

HEIDEGGER
FROM
METAPHYSICS
TO
THOUGHT

by
Dominique Janicaud
and
Jean-François Mattéi

TRANSLATED BY
MICHAEL GENDRE

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In memory of Jean Beaufret

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Contents

Translator's Preface	ix
Acknowledgments	xxvii
Foreword	
DOMINIQUE JANICAUD AND JEAN-FRANÇOIS MATTÉI	xxix
List of Abbreviations of Works Quoted	xxxiii
1. Overcoming Metaphysics?	
DOMINIQUE JANICAUD	1
2. Heideggeriana	
DOMINIQUE JANICAUD	15
3. The Heideggerian Chiasmus	
JEAN-FRANÇOIS MATTÉI	39
3.a. The Crossing of Paths	39
3.b. The Turn	61
3.c. The Lightning Flash	81
3.d. The Round	102
3.e. The Paths of the Cross	125
4. Metamorphosis of the Undecidable	
DOMINIQUE JANICAUD	151
5. Heidegger in New York	
DOMINIQUE JANICAUD	165
(1993) "Epilogue for Two Voices"	
DOMINIQUE JANICAUD AND JEAN-FRANÇOIS MATTÉI	221
Notes	227
Index	243
	vii

Translator's Preface

Wege, nicht Werke (Paths, not works). The exergue put by Heidegger at the head of his collected writings could well have been the leading motto that Dominique Janicaud and Jean-François Mattéi decided to follow in this collection of essays, where they sought access to what in scholarly terms is (and still has to be) called the Heideggerian corpus. The reader of these essays will be challenged to decide whether these readings—or these delineations of paths—are conducted by the compass and according to the directions initiated and urged by Heidegger in his effort to think beyond metaphysics. He or she will be challenged to determine whether it is possible to reenact the Heideggerian questioning within the ground where the thinker sought his own departure—a ground that must be opened to questioning, rather than demolition, in order to rekindle the sense of our belonging to the earth, sky, divine, human community, i.e., to the fourfold; in order also to reiterate the question—left pending by Heidegger—of ethics and of the future of thought.

In this preface I would like to limit myself only to a second-degree delineation—that of the paths, or the cartography, that Janicaud and Mattéi were able to detect and through which they invite us to read—or to follow for a while, at least—a great thinker of the twentieth century. "*Heidegger bifrons*," they write; i.e., Heidegger upon whom devolved two tasks: tracing the question of Being within the history of metaphysics that is paradoxically characterized by its forgetfulness and thinking beyond metaphysics, beyond the sedimented tradition of the interpretation of Being as beingness, presence,

substance, subject, absolute, eternal return—to name only a few of the guises under which metaphysics has appeared in the history of metaphysics. And this task of thinking, this *Zudenkendes*, is such that without it we would be caught in a terminal repetition (with or without deconstruction) of the same, i.e., a metaphysical identity that fails to be opened to the world (i.e., to Being) and to the fourfold.

Yet before trying to outline only a few of the signposts by which renewed attention can be paid to the Heideggerian landscape, it might be important for the reader of these essays to keep in view what these two critics are *not*. They are not deconstructionists, they do not consider that the method of immersing oneself in the playful activity of perverting the letter of texts in order to observe what will obtain concerning its spirit is a method respectful of the *Zudenkendes* of fundamental thinking. They would rather claim that such a method would have been greeted by Heidegger as the method of the *zu (nichts) denkendes*. Hence once finds in these essays allusions to Jacques Derrida and to the misconceptions of a Deleuze concerning the *Kehre*. In no way does deconstructionism's different approach open paths or take the Heideggerian paths seriously; in no way does it prepare a critical approach for the reader. Instead of that playful twisting of the letter of the texts in order to prepare—or provoke—the escape of their spirit, these two critics have preferred a more faithful approach to the Heideggerian corpus. And this corpus is not made of works, but of paths—paths leading up and paths leading back down—back down to what is still to be thought (our eyes being still raised and attuned to the dimension of transcendence): the clearing, the fourfold, and the appropriating event. If Heidegger's philosophy only consisted of works (as clearly Heidegger claims it does not), these works could perhaps lend themselves to a demolition enterprise. But if we must read Heidegger keeping in mind the requirement of the path or paths of thinking and the specific openness to a landscape (rather than a closure within intertextuality), then crossing paths (not words) with Heidegger will be deemed the most valuable tribute critics can pay. The paths of critical appraisal delineated by Janicaud and Mattéi are thus tanta-

mount to the clarification of the ways of a difficult thinker, a thinker to whom some respect is owed—over and beyond his failing (quite significant) in keeping with the political and the impossibility of articulating a commanding ethics upon his ontological questioning.

