



Note: Following is the "Afterword" [or "Nachwort"] written for the seventh volume in the Wiener Reihe Themen der Philosophie which is co-edited by Ludwig Nagl (Professor of Philosophy at the University of Vienna, Austria) and Hugh J. Silverman. Entitled Textualität der Philosophie -- Philosophie und Literatur this volume was published in German in Munich and Vienna by Oldenbourg Verlag in 1994. The Nachwort parallels Ludwig Nagl's "Einleitung" ["Introduction"] to the volume. The reader is invited to obtain this book which contains many important essays by German, French, and American philosophers on the topic of philosophy and literature for the German-language reader. The Afterword is included here in the English version; the German version, expertly translated by Erik Vogt, can be found in the aforementioned volume.

Hugh J. Silverman

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The choice of Textuality of Philosophy -- Philosophy and Literature for this seventh volume of the Wiener Reihe is not without significance.(1)

In the postmodern society in which we find ourselves it is not possible to think of the self as a center, of experience as infinitely perfectible, of science as pure progress, of knowledge as comprehensible and encompassable, of truth as singularly accessible. Philosophy textualizes itself; we do not textualize it. There is no danger that philosophy will become only a text and that everything else will be omitted from concern, for there is nothing else. This very textuality of philosophy repeats itself, spreads itself out, juxtaposes itself with alternative conceptions, and differentiates itself from competing practices.

To be postmodern is to read the gaps, margins, limitations, and frames of the modern. The postmodern will necessarily delimit itself in the modern. Advocates of the modern need not fear that their enterprise has been undermined. The modern continues to be modern. We continue to seek the new, we continue to be perplexed by what we do not understand, we continue to improve upon what we have. But in the interstices, in the gaps, in the spaces of difference that mark themselves out in the modern, there the postmodern identifies itself. The postmodern cannot be some failure of the modern. The postmodern cannot be the successor to the modern. The postmodern cannot call for the decline of the modern. Indeed, the postmodern depends upon the modern for its very supplementarity. The postmodern will not attempt a take over -- hostile or benevolent. That is not its interest. The postmodern is not a political agent of change, but an articulation of the changes that take place. The postmodern will not try to succeed where the modern fails. The postmodern will look for the moments of the aesthetic in the modern, the fissures of inclusion and exclusion that mark the modern, the differences in sexual, political, intellectual, and racial practices. The postmodern interest in the juxtaposition of differences allows it to read in the interstices of the modern age. Postmodern philosophy is philosophy reading itself in the modern. In this sense, the textuality of philosophy is the dominant concern of postmodern philosophy.

The textuality of philosophy marks a major shift in the understanding of philosophy in the contemporary world. It signals a reinscription of philosophy into the frameworks of textual practice. It also links up textuality with the relation between philosophy and literature. This means that philosophy cannot be understood simply as an attempt to wonder about, inquire into, reflect upon, produce arguments for, or create a system for the natural and cultural worlds in which we live. Rather philosophy must now be understood as a kind of text whose textuality spills over into a wide variety of domains -- areas which

themselves have become textualized in contemporary theory. What counts as philosophy is no longer limited to the titles of the books of Aristotle. What lies outside these names is a further domain of thought and understanding. Philosophical psychology is also a matter of philosophical autobiography, philosophical anthropology is also a matter of the cultural text, political philosophy is also the social text, philosophy of science is also the discourses of scientific practice... Philosophy textualizes itself in an ever disseminated, ever deployed practice. Philosophy shall not close itself off to the limits of a philosophical orientation, to a set of philosophical problems, to a transcendental domain of self-circumscribing *pensée de survol*. Philosophy, as Merleau-Ponty reiterated again and again must become non-philosophy; it must enter into the texture of human endeavor, aesthetic production, social enterprises, and scientific articulations. What this means is that the textuality of philosophy is a reading of philosophy as a text, of what is intelligible, textualizable, signifiable. Philosophy as a text includes the whole history and contemporaneity of philosophical practice. But it also suggests that many readings of philosophy are not only possible but displayed in the very reading of them.

