

EDITORIAL:

The *Knot* between Ricoeur and Derrida: A Look at Rhetoric in the Human Sciences

. . . *It is clear that rhetoric is something one can decorously indulge in as long as one knows where it belongs. Like a woman, which it resembles ('like the fair sex'), it is a fine thing as long as it is kept in its proper place. Out of place, among the serious affairs of men ('if we could speak of things as they are'), it is a disruptive scandal--like the appearance of a real woman in a gentleman's club where it would only be tolerated as a picture, preferably naked (like the image of Truth), framed and hung on the wall.* (15-16)

Paul de Man, "The Epistemology of Metaphor"

It seems fitting that the first special issue of *Janus Head* features an exploration of the relationship between rhetoric and the human sciences. At first glance one might overlook the possibility of interpenetrating connections, for in every first glance there is danger its quick synthesis may impede any consideration of a deeper link. But with a closer, second look, we discover that to understand the nature of this relationship is to stand at the crossroads of the *Janus Head* vision; or, in a more profound sense, it is to dwell in the depths of its interdisciplinary soul, and only the question of rhetoric dares to bring us there. Whether as a mode of persuasion or figures of speech, rhetoric is fundamentally a question of soul. Its worry is for the soul of listeners and expressed in the soul of the one who speaks. In this sense soul (*anima*) carries the kind of metaphorical doublings that makes the study of rhetoric, by necessity, an interdisciplinary activity. At the same time a focus on rhetoric discloses the limits of psychology and philosophy or any discipline whose appropriation of things takes on a modernist cast. That is, rhetoric is at once the condition of possibility for psychology and philosophy to the extent these disciplines seem to keep rhetoric in her place and the condition of impossibility insofar as she undoes things the moment we take her seriously at her word. James Hillman, one of this country's most scholarly and thoughtful critics of contemporary psychological life, writes, "psychic reality is inextricably involved with rhetoric. The perspective of soul is inseparable from the manner of speaking of soul, a manner which evokes soul, brings to life, and persuades us into a psychological perspective" (*Brief Account*, 19).

Implicit in these remarks is Hillman's view that the soul of rhetoric is persuasive to the extent that the rhetoric of soul exists as a retrieval of image. Hence, rhetoric persuades when it bodies forth a perspective of soul, an imaginal perspective that stirs the hearts and minds of those to whom it is directed. And its language is soulful to the extent it "sets things before the eyes," not as things in themselves, but as concrete, embodied images that claim us. In this context the relationship between the

terms *rhetoric* and *soul* forms a chiasmus that crisscrosses at the *and*, traversing what constitutes the space in between. To insist on the presence of the *and*, as Hillman does, not only reveals that the differences between the objects we claim to "know" share an *arche-typal* ground, but that this ground by virtue of its inter-disciplinary nature is one of metaphor-- the path and place of soul. For Hillman psychology finds its soul in making a rhetorical turn, in the "soul-making" of metaphor from that which otherwise appears "literal." So it is not surprising, then, that rhetoric imagined as something more than mere figure or form threatens to become a "scandalous affair" in which her image seems "off the wall," "like the fair sex," but "well hung" and seducing men everywhere.

We begin to see with Hillman that there is much at stake in the question of rhetoric, not the least of which concerns how soul (metaphor) might "live on" in a postmodern world. Both Paul Ricoeur and Jacques Derrida share a similar concern over soul, but in terms of the identity and future of philosophy. In their view the origin and end of all things philosophical depend on how we understand metaphor. While they may agree that the future of philosophy should preserve something of a Kantian legacy, each charts a different course to get there and accuses the other of betraying that which is properly Kantian. The issue is: how critical must philosophy be in the future to discharge its debt to Kant? Although the complexity of their arguments cannot be addressed in detail here, a schematic view of their positions offers the philosophical context necessary to understand what contributions to Philosophy, History, and Psychology the essays on Rhetoric in this volume make.

