

“If there were to be a national vote among Hungarians as to what part of their culture (if anything) they are most proud of, their difficult language, their tragic history, and the grim pessimism of the Hungarian character would surely be among the top-ranking objects of national pride.

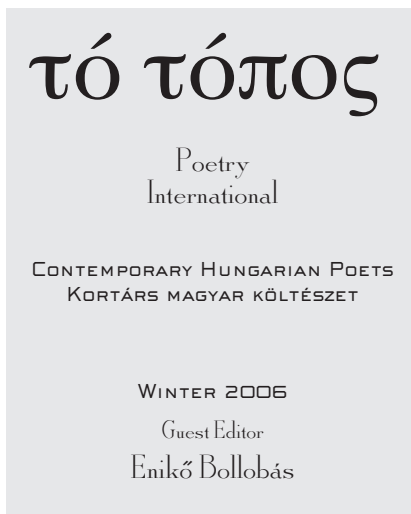
Joking aside, somewhere in these possible self-images would lie, I suggest, the centrality for Hungarian culture, of literature, and of poetry in particular. For it is a culture that both reflects and is produced by a history peppered with oppression, failed revolutions, and a strange (Finno-Ugric) language related only to Finnish and Estonian in Europe, hopelessly difficult for speakers of Romance, Germanic, and Slavic languages (just about everyone else in Europe). Its psychological disposition to hopelessness is evinced in its consistently top rank in the world’s suicide’s rates.

In spite of the successive waves of “modernization” or “Westernization” this Central-European country has gone through in the past century, poetry is still a highly respected intellectual enterprise, with poets whose word seems to count even when they are not writing poetry. People

still read poems just for fun, and they still go to bookstores to browse through poetry sections and then to buy the books that caught their attention. Of course, the world would be a better place with less television and more poetry in Hungary too, but I’m afraid this is yet a moment in history we will be nostalgic about later. Like the “average year” for a Hungarian: worse than the previous one, but better than the one coming after . . .

With the poetry gathered here we tried to provide a glimpse into the variety that so characterizes contemporary poetic writing – of men and women, formalists and experimentalists, realists and surrealists, Roma poets and “minority poets” (Hungarian poets living as minorities in countries surrounding Hungary), those preoccupied with space and those preoccupied with time.”

I returned to Hungary with fresh ideas, intellectually recharged after five months on the campus of a very fine American university. I felt full of energy and determination to continue my work of importing American ideas – in the form of American Studies and American Literature – from the U.S. to my home country.



Philosophy and Literature – Literature and Philosophy

Géza Kállay

Dear Ladies and Gentleman,

Thank you very much for the invitation and for coming tonight. The occasion, needless to say, is my return from the University of California, Santa Cruz, where I spent the Academic Year 2004-05 with a Fulbright Grant. I suppose I should also give a full account of my Family’s and my stay there, yet I think it makes this occasion even more exciting, if I do not only speak about our very pleasant and useful, but personal adventures: that, for example, in Santa Cruz High School and in Westlake Elementary School, respectively, all my three daughters have learnt wonderful English, which is an invaluable treasure for life, and for which we are for ever grateful. It would be tempting to go on and make mention of my wonderful colleagues at UCSC, many of whom have become friends, or about the beautiful scenery in the Monterey Bay area, yet now I will try to give an account of what was happening in my mind, while I was sitting in my office overlooking the redwood forest and, on other occasions, the Pacific Ocean, with all internet and library facilities at my disposal. That could be called the ‘research’ part of my stay, while my primary duty was to give five courses over three quarters: two on East- and Central European Literature and one on the genre of Comedy for the Literature Department, and one on Metaphor and another on the Vienna Circle and Wittgenstein for the Department of Philosophy. But since I had the rare opportunity to teach both literature and philosophy ‘legally’, and in a parallel fashion (a privilege not all universities would have granted me), even preparation for my classes was often thinking about literature and philosophy or philosophy and literature, to the extent that at one point I was inclined to coin the name of a new discipline, philostructure and literophy, in Hungarian perhaps “filozalom és irozófia” or “literazófia és filozotúra”. In Santa Cruz, first and foremost, I tried to cut myself some paths in the jungle, thinking about possible ways in which these two disciplines might be related at all, heavily relying, of course, on the material available in my printed and electronic resources. I must confess that while going through especially some of the philosophical stuff, I often felt like the fallen angels in Pandemonium, who, as Milton tells us in Paradise Lost

...reason'd high
 Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and
 Fate,
 Fixt Fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
 And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
 (Book II, lines 558-561)

Another convenient starting point might be not poetry, but philosophy, the 10th Book of Plato's *Republic*, where Socrates, after congratulating himself on having justifiably banished poetry from the city, sneeringly remarks that "there is an ancient quarrel between it [poetry] and philosophy, as is proved by phrases like 'the dog yelping at its master' or 'baying' and 'great in the empty talk of fools' [...] and innumerable other signs of the old opposition between them." These phrases are most probably quoted from philosophers attacking Homer long before Plato's time but the exact sources have not been identified. The reason for this animosity, at least on Plato's part, is well-known: poetry (which is of course very different from either Milton's or our present understanding of literature) has to pass Plato's epistemological test and it fails: poetry does not yield any certain knowledge, poets contradict themselves, they fall very far from *noesis*, understanding, or *dianoia*, reasoning and all they can perform is *eikasia*, image-making or *mimesis*, imitation, so they are not worthy of the attention of the philosopher.

