Philosophy ought really to be written only as a form of poetry.

– Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*

It is by considering language that we would best see how we are to and how we are not to return to the things themselves. ... [Language] is a power for error, since it cuts the continuous tissue that joins us vitally to the things ...

– Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*

It is necessary for thinking to become explicitly aware of the matter here called opening .... What the word designates in the connection we are now thinking, free openness, is a “primal phenomenon” [Urphanomen], to use a word of Goethe’s. We would have to say a “primal matter” [Ursache]. Goethe notes (Maxims and Reflections, n. 993): “Look for nothing behind phenomena: they themselves are what is to be learned.” This means the phenomenon itself, in the present case the opening, sets us the task of learning from it while questioning it, that is, of letting it say something to us.

– Martin Heidegger, “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking”

In contemporary French philosophy, the radical critique of phenomenology can be seen as following a historical-intellectual itinerary. Having taken the linguistic turn (or anti-linguistic turn, whichever the case might be) and left it behind, it veers toward and reaches now the pragmatic turn.² The pragmatics in question, as evidenced explicitly in Gilles Deleuze and implicitly in Michel Serres, should not be confused, however, with any kinds of pragmatics in the hitherto tradition of philosophy. To the extent it presents language as the site of a philosophical problem to be inquired into and conceptualized, it is, rather, what Jean-Jacques Lecercle has described as “misprision of Anglo-Saxon speech-act theory” represented, in particular, by J. L. Austin, J. R. Searle, and H. P. Grice (*DL*, p. 20).³ Out of this misprision emerges then “a pragmatics with a difference,” or a “new pragmatics, with a strong continental flavour,” articulating an “other philosophy of language,” (*DL*, pp. 28, 162, 247). More specifically put, this different pragmatics is “Schizoanalysis,” which “has no other meaning: Make a rhizome,” so announces Deleuze in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and the best way to do it is to “experiment” (p. 251).⁴

Thus displaced from its analytic paradigm, this version of pragmatics is different or new or continental in that it is, among other things, literary or poetic in nature, which finds its expressions in two aspects. On the one hand, as already amply demonstrated in the works of Deleuze and Serres and frequently noticed by critics and philosophers alike, its reading of literature, or its engagement with literary texts, presents itself, both conceptually and methodologically, as that which constitutes intrinsically any philosophical rethinking. 5 “So the point of entry into language, in its problematic aspect, before common sense has had time to answer all the questions,” explains Lecercle, for instance, “is the literary text” and, it is in this sense that, “the new pragmatics is, at the same time and indissolubly, a new poetics” (DL, p. 199). On the other hand, and this is the issue to be addressed in this paper, since “language is the very material on which to experiment for any argument to gain some meaning,” as Bruno Latour asserts (“Enlightenment,” p. 96), the new poetics as such also entails a new form of writing philosophy, which is, at the same time and indissolubly, literary, featuring a poetic texture. In other words, this new form of writing is characterized by the absence of a “meta-language,” be it philosophical or scientific, that results from what Latour refers to, albeit in a broader context, as “a cross-over, in the generic sense, whereby characters of one language are crossed with attributes of another origin” (“Enlightenment,” pp. 90–91). 6

That being the case, both in Deleuze’s empirical attempt to see the world as difference “differing,” as difference showing itself in itself, in which “phenomena flash their meaning like signs,” 7 and in Serres’s “pre-Copernican version of things” whereby “to see things from the point of view of the known, not of the knowing” (Latour, “Enlightenment,” p. 89), this literary or poetic form of writing, which advances a new pragmatics, is itself practiced (more in Serres) and theorized (more in Deleuze) “under the concept of ‘style’” (DL, p. 160).

In his study of the French philosophical tradition in general and the works of Michel Serres in particular, Latour makes the following observation: “The deepest content of what [philosophers] have to say is first of all a style, a form, a particular way of saying it” (“Enlightenment,” p. 96). Style is the deepest philosophical content because, similar to that in sports, according to Deleuze, “Style amounts to innovation,” engaging in “qualitative transformations.” 8 As such, “Style in philosophy strains