And why the link with literature? Philosophy is not to become literature any more now than it ever did: viz. Plato's dialogues, Lucretius' poems, Boethius' consolations, Augustine's confessions, Aquinas' disputations, Montaigne's essays, Descartes's discourses, Hume's treatises, Rousseau's discourses, Kant's critiques, Hegel's philosophies, Marx's manifestos, Kierkegaard's pseudonyms, Husserl's ideas, and Wittgenstein's investigations, Whitehead's relations, Heidegger's introductions, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenologies, and Rorty's consequences. This network of philosophical forays, trials, and tribulations constitutes a web of texts and treatises, fragments and systems, failures and accomplishments. But in it all there are the texts of philosophy -- those which are to be read, studied, taught, and challenged. The textuality of philosophy puts these texts in question by questioning itself. Each time that philosophy marginalizes itself, makes itself less than a concern with the big questions of human, cultural, aesthetic, social, and scientific thought the more it circumscribes itself as an enterprise worthy of return, demanding self-examination, requiring self-delimitation as text. The textuality of philosophy is the postmodernity of modern philosophy. It marks the sublime places of difference that are invisible to modern thought. It requires of itself that a political practice be one in which difference is heard, named, identified, and given expression. Such sublime moments of the contemporary are also its ecstasy -- its going outside itself, to the world, to experience, to understanding, to confusion, to hope, to expectation, to disappointment. The postmodern looks for moments of centrality, of dominance, of majority in order to understand how these moments make themselves an object of ridicule, of comic self-affirmation, of buffoonery. And yet these moments of centrality take themselves with ultimate seriousness -- central committees, central intelligence, center city halls, grand central stations... Or in philosophy, as *cogito*, as transcendental unities of apperception, as transcendental egos, as communicative competencies and transcendental points of view, as arguments, as systems, as constructs... Nations want central governments, peoples want leaders, novels want plots, paintings want focal points, and philosophy wants answers. The postmodernity of philosophy recognizes that there are differences in all this, and that these differences operate in the fault lines of centralities, in the juxtaposition of identities.

The present volume of the Wiener Reihe takes up the relations between philosophy and literature as a cultural phenomenon, a regional phenomenon, and an intellectual phenomenon. Twenty years ago there would hardly have been any interest in philosophy and literature. Yes, philosophy, yes, literature, but not philosophy and literature. The development of philosophy and literature as an international enterprise is the inscription of a relation that cannot be reduced to one side or the other. Philosophy tries to colonize literature through the philosophy of literature. Literature tries to become significant by becoming philosophical. Philosophy tries to link up literature with the other arts -- as in Aristotle (epic, comedy, tragedy), or Horace (poetry is like a painting), or Lessing (poetry vs painting), or Hegel (in a whole system of arts), or Sartre (prose writing vs poetry writing), or Dewey (art as experience), or Foucault (the discursive practice of the arts). The muses mark differences and form a pantheon of aesthetic gods. And literature is just one of them. Literature wants to be theoretical and so it invents (in the twentieth century) literary theory. Literary theory is taken to be a challenge to literary criticism rather than the supplement that it was intended to be. But literary theory becomes a close cousin to philosophy and their marriage brings the pleasures and pains of all incestuous relations. And yet they elaborate and develop their textual practices in the interstices of one another.

And what does this all have to do with "continental philosophy?" Continental philosophy first developed in North America and in Britain as an alternative to the predominance of Analytic philosophy. Continental philosophy is different from European philosophy, for not all European philosophy is relevant for the development of "continental philosophy" in North America. Continental philosophy arose in the US out of phenomenology and existential philosophy as it was articulated in small pockets of American universities in the 1960s. The establishment of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP) in 1962 was the mark of its appearance on the scene. Built out of the toil and torment of some philosophers who came to America from Germany, Austria, France, Italy, etc. during and after the second world war, these philosophers eventually found small homes in American philosophy departments. Yet it was not long before they developed a coterie of students and followers, who themselves went on to graduate school and took up teaching posts in Philosophy Departments, such as those at Yale, Northwestern, Purdue, Penn State, Duquesne, the New School for Social Research, and so forth. These were the centers for what went under the general name of "phenomenology." And it was under the aegis of phenomenology that their adherents created SPEP. It was a small group, though it gradually began to grow.(2)