So the relationship between philosophy and literature is far from being a new question, though in the past 30 years or so there has been renewed interest in it: while many disciplines have become more and

more specialised and departmentalised, there has been a parallel interest in interdisciplinary connections everywhere. But, even further, the renewed interest in philosophy and literature may also have to do with a general dissatisfaction with philosophy, even after the great philosophical revolutions in the early and mid-20th century. Thus, philosophy soon found itself without agreement as to what its task could or should be, both in the Continental (German-French) and the Analytic (Anglo-American) traditions, and there was a time when both traditions were blaming the other for leading philosophy astray, and although today they might be more patient with the other, we are far from a ceasefire on either side. As far as literature is concerned, we surely, as a first step, have to distinguish between "primary" literature (poems, novels, dramas, etc.) and literary criticism. In primary literature, like in all branches of the activity we call, for better or for worse, art, there has been, as Arthur C. Danto has shown, an overwhelming worry about its own status and boundaries, inscribed, in many cases, into the work of art itself: as if, from the time of Modernism, poems, novels, dramas, etc. were constantly asking, with their very texts themselves: 'Am I still a poem, a novel, a drama? What is the particular realm, ground, I can, I am entitled to occupy, what may I lay claim to?'. This has, undoubtedly made the status of literature highly problematic: *what* is it, after all? And because this question is heavy with ontology, piercing to the very heart of literature, literature has become this way more 'philosophical', constantly

'worrying' about itself, taking its own temperature and temperament, carrying this concern, in the form of an imprint from philosophy, on its own body. This 'intensive-internal' anxiety was, especially from the late 60s on, supplemented by an 'extensive-external' one, largely brought about by social movements, such as the Civil Rights Movement, Feminism, the Student and Sexual revolutions, so the concern with minorities, in the broadest possible sense. All of a sudden the very term *literature* seemed to be unsatisfactory: if all peoples in the world have some sort of a literature, then publishing, teaching, and even the very activity we would like to call 'literary' has to be reconsidered. One of the indices of the turmoil was, as it is well-known, the re-writing of the canon, and if one recalls the Ancient Greek meaning of this word – 'measuring rod, standard' – then one may see that the ontological anxieties were coupled with worries about values and value-judgements, the *Urteil* with which Immanuel Kant started his aesthetic investigations some two hundred years ago. On what grounds could anyone decide today that a detective novel, or the lyrics of a popular song, etc. are, or are not, literature? And on what grounds could one claim that they are 'better' or 'worse' than a drama by Shakespeare or a poem by Shelley? Whether the boom in literary theory coming into full swing especially in the late 70s and 80s was to *solve*, or to *avoid* these problems, would need a separate 'measuring rod', yet as far as I can see, philosophy, primary literature and literary theory met, from the late 60s on, in a triple embrace: the dissatisfaction

with philosophy, especially dissatisfaction with those trends which were pushing philosophy towards the paradigms of the natural sciences, were shepherding philosophy towards art and literature, while the boundary-seeking of primary-literature sought 'theoreticians', those whose main duty is to clarify thoughts. Out of this triple embrace, several offsprings were born and various prepositions and adverbial conjunctions carry the distinguishing marks of the children:

philosophy of literature
 philosophy as literature
 philosophy in literature
 literature in philosophy
 literature as philosophy

More combinations are welcome, if one can give meaning to them.

The **philosophy of literature** is usually understood as literary theory (or, even more traditionally, as a branch of good old aesthetics) itself, so some kind of theorising about literature and it can take two main forms: either a poet reflects on literature (poetry, etc.) within the very medium of an art-work (this is not new, either, please see, for example Horace in his *Ars Poetica*, or Pope in his *Essay on Criticism*), or the author writes something like a prose-treatise, such as Aristotle's *The Poetics* or Jonathan Culler's *Deconstruction*. I think that literary theory is different from the philosophy of literature only in the second being perhaps more conscious of the source of authority it relies on, and thus we have more or less professional philosophers made to line up behind various schools of literary theory: Heidegger behind Gadamerian