What appears to be the core issue dividing Ricoeur and Derrida is how to understand Martin Heidegger's axiom-- "the metaphorical exists only within the bounds of the metaphysical."⁴ At one level this axiom simply challenges the foundation of difference that Aristotle sought to preserve between the domains of philosophy and literature. At another level, it speaks to the horizon of Kantian philosophy and whether or not *auto-critique* "steps back" to exhaust the last metaphysical moment inherent in modern critical thought. In Study 8 of *The Rule of Metaphor*, Ricoeur assimilates Derrida's position in "White Mythology" to that of Heidegger's in *The Principle of Reason* and then rejects their philosophy for being an "unbounded deconstruction," exceeding the Kantian limits of interpretation. For Ricoeur not being "bound" means that the "being of metaphor," also the bedrock of philosophical difference, opens into the "metaphor of being," and the once clear boundary between philosophy and literature disappears, no longer founded on a principle of identity.⁵ Difference, taken in this critical sense, does not present itself as a difference of kind but one of degree: a manifestation based on the logic of "neither this nor that" as opposed to "either this or that." In this instance one thing differs from another in deferring to the other with each belonging to the "same" place. Consequently, any

effort to name or define, according to Heidegger, results in an event of appropriation from which there is no transcendence-- no beyond the "round dance," or the "fourfold," or the "neighborhood" in which we inevitably find ourselves. The law of Kantian temporality thus appears unhinged, and the ordering of space follows what seems to be an immanent yet contradictory logic.

In response, Ricoeur argues against following the paths of Heidegger and Derrida for fear that philosophy would come to an "end" as we know it, making it impossible to find itself in the future. To hedge against deconstruction, he proposes that the critical work of philosophy assumes a hermeneutic function in which the semantic property of Kantian transcendentalism is retained. This move grants philosophy an identity as relative pluralism in which every view can be considered meaningful to the extent it may be attributed to the individual who expressed it. With this, Ricoeur can dismiss Heidegger and Derrida as being no different from their predecessors who think about their relationship to the world and each other in seeking to establish their place in history. Their position, he claims, is an ontology, which "cannot assume the privilege of opposing all other ontologies by confirming them inside the bounds of 'the' metaphysical. Its unacceptable claim is that it puts an end to the history of being, as if 'being disappeared in Ereignis'" (*RM*, 312). Ricoeur also realizes that it is not enough to locate the work of Heidegger and Derrida outside the "bounds" of philosophy in something like poetics. He must therefore provide a corrective to the Aristotelian definition of metaphor whose error permits deconstruction to pose such a disruptive force to philosophy.

In order to make good on his argument, Ricoeur returns to the doctrine of analogy in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *Categories* to question the situating of metaphor in lexis as noun or name. Although he does not mean to abolish Aristotle's theory of metaphor, since the word is to remain as the locus of metaphorical effect, he reframes the question of metaphor to focus on the process by which metaphor comes into being. In other words, Ricoeur offers an interactionist theory of metaphor that elevates metaphor from its origins in a semiotic-based theory to its "rightful" place in the context of a sentence as a philosophical semantics. Ironically, his effort to shore up the scaffolding of a philosophical foundation is nothing more than a substitution of paronym for analogy as the means by which metaphor achieves its transcendental status.⁶ Yet the effect of such a move, according to Ricoeur, is twofold: first, it denies the possibility of a direct passage from the discursive or semantic domain of metaphor to one based on analogy; and second, it reestablishes the minimal Kantian moment that makes possible the transcendental mode of ordering discourse on the question of being. In this way Ricoeur reveals metaphor as the primordial vehicle by which the imagination, as the semantic faculty of judgment, exercises its genius over the aporetic.

