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Textual Reasoning in Three Stages

A programmatic statement by Steven Kepnes (Colgate University)

Ryan Hendrickson writes on Philo of Alexandria:

Philo of Alexandria is a thinker who defies taxonomy. The taxonomists in religious studies class him as a “Jewish philosopher,” implying that both his Judaism and his philosophy are paramount to his identity, yet his “philosophy” seems almost non-rational, and his Judaism non-traditional at best. I suggest that the best way to understand Philo’s writings and motivations is to loosen the modern attempt at classification and try to apprehend him on his own terms.

For the full text of the essay, please go [here](#).

Jonathan L. Sherwood

Otherwise Than Testimony, or: How Might Testimony Testify?

This paper was originally presented at an International Association for Philosophy and Literature Annual Conference panel in May, 1996. The title and theme of the panel was “Post-Testimonial Holocaust Writing”. In this title (and in the other papers presented), I heard these implicit questions: “What are we to do and think in this time, as the era of direct testimonial transmission from survivors of the Holocaust comes to a close with their passing away? What are we to make of literature that is about the Holocaust but that no longer comes from the testimony of survivors?”

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Listening with my own ear, however, attuned as it has been by the poetry of Paul Celan and the writings of Emmanuel Levinas, I thought that, in a very different sense, we have perhaps always been “post-testimonial”. In what time have we ever had testimony as something clearly available to us? With this question in mind, I consider two poems by Celan and passages from Levinas’ *Otherwise than Being* that indicate a phenomenology of testimony oriented towards the vanishing trace of a word that indexes memory and suffering precisely inasmuch as it fails to properly remember. In other words, I consider testimonial speaking in the mode of something for which we will have been always too late to properly receive.

For the full text of the paper, click [here](#).

Submissions

We cordially invite submissions on any topic associated with the purposes of textual reasoning. If possible, please send a diskette formatted for Macintosh (Word 6 or lower) to Michael Zank, Dept. of Religion, Boston University, 745 Commonwealth Ave, Boston, MA. 02215, or attach file to an email message and send to mzank@bu.edu.