

## INTRODUCTION

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In May 2002, the annual meeting of the North American Heidegger Conference took place at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven. The conference, entitled “Heidegger and France,” was inspired by Dominique Janicaud’s *opus magnum Heidegger en France*, a remarkable work that chronicles the reception of Heidegger over the course of more than seven decades. Dominique Janicaud was one of two invited keynote speakers at the conference. Tragically, he was to die unexpectedly in August of the same year. This book, drawn from many of the papers presented at the Heidegger conference along with other invited contributions, is dedicated to his memory.

While Dominique Janicaud’s book *Heidegger en France* is a groundbreaking intellectual history of that reception, a radical and bold intertwining of *Historie* and *Geschichte* (much of Janicaud’s book is a reconstruction of the history of the reception of Heidegger’s work, following a chronological order from the late twenties and early thirties until the end of the century!), *French Interpretations of Heidegger: An Exceptional Reception* undertakes a philosophical engagement of the work of a number of the most significant and most creative figures of that reception. Dominique Janicaud’s own essay, “Toward the End of the ‘French Exception’?,” delivered at the Heidegger Conference, serves as an introduction to this volume. Janicaud’s essay is then followed by chapters that address the work of the thinkers who have engaged Heidegger’s work, including Jean Beaufret, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Jean-Luc Nancy, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Luce Irigaray, Marlène Zarader, Jean Greisch, and Françoise Dastur. In turn, and through these essays, this volume further explores the extraordinary impact that Heidegger’s thought has had on contemporary French philosophy.

The French interpretations of Heidegger<sup>2</sup> present the paradox of an encounter between the French Cartesian tradition of consciousness and reason

and a thought marked by the German phenomenological tradition. As Françoise Dastur explains in her chapter, “The Reception and Nonreception of Heidegger in France,” “We have, on the one hand, a Cartesian tradition that inaugurates the metaphysics of subjectivity that characterized modern thought, allied to a scientism and a positivism that give an exclusive privilege to the ontic, and on the other hand, the speculative summit of German idealism opening the way to both Husserlian transcendentalism and Heideggerian ontologism” (FIH, 267). This is an unlikely relation, and yet this peculiar hermeneutic encounter has been extraordinarily productive and has given rise to a tremendously creative body of work. As Janicaud describes it, “there took place a series of dramatic, passionate, polemical attitudes or interpretations”: not a peaceful reception but a veritable polemical turmoil. This explains in part why this reception also led to major (creative) misunderstandings, not the least of which being Sartre’s well-known misappropriation of Heidegger’s vocabulary in *Being and Time* as an ontologized anthropology, an existential Cartesianism. Janicaud rightly reminds us that Sartre appropriates so many insights from *Sein und Zeit* that “it is almost impossible to sum them up: facticity, being-in-the-world, freedom as transcendence, the ontological role of anxiety, the phenomenological description of the structures of inauthenticity and even the existential openness to authenticity” (FIH, 26). In Sartre’s text, these motifs are used to mean something quite different from Heidegger’s intent, which at the time was nothing less than a project of fundamental ontology, whereas Sartre develops a philosophy of the human will as absolute. Janicaud thus observes that the French “reception” of Heidegger has been anything but passive; in fact, it led to quite diverse interpretations, appropriations, or misappropriations (even if these were brilliant and inventive, as in the case of Sartre).<sup>3</sup> The fact remains that the phenomenon of French existentialism was the expression of a need by French philosophers to “free themselves from the context of Cartesian philosophy” (FIH, 267), and Françoise Dastur emphasizes that it was a matter for both Merleau-Ponty and Sartre of finding in German philosophers such as Husserl and Heidegger “a broader philosophy” and “a presuppositionless analysis of phenomena, that is, of the milieu in which our concrete life takes place”;<sup>4</sup> it was a matter, then, of exploring “the concrete world of perception that remains outside of science,” and of finding again “the bond with the world that precedes thought properly speaking” (FIH, 267). As Dastur concludes on this point, “It was indeed a question for Sartre, as well as Merleau-Ponty, of finding in the ‘philosophy of existence’ that came from Germany through Husserl and Heidegger the means of breaking out from a Cartesian inspired reflexive philosophy, and of thinking the concrete situation of human beings in the world and in history” (FIH, 267). This first existentialist phase was followed by structural-

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ism, post-structuralism, deconstruction, and gender theory, which all have, in their own way and towards their own ends, exploited the resources of Heidegger's questions.

Indeed, Dominique Janicaud stresses that key representatives of contemporary French philosophy are, to a large extent, critical or "inventive" recreations—as opposed to mere reflections—of Heidegger. This is an important issue for the American continental scene as well, because those figures are the very same French philosophers—Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, Derrida, Nancy, Deleuze, Irigaray—who have buoyed and infused American continental philosophy for the past four decades. An engagement of the French thinkers who addressed Heidegger would thus allow American philosophers to undertake a critical archeology with respect to the sources of their *own* development. The discussion in this book of the French interpretations of Heidegger will thus not only shed light on the development of most of twentieth-century French philosophy, but will also enable American interests and expressions in contemporary continental philosophy to achieve new levels of self-reflection and self-understanding.

Dominique Janicaud's article, "Toward the End of the 'French Exception'?", borrows a theme that had been under tremendous discussion in France in recent years regarding the so-called French cultural exception, an expression that refers to the notion of a French identity staying immune to the ravages of globalization, keeping its distance from the creeping homogeneity of American culture, refusing the reduction of culture to business, and thereby maintaining its special status or "cultural exception." Stressing that globalization is not only economic but "involves also the whole network of information, ways of living and modes of thinking," Janicaud appropriates the expression to emphasize the bold and critical aspects of the French reception of Heidegger's thought: "My point in this essay is not to argue for or against this supposed French 'cultural exception' in general. It would be quite irrelevant to my topic. I just wanted to use the expression and to explain its origin, in order to establish a starting-point to set up *my* specific questions regarding Heidegger's reception in France during the last decades." Janicaud advances the hypothesis that "the French reception of Heidegger's thought has been continuously so outstanding, so bright, and so dramatic that it really constitutes *an exceptional phenomenon*" (FIH, 24, our emphasis), indeed an exceptional reception, unique in its kind, that this volume seeks to explore further. Janicaud asserts that "there is a hermeneutical legitimacy and fruitfulness in patiently checking how the main orientations of Heidegger's thought have been more or less creatively understood, questioned and sometimes positively reformulated in the French-speaking world" (FIH, 32). Janicaud addresses the distinctive aspects of the "most creative figures" of this reception, not just commentators but "great original and gifted intellectuals" such as Sartre,

Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, Derrida, and Ricœur. Janicaud shows, for example, that it was thanks to Sartre's reception that Heidegger burst onto the French scene as a major thinker, as a major event. At the same time, Janicaud insists, Sartre emerged from this encounter with original and personal philosophical insights that led to French existentialism.