Whereas Ricoeur seeks to discount the later Heidegger, and indirectly Derrida, for not being Kantian enough, Derrida's response is to show the inherent failure of Ricoeur's position, but he does so in a mediated way, by directing his critique at Heidegger. In "The Retrait of Metaphor" Derrida objects to Ricoeur's characterization of his work as an "unbounded deconstruction" and proceeds to show how his thought differs from that of Heidegger. In fact, by demonstrating that his thought takes a critical "step back" from Heidegger, Derrida suggests that both Heidegger and Ricoeur intend to honor their debt to Kant but are unsuccessful in rather contradictory ways. On the one hand, Ricoeur articulates a philosophical critique of language, hoping to secure the place of philosophy in the semantic ground of Kantian thought; but with his focus on meaning he misses the critical force in Kant that leads Heidegger and Derrida to claim critique as his proper legacy to modern thought. Even more, despite Ricoeur's best efforts, his view can be shown as "hoisted on its own petard" when subject to such radical Kantian critique. On the other hand Heidegger, who offers a critique of philosophical language, substitutes the use of catachresis for metaphor in order to resist naming or predicating anything that might be the commission of a metaphysical error. Rather than coin a new word or phrase, Heidegger works etymologically to show how language has been misappropriated by philosophy. His critique is an effort to let words signify beyond the meaning philosophers impute to them. Nevertheless, despite his reluctance to affirm by name, as Derrida makes clear, Heidegger "shrinks back" from inscribing the presence of such a critical gesture and thus is unable to recognize the extent to which his own thought is bound to Kantian critique, having lapsed into a "metaphysics of presence." In Derrida's view, the fact that Heidegger's thoughtfulness escapes the presence of its own critique makes him appear more "unbounded" than Derrida, whose critical remarks of Heidegger help us to see how Heidegger's thought falls short of acknowledging the Kantian frame in its midst. If Ricoeur dismisses Heidegger and Derrida for not being Kantian enough, then Derrida argues that Heidegger, like Hegel and Nietzsche who sought to exceed the limits of the Kantian episteme, is in the "end" simply too Kantian. This rather trivial difference between Heidegger and Derrida, which Ricoeur overlooks, may well reflect a historical difference between a debt still owed to Kant and one fully discharged.

Although Heidegger and Ricoeur assume the "same" metaphysical position, albeit in different ways -- one knowingly, the other unwittingly -- Heidegger is a pivotal figure in that his thought brings us to the intersection between disciplines. Indeed, the more self-critical his philosophy has become the more rhetorical or poetic it must appear to be. With Heidegger, as Ricoeur and Derrida suggest, we are invited to stand in an undecidable, unknowable space that cannot be anything but Janus-faced. What *is* (post)modern and (post)structuralist resides here, making the question of rhetoric perhaps the most significant issue of our time, since time after Kant is no longer a viable construct in which to order things. The papers in this volume are, in a

sense, "timeless" precisely because their focus on rhetoric takes a critical turn to displace and retrieve a sense of "discipline" that lives parasitically on the margins of every discipline. Each paper in its own way advances an understanding of rhetoric that is a critical engagement with the modern notion of disciplinarity, suggesting in some sense that the future of any discipline lies in the retrieval of that which it covers over.

The lead paper by [Ernesto Grassi](#) argues against the traditional view of rhetoric as being separate from philosophy. In "Rhetoric and Philosophy," reprinted for this special issue, Grassi shows us that originary speech, which lies outside historical time, is purely semantic comprising both the "origin and criterion" of rationality. Whereas philosophy relies on apodictic language to demonstrate its proofs, rhetoric takes place in a time before philosophy and as the first principle of philosophy. The character of rhetoric, then, is indicative and allusive, its underlying structure the very condition that grants demonstration the possibility of existence. Furthermore, Grassi speculates that the essence of rhetoric may be located in metaphor: "Surprisingly enough, perhaps, we can speak about first principles only through metaphors; we speak of them as 'premises,' as 'grounds,' as 'foundations,' as 'axioms'" (33).

In making originary speech metaphorical, Grassi reveals a certain allegiance to Heidegger, which becomes evident in his interpretation of Cassandra in *Agamemnon*. The image of Cassandra fused with Apollo earns her the "divine gift"-- "which eliminates the order of the temporal sequence of cause and effect and also rational speech" (24). It is, according to Grassi, "to encompass all in an instant" and to do so by means of a ruse-- by and through the artifice of a rational design. Again, with Grassi, we find ourselves at the "crossroads" of the metaphorical and the metaphysical, where rhetoric and philosophy find unity at the origin.