By 1980, the question of "continental philosophy" had taken on a dimension in the discourse such that the task was to turn SPEP from a small society concerned only with phenomenology and existential philosophy -- namely the philosophies of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Gurwitsch, Schutz, and Strauss -- into a society for continental philosophy broadly understood. Structuralism, poststructuralism, deconstruction, hermeneutics, critical theory, French feminism, and so forth became

part of the framework of continental philosophy and therefore of necessary interest to the organizers of SPEP . Many young American scholars had become continental philosophers such that the society quadrupled in size by the time I completed my second term as co-director in 1986. Most of its members were North Americans schooled often almost entirely in the best of the graduate schools where it was taught, namely at Stony Brook, Penn State, Duquesne, Purdue, Northwestern, Boston College, and several others. Now SPEP is a major American philosophical society counting somewhere around one fifth of the philosophers in the US among its adherents. It is still a youthful society with many new members just beginning their philosophical careers along with the more established figures. SPEP has defined itself as a place where current research and new directions constitute the forums of discussion and presentation of continental philosophy.

But what is continental philosophy? Continental philosophy is a complex of philosophies which are practiced largely outside Europe but which draw upon the writings and texts of European philosophers from certain traditions: the phenomenology of Husserl, the ontological hermeneutics of Heidegger, the existential phenomenologies of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, the structuralisms of de Saussure, Levi-Strauss, and Lacan, the semiology/semiotics of Barthes and Eco, the hermeneutics of Gadamer and Ricoeur, the poststructuralisms of Foucault, the deconstructions of Derrida, Lacoue-Labarthe, Nancy, and Kofman, the French feminisms of Kristeva, Cixous, and Irigaray, the postmodernisms of Vattimo and Lyotard, and so forth. These writings, these texts are studied, interpreted, read in a new context and with new meaning. A style and a practice that is articulated in English, shaped often by continued renewal through readings and translations of French, German, Italian etc. writings, often articulated through the understanding of and in reference to the texts of these philosophers, yet developing problematics in social philosophy, aesthetics, epistemology, philosophical psychology, and so on for the North American context.

The links between continental philosophy and the study of literature are also relevant here. For it is particularly postmodern continental philosophers who are attracted to the connection with literature -- a fact that is tied to the inherent interests of postmodernism itself. Postmodern theory has its effects in both philosophy and literature. First developed in connection with American architecture, postmodern thought finds its expression in Heideggerian hermeneutics as read by and through the deconstructions of Derrida, the archaeologies of Foucault, the libidinal economies of Lyotard, the nomadologies of Deleuze, and the semanalysis of Kristeva. This meeting place of continental philosophy and postmodern thought also permeates contemporary literary theory and literary criticism as well as the creative production of novelists such as Calvino, Gardner, and Gass not to speak of films such as *Blue Velvet*, *Wild at Heart*, *Twin Peaks*, *Roger Rabbit*, and the *Last Action Hero* with Arnold Schwarzenegger placing himself in an ironic mode...

The theoretical status of these forms of aesthetic production also have their effects in the professional institutions in which philosophy and literature can be brought into conjunction. In the 1970s, a small group of us attended the first meeting of the International Association for Philosophy and Literature. While I was elected to the executive committee in the first year in 1976, it was not until 1987 that I became its Executive Director. Although the IAPL meetings are held annually in the late Spring at different North American universities, its has grown to very large proportions. Its participants and members come from many countries around the world. What is important here is that the connections between philosophy and literature have also become a fixture in the American curriculum. When I went to the State University of New York at Stony Brook in 1974 with a joint appointment in Philosophy and Comparative Literature, this was a rare occurrence. Now there are many academic appointments with a similar title all across the country. It is not that philosophy is read as literature nor literature as philosophy but that the interconnections between the two fields are brought into constant connection: sometimes as literary theory, sometimes as philosophy in literature, sometimes as philosophy as literature, sometimes as philosophical methods for the study of literature, sometimes as the philosophico-literary framework. And it is the textuality of philosophy that has now reanimated philosophy in North America. Risking obscurity through scientism, the connections between continental philosophy and the philosophy-literature interface have revived philosophy for the postmodern age. And postmodernism itself is so woven that it would be impossible to separate the philosophy from the literature in it. For postmodernism, reading the intersections, articulating the places of difference in the modern does so through readings of literature, philosophy, art, architecture, anthropology, science, and psychology. And the connection between philosophy and literature in particular is the postmodern inscription of difference in a modern context. Readings of Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Jean-François Lyotard, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Irigaray, Nancy, Heidegger, Gadamer, Benjamin, Adorno, Vattimo, Sini, and Perniola open a frame for the writings of North American philosophers such as Edward S. Casey, John D. Caputo, Alphonso Lingis, J. N. Mohanty, Graeme Nicholson, William J. Richardson, Gary Shapiro, Mark Taylor, and many others.(3)