In the second part of his paper, Janicaud raises the question as to whether this "French exception" is coming to an end. Janicaud follows the trials and tribulations of the French reception. As he explains, "I chose to face them squarely instead of ignoring them, to accept them, to very clearly establish their status and to shed light on their relevance and their limits" (FIH, 30). Heidegger himself confessed, "When you will have seen my limits, you will have understood me. I cannot see them."<sup>5</sup> Janicaud suggests that the task is to "open up the field of critical thought by both listening to Heideggerian requirements in their rigor *and* collecting the most creative objections, oppositions, criticisms, so as to enrich our hermeneutical work. It is a philosophical choice, a decision to go through the greatest difficulties, to sail through the most appalling storms . . ." (FIH, 31).

Janicaud formulates the hope that what might be called the "event quality" of the reception of Heidegger's thought in France would give way to a reading that would be more attentive to the "letter" of the text, thus opening to fruitful engagements. Janicaud also reveals the limits of this problematic French exception by encouraging American thinkers to be similarly creative and challenging. Going against Heidegger's skepticism with respect to the prospect of authentic thinking in America (!),<sup>6</sup> Janicaud holds onto the "dream of a future collusion between the *Seinsfrage* and a still unapproachable America." He challenges "America" to engage Heidegger critically, selecting five fields in which the fruitfulness of Heidegger's thought could be tested and illustrated: the renewal of phenomenology, the refoundation of ethics, the questioning of hermeneutics, the theological debate, and the rethinking of the history of metaphysics, thus drawing the possible contours of a future thought opened by Heidegger.

The essays in this volume are, in a sense, responses to Dominique Janicaud's intellectual challenge. The various chapters reveal the dynamic and creative aspect of the French reception of Heidegger. Those written by contributors who are French or who have been based in France, including Jean-Luc Nancy, Pierre Jacerme, Dominique Janicaud, Françoise Dastur, and Jean Greisch, continue this tradition of rigorous interpretation of Heidegger's work. For their part, the American, Canadian, and British thinkers in this volume are far from mere echoes of the French interpretations, challenging French readings of Heidegger as well as Heidegger himself in philosophically suggestive and fruitful ways.

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Emmanuel Levinas's complex relation to Heidegger is addressed in Reginald Lilly's chapter, "Levinas's Heideggerian Fantasm." It was certainly in reaction to Heidegger that Levinas sought to go beyond being—as well as "the dictatorship of the Same" to which Heidegger's thought still belongs, for Levinas—in order to reach the ethical. "Because he sees being informed by a principle of identity and sameness, as hegemonic and henological and therefore irremediably atheistic and 'anethical,' Levinas posits the need to pass beyond being" (FIH, 35). Lilly questions the legitimacy of this interpretation and, as the title of his essay suggests, proposes to bring into view a certain fantasmatic structure of Levinas's thinking, paying close attention to his often-neglected early texts. Lilly has recourse to a psychoanalytic motif in order to suggest that Levinas's interpretations involve a suppression and a distortional reconstruction of Heidegger's thought. In a parenthetical comment, Lilly explains that Levinas "does not just misread Heidegger, but vigorously suppresses basic elements of Heidegger's thought whose recognition would have challenged his misreading" (FIH, 35). Fantasms, as Lilly points out, are always strategic: in this case, they allow Levinas to understand being in such a way as to prepare its overcoming. Levinas would see Heidegger as belonging to a tradition of egoism and solipsism—Heidegger is made to fit seamlessly into the Western henological tradition that begins with Parmenides—an egoism that Levinas attempts to escape in order to give thought to ethics.

Lilly intends to reveal such a "movement of consolidation, homogenization and displacement, and to indicate how this prepares for Levinas's own philosophy of being" (FIH, 36). Lilly sees in Levinas a *méconnaissance* of Heidegger's thinking of being, particularly insofar as Levinas refers to it as an anthropology. Lilly writes: "The denial that SZ is fundamentally a propaedeutic to a science of being is a denial of its theoretical (in Levinas's terminology) character and allows him to reduce it to a purely practical, anthropological treatise" (FIH, 39). This misreading, Lilly suggests, leads Levinas to overinvest the status of Dasein's understanding of Being and to interpret such an understanding as an "accomplished ontology" and as "a ego-reductive practice." In this way, Levinas conflates Heidegger's thought "with the modern metaphysics of subjectivity" (FIH, 39). Lilly asserts that Levinas sees in Heidegger's Dasein the "profoundest of modern solitudes." Moreover, where Heidegger sees difference, Levinas sees "the uniformity and self-sameness of Dasein's understanding" (FIH, 45). For Lilly, Levinas misses "the lethic dimension of being" in Heidegger's thought as well as his "critique of the metaphysics of presence" (FIH, 45). Interpreting Heidegger from within this Cartesian framework, Levinas sees Heidegger caught in this tradition (consolidation), where his alleged solipsism shows itself in having effected a homogenization of being, in which being, beings, and Dasein are practically indistinguishable.

Pierre Jacerme's chapter, "The Thoughtful Dialogue Between Martin Heidegger and Jean Beaufret: A New Way of Doing Philosophy," reveals Jean Beaufret's crucial role in the reception of Heidegger in France. Jean Beaufret was Heidegger's host in France as well as his main interlocutor. Beaufret paid his first visit to Heidegger's hut in September 1946, and so began their thirty years of philosophical friendship. The "Beaufret phase" includes the conference at Cerisy in 1955—Heidegger's first visit to France—as well as the Thor Seminars in Provence in 1966, 1968, and 1969. Given Beaufret's crucial and central position in the reception of Heidegger in France, it is all the more striking that Beaufret continues to be virtually unknown in the United States. Yet Beaufret was the recipient of the seminal "Letter on Humanism," in which Heidegger intimates how he has been misread by Sartre.

