

*This page deleted
from computer 3-16-91*

File name: ENG-A607.OPN

1-5-89 ff.

OPENING REMARKS ENG-A 607 1-24-89

The reflections in this course come not out of the lengthy philosophical tradition (Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger, and others) with which some recent philosophers, most notably Paul Ricoeur, have worked. Ricoeur has refocused much of the philosophical discussion of hermeneutics or interpretation, and indeed, in a way, pretty well all of philosophy, specifically around certain questions concerned with language as such. In doing so, he has followed and accentuated an established trend in recent thinking. The present reflections are concerned also, although not exclusively, with language, but they have been generated more specifically out of work on the evolution of verbal communication through the technologies of writing, print, and electronics. These reflections, I hope, are closer to readily accessible common experience and common knowledge than the lengthy more formal philosophical tradition--which is not to say that they are any better or more reliable, but only that they provide somewhat different perspectives. These reflections will necessarily weave through some of the same territory that Ricoeur and others have traversed, but over somewhat different paths.

One scholar whose work is particularly relevant to the present course is Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975). You are referred especially to his book The Dialogic Imagination, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: U of Texas P, 1981). Material in the present course intersects in some places with Bakhtin but it does not grow out of his writings, since it was worked out well before I became acquainted with him. He, too, does not attend to the evolution of verbal communication through the technologies of writing, print, and electronics--a line of study still very little known among Continental European scholars, although now becoming more familiar to them.