What it means to find ourselves at the "crossroads" of such Heideggerian thinking is the focus of [Michael Sipiora's](#) critical paper, "The Psychological in the Neighborhood of Thought and Poetry: The Uncanny Logos of the Psyche." Sipiora argues that the work of Medard Boss "invites the possibility of an alternative, although not conflicting approach to psychology." Against the backdrop of *Ereignis*, Heidegger's term for the "event of appropriation," Sipiora shows how Boss' work provides the necessary framework to think beyond the limits of poetry and thought, arriving at the space in between, in the neighborhood of poetry and thought where the uncanny of the psyche resides. Following a particular "strain" in Boss' work, Sipiora advances a view of the psychological that seeks to retrieve what goes "unsaid" in Boss, and this he accomplishes by offering a reading that relies on the later Heidegger. From his vantage point, Sipiora claims that to be psychological means not only catching sight of the uncanny in the neighborhood between poetry and thought, but also embarking on the critical path of taking the "step back" into a relation that is at once "nearer than the nearest" for ordinary thinking and "farther than the farthest" (Heidegger, *LH* 211-

12). Accordingly, these moments in their difference find their home in the neighborhood of their relationship to each other. Ultimately, Sipiora provides such a critical reading of Boss that it brings psychology to the threshold of a postmodern understanding.

The question of psychology, in a significantly different way, is also the focus of [Brent Dean Robbins'](#) paper, "On The History of Rhetoric and Psychology." In this paper he examines the complex relation between classical rhetoric and modern psychology. Robbins asserts that the current divide separating rhetoric from natural science psychology originated with the Port-Royal Logician's whose effort to establish a Cartesian linguistics sought to eliminate any prior relationship with classical rhetoric. In turning to the work of Giambattista Vico, Robbins re-situates modern psychology to show that "the heart of the rhetorical tradition [as] defended by Vico" lies buried in the ground upon which it rests. His effort to provide a historical unearthing of that rhetorical ground reveals the extent to which the Cartesian divide between psychology and classical rhetoric is more or less arbitrary.

Just as Robbins sought to bridge the gulf between psychology and rhetoric, so [John Arthos](#) in "'To Be Alive When Something Happens': Retrieving Dilthey's *Erlebnis*" challenges the rift between conceptual and imaginative thought as imposed by High Modernism. Arthos' essay meticulously demonstrates how Dilthey's notion of *Erlebnis* has been simultaneously appropriated and obscured by Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur. In his effort to uncover *Erlebnis* as "a useful middle term between philosophy and literature," Arthos intends to transgress the limits of High Modernism in order to establish a more inclusive and integral relation. "*Erlebnis*," writes Arthos, "enables us to realize our relation to the social, historical, and cultural without sacrificing personal experience." In bringing *Erlebnis* to life, Arthos not only provides us with a term that has far reaching implications for establishing a postmodern hermeneutics, but also demonstrates, by virtue of his own hermeneutic, the critical path one might have to take to realize its all-encompassing-potential.

The remaining two papers in this volume return to the origins of rhetoric to question its fundamental nature. In "Speaking Differently: Deconstructive/Meditative Thinking as the Heart of 'the Faculty of Observing,'" [Aloysius Joseph](#) offers an exegesis of the term "observing" as the critical moment in Aristotle's definition of rhetoric: "Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion." The strength of his paper turns on two competing meanings of "observing": one which assumes a detached relationship to the object being observed and searches for the underlying laws that govern its "essence," and the other which focuses on the "aspect nature" of phenomena and seeks to "let be" the very phenomena it is. Joseph links Heidegger's view of calculative rationality to the first sense and meditative/deconstructive thinking to the second. This move leads Joseph to

the position that "the genuine rhetor is one 'who dwells' as one would in meditative thinking" and is thus able to speak more persuasively.

Interestingly, for [Cyd Ropp](#), Heidegger provides a different means of access to understanding rhetoric. Ropp claims that dreams are considered a "call of conscience" in which the dream itself appears as a "proto-rhetoric." In her paper, "A Hermeneutic and Rhetoric of Dreams," she argues that there has been a shift away from expert-based approaches to dream interpretation toward more secular approaches. Ropp makes the case that answering the "call of conscience" of one's dreams requires that agency be vested in the dreamer as translator of the dream. It is the translation of the dream by the dreamer, a nascent hermeneutic activity, which transforms the dream into a rhetorical event, virtually the opposite polarity of the relationship in waking life. She writes: "In waking life rhetoric precedes hermeneutics. In dreams hermeneutics comes before the possibility of enactment, for the dream's proto-rhetoric is felt before it is understood." Ropp ends her paper by surveying three kinds of hermeneutic approaches that span the ages: 1) Old Testament, 2) Ancient Greeks, and 3) contemporary views.