Thus, although Heidegger's "Letter on Humanism" was written to Beaufret, few are aware of the details of their meeting or of their relationship. Pierre Jacerme's chapter provides important historical and philosophical insight in this regard. Beaufret read Heidegger and Husserl during the early forties after having escaped from German captivity. In fact, according to Jacerme, Beaufret was reading *Being and Time* while taking part in the French resistance. Later Beaufret began corresponding with Heidegger, who quickly expressed an admiration for Beaufret's grasp of philosophy. Jacerme insists that when they met for the first time on September 10, 1946, they met as equals rather than as master and disciple, to the extent that they were equally engaged in the matter of thought: "They were thus *equally* involved in the 'matter of thinking,' which became the heart of the experience of their relation, rather than the relation between a master and a disciple. This is what Heidegger calls here *sunousia*, a term borrowed from Plato's seventh letter, which expresses the enduring contact with the presence of the very thing which is to be thought, from which alone the clearing can light up" (FIH, 63). Jacerme's essay reveals the fascinating exchanges between Heidegger and Beaufret that were both philosophical and personal, particularly around the issue of language and thought.

Jean Beaufret was a legendary professor of philosophy, having trained generations of students and future professors, who never taught a course on Heidegger. That is the case, as Jacerme reminds us, because Beaufret believed that "one cannot *summarize* Heidegger's thought. One cannot even *present* it. Heidegger's thought sheds a singular light on the modern world itself, a speech that destroys the security of instrumental language and destabilizes the foundation of man in the midst of beings" (FIH, 59). Jacerme stresses that it is not a question of speaking *about* something but of showing how Being opens in a clearing while taking the form of our world, and "that is what we must seek to *see* and to *hear*, acquiring thereby a new language" (FIH, 60). Hence he

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details the unique meetings of minds between Heidegger and Beaufret, a meeting of mutual understanding and respect. Jacerme suggests that the theme of time provided a particular philosophical link between the two thinkers and specifies, moreover, certain of Beaufret's inventive translation choices that emerge from his unique relation to Heidegger (in a singular play of "mutual exchange" of languages) as in his usage of the expression *il y a* or of the term *représentation*, better suited to preserve the relation between *presence* and *presentation* than *Vorstellung*.

In the next chapter, "Postscripts to the 'Letter on Humanism': Heidegger, Sartre, and Being-Human," Dennis Skocz focuses on Sartre's reading of Heidegger. In the "Letter on Humanism," Heidegger was responding to Sartre's "reception" of his work. Skocz reads the "Letter on Humanism" as a frustrated exchange that falls short of a genuine dialogue. Hence his chapter is an effort to pick up where this dialogue foundered. Skocz writes that "both Sartre and Heidegger fall short of a satisfying being-historical reflection on being-human. Sartre's formulation of the question inscribes him in a metaphysical conceptuality from which he never breaks free. Heidegger, who helps us see this with respect to Sartre, fails to engage humanism in its historicity . . . and is silent on the political dimensions of human-being." In short, "if Sartre does not think being-human in being-historical terms, then Heidegger leaves out the historical in being-historical" (FIH, 74). Although Skocz recognizes that both Sartre and Heidegger situate themselves outside the tradition of humanism in their efforts to define what it is to be human, he nevertheless asks whether Heidegger's treatment of Dasein in the "Letter on Humanism" takes sufficient account of Dasein's "being-historical" aspect. Skocz finds Heidegger's rhetoric in the "Letter on Humanism" singularly ahistorical and blind to political history. He thus states that Heidegger's thinking of history "completely ignores the Enlightenment, the 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen,' the French Revolution, and the Terror. How strange that a letter addressed to the Frenchman Beaufret, inserting Heidegger in a debate of historical moment to the French, should make no reference to the preceding and none at all to any of the *philosophes*, the quintessential humanists of modernity!" (FIH, 77). Skocz takes account of Heidegger's discourse on the history of being but finds that Heidegger's text is not sufficiently grounded in a political historical sense. On the other hand, Skocz considers the extent to which a metaphysics of production remains central to Sartre's project. He reflects on what praxis means for being human: "The metaphysical paradigm, which underlies Sartre's thinking from "Existentialism" to the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, seems to preclude a satisfying response to the being-historical challenge of alienation" (FIH, 81). Skocz's treatment is illuminative of Sartre's and Heidegger's texts even as it

deems the exchange constituted by the “Letter on Humanism” to be inconclusive. “The long Franco-German reflection on being-human as pursued by Heidegger and Sartre before and after the ‘Letter on Humanism’ concludes with unsatisfying responses to the human condition understood as alienation or homelessness, but the ‘dialogue’ on being-human continues” (FIH, 85).

Wayne Froman’s chapter, “Merleau-Ponty’s 1959 Heidegger Lectures: The Task of Thinking and the Possibility of Philosophy Today,” engages Merleau-Ponty’s heretofore little-known 1959 lecture course in *Notes de Cours 1959–1961*. Froman emphasizes that with the posthumous publication of *The Visible and the Invisible* and its working notes, some readers were surprised by the prevalence of Heideggerian terminology and questions in the text. What at first seemed surprising in *The Visible and the Invisible* is better understood, Froman indicates, with the 1996 publication of Merleau-Ponty’s 1959 lecture course at the Collège de France. Froman asserts that Merleau-Ponty’s course reveals intimate and extensive knowledge of Heidegger’s work. Froman writes, “this text shows Merleau-Ponty remarkably perspicacious and well out ahead in terms of understanding what Heidegger was saying, before the at-length expositions of Heidegger’s work would appear . . . the reading that we find here remains difficult to surpass” (FIH, 89–90). Froman specifies that Merleau-Ponty’s objective in the lecture is not a simple exposition of Heidegger “but rather to bring out in the later Heidegger what pertains to the question for the course, that is, what pertains to the possibility of philosophy” (FIH, 89).

Froman focuses on how Merleau-Ponty understands Heidegger’s transition from the early to the later work and the implications of that transition “for the questions that concern humanism, language, and history” (FIH, 90). With respect to this transition, Froman reflects on Merleau-Ponty’s treatment of the movement from *Sein* to *Seyn*, the question of language, the emergence of *aletheia*, and the equiprimordial status of space and time. Rather than as a reversal, Merleau-Ponty understands Heidegger’s later work as a deepening, a deepening the French thinker was working on at the end of his life. Froman asserts, for example, “With regard then to the transition from the earlier work to the later work, in 1959, Merleau-Ponty’s understanding is that ‘[t]he development is not [a] reversal from an anthropology into a mysticism of Being: the start is not anthropology and the end is not mysticism’” (FIH, 93). Indeed for Froman, Merleau-Ponty’s lecture suggests the work that “lay before him . . . when the work on the *Visible and the Invisible* was interrupted by death” (FIH, 90). Froman shows that Merleau-Ponty neither duplicated nor renounced the insights from Heidegger’s thought and that he “set out toward phenomenological philosophy via a philosophical interrogation of the world that he explicitly distinguished from reflection as well as from dialectic and intuition” (FIH, 101).