hermeneutics; a different Heidegger behind existential criticism; again a different Heidegger, supplemented by Husserl behind phenomenological criticism and Jauss's and Iser's reader-response criticism; Paul Ricoeur behind phenomenological hermeneutics; Nietzsche and Derrida behind deconstruction; Foucault and some Marx, with or without some Frankfurt-school transformation, behind new historicism and cultural materialism; Freud and/or Lacan behind psychoanalytic and so-called sexual-textual criticism; Adorno, Croce and Benjamin behind what is now beginning to be called the new aestheticism; sometimes all these, or some of these lining up, together with some old-time French structuralism behind the various branches of Feminism, Gender Studies and post-colonial criticism, and the list could be continued, and the line of philosophers or theoreticians is not exhaustive, either. It is, however, remarkable, why and how Ludwig Wittgenstein, one of the most original and influential thinkers of the 20th century, has not become a main source of inspiration behind any of the 'schools' of literary theory – I devoted almost a hundred pages to this question in the 2004/December issue of the Hungarian journal *Helikon*; I finished the article just in Santa Cruz. Yet it is also remarkable, and further complicates the picture that our present notion of 'literature' was forged sometime in Romanticism: in a way, the very 'birth of literature for us' happened then. This birth of literature did not only go, as it has been pointed out several times, hand in hand with the rise of the so-called nation-states, but seems to be inseparable from

the birth of our present understanding of 'theory' as well: literature and its theory were born together, and theory, though of course not exclusively, made its appearance in the form of philosophical aesthetics in the works of Lessing, Baumgarten, Kant, Schelling and Hegel. And since these thinkers made an overwhelming impact on the Continental tradition of philosophy, and had only a negative effect, if any, on the Analytic tradition, it has always been easier, or even more 'natural' to mix philosophy with literature in the Continental schools of philosophy and literary theory.¹¹³ Schelling or Hegel never had to seriously justify why they wrote on, for example, Shakespearean tragedy, while for example Hume's essay on tragedy and Coleridge's interest in (German) philosophy are the exceptions.

Thus, one could justifiably claim that the above picture of the philosophy of literature is valid, if it is valid at all, only with respect to the past two hundred or so years, first and foremost because previous ages were obviously not worried about the exact genres or branches of study their texts were coming from. Was Montaigne concerned whether the endless sources he was relying on were historical, poetic ('literary'), philosophical, psychological or some other? Even the question seems to carry serious anachronisms, signs of typical 'back-reading'. Even further, it happened only recently, precisely in the

113 With respect to the Analytic tradition, Kant seems to be an exception, but the Kant that had made an impact on Anglo-Saxon philosophy is not the aesthetic Kant.

age of re-canonisation, that so-called 'classical learning' disappeared from the curricula of so-called 'educated people' and one could plausibly argue, I think, that up to even the Second World War, the influence of Plato or Aristotle for example had somehow always been 'behind' any kind of literary activity. Not that everyone was consciously relying on any of them all the time, but they created a kind of point of reference, a kind of *Grund*, a kind of 'basic ground' German philosophers like to talk about. And it was partly noticing our anachronisms and back-readings that has brought about the next possible assessment of the relationship between philosophy and literature: **philosophy as literature**.

The school which has come closest to reading **philosophy as literature** is undoubtedly deconstruction. This is not the same as **philosophy in literature**. But philosophy in literature, as it is often understood today, is, I think, a dead end as it is, since it usually takes the form of arguing that there is, a 'lot of philosophy' in, for example, Dostoyevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*, or Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. But cannot that be true, if we want, of any literature? Is there less 'philosophy' in, say, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, or in Wordsworth's *Prelude*? And how could one measure the 'more' philosophy that supposedly resides in Coleridge's *Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, in comparison with, say, Wordsworth's *We are seven*? And how about science, or the *Barbie Magazine*, or even our shopping lists? 'Some philosophy' will 'live' in everything, thus the whole enterprise becomes unwarrantable and empty. When

I read interpretations claiming that they are looking for philosophy in literature, I often find that either the literary piece is a mere illustration of an otherwise well or badly exposed philosophical problem, or that the philosophy in question is hovering so far away from the literary interpretation that both could very well do without the other: they are unable to become the figure of each another. Philosophy in literature, the *in* becoming more a marker of distance than proximity, may also give way to what we may even take to be its subtype: **philosophy through literature**, when undoubtedly well-meaning editors put what they call 'philosophical' literary pieces together, to make thorny philosophical problems easier to digest, or to trigger mostly 'ethical' discussions and thereby get closer to 'moral philosophy'.