Finally, let me say that the culmination of these papers suggests that rhetoric can no longer be viewed simply as a handmaiden to the human sciences, or a lost art that no longer has a place in the liberal arts curriculum. True, the study of rhetoric does not enjoy the prominence in the university it once did. In fact, the only place in the academy rhetoric appears *as* Rhetoric may be in newly formed writing programs that have seceded from English departments and, in an effort to establish their own identities, grant graduate degrees in Rhetoric. Yet these programs are few and far between and have only sought to re-invoke Rhetoric as a viable theoretical foundation because writing as a scholarly activity had been so completely marginalized. Nevertheless, the lack of an institutional presence does not mean that the question of rhetoric is dead and buried, for traces of it exist in course offerings among academic disciplines that challenge philosophical assumptions in and by which they claim their status as a discipline. Whether these concerns reflect a stylistic fad or an enduring epistemic shift, only time will tell. What seems clear at this point is that interest in things "postmodern" marks the return of rhetoric as a disruptive critical force to any "discipline" that would seek to deny its linguistic foundation as having something other than a duplicitous nature.

Today, rhetoric has burst onto the academic scene, making its return under the guise of a deconstructive tropology. The humanities may have been the first to experience the disruption of this return, but the rippling effect has been pervasive throughout the academy. With these papers it becomes evident that rhetoric "lives on," not necessarily as a mode of persuasion or ornamental figures of speech, but as that which currently finds its host in the human sciences. So too, if the human sciences are to

have a place in the future, then we will find it everywhere and always in the criticism of its rhetoric.

Rex Olson
Guest Editor

Notes

1 The term, "human sciences," seeks to include both the social sciences and the humanities, especially modern critical philosophy whose primary means for understanding human nature relies on hermeneutic-phenomenological methods of inquiry.

2 The art of Rhetoric in Classical and Medieval times referred to the art of persuasion. By the 17th and 18th centuries the boundary between rhetoric and poetics had become blurred as Rhetoric underwent a dramatic shift from the art of persuasion to the art of literature or Criticism. This modernist shift focused considerable attention on the tropes and figures of language than on the modes of discourse appropriate for speaking engagements. The work of George Campbell, Hugh Blair, and Richard Whately reflected a more comprehensive rhetoric, one that also included rules for literary texts. Meanwhile, across the Channel in France, Du Marsais, Condillac, and Fontainier, among others, were authoring rhetorics that featured theories of figures and tropes. For surveys of this shift in rhetorical theory see, for example, Edward Corbett's *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* and Tzvetan Todorov's *Theories of the Symbol*.

3 For further reading on the polemical exchange between Ricoeur and Derrida see David Wood, *Philosophy at the Limit*; Rudolphe Gasche, *The Tain of the Mirror*; Herman Rapaport, *Heidegger and Derrida*; and Leonard Lawlor, *Imagination and Chance*.

4 See Ricoeur's discussion on page 259 in Study 8 of *The Rule of Metaphor* or Lecture 6 in Heidegger's *The Principle of Reason*.

5 Aristotle's notion of metaphor, one could argue, had been discovered in working through the question of being in Book III of his *Metaphysics*. His concern was to resolve the many ways in which "being" had been postulated as a first principle, but that required overcoming the difficulty language posed to his project. The term "being" could not be left to signify multiple meanings, if metaphysics was ever to be established as an architectonic science. The term "being" had to mean something more substantive, more "real." To address this concern Aristotle formulated a notion of difference in which clearly articulated definitions specify the "essence" or "substance"

of things in terms of proper meaning (1017 b 23-27; 1024 b 25-34). Aristotle intended language of metaphysics to speak in categorical terms, as "figures of thought," that philosophy might finally know what it was talking about one day. The metaphor of being, the "knot" at the center of being, would then be untied or cut with the knowledge of what the term "being" means. By grounding the question of being in proper meaning, Aristotle made it seem possible for the differences between things to rest on a principle of identity. Hence, these differences, if viewed under a more critical eye, can be seen as metaphysical differences.