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In their chapter, “Self-fashioning as a Response to the Crisis of ‘Ethics’: A Foucault/Heidegger *Auseinandersetzung*,” Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg stage a critical encounter between the thought of Michel Foucault and that of Martin Heidegger, an encounter made possible by the crisis of ethics. As they explain, “In staging this *Auseinandersetzung* or critical encounter, our focus will be on how Michel Foucault and Martin Heidegger each responded to what we believe was for them a profound crisis of ‘ethics’ in the modern world, *our* world. . . . The insights of these two thinkers can assist us in both grasping the elements of that crisis, and in beginning to fashion a response to it” (FIH, 104). Milchman and Rosenberg understand ethics “not in the sense of code morality, the moral law or commandments in its manifold forms . . . but rather, as in Foucault’s last writings, as the self’s relationship to itself, its *rapport à soi*, which includes its self-practices [*pratiques de soi*] through which we become ethical subjects . . .” (FIH, 106). Milchman and Rosenberg attempt to think this sense of self alongside Heidegger’s understanding of Dasein as an entity whose way of being entails care, as Heidegger develops it in the early Freiburg lecture courses (1919–1923), and the Marburg lecture courses.

Milchman and Rosenberg trace the ethical crisis addressed by Heidegger and Foucault to Nietzsche’s proclamation of the death of God. “It is that space,” they write, “vacated by the death of God, a space that has remained empty, which has generated the profound ethical crisis through which we have lived now for more than a century” (FIH, 109). Milchman and Rosenberg point out moreover that “the death of God was—as Foucault pointed out in the final page of his *Les mots et les choses* [*The Order of Things*—the prospective basis for the death of *man*; not human being, but the historical form of the subject that had shaped the modern West” (FIH, 109).

Milchman and Rosenberg suggest that “the fashioning of a self, its transformation from a dispersed self into a shaped self, and the ability to generate values without transcendentals,” (FIH, 111–112) was, for Foucault and Heidegger, the point of departure, in albeit different ways, for a response to the ethical crisis of our time. Heidegger had identified a counter-ruinant movedness to life that led to the project of a fashioning of the self: Heidegger’s emphasis on facticity in the early works is also connected to Foucault’s notion of philosophy as a way of life. “That kind of re-description of philosophy, and its source in the lived experience of the thinker, in her *Faktizität*, which Heidegger had articulated so powerfully in the 1920s, had its counterpart in Foucault’s articulation of philosophy as a way of life” (FIH, 115). Another important feature of their encounter was how “Foucault’s *genealogies* share with Heidegger a commitment to historicity,” as “Dasein does not respond to anxiety by finding the resources for its resolution in a solipsistic self; rather, its own historicity, its own

historical being-in-the-world, is what has taken us, here, to the very threshold of a project of self-fashioning" (FIH, 117–118). In the course of its analysis, the chapter takes into account the insights of a range of commentators, including Dreyfus, Nehamas, Van Buren, Danto, and Haugeland.

Andrew Mitchell's chapter, "Contamination, Essence, and Decomposition: Heidegger and Derrida," is a careful analysis of Heidegger's treatment of essence (*Wesen*) and a response to Derrida's charge that Heideggerian thinking is grounded in metaphysical notions of purity and presence. Repeated throughout the eighties and nineties, signally in *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, Derrida's argument is couched in terms of a "contamination" that Heidegger is desperate to avoid. According to Derrida, Heideggerian thinking is an effort to cordon off a region of purity free from the taint of the ontic and the technological. The name for this region in Heidegger's work, according to Derrida, is *essence*. Heidegger's strategy is to secure a place for essence at the ontological level where it would remain free from ontic "contamination" and especially from the destructive power of modern technology, a strategy he pursues, according to Derrida, by thinking in terms of strict conceptual demarcations.

Countering these claims, Mitchell's essay shows that Derrida overlooked the crucial aspect of withdrawal in Heidegger's thinking of essence. Pursuing the idea of withdrawal and non-presence in essence, Mitchell explores decomposition (*Ver-wesen*) and ambiguity in turn to offer a more nuanced view of essence in Heidegger. The point is not to claim that Heidegger already thinks contamination, but that the idea of contamination itself is untenable for the nonpresent, worldly, and ambiguous sense of essence that Heidegger's thought proposes.

In responding to Derrida's charges, Mitchell analyzes the role of withdrawal in essence for Heidegger to argue that, far from a policy of quarantine, Heidegger's notion of essence names an abandonment to the ontic and technological world. Withdrawal is how "being" (*Seyn*) remains affiliated with beings. Mitchell shows that withdrawal must be thought in terms of a concealment that singularizes the being by allowing it to not show itself.

To properly understand this abandonment, Mitchell turns to an analysis of Heidegger's notion of decomposition (*Verwesen*), drawing on the very text at stake in Derrida's critique, "Language in the Poem," Heidegger's lengthy reading of the poet Georg Trakl. Mitchell shows that the connection between essence (*Wesen*) and decomposition (*Verwesen*) is more than an etymological one; the withdrawal inherent to essence is matched by the departure and displacement endemic to decomposition in Heidegger's analysis. For a thinking of abandonment, in other words, it is not enough to focus solely on the being's abandonment "by" being; one must also understand the being itself as permeated by abandonment, living it out as decomposition. Decomposition shows, in

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other words, that all abandonment is abandonment to . . . abandonment. Mitchell proposes decomposition as a corrective to Derrida's notion of contamination.

In the closing pages of the essay, Mitchell turns to the issue of ambiguity as a rejoinder to Derrida's charge that Heideggerian thinking would be a matter of conceptual demarcation. Contra Heidegger's earlier denunciation of ambiguity in *Being and Time*, the later work could be said to locate ambiguity as the domain of the poet. Again attending to the very text that Derrida draws from, Heidegger's Trakl reading, Mitchell shows that the withdrawal of essence can only be addressed ambiguously. Mitchell's essay is thus a complex response to each point of Derrida's most recent critique of Heidegger, a response showing that far from failing to think contamination, Heidegger presents a far more nuanced thinking of essence in his treatment of decomposition.