Reading **philosophy as literature**, at least in its deconstructivist understanding, is a totally different enterprise, often concentrating on the rhetorical organisation of a text traditionally called 'philosophical'. When, for example, Derrida was not looking for arguments in the texts of Plato but was rather demonstrating how the various meanings of the word *pharmakon* destabilises even the very possibility of looking for such arguments, or when Paul de Man, in his essay on the "ontology of metaphor" showed how certain metaphors disrupt the philosophical text of even such a "dry" author as John Locke, they were questioning, first and foremost, the truth-claim philosophy has traditionally laid on the 'nature' of the world and the human being. What New Criticism

carefully distinguished as images, figures or tropes turned out to be subversive metaphors, making deconstructionists infer that the most fallacious assumption of especially some analytical philosophical schools was that there would be a common 'content' behind various verbal formulations. Some analytic schools of the philosophy of language – if they paid attention to deconstruction at all – objected: if there is never at least *some* – though undoubtedly vague – common content 'behind' two formulations, how is translation possible, why do we accept something as a paraphrase of something else, how is interpretation possible as being 'about' some other text? Should we go as far as to claiming that, say, an interpretation of a poem has nothing to do with the 'content' of the poem under consideration? It was especially logic in analytic philosophy which felt offended, since the deconstructive claim shook its very foundations: without the ability to re-formulate a sentence in some kind of a formal system, without the justifiability of 'translating' a proposition into the symbols of logic, logic, at best, is about itself. The only work about *logic* I know which is conscious of this problem, not only on the level of reflection in the text, but also as something put on display on the text's very body, is Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, although, paradoxically, Wittgenstein's book could also be read, for example by the Vienna Circle, as precisely strengthening the positions of logic and providing useful tools for the logical analysis of sentences. The difference and the clarity

of the relationship between signifier and signified is, indeed, an absolute demand in the *Tractatus*, yet Wittgenstein could show how the consequential adherence to this demand also annihilates, at the same time, and with the self-same gesture, the presuppositions which have created that demand; in other words he demonstrated, how the medium designed to formulate and solve problems will fall victim to the very principles it has been able to establish. The *Tractatus* displays a figuration one could even call tragic: the very condition of the success of the *Tractatus* coincides with its absolute failure, and of course it will long remain a matter of debate whether Wittgenstein, by exposing the limits of a logic-based language to the utmost, could this way transcend precisely the limits of that language, and thus, of the world, but not by remaining in the medium of language and logic but rather by pointing towards, and putting on display something that can be *seen* but not talked about, something he wished to call the *transcendental*. To connect that which can only be seen with traditional *phantasy*, reminding ourselves that Greek *phantazein* originally simply means 'to make visible', is just as tempting as to connect the Wittgensteinian ineffable with the 'unutterable residue' especially romantic aesthetics found in a work of art after its interpretation. After all, Wittgenstein himself says in the *Tractatus* that ethics and aesthetics are one, and here ethics is to be understood not as anything normative, ordering or prompting people to do or not to do something, but as an attitudinal-ontological spontaneous

response to the limits of the world, a stance pertaining to the innermost core of a unique individual.

As opposed to the starting point of the *Tractatus*, deconstruction based its stance on the distrust between the correspondence between the signifier and the signified. Although admitting that the signifier and the signified can – or even have to – be momentarily distinguished, it was claimed that there is simply no authority to fix either of them, and thus to identify one as either. Once it is admitted that the signifier may not come to the signified from the 'outside', and thus the signified is not something which would have earlier been fixed so that the signifier may appear to 'refer' to it, then the only alternative that seems to remain is that the signifier signifies itself, it becomes its own signified. Please note that this is a very old idea in the European tradition, from the Sceptics onward, but it was revived and gained popularity in European thinking again largely through the work of Hume and Kant, who tried to limit reason the way Wittgenstein tried to limit language. Kant famously denied that we would have any direct or indirect access to a supposedly fixed 'thing', to the "thing in itself", and thus the road was open toward watching (in time and space) the dance of the signifier around the unknowable signified. Encouraged by Kant, Schelling even concluded that this makes poetry, and poetry precisely as a special *epistemological* and *ontological* medium, higher-ranking than philosophy. Schelling did no longer look at philosophy as literature but rather at literature as philosophy, realising

that poetry not only acknowledged and wholeheartedly embraced the unfixity of the signifier but could even be looked at as having, from time immemorial, invented it. Therefore for Schelling poetry, and especially tragedy, is able to disclose a dialectic philosophy will never be able to do, philosophy bound by the paradox of the object (of experience) turning into the subject (experiencing), and the subject (experiencing) turning into the object (of experience).