Subsequent to his writing the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle authored *The Poetics* in which he introduces his theory of metaphor, a theory that seeks to anchor the play of metaphor in proportional meaning. For Aristotle a proportional metaphor consists of linking elements by means of analogical expression: "a is to be as x is to y." The nominal metaphors "a is b" or "x is y" are overlooked, treated merely as elements in the construction of a more semantic metaphor. To see metaphorically, according to Aristotle, is to create meaning, through synthesis, by discovering what is similar in dissimilar things. It is, as he puts it, in a slightly different sense, a matter of finding "Hermes in the stone" (1017 b 7). Whether Hermes appears in a particular thing as its substrate (proper meaning) or as the "same" form that inhabits different things (proportional meaning), metaphor is fundamentally a structure of meaning. Such is the mark of genius, and Aristotle reasoned that by making analogy the foundation of metaphor, "metaphor" could be used as a concept to identify similar expressions as figures of speech. It is only when the hard line difference between the "being of metaphor" and the "metaphor of being" is subjected to radical critique that philosophical difference is rendered permeable, allowing for the interpenetration of opposite contents, each always already at odds with itself as the "other."

6 The term paronym refers to paronymous words that are: 1. derived from the same root; cognate: said of words (e.g. *differ* and *defer*). 2. differing in spelling, origin, and meaning, but pronounced alike (e.g., *pair*, *pare*, and *pear*) (*WD, Unabridged*). In basing his interpretive scheme on paronym, Ricoeur seeks to provide an architectonic interpretation that differs from the aporetic, which surfaces in accordance with homonyms-- words that sound alike but differ in their signification. Note that Ricoeur's shift in focus grants primacy to meaning above and beyond signification.

7 My remarks throughout have turned to some degree on the double meaning of the term "living-on." It can mean to live into the future, which has been my focus throughout, and it can mean to live parasitically, as used here. For an exploration of this double meaning see Derrida's "Living On: *Borderlines*."

References

- Aristotle (1983). *The Categories*. Harold P. Cooke and H. Tredennick, (Trans.). Cambridge: Harvard UP.
- Aristotle (1980). *Metaphysics*. Hugh Tredennick, (Trans.). Cambridge: Harvard UP.
- Aristotle (1982). *The Poetics*. W. Hamilton Frye, (Trans.). Cambridge: Harvard UP.
- Corbett, Edward P.J. (1971). *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*. New York: Oxford UP.
- de Man, Paul (1978). "The Epistemology of Metaphor." In Sheldon Sacks (Ed.). *On Metaphor*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 11-28.
- Derrida, Jacques (1978). "The Retrait of Metaphor." *Enclitic* No. 2, pp. 5-33.
- Derrida, Jacques (1979). "Living On: *Borderlines*." Harold Bloom et. al. (Eds.). In *Deconstruction and Criticism*. New York: Continuum Publishing, pp. 75-176.
- Derrida, Jacques (1982). "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy." Alan Bass, (Trans.). In *Margins of Philosophy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 207-71.
- Gasche, Rudolphe (1986). *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection*. Cambridge: Harvard UP.
- Heidegger, Martin (1991). *The Principle of Reason*. Reginald Lilly (Trans.). Bloomington: Indiana UP.
- Hillman, James (1983). *A Brief Account*. Dallas: Spring.
- Lawlor, Leonard (1992). *Imagination and Chance: The Difference Between the Thought of Ricoeur and Derrida*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Rapaport, Herman (1989). *Heidegger and Derrida: Reflections on Time and Language*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Ricoeur, Paul (1981). *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Todorov, Tzvetan (1982). *Theories of the Symbol*. Catherine Porter, (Trans.). Ithaca: Cornell UP.

Wood, David (1990). *Philosophy at the Limit: Problems of Modern European Thought*. London: Unwin Hyman Press.