on analysis of family names, personal names, and any available historical sources, administrative documentation, or word lists; in many cases that is all we have from a language – there are no texts, no native speakers, no language descriptions. As a result, by analyzing toponyms we can retrieve a significant amount of information about languages no longer spoken on several levels: phonology (sound structure), morphology (word structure), and lexicology (meanings of words and roots).

In such a way we can reconstruct – to a certain degree (depending on the amount of available material) – the distinctive characteristics of a particular language. For example, the dominant language in the Greater Antilles,

and the lingua franca in the region, was Taíno, or Island Arawak, consisting of several different but mutually intelligible dialects. However, within a little more than a century after the initial contact with Europeans it became an extinct language, so it is no surprise that our understanding of it today is far from perfect: all we have are six sentences, about twenty phrases, some two hundred recorded word forms (mostly nouns and names), and close to one thousand toponyms. Obviously, place names represent by far the most important set of the available linguistic material of this language; a more detailed analysis of those place names can certainly help us understand Taíno better.

On the other hand, in terms of historical reconstruction, toponyms can also be very important for examining past events as they provide us with a wealth of useful information. They often remain in place, as some kind of fossils, centuries after the language they belonged to died and its speakers disappeared, when their original meaning had been in many cases lost. The thing is that place names belonging to a specific language group demonstrate that speakers belonging to that specific speech community were physically present and inhabited the location that carries the name meaningful in their language. In other words, toponyms show the actual presence, at some point in the past, of a specific linguistic / ethnic group. Even in cases when it is impossible to successfully interpret the meaning of a toponym, its structure – phonological and morphological – can give us clues as to its linguistic affiliation. Furthermore, given that the pre-Columbian Circum-Caribbean homed an intricate and multi-directional network of trade and cultural influences, toponyms can help us make the distinction between cultural influences or trade, on one

There is a very tempting possibility, based on the phonological analysis of those toponyms and their comparison with the phonological characteristics of the Chibchan – and possibly Misumalpan language family (conveniently grouped by some researchers into Macro-Chibchan family) – that Guanahatabey place names were actually left by early (Macro-)Chibchan migrants from lower Central America.

hand, and actual population movements, on the other, and thus elucidate the problem of successive migrations into the Greater Antilles. This means looking into possible linguistic parallels between Caribbean toponyms and indigenous language families spoken in the contiguous continental regions identified as possible sources of the incoming migrants.

The most important difficulty involved in toponomastic analysis comes from the chains of transmission of place names and from cross-language interference. For example, the toponyms from western Cuba interpreted as Guanahatabey were transmitted by Arawak speakers to Hispanophones who wrote them down. Given that those three languages (Guanahatabey; Island Arawak; Spanish) have different phonological structures, we need to be able to – at least tentatively – reconstruct the original forms of toponyms, before we can proceed to compare them with possible source languages. Since none of the indigenous idioms in the Caribbean was a written language, we often encounter a variety of spellings for the same word: for example, the *g* in syllables *gua* and *güe* was often a dummy (was not pronounced), so *gua* was probably pronounced [wa]. As a result, we need a systematic approach to address such problems, while inevitably the rate of success will depend on the amount of available material, given that a larger number of lexical items allows easier identification of patterns

Our team examining crab holes at the archaeological site Canímar Abajo, Cuba

of change.

It is generally accepted that at the time of initial contact and early colonization, the Greater Antilles were inhabited by five different speech communities, speaking five different languages:

- the Taíno (the Classic Taíno), inhabiting Puerto Rico, Hispaniola, and eastern Cuba
- the Ciboney Taíno (or the Western Taíno), living in central part of Cuba, as well as in Jamaica, the Bahamas, and western Hispaniola
- the Macoris, in north and northwestern Hispaniola
- the Ciguayo, settled in northeastern Hispaniola
- the Guanahatabey in the Cuban west.