Jonathan Dronsfield addresses Deleuze's reading of Heidegger in his chapter provocatively titled, "Between Deleuze and Heidegger There Never Is Any Difference." At the outset of his chapter, Dronsfield brings to light the tenuous yet crucial relation between Deleuze and Heidegger as he notes a correspondence between difference and questioning, between ontological difference and the being of the question, a correspondence that would bring "Deleuze, or at least the 'early' Deleuze of *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*, very close to Heidegger, a thinker whose thought Deleuze otherwise never ceased to contend was different from his own" (FIH, 152). Yet Dronsfield insists that being is a question for both Deleuze and Heidegger, and that this represents a correlation the degree of which "cannot be underestimated." Dronsfield's chapter elaborates on the nature of the question of being in Deleuze and Heidegger as well as on the extent to which for each the question, or questioning itself, involves a transformation of what is meant by the question.

Dronsfield provides an in-depth investigation of the nature of the question in Deleuze's work, particularly in terms of the unconscious in its relation to art and chance. For Deleuze, he claims, "the work of art is a problem complex comprising a 'theatre of problems and always open questions' enabling us to encounter questions of being" (FIH, 155). It is the central nature of chance that brings about Deleuze's fundamental break with Heidegger, in contrast to the latter's recourse to the concept of history. According to Deleuze, Heidegger does not go far enough in his thinking, because he does not break with history. It is not history that is at stake but rather the repetition of the question. Dronsfield writes, "Each time the die is tossed there is a repetition. Being is repetition" (FIH, 160). There is an episodic repetition expressed through the work of art. This repetitive fissure of expression is something that cannot be fulfilled or historicized. Dronsfield suggests that for Deleuze the fissure or fracture "is the place from where ideas that derive from imperatives enter and leave, and is displaced

by them each time” (FIH, 157). Dronsfield clarifies further that the fundamental difference with Heidegger is that Deleuze thinks without origin. In his development of this difference, Dronsfield explains Deleuze’s rejection of the tendency in Heidegger’s work to undertake a return or retrieval. Dronsfield writes that “it is with Heidegger’s appeal to history, to the historical destiny of man to take on the burden of his finitude, and ‘once more’ to do so, that we arrive at the matter of Deleuze’s fundamental disagreement with Heidegger: the question of history, the history of the question of being, and what Deleuze calls Heidegger’s historicism” (FIH, 160).

In spite of the fact that Heidegger’s project required the return to the Greeks, or that for Deleuze that return prevented “philosophy from creating new concepts,” Dronsfield boldly suggests that ultimately there is never any difference between Heidegger and Deleuze. “If Deleuze is right, and ‘there is’ never any difference because ‘it is never anywhere but in the question, and in the repetition of the question,’ then Deleuze and Heidegger are the same” (FIH, 162), that is to say, they have the question of being—being as a question—in common.

Jean Luc Nancy’s chapter, “On a Divine *Wink*,” enters into a thinking of “the hint” and of the “last God” in Heidegger’s *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*. Nancy’s discussion revolves around the sentence, “The last god: his occurring is found in the sign [*im Wink*], in the onset and absence of an arrival [*dem Anfall und Ausbleib der Ankunft*], as well as in the flight of the gods that are past and their hidden metamorphosis” (FIH 167). The German word for hint (*Wink*), which has been rendered by Derrida as *clin d’œil*, is a term that Nancy calls, properly speaking “untranslatable” (FIH, 168). Nancy raises concerns about understanding *Wink* as a sort of sign, but also about the interpretation of the term *clin d’œil*. “*Clin d’œil*,” he writes, “. . . would introduce other connotations just as suspect, and of an order more fraught or more carefree than that of *signe* understood in the sense of *Zeichen*, of signifying sign, of meaning-to-say . . .” (FIH, 168). With *Wink*, Nancy insists, it is anything but a question of meaning. Indeed, Nancy suggests that any translation is inadequate because *Wink* refers to the contradictory event of what is simultaneously an arrival and a flight. The word, Nancy writes, is “awaiting its own true sense.” And further: “The *Wink* is a sign of awaiting, or of putting expectation in the position of a sign. It is suspended between hope and disappointment. We must await its interpretation, but that waiting is, in itself, already a mobilization, and its mobility or motility is more important than its final interpretation” (FIH, 169).

For Nancy, the proper sense of the term *Wink*, as well as what it portends in this context, is “deferred.” Further, this fact of deferral and impossible translation—the “exception of the untranslatable”—represents what Nancy calls the very “law

of translation.” The exception suggests a sovereign exclusion of language, or any language, and the impossibility of a simple translation except with a certain “wink.” Nancy shows that in Heidegger’s text, the word *Wink* is associated with another enigmatic term, *Vorbeigang*, or “passage,” with the connotation of “in passing.” Describing the link between *Wink* and *Vorbeigang*, Nancy asserts that “The *Wink*, here, in its function of sign or divine signal—of god-signal, one would have to murmur—is identified as fugitiveness, as the beating of the instant according to which what arrives leaves and, *in leaving* . . . remains absent . . .” (FIH, 171).

It is with the *Wink* that Nancy seeks to determine the nontheological divinity of the last God. In such a *Wink* of the passing, Nancy discerns the “appearance of the inapparent.” The *Wink* is that which is “in excess of itself, or else in lack” (FIH, 175). Why must this passing, Nancy asks, a “gesture in the direction of the inappropriable Being of being,” be referred to as God? (FIH, 177) In response, Nancy suggests that “Some *one* who passes, is but the tread of the passing, not a being who would have passing as an attribute. One should not speak—Heidegger himself should not—of the passing *of the god*: but God is in the passing. God is the passerby and the step of the passerby” (FIH, 178). This is for Nancy the “divine truth” of the *Wink*: “. . . there is no wink *of god*, but that the god *is* the wink. He does not do it, he winks himself there, just as he states his name in it, properly common and commonly proper—the name, in sum, of every person” (FIH, 182).

According to Gregory Schufreider, Lacoue-Labarthe has provided one of the most sophisticated accounts of Heidegger’s Nazism. Based on a close reading of a series of texts, he traces a line in Heidegger’s thought that is designed to connect over two decades of what is said to be a “‘political’ journey”: from the *Rectoral Address* (1933) through *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1935/36) and *The Question Concerning Technology* (1953) to *The Question of Being* (1955).