That these philosophers are in regular dialogue with philosophers in Europe and are part of a philosophical network(4) understood as continental philosophy in a postmodern frame is the new dynamic in the textuality of philosophy today.(5)

The postmodern frame is a delimitation and a supplement to the modern. The postmodern is inscribed within the modern. Similarly, continental philosophy with its origins, sources and reference texts grounded in the European context has proliferated, grown and defined itself far from the European soil. While the textuality of continental philosophy has been developed and articulated in North America, it remains at best a supplement to the European frame (and not at all to the analytic philosophy which is

often identified with contemporary "American" philosophy). There is a radical difference between Continental philosophy and European (French, German, Italian, etc.) philosophy. Continental philosophy -- practiced in North America -- offers an understanding, a perspective, and a textuality which is outside Europe and outside the centers of European thinking. To bring it back again into Europe is to reinscribe this supplementarity into the centrality of its origins -- but again as a guest, as a kind of guest professor, whose role is to inform and reread the traditions from the outside, in a reading that is other, that could not come strictly from the inside, a reading which is not just commentary and presentation but even more importantly philosophizing itself.

For these reasons, the problematic of philosophy and literature, which might have been a European phenomenon -- the French lycee education with its links between the philosophical and the literary, the German-Austrian university education which allows for philosophy as the *Hauptfach* and literature as the *Nebenfach* -- or vice versa -- always demands the priority of one or the other. And even so, there is often suspicion from one side or the other. By contrast, the concern for philosophy and literature reformulated in terms of the textuality of philosophy brings the lessons of deconstruction to a rewriting of European thought. The reading of textualized European philosophy from America, read from the outside, read such that it breaks the unended continuity of the European traditions themselves, whether they be those of those of Descartes (as in Edmund Husserl and Jean-Paul Sartre), those of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche (as in Martin Heidegger), those of Freud and Marx (as in Jean-François Lyotard), those of Heidegger and Nietzsche (as in Jacques Derrida), those of Hegel and Heidegger (as in Hans-Georg Gadamer), those of Kant and Hegel (as in Jurgen Habermas), those of Schleiermacher (as in Manfred Frank), those of Husserl, de Saussure, and Freud (as in Julia Kristeva), those of Kant, Nietzsche, and Berson (as in Gilles Deleuze), and so forth .. the problem is necessarily one of reading alterity, reading differences. These possibilities of reading differences are the concerns of the second part of this volume and they question some of the continuities of the first part -- continuities from Aristotle through Kant and on to the contemporary analytic and even post-analytic philosophers such as Rorty, Danto, Cavell, Caws, and so forth. They enframe the empiricist traditions that seek to treat literature as another form of argumentation, or the critical traditions which question literature as if it were an object or an act of communicative competence. Indeed, this other American philosophy -- continental philosophy -- whose concerns come out of philosophy departments, whose practices are certainly philosophical, and whose understanding is an alternative to an analytic tradition inherited from British philosophy has proliferated and expanded -- and now as here in this volume of the *Wiener Reihe* returned to Europe as a guest, as a friendly visitor, and yet perhaps also with the *sagesse* and knowledge of a writer from the outside, as an inscription of alterity and discontinuity in relation to the European philosophical frames as they seek to reframe themselves for the twenty-first century in the context of a postmodern society in which philosophy and literature enter into the contemporary textualities of philosophy.

## NOTES

1. It is an honor to coedit this volume of the Wiener Reihe with Ludwig Nagl to whom I am grateful for the invitation. The original conception took place as a result of many discussions over a number of summers in Vienna which came together during the Sommersemester 1993 while I was Gastprofessor at the Philosophisches Institut - Wien (Austria). We felt that the current topic "Textualität der Philosophie/ Philosophy and Literature" was particularly suited to the sort of European-American collaboration that this project has entailed. Early on we found a parallel itineraries between the Wiener Reihe and the Continental Philosophy series which I edit for Routledge in New York and London. In 1987, at the time of my first invited lecture for the Philosophisches Institut at the Universität Wien (which I entitled "Continental Philosophy and the American Scene"), the first volume of Continental Philosophy (on Philosophy and Non-Philosophy since Merleau-Ponty) was about to appear while the first two Wiener Reihe volumes had already seen the light of day. The present seventh volume of the Wiener Reihe follows on the heels of Continental Philosophy-V: Questioning Foundations: Truth/Subjectivity/Culture" (1993). While their structures are quite similar, the philosophical commitments of these two projects are somewhat different. Yet they meet somewhere across the Atlantic or perhaps even on the continent where the co-editors of this volume have often met to work out details for the present volume.