Deconstruction is undoubtedly a new landmark in the history of philosophy and literature, yet it is hard to celebrate it without some reservations. Though deconstruction has often insisted that it does not turn philosophy into literature, and that it was only allowing the rhetoric of a text to do what it does anyway, it has brought, as I tried to show above, a kind of philosophy surely to an end: the philosophy which insists on referential relations between language and world. I could also say that while talking about signifier and signified, deconstruction forgot that not only the linguistic sign is a signifier, but we, human beings are signifiers as well, with wills, desires, and so on, and these cannot all be dissolved in language. Deconstructionists, at least in some circles, thought that they only have to let language loose and run wild, and it will do the job it would do anyway. But however true it is that this way language "makes truth happen" rather than looking for a norm in the external world to be 'true', our everyday practice and circumstances tell us that we do use language referentially as well, and we may use it referentially even when we

'produce' literature. I think the wrong assumption has been that the creational and referential aspects or 'functions' of language were mutually excluding each other. But without the referential aspect we could hardly talk about anything already mentioned, remembered, etc. at all; we also need a certain amount of fixedness to establish our identities and the identities of the objects around us, we simply cannot create the world and ourselves anew and "let truth happen" all the time. And opposing the creational and referential uses of language also *created* the false impression that these two were the *only* alternatives, thus making it seem superfluous to look for others. Is "speaking fiction", for example, one or the other? And can it not be something different than them? Below I will try to show, relying on the work of Brett Bourbon, that fiction might be thought of as another kind of 'function' of language, neither referential, nor creational.

In less competent hands than Derrida or de Man, reading philosophy as literature, also lead to some trivial conceptions of their possible relationships. As a first step, this trivial understanding did not make Dostoyevsky or Shakespeare a great philosopher, as the above scolded **philosophy in literature** tried to do but was rather looking for **literature in philosophy**. For example, Plato's dialogic form or allegories of caves and other matters, were taken as clear instances of 'literature in philosophy', to the extent that Plato became a dramatic poet. Or the Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations*, strikingly different in style

and approach from the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, was seen, with his strangely conversational tone and various interlocutors as not only employing literary devices in the *Investigations*, but as a lyrical or also dramatic poet. Thus, paradoxically, confusingly, but not surprisingly, literature in philosophy indeed turned into **philosophy as literature**: the texts of Wittgenstein or Plato were read as poems. This, in itself was not the problem, but in many cases these moves aimed at deflating the weight and seriousness of the texts; the adherents of this position silently assumed that a poem was a far less serious business than a philosophical discussion. Deconstruction cannot be charged with this kind of deflationary or reductive desire precisely because it did not wish to commit itself to what it was reading; since it did not mind whether what it was dismantling was a philosophical treatise or a poem, it never could claim that e.g. a poem might be less 'serious' than a piece of philosophy or anything else. Yet the trivial understanding of literature in philosophy became even more complicated, but no less trivial when it started to read such "poetic" philosophers as Kierkegaard or Nietzsche. In their case, it was first carefully established that they were precisely philosophers and not poets, and then triumphantly held up as positive examples: 'you see, not all philosophy is dry', as if the question of whether the 'boring Kant' could, for example, be danced to the lively tune of Nietzsche would only be a matter of the technique of writing. And the old problem returned: can we transform the 'content' of Kant into a 'livelier livery' without any loss or

addition of meaning? Is a philosopher's (of anyone's) language and style external to the 'purport he manages to get across'?

The only branch or subdivision of the Analytic school I know of which paid any attention to the creational aspects of language, so important in the philosophy as literature of deconstruction, is speech-act theory. The main point of speech-act theory can be illustrated easily and it is now pretty well-known: if I name a ship "Santa Cruz", I am not producing a statement which could be examined along the lines of truth or falsity, but I am crating in and with language, which can be successful or not, valid or invalid, and this involves also some institutions which are not linguistic at all: I have to be authorised to name the ship, there has to be a cheering crowd in a harbour, a bottle of champagne to be broken on the side of the ship, it has to be launched from the dry dock onto the water for the first time, and so on. Speech-act theory was undoubtedly a very important move towards understanding various uses into which language can be put, yet it soon ceased to be the cure-all many people thought it to be. Separating the linguistic and the non-linguistic or "pragmatic" aspects of meaning was a small problem compared with other ones. First, speech-act theory tried to capture meaning primarily through the intention, the so-called "illocution" of the speaker. It was of course acknowledged that a speech-act makes some effect on the listener: this was called the perlocutionary act, for example a warning or even a promise can threaten or intimidate me. Yet perlocution seemed so complicated and uncertain that

nobody dared to approach meaning from the perlocutionary side. Even further, it turned out that pin-pointing the meaning of a sentence, even from the illocutionary point of view, is hopeless too: any sentence might be intended by me to be a promise, a warning, an expression of desire, an oath, a curse, a joke, or even conveying the perhaps good piece of news that James Bond is coming to visit us today, only the necessary circumstances and some previous agreements have to obtain. So it was realised that there is no necessary logical relation between the meaning of a sentence and the many uses it might be put to; the meaning of a sentence does not predestine it to 'fulfil' or even 'favour' a particular function in communication. Thus to understand the 'creational' aspect of literature through speech acts has proved to ask questions pertaining to the very foundations of speech-act theory – I will return to this problem below.