Linguistic affiliation of only one of the those languages is irrefutable: it is clear that Taíno belongs to the Caribbean, or Extreme North branch of the Arawak language family. The Ciguayo language, preserved in only one recorded word form and possibly one toponym, was explained by Granberry and Vescelius as belonging to the Tolan (or Jicaque) language family from Central America; that is a very interesting hypothesis, but the extreme paucity of the material didn't allow it

to be generally accepted. The situation with the Macoris and the possible language substrate of the Ciboney Taino is even more confusing. The Warao elements apparently present in those idioms can easily be understood as a result of early mutual influences betwee Arawak and Warao language groups, not surprising in view of the fact that they were neighboring speech communities for long periods of time. The Macoris language is also very poorly preserved: all we have is one recorded word form and very few toponyms.

Especially interesting both linguistically and culturally are the Guanahatabey from the westernmost section of Cuba, the modern Pinar del Río province. According to early reports, not only had they a culture remarkably dissimilar from other communities in the region (they were hunter-fisher-gatherers without pottery or permanent habitations), but they also used a language completely unintelligible to speakers of other languages in the region. Unfortunately, their language was not ever recorded, not even heard, by any of the Spanish chroniclers, so we have to base our study of it exclusively on the analysis of the small number of their place names. It is thus intriguing o note that twenty-six toponyms were indentified

that are, on the one hand, found only in Pinar del Río province, and that – at the same time – have resisted all attempts to be explained as Taíno; there are two more toponyms found both in Pinar del Río and Habana provinces, which also cannot be interpreted as Arawak. There is a very tempting possibility, based on the phonological analysis of those toponyms and their comparison with the phonological characteristics of the Chibchan – and possibly Misumalpan language family (conveniently grouped by some researchers into Macro-Chibchan family) – that Guanahatabey place names were actually left by early (Macro-)Chibchan migrants from lower Central America. This possibility seems to be further promoted, on the one hand, by a recent study of ancient DNA material from, respectively, Central America and western Cuba, and, on the other, by bathymetric evidence showing that lower see levels – lower by as much as five meters – might have exposed many small islands in the Nicaraguan Rise extending between Nicaragua and the southern coast of Jamaica, which could have provided early fishing communities both with an easy island-hopping highway towards the Greater Antilles, and with excellent fishing grounds and thus excellent initiative to explore them. In such a manner, the results of toponomastic analysis in this region are not important only for better understanding of the pre-contact languages, but also have a vital importance for unraveling the complex patterns of successive migrations and interactions between islands and the contiguous continental regions of the Circum-Caribbean, especially as they provide new evidence for early population movements between southern portion of Central America and the Greater Antilles. (IR)

Thoughts on Language

The magic of the tongue is the most dangerous of all spells. (E. G. Bulwer-Lytton)

Language is an organism. To digest it one must be, paradoxically, swallowed up by it. (Shemarya Levin)

When I cannot see words curling like rings of smoke round me I am in darkness, I am nothing. (Virginia Woolf)

Language is a finding-place, not a hiding-place. (Jeanette Winterson)

Personally I think that grammar is a way to attain beauty. (Muriel Barbery)

Language has no legs but runs over thousands of miles. (Korean proverb)

Language is the main instrument of man's refusal to accept the world as it is. (George Steiner)

Man was given the gift of language in order to be able to hide his thoughts. (Talleyrand)

The limits of my language mean the limits of my world. (Ludwig Wittgenstein)

Language is a poor bull's-eye lantern wherewith to show off the vast cathedral of the world. (R. L. Stevenson)

Language is man's deadliest weapon. (Arthur Koestler)

Language is half-art, half-instinct. (Charles Darwin)

Language is a city to the building of which every human being brought a stone. (R. W. Emerson)

Language is the house of Being. In its home man dwells. (Martin Heidegger)

The unconscious is structured like a language. (Jacques Lacan)

Pieter Brueghel the Elder (1526-1569), *The Tower of Babel*