In order to resist this four-sided frame, Schufreider’s “Sticking Heidegger with a Stela: Lacoue-Labarthe, Art, and Politics” revisits the question of the *Gestell* around which Lacoue-Labarthe organizes his account, in part to see whether the word can mean the same in the “frame-work” of art as it does in the “framing” of modern technology. To show that Lacoue-Labarthe’s connection is too direct, Schufreider retraces his account through two of his texts, namely, *Typography* and *The Fiction of the Political*. By concentrating on his central figure of “figuration,” Schufreider addresses the question of how a “configuration” of truth may be said to take place, according to Heidegger, if it is not to be thought in terms of an “ontosteleology”: as if the law of being were written in stone and erected on a stela.

To question the “set up,” Schufreider takes a closer look at Heidegger’s use of language in *The Origin of the Work of Art*, especially with respect to *Gestalt*

and *Gestell*. On Schufreider's account, *Gestalt* cannot there refer to what the tradition (including Nietzsche and Jünger) has called "form" but to a "con-figuration" of truth that is set into operation in the strife between world and Earth. To be specific, Schufreider shows that a network of linguistic relations is set up between *Gestalt*, *Ge-stell*, and *Gefüge*, on the one hand, and *Streit*, *Riß*, and *Fuge*, on the other; between configuration, frame-work, and structure (system), on the one hand, and strife, split (slit), and slot, on the other. On Schufreider's view, these two sets go hand in hand, which means that, in art, one must think in terms of the configuration of a rift (*Gestalt/Riß*) that takes place in a framework of strife (*Ge-stell/Streit*) that is joined through a system of slots (*Gefüge/Fuge*) or structured openings.

In contrast to Lacoue-Labarthe's account, Schufreider reads the *Ge-stell* in *The Origin of the Work of Art* not in terms of the imposition of a rigid form, as in the case of the framework of technology, but in view of a dynamic operation that is designed to create an opening linguistically. In the case in point, *Ge-stell* does not refer to a frame but names the gathering of a set of *stellens* whose own configuration is graphically designed to create an opposition between setting up (*auf-stellen*) and setting forth (*her-stellen*), setting back (*zurück-stellen*) and setting down (*fest-stellen*). On this view, the *Ge-stell* must itself be read typographically: in terms of a stela that is inserted into the word to create a rift in language. Rather than imposing a form (including etymologically) or creating a direct line to other words, the hyphen is designed to configure a breach that is literally un-heard in the spoken word if one takes Heidegger's writing literally rather than literarily. In effect, Heidegger's "hyphonation," as Schufreider would call it, is designed to open up a silent space in which the word is exposed in its own linguistic creation.

In the end, then, Schufreider questions whether there is not a lost stela in Lacoue-Labarthe's accounting, and one that can never quite be found: *eine offene Stelle*, as Heidegger would say. In that event, far from being confused by his own use of the terms *Gestalt* and *Gestell* in the thirties, as Lacoue-Labarthe contends (in what amount to a "defense"), Schufreider concludes that Heidegger had all of the resources available to him to reject National Socialism as inconsistent with his thinking at the time and did not need to wait until the fifties to uncover the "truth," i.e., its falsehood as a political imposition that refuses to submit itself to the struggle and opposition required for the creation of a collective configuration.

Helen Fielding's chapter, "Dwelling with Language: Irigaray Responds," elaborates on Irigaray's unique reception of Heidegger's thought. Stating that "rather than directly following in his path, Irigaray engages with Heidegger's works dialogically" (FIH, 215), Fielding marks the conceptual differences

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between Irigaray and Heidegger, arguing that although Irigaray begins, like Heidegger, with a critique of Western metaphysics, “unlike Heidegger, it is not a relation to language and to being that Irigaray attempts to reveal; rather, it is the relation between two humans who are different, that is, the relation of sexual difference that is at the heart of her project” (FIH, 215). Fielding does not suggest that Irigaray simply opposes or rejects Heidegger’s thought. In fact, she asserts that although Irigaray’s texts are critical of Heidegger, they can only be understood in terms of their proximity to Heidegger’s thought. In fact, only such an understanding, Fielding writes, would “allow for an adequate assessment of [Irigaray’s] central claim for the priority of sexual difference” (FIH, 216). Specifically, Fielding draws on the late Heidegger’s thinking with respect to language and “nearness,” to the extent that such thinking would help clarify Irigaray’s approach to sexual difference and her own intuition of proximity. “What is factual, however, is that human beings are (at least) two,” and thus such a reflection of proximity would further allow for the recognition of sexual difference as well as other differences. Fielding writes that “This proximity is one that cannot be grasped, that does not appear, and so cannot be known as such. And yet, the relation that emerges out of this proximity, if the feminine and the masculine come into their own through their relation while retaining their distinctness, allows for the recognition of other differences” (FIH, 218).

Fielding asserts that Irigaray’s philosophical contribution is that she anticipates an economy not grounded in the being of the same, but rather “one sustained by the groundless ground of the weaving of relations” (FIH, 219). Fielding finds a unique articulation in Irigaray of this “groundless ground,” since, “[t]he ground of being, which provides the whole of the same, cannot account for the originary whole of the relation with the mother that preceded any differentiation as such” (FIH, 219). It is this primordial relation to the mother which is to be thought, a thinking that must begin from the human capacity to be in relation, rather than with inverse differences between men and women, a thinking that allows for a rethinking of sexual difference as neither essential nor completely constructed. “Rather than it being the ontico-ontological difference that is the most unthinkable of differences, for Irigaray it is this elusive yet primordial relation with the mother that needs to be thought” (FIH 219).

Fielding insists that Irigaray does not seek to repudiate Heidegger’s claim that language is the house of being but would question the totalizing nature of his claim and the fact that, in Irigaray’s view, Heidegger disallows “a language of nature or alternate rhythms” (FIH, 221). For Irigaray, Heidegger’s language of Being is “a closed system” that cuts “off the possibilities of language for opening up the future through a communication between two in the present.” Fielding shows that Irigaray sought to “remind Heidegger of his own insight

that language is rooted in the body” (FIH, 221) and to radicalize such a claim in terms of our abyssal debt towards it and of the community it opens up.

