**[LANGUAGE-IN-USE AND THE LITERARY ARTIFACT](http://rep.ucpress.edu/content/137/1)**

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Literary critics and theorists often shy away from talking about writers and readers as people who put language to use. Instrumentalized reason, positivism, and other watchwords warn against turning a literary artifact into mere data or information, or making it part of an exchange of language that is not exclusively aesthetic in nature. At the same time, when critics seek praxis in literature, speak about the performative attributes of a text, or discuss how to do things with words, they usually treat whatever text they are considering as a stable object. The contributors to this special issue of *Representations* are all interested in language-in-use as it applies to different kinds of linguistic artifacts and to text understood as the dynamic product of an interactive process. –*from the introduction*

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