But speech-act theory at least raised the problem of language as creation. Until then, the analytic tradition had always tried to maintain the greatest possible distance between philosophy and literature. If there has ever been a philosophical school thinking that any kind of literature was – as Plato put it – 'a dog yelping at its master' or 'great in the empty talk of fools', then it was the Anglo-Saxon one. Since they were mostly concerned with the analysis of language, and the medium of literature is language, too, analytic philosophers often thought of literature as a contagious disease, spreading misleading and seductive tropes and figures of speech, and unnecessarily disturbing the clarity of

analysis. It was especially metaphor which proved to be the arch-enemy. When Max Black, the serious – and brilliant – scholar of the *Tractatus*, started to write in the early 1960s on metaphor, when Stanley Cavell ‘mixed’ his analysis concerning, for instance, the difference between *knowing* and *acknowledging* with the interpretation of *King Lear*, even their most benevolent analytic colleagues thought that they were at best wasting their time. The farthest some Anglo-Saxon thinkers ventured was to compare the ‘literary styles’ of some classics of philosophy, the *way* they present an argument, but analysts here did not come up with more surprising results than finding that for example Berkeley or Hume wrote more entertainingly and ‘easily’ than Locke or Kant. But please notice that in philosophy a ‘light-handed style’ as opposed to a ‘heavy-handed’ one may not necessarily be an advantage: a thinker whose style is witty and easy-flowing, might far more easily gloss a problem over with a clever rhetorical device and put an oratorical shroud over it than the one who struggles with each word and constructs phrases and sentences clumsily and laboriously. And this is so precisely because analytic philosophy is quite right in claiming that many – though of course not all – philosophical problems have arisen from the unclear and imprecise use of language, when philosophers were selling accuracy and exactness for rhetoric or – as Wittgenstein puts it in *Philosophical Investigations* – language went on holiday.

The perhaps never absolutely self-conscious program of philosophy as literature in the Continental tradition and

especially in deconstruction, however, called attention to a seemingly trivial but often neglected aspect of even analytic philosophy. This went beyond the endeavours of, for example, the above mentioned Paul de Man finding subversive metaphors in the texts of Locke, Condillac or Kant. It was realised that not even the most rigorous philosophical analysis can remain totally devoid of, and immune to, some examples, commonsensical or hypothetical. Even a commonsensical, ‘everyday’ example like Kant’s sun and rain, or the 13 thalers, or the marble on a cushion in *The Critique of Pure Reason* might be read not as mere illustrations of a theoretical point, but as perhaps even ‘subversive’ mini-narratives, and if one opens a book today especially on epistemology or the ‘mind-body’ problem in analytic philosophy, she will read so many hypothetical examples and ‘thought-experiments’ concerning Doppelgängers, Twin-Earth examples, split brains, Chinese rooms and possible worlds that perhaps she will think she is reading science-fiction rather than philosophy. For example, the analytic Scott Sturgeon, in a philosophical handbook, introduces his chapter on epistemology with the thought-experiment that the reader should suppose that one day somebody wakes up to the strange belief that Plato and Aristotle were in fact the same person. And the reader is further asked to suppose that this idea was implanted in this unfortunate man by a friend, with the help of hypnosis, just for fun. And it should also be supposed that Plato and Aristotle were the same person in reality as well, but the friend

performing the hypnosis was not aware of this. And so on. I am inclined to write a short-story about this.

Yet before philosophers start to write fiction – which is not without example, either, please think of George Henry Lewes, Mary Evan’s (*alias* George Eliot’s) partner, or of Umberto Eco – let us have a look, finally at **literature as philosophy**, already mentioned with respect to Schelling. Schelling may well represent the temptation, or even the seduction to think that the human being should not wait for the understanding of herself and the world through epistemology but through aesthetics and thus also through poetry; in Schelling the tenet can surely be found that we are not, or even should not primarily be, in a knowing relationship with the world but in an aesthetic one, or, to be more precise, it is the ‘knowledge’ or understanding provided by e.g. a poem or a drama that guides us best in our understanding of the world and ourselves; in other words our ontology is, or should be grounded in aesthetics and not in the theory of knowledge. As I tried to argue elsewhere, the conviction that we are primarily not in a knowing relationship with the world runs through, in various forms, in the philosophy of Wittgenstein, too, from the *Tractatus* to *Philosophical Investigations*. Whether according to Wittgenstein we should trade the knowing relationship for an aesthetic one or for something else, is another question.

So is there a right relationship for philosophy and literature? This much

at least seems to be true to me: we fare best if we keep the relationship between literature (novels, poems, dramas, etc.) and philosophy in this ‘**and**’ position, leaving them what they are, whatever they might be, precisely to enable both to bite into each other, like perhaps Plato’s dog, through occasional and respective ‘*as*’-es, but not ‘*in*’-s. And we definitely fare better if literature is taken neither as a mere illustration of philosophy, nor as a ‘laxer’ way of saying the *same* as what philosophy says but it is acknowledged that literature, with its own means, might heuristically contribute to philosophical problems. And we definitely fare even better if it is acknowledged that literature, and any kind of literature, does have an epistemological relevance, an ontological understanding or an ethical expository power, but these are interesting for philosophy because literature, in and through its rhetorical, structural and other means *as* precisely *different* from those of philosophy, may reveal something philosophy cannot, and *vice versa*, because one is just as much bound by its own and peculiar traditions as the other.