Allen Scult’s chapter, entitled “Forgiving ‘*La Dette Impensée*’: Being Jewish and Reading Heidegger,” reflects on Marlène Zarader’s reception of Heidegger in her book *The Unthought Debt: Heidegger and the Hebraic Heritage*.<sup>7</sup> Zarader’s reception of Heidegger provides a path for Scult to reflect as a Jew on his own relation to Heidegger’s thought, and to reflect on Heidegger’s debt to the Hebraic intellectual tradition. Scult writes of his distress with what he calls Heidegger’s “stark silence,” a silence with respect to National Socialism and a silence with respect to the Jewish tradition in general (FIH, 231). For Scult, Heidegger’s silence with respect to the Jewish intellectual tradition is a philosophical silence, or even a silencing of a whole tradition of thought in favor of a privileging of Greek thought.

Scult asks, “But what if the lineage Heidegger lays out to guide the focus of his philosophical preoccupation is deficient, and the rigorously conceived ‘new beginning’ fails to take account of an essential aspect of its own becoming?” (FIH, 233). The “unthought” beginning to which Scult refers is the Hebraic tradition. Zarader’s reading of Heidegger is seen as particularly valuable insofar as it offers a “detailed delineation of the striking structural analogy between hermeneutical phenomenology as we find it in the later Heidegger and in the fundamental revelation texts of the Old Testament” (FIH, 233). In this respect, Scult cites Caputo, who wrote that “[Heidegger’s] discourse of call, address and response . . . is borrowed from the biblical tradition of a salvation history, from the religions of the Book, which are set in motion by the Shema, the sacred command or call—‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord Thy God is One.’—a command that defines and identifies a sacred people: one God, one people, one place.”

Scult laments that Heidegger does not acknowledge his debt to Jewish hermeneutics. It is this debt that Zarader’s text illuminates, showing that it resurfaces in Heidegger “transfigured: The voice of God becomes the voice of Being; The People of God, the recipients of the call, are relocated in the German ‘*Volk*,’ with Heidegger himself as bearer of the message. Zarader’s intention seems clearly to expose Heidegger’s impersonation of a Hebrew prophet” (FIH, 234). Scult proceeds to reflect on the implications of a “devotional commitment to the words of a particular text” (FIH, 236). While Zarader and Caputo see this central imperative of the Shema—the message of the prayer which hermeneutically anchors every Jewish service, the Shema: “Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God, the Lord is One.”—as being at the core of Heidegger’s “borrowing,” Scult contends that the “apparent similarity arises out of the exigencies of Heidegger’s own hermeneutical phenomenology” (FIH, 236).



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In the concluding section of his text, Scult reflects on the extent to which Heidegger's text and Judaism each entails an ontology that involves a call to an origin. With respect to Heidegger, he writes, "Yet the way to understand care—to think it ontologically—still must be grounded in the facticity of the originary call 'being what it was.' Thinking the call as the call to care links its present showing as conscience to its originary factual showing as the call of faith and thus makes a factually grounded ontology possible" (FIH, 240). In the case of "Being Jewish," the call is to the Torah, a dwelling with the words of a sacred text. Scult reflects: "'Being Jewish' turns out to be an ongoing responsibility, carried along on one's wanderings from place to place, to interpret and re-interpret the word in order to continue to heed its call" (FIH, 240). Scult finds his work as a reader and interpreter of religious text illuminated by his experience of reading Heidegger. The intense reading of the religious text entails for Scult an experience of "discoveredness." He writes:

The experience of reading Heidegger I am trying to account for here has been for me a series of returns to the authentic "how" of being Jewish as a way of reading particular texts, whose words seem to connect one to the place from which one comes, through a reenactment of the primordial always-already-having-been of the relationship between Dasein and the Word. (FIH, 242)

Thus, another debt is acknowledged: Scult's own debt to Heidegger, which has led him to a sense of philosophical self-understanding.

In his chapter entitled "The Poverty of Heidegger's 'Last God,'" Jean Greisch analyzes the "reframing" that the philosophical and theological question of God undergoes in Martin Heidegger's thought at the time of the turning and his essay is an important contribution to Heidegger's impact on a philosophy of religion. Greisch asks in a somewhat provocative way, "what are we to do with Heidegger's 'last God?'" that is, with a God that is positioned in confrontation with the Christian God?<sup>8</sup> Indeed, Greisch claims that with this motif of the last God, "what is at stake here is also a confrontation with the God of Judeo-Christian faith" (FIH, 246) as well as the *causa sui* God of the tradition. His chapter undertakes a reading of three of Heidegger's texts written between 1936 and 1939: *Die Beiträge zur Philosophie, Besinnung*, and *Die Geschichte des Seins*, texts that address the enigma of the last God.<sup>9</sup> Greisch undertakes a careful reflection on the notion of the "last" as it also implies a reference to the beginning and the origin.

Greisch writes in this respect: "In fact, the 'last God' involves a paradoxical relation with the idea of a beginning. The event (that only occurs as a 'passing' [*Vorbeigang*]) of the 'last God' does not mark the end but the beginning of a new history. 'The last God is not the end but the other beginning of immeasurable

possibilities for our history' (GA 65, 411/289). In a sense, we could apply to it the sentence in the Gospel: 'The last will be the first.' For the same reason, the end cannot be understood either in the teleological sense of an end to be attained" (FIH, 249).

Greisch wonders whether such a thinking of the last God is not a "more or less esoteric crypto-religion," or "if there is some complicity here with Judeo-Christian eschatology" (FIH, 255). Greisch responds to this question through an analysis of the "poverty" of the last God. His analysis suggests that the arrival of the last God should be understood as a mode of finitude. The theme of poverty is an analog for the poverty or finitude of Being. As Heidegger writes, "Poverty: the essence of be-ing as *Ereignis*" (GA 69, 110) (FIH, 257).

The theme of finitude or poverty is also present in *Besinnung*. While Heidegger employs the expression, "Last God," the issue in this case is the "abyss of the truth of Being" (FIH, 253). In the face of this abyss, Heidegger suggests that philosophical and Christian theology have "exhausted their possibilities" and can no longer offer salvation (FIH, 253). In the third text from this period, *Die Geschichte des Seins*, the last God is further associated with the theme of poverty. Greisch emphasizes that Heidegger in fact speaks of the last god in terms of the "gift of impoverishment" (FIH, 256). He shows that it is this very poverty that Heidegger sets against the themes of domination, power, and even "powering of power" in our time. For Heidegger, the impoverishment of poverty is proper to the "richness of be-ing" (FIH, 257).