2. In 1966, I attended the fifth annual conference of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy which was held at Penn State University. At that time, I was intrigued not only by the few transplanted Europeans but also by the Americans such as William Richardson, John Wild, and James

Edie who had made phenomenology their home. By the early 1970s, SPEP had become a serious philosophical society even though, in 1980, when I became Co-Director of the Society, it was still a youthful group dominated by many old men. I took as my goal to expand it and open it up to younger scholars and philosophers seeking a place to express their philosophical ideas and continental interests.

3. Some of the more recent relevant writings by these North American continental philosophers include: Edward S. Casey, *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study* (Indiana, 1976), *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Indiana, 1987) and *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Indiana, 1993); John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project* (Indiana, 1987), *Against Ethics: A Contribution to a Poetics of Obligation with Constant Reference to Deconstruction* (Indiana, 1993), *Demythologizing Heidegger* (Indiana, 1993); Alphonso Lingis, *Excesses: Eros and Culture* (SUNY, 1983), *Libido* (Indiana, 1988), *Deathbound Subjectivity* (Indiana, 1989); J.N. Mohanty, *The Concept of Intentionality* (Green, 1964), *Husserl and Frege* (Indiana, 1982); Graeme Nicholson, *Seeing and Reading* (Humanities Press, 1984) and *Illustrations of Being* (Humanities Press, 1992); William J. Richardson, *Heidegger: From Phenomenology Through Thought* (Nijhoff, 1967) und (with John Muller), *Lacan and Language* (NY International Univ. Press, 1977); Gary Shapiro, *Nietzschean Narratives* (Indiana, 1989), *Alcyone* (SUNY, 1991); and Mark C. Taylor, *Journeys to Selfhood: Hegel and Kierkegaard* (California, 1980), *Erring: Postmodern A/Theology* (Chicago, 1984), *Altarity* (Chicago, 1987), *Tears* (SUNY, 1990), *Disfiguring: Art, Architecture, Religion* (Chicago, 1992).

4. Continental philosophy operates in a wide field within the American context as evidenced by the growing number of book series which supports this work. These include: *Continental Philosophy* (Routledge), edited by Hugh J. Silverman, *Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy* (Northwestern University Press), edited by John McCumber (originally James M. Edie, founding editor) ; *Contemporary Studies in Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, edited by Hugh J. Silverman and Graeme Nicholson (Humanities Press); *Contemporary Continental Philosophy*, edited by Dennis J. Schmidt (SUNY Press), *Studies in Continental Philosophy*, edited by John Sallis (Indiana University Press), *Studies in Contemporary Continental Philosophy*, edited by Galen Johnson (Peter Lang), *Series in Continental Thought* (Ohio University Press), edited by Claude Evans, and *Selected Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy* (SUNY Press) with various editors.

Those book series which specifically link Continental Philosophy to the Philosophy-Literature Interface include: *Philosophy and Literary Theory* (Humanities Press) edited by Hugh J. Silverman, *Theory and*

History of Literature (University of Minnesota Press) edited by Wlad Godzich and Jochen Schulte-Sasse, Advances in Semiotics (Indiana University Press) edited by Thomas A. Sebeok, Theories of Representation and Difference (Indiana University Press) edited by Teresa de Lauretis, Contemporary Studies in Philosophy and Literature (SUNY Press) now entitled Northwestern University Press Series in Philosophy and Literature edited by Hugh J. Silverman.

Garland Publishing produces substantial bibliographies of writings on major figures such as Merleau-Ponty, Levi-Strauss, Derrida, et al.

5. On the various occasions when I have been invited to teach and lecture at European universities, my students have reported that the American perspective in which continental philosophy is taught provides a supplement and fills a lack in their own contexts. My part in this volume is dedicated to them. Furthermore, I am grateful to my colleagues at Warwick, Leeds, Torino, Nice, and Vienna who have invited me to serve as Visiting Professor at their universities. My only hope is that their reward is as great as the intellectual pleasure I have received from their hospitality and warm welcome.

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