Take Stanley Cavell as a positive example of the **and**-relation: when he, in his investigation of the problem of philosophical scepticism, turned to Shakespeare’s *Othello*¹¹⁴, he did not only identify tragedy as figuring, as ‘acting out’

114 Stanley Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 125-142.

and ‘animating’, in the form of insane jealousy, the pattern inhering in scepticism, but also showed that the problem of human separateness, identified by Wittgenstein in the *Philosophical Investigations* as the main reason for, or even as a condition of, scepticism, makes the pattern of tragedy, and especially a tragedy of marriage, more understandable, aesthetically more relevant, that is, yes, more enjoyable. So not only literature was made use of for philosophical purposes but philosophy was turned back on literature as well. This does not make Shakespeare a philosopher, nor does it make Wittgenstein a playwright, as it does not make philosophy become literature, or literature become philosophy, nor does it make one ‘better’ or ‘higher-ranking’ than the other. It is another question, which philosophical problem is to be tackled together with which piece of literature, or which piece of literature is to be recalled, when it comes to making a question of philosophy more dynamic or revitalised in the medium of literature. This will, needless to say, depend on the tradition and interests one has; as Patricia Parker once told me, one stumbles on combinations that prove to be helpful rather than consciously looking out for them.

Or take another positive example of the **and**-relation, Brett Bourbon, of Stanford University, the new star of philosophy and literature, whom I got to know, and made friends with, during my stay in California. Brett Bourbon, in his book *Finding a Replacement for the Soul* published a year

ago¹¹⁵, picks up, among other things, a quarrel about fiction primarily with Searle’s speech-act theory and Lamarque and Olsen’s *Truth, Fiction and Literature*. Bourbon shows that solving the ‘riddle’ of fiction has taken three basic ways. one is the well-known idea that ‘fiction opens up a new, possible world’, but ‘possible world’ hardly means more than ‘fiction’ itself, so thus we remain with the good old tautology that fiction is fiction. The second way is to insist that the status of fiction could be decided with respect to the intention of the author, precisely with the help of speech-act theory, but Lamarque and Olsen do not think of course that here we would be concerned with the intention of a flesh-and-blood person, but rather somehow with the ‘intention of the text’ as it is ‘inscribed’ into it, perhaps in the form of ‘indicators’, ‘winks’ or ‘cues’ of the text: ‘yes, yes, come on, take me to be fiction’. But even granted that these indicators can be correctly identified (correctly with respect to what?) “the cues”, as Bourbon puts it, “say nothing about what it means *to take* something as fictional” (p. 66), or again: “The recognition of a fiction [...] does not enable us to understand what it means *for it* to be fictional” (p. 76, italics in both cases mine), as, I may add, the recognition that, for example, someone is in trouble does not enable me to understand what it means for the Other to

115 Brett Bourbon, *Finding a Replacement for the Soul: Mind and Meaning in Literature and Philosophy*, Cambridge, Mass. and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2004, especially Ch. 2: “The Logical Form of Fiction”, pp. 50-79.

be in trouble. The third possible way is to claim that everything, including ourselves and the world as we ordinarily know it, has been fictional (perhaps ‘unreal’) from the start, but this clearly begs the question, because even to understand this requires the very notion of fiction itself, rather than ‘explaining’ what this fiction might be. In other words, this approach ‘solves’ the problem by eliminating the notion of fiction: if everything is fiction, then there is no way to distinguish between fiction and anything else other than fiction.

To gain a new understanding of fiction, Bourbon proposes to reconsider the “speaking-voice” behind fiction. The gist of Bourbon’s argument is to suggest that when someone ‘speaks fiction’, when I, for example, tell a tale, I am not talking from a first person standpoint, performing a kind of ‘speech-act’. Bourbon rather claims that “No one can speak or mean fiction in his or her own voice. What we understand as a fiction we understand as framed by implicit quotation marks” (p. 61).