In addition to the treatment of the poverty of the last God, Greisch's chapter undertakes an interpretive reading of the philosophical relation between the *Beiträge* and *Being and Time*. Whereas in *Being and Time* the basic mood was anxiety and associated with care, in the *Beiträge* it is *Verhaltenheit* that appears as "the fundamental mood of the other beginning of the thinking, which substitutes for the role that the metaphysical beginning accorded to wonder. *Reservedness* is the middle term of a triad of which 'startled dismay' [*Erschrecken*] and deep awe [*Scheu*] are the extremes (GA 65, 15/12). The agreement of these three moods is found in a new interpretation of care" (FIH, 251).

In this respect, Greisch shows how after the turn *Dasein* refers to the humans who discover their fundamental vocation as "guardians, and caretakers of being" (GA 65, 13/17) (FIH, 251). Humans become the guardians of the "silent passing of the last God" (GA 65, 406/286) (FIH, 251). In this respect, Greisch emphasizes Heidegger's concern that we are not attuned in our time to this task, that man has been without mood for a long time (*Stimmunglos ist seit langem der Mensch*) (GA 66, 238–239) (FIH, 254).

Françoise Dastur engages the question of the reception of Heidegger's thought in the broader context of the French-German philosophical dialogue,

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and in particular in light of the need of contemporary French philosophers to free themselves from Cartesian philosophy. Heidegger developed a thought that would retrieve a bond with the world prior to thought properly speaking, and it is this break with Cartesian philosophy that attracted the existentialists, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, and those who followed. "It was indeed a question for Sartre, as well as Merleau-Ponty, of finding in the 'philosophy of existence' . . . the means of breaking out from a Cartesian-inspired reflexive philosophy, and of thinking the concrete situation of human beings in the world and in history" (FIH, 267). Dastur proceeds in her chapter, "The Reception and Nonreception of Heidegger in France," to reconstruct this reception of Heidegger's thought, as well as its limits in Sartre, Levinas, Derrida, and Merleau-Ponty. Sartre remains caught in a Cartesian philosophy of consciousness and will, and the fundamental stakes are thus "the confrontation of the Heideggerian analytic of Dasein with Sartre's philosophy of consciousness" (FIH, 268). After a detailed terminological comparison of the vocabulary of *Being and Nothingness* with that of *Being and Time*, Dastur concludes that Sartre missed the true meaning of Heidegger's thought of Being because of the implicit Cartesianism of the thought of the French philosopher, with which Heidegger decisively broke.

Turning to Levinas, Dastur argues that although Levinas was not trained in the Cartesianism of French philosophy, "just as in the case of Sartre . . . in the last analysis, it was also a Cartesian motif that Levinas opposed to Heidegger's thought" (FIH, 271). Noting the radical break introduced after *Totality and Infinity* with his earlier commentaries on Heidegger, Dastur shows how Levinas has opted for a more classical metaphysics of transcendence than Heidegger's analytic of finitude, "as if to the thought of transitivity he had to oppose a thought of exteriority" (FIH, 275). Dastur sees a Cartesian heritage in this reference to the exteriority of transcendence, and she cites Levinas in this respect: "Descartes," he concludes, "better than an idealist or a realist, discovers a relation with a total alterity irreducible to interiority, which nevertheless does not do violence to interiority" (TI, p. 211, cited in FIH, 275). With respect to Derrida's interpretation of Heidegger, Dastur notes a constant ambivalence through which Derrida detects in Heidegger two contrary gestures: "one by which he remains within metaphysics and the other by which he places the determination of being as presence in question, thus opening the possibility of thinking being as a withdrawal or absence" (FIH, 276). Derrida is said to take issue with Heidegger's thought of difference, in the sense that such a thought "seems to reinforce the value of the *presence* of being," an issue addressed by Andrew Mitchell in his chapter. Dastur discusses this *differend* and insists on the radical misunderstanding in Derrida's reading of Heidegger, a misunderstanding that she traces in Derrida's unacknowledged Sartreanism.

Dastur contends that “it is in fact paradoxically to Merleau-Ponty that we must turn if we want to find a true ‘reception’ of Heidegger’s thought” (FIH, 279). Dastur contends that some working notes from *The Visible and the Invisible* show that the work of the “later” Heidegger served as a model for Merleau-Ponty. The notion of flesh, of flesh of the world, bears strong affinities with Heidegger’s nonanthropocentric thought of presence. Many a statement from Merleau-Ponty on the chiasm “have a clearly Heideggerian resonance,” we are told. Dastur explores these resonances by close reading of some passages from *The Visible and the Invisible*. Stressing the “remarkable homology between Heidegger’s motif of *Seyn* and Merleau-Ponty’s problematic of the visible and the invisible” (FIH, 284), Dastur sheds light on this striking statement from Merleau-Ponty that the “perceptual world is at bottom Being in Heidegger’s sense” (FIH, 282).

As the chapters in this volume attest, contemporary French philosophy of the last fifty years has been deeply affected by Heidegger’s thought. Jacques Derrida once wrote that, “what I have attempted to do would not have been possible without the *opening* of Heidegger’s questions.”<sup>10</sup> *French Interpretations of Heidegger: An Exceptional Reception* addresses that very “opening” provided by Heidegger’s questions and explores its dimensions and developments within French thought from its earliest to its most recent expressions. As Dominique Janicaud asserts in his chapter, the French reception of Heidegger has been a “creative appropriation rather than a passive reception, or in more literary terms, a saga rather than an ordinary story . . . a series of dramatic, passionate, polemical attitudes or interpretations” (FIH, 24). Indeed, entire areas, disciplines, and fields have been transformed through this encounter: first and foremost phenomenology, but also ethics, esthetics, theology, theory of action (Ricoeur), gender theory, literary theory, philosophies of technology and of the environment. Indeed, most of French philosophy of the last fifty years has been deeply determined by it. *French Interpretations of Heidegger: An Exceptional Reception* suggests moreover the remarkable extent to which American continental philosophy has itself been affected by the French reception of Heidegger’s thought. The French engagement of Heidegger has drawn a new geography of thought encompassing both sides of the Atlantic, always in a dialogue, whose contours have only begun to be explored. The present volume, inspired by Dominique Janicaud’s masterful *Heidegger en France* as well as by his life’s work, attempts to further this dialogue, to enact a genuine *sunousia* (as Heidegger termed it in his letter to Jean Beaufret of November 23, 1945) that opens Heidegger’s thought anew as it appreciates the legacy of the French interpretations of Heidegger.