

Introduction

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In its Call for this special issue, *Mosaic* asked what is happening between poetry and philosophy today if not an Hegelian *passage* from one to the other, an *Übergehen*, what Derrida in *Glas* calls a “disappearing movement” (2a) in which poetry would be relieved, would pass into the higher reaches of the concept. As is evident from the opening pages of *Glas* alone, the entire tradition of metaphysics—its understanding not only of philosophy, but also of history, religion, art, family, sexual difference, and of course the academic institution—is caught up in this sense of “passage,” the sublimating and spiritualizing relief of the sensible figure. Opposing the reduction of the figure, of metaphor, to the status of mere ornament, Paul Ricoeur adds a “twist” to the passage *from* poetry *to* philosophy, arguing in *La métaphore vive* (translated as *The Rule of Metaphor*) that “living metaphor” conducts us “upward” to philosophy by way of semantic innovation, vivifying language by enabling a surplus of meaning, a “thinking more” (303). Needless to say, it remains the case for Ricoeur that, despite the figure’s vivifying principle, poetry passes into, but does not enter, philosophy, which is a realm “free of interpretations, schematizations, and imaginative illustrations” (302).

Challenges to this traditional sense of passage necessarily involve a re-theorizing of both philosophy and poetry, which is one reason why *Mosaic* coupled the two in its Call for this special issue. Readers will recognize, however, that in some ways a special

issue on this topic is redundant: *Mosaic*, as a critical journal, regularly publishes essays that approach poetry philosophically, or that philosophize poetically, essays in which the journal's contributors, in diverse ways, engage the question of what is happening between poetry and philosophy today, often by recasting, whether overtly or not, the metaphysics of *passage* itself. It seems to me, moreover, that a critical journal is called upon today to "theorize" poetically, thus to disturb the myth of a pure and proper philosophical realm free of the "drifting or skidding" (Derrida, "Retrait" 7) that belongs to all of language. As Derrida puts it in "Signature Event Context," whatever the genre in question, an "essential drift [*dérive*] bear[s] on writing as an iterative structure" (8), something that, for him, "is tied to the spacing [*espacement*] that constitutes the written sign" (9). Nicholas Royle's theory of "veering," and the veering of literature, attends closely to this idea of *espacement*. Veering, for him, suggests another way of "orienting" ourselves to texts and within a world in which everything (not only humans but also other animals, and even stars) veer (viii). In *Veering: A Theory of Literature*, Royle's concern "is to elaborate an understanding of veering that goes beyond any traditional enclosure of 'literature' and that cannot be reduced to any kind of 'mere theory,' 'linguisticism' or 'wordplay.' Veering is not only human," he repeats: "it goes, as it were, all the way down and all the way out. It is about literature, but it is also about anthropocentrism, the environment, space and time" (5). Beyond the enclosure of literature, of literary theory and/or of philosophy, the turns of contemporary poets and critics, like Royle's veering, impel us "to think afresh and otherwise about the borders or opposition between interior/exterior or inner/outer" (7).

WORKS CITED

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