As I understand this, fiction, e.g. a tale would of course be heard by the other in my voice but I rather ‘lend my voice’ to this tale (somehow the way actors lend their voices to cartoon-characters, or after all, each actress and actor lends their voices (and bodies) to roles like ‘Ophelia’ or ‘Hamlet’). Fiction, in a trivial sense, is of course in my voice, if I tell it but my listener will understand it as lacking my authority, my *meaning* it, but I do not ‘mean it not’ in the sense of a lie but in the sense that the listener will understand that those are not my words. I have relinquished my *author*-ity over the question of whether

what I am telling was so or not and I allow my words to ‘flutter’ in a kind of indefinite space. Some Hungarian fairy tales nicely thematise this situation by often starting the narrative by: “Where was, where wasn’t, there was once a poor man...” [Hol volt, hol nem volt, volt egyszer egy szegény ember...], and ending the tale by: “This was so, or was not so...” [Így volt, nem így volt...]. Fiction, according to this understanding, speaks in a kind of general space, not bound to anyone and, not looking for a particular listener, but rather creating a space which implies everyone as a potential audience. To understand fiction is precisely relinquishing my authority that goes along with the creation of speech-acts in the first person singular, and this, I think, nicely corresponds to the insight that in fiction things are neither under the domain of the *is* of reality (‘there is a table here’), nor under the domain of *is not*, in the sense that fiction would be a denial of reality, i.e. a simple lie, but, as the Hungarian fairy tales suggest, under the domain of *is* and *is not* at the same time, or under the domain of *may be*, and *might be*, where I give over my strength, my power, my might (always relative to a potential counter-force), to things happening; I give away my might so that they *might*, *may* happen.

Thus, fiction, according to Bourbon, is “an utterance without a speaker, hence, [it is] quoted.”(p. 67) Here quotation should be understood not as quoting a particular person, especially not some kind of *author*-ity. That I am in a quotational relationship with fiction is rather to characterise my stance towards what I am saying: the stress is on that it is *not me*, who is talking

but someone else, without any further characterisation of that someone. Perhaps it is the “world itself”, as Vörösmarty once put it in his poem *Az emberek* [People]: “Hallgassatok, ne szóljon a dal, / Most a világ beszél”: ‘shut up, let no song be heard, now the world is speaking’. Brett Bourbon is right: fiction speaks like an oracle, not like an author.

Bourbon’s theory seems to be, at a first glance, a contribution to what we started with: the philosophy of literature – after all, debates about the ‘status’ of fiction typically fall within the domain of literary theory. This is true, yet the quotational theory is much more than that. To understand where and why it is more, we must recall that discussions of fiction, as we saw, usually start with the ‘comparison’ of our ordinary world with the world of fiction. Then either a referential theory of language is utilised: ‘how can ordinary words name entities in the possible world of fiction?’. Or a creational theory of language is used in which language, without our intentions, lets truth happen, and hence creates entities itself, or creation is claimed to be precisely relative to our intentional stances, as in speech-act theory. In the quotational theory, there is an interest in our stance, in our perspective, in our position, yet the quotational theory does not reduce this stance to our intentions but it is interested in our *understanding*

ourselves: the quotational theory asks *how we understand ourselves relative to the words of fiction*. And doing this, it realises that the ‘status’ of fiction is not relative to reality, our world, but it is relative to us, to ourselves, but not to our intentions, but to *as we stand* and *how we are* with our understanding of ourselves. This way fiction, no longer bound by comparisons with the real world, is discovered as having a *new ontological status*, but ‘new’ not in the sense that it has been created by us: it is rather seen as a space where we may ask again *how* and *what* we are. By erasing the speaking subject with an intention from behind fiction, the quotational theory creates the possibility to seek a new ontological status for ourselves. Thus, through the reconsideration of one of the chief categories of literature, i.e. fiction, a new ontological space has been discovered, which can truly be taken as a contribution to philosophy. And concentration on our stance relative to fiction, and thus creating a new ‘persona’ behind fiction, who is not the ‘I’ as the speaker, also indicates that one of the most fruitful investigations in philosophy and literature might be expected in the direction of understanding in *how many ways we may be*: most probably first the ‘I-you-he/she/it’ relations, the ancient grid put on ‘possible personae’ and expressible through these grammatical personal pronouns, will have to be reconsidered.

Comparative volcano geomorphological studies in the San Francisco, Springerville, Hopi Buttes and Mount Taylor volcanic fields

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During my Fulbright research period I was affiliated at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, to study old, eroded volcanic landforms of Arizona and New Mexico. In addition to these states, I visited six more ones (“volcanic states” such as Oregon, California, Washington, and “canyon states” of Colorado, Utah and Nevada). Most of the states were visited by professional field trips. In addition, mostly with my family I visited a number of national parks and monuments. During my Fulbright period, I attended two conferences (an international volcanological congress in Chile, and a Fulbright meeting in Washington DC), and gave three invited talks at various universities (NAU, UNM, and ASU) in Arizona and New Mexico under the Occasional Lecturer Program. Although due to the severe winter my field work was limited, I could go ahead with writing scientific papers, and eventually I completed or prepared four publications. Scientific work related to the Fulbright, among others a high-precision radiometric dating project supported by the Hungarian Fulbright Commission, is in progress. During most of my Fulbright period my family stayed with me; in particular, my children obtained significant experience in going to American elementary school and learning English.