Janicaud's first two essays, "Overcoming Metaphysics?" and "Heideggeriana," both echo and pay tribute to Heidegger's "Ueberwindung der Metaphysik" (Overcoming Metaphysics). Janicaud shows that Heidegger had warned against the "hardly surpassable grotesque" to which the interpretation of the word *Destruktion* had already lent itself. The method of the *tabula rasa* evident in *Being and Time* was then also connected with a "programmatic ardor" not dissimilar to Husserl's. Hence at the time of the major treatise, the *Destruktion* of metaphysics had to be interpreted as *Abbau* (taking down, dismantling) of those all too "banal and empty representations" and of the interrelatedness of the layers of the history of metaphysics, which all hide the fundamental question. But the meaning of this overcoming (and of the connected *Abbau*, as the sense of *Destruktion*) is revealed finally in the interpretation of Being as Time, or as authentic temporality. Janicaud suggests that the "violence" evident in the term *Destruktion* was necessary in order to reveal the unthought of the venerable texts of the tradition which always skirted, but ultimately eschewed, authentic temporality. A certain transgression was at play, at work—or rather I should say, under way—in the early Heidegger in order to delineate metaphysics. As Janicaud writes: "To transgress in order to delineate, will not this be the lesson of the overcoming?" (5).

Then Janicaud shows that this delineation is oriented toward another landscape which was the hidden negative of the metaphysical layers of the history to (be) overcome. Yet this overcoming is not the simple sloughing off, the pushing out of one's way, of a tradition good for nothing. The tradition is not so much to be razed, as remembered. But this remembering is not akin to the articulation of a *telos* that overcomes an absolute sundering as in Hegel. This remembering is connected to the injunction of Being and is therefore to be experi-

enced in a turning (*Kehre*) away from the sedimented, banal, and empty representations of metaphysics. Janicaud claims that one must seek Heidegger's complex attitude toward the metaphysical tradition in the light of an experience of the nonmetaphysical terms. We are thus to forebear or endure this metaphysical tradition just as it is said that we forebear or endure grief, failure, et cetera in and through time. Such a tradition, therefore, is not unbearable but becomes entirely appropriated by the one who has experienced, endured and foreborne it. As in the case of *Dasein*, which experiences grief and failure, every step beyond grief and failure is a step through and away from them, inasmuch as grief and failure are essential experiences. This forbearing, this endurance as the endurance of metaphysics within the thought of Being, is the German *Verwindung*. This endurance of metaphysics is freed from what it endures inasmuch as it encounters the simplicity of the "there is" (*es gibt*), whose givenness comes even prior to temporality—since such a time was still caught in the *acribeia* of the description of a structural construct (*Dasein's existentialia*). For Janicaud the terms of the later Heidegger (Heidegger II), especially as they appear in the last seminar *On Time and Being*, "correct the exaggerated amplitude of the expression 'to think Being without beings'" (11). Contrary to the vacuous suspense, the free-floating status, in which many critics leave *Ereignis*, Janicaud recognizes that the "suspension" (12) of this new, necessary term in the path of "overcoming metaphysics" requires that we take its measure, or its measures—since Heidegger had indicated in the Letter to Richardson that his new thinking is "manifold (*mehrfältiges*)" (xxii–xxiii).

For Janicaud, *Ereignis*—essential though it is—is a stage manifesting itself as a clearing in the path of the thinker—not the terminal point at which Heidegger's path evaporates into thin air or northern mist, poetically dressed to mask the absence of thought. Only at such a point can it be said that Heidegger is a matter for thought and presents us with a *Zudenkendes*.

Janicaud's second essay, "Heideggeriana," explores paths beyond metaphysics from a different perspective. The struc-

ture of this essay in 28 sections pays homage to Heidegger's text, "Ueberwindung der Metaphysik," while opening it up to further questioning. Since Janicaud has refused to cut the coinages of the later Heidegger from the path of thinking,¹ i.e., since he requires that the *Zudenkendes* of *Ereignis* (and the constellation of other terms) be taken seriously and offered to a meditation and to a "measure" or "measures," it would be a complete derogation of Heidegger's seriousness to evade the idea that the matters for thought in Heidegger II are outside of a sending of Being, that they are outside of an epoch. *Ereignis* is hidden within the metaphysical epoch, within the (thoughtful, meditative, and measuring) suspension of the epoch, revealing it as what it is. In other words, *Ereignis* is within the lifting or suspending of the inauthentic time-outside-of-time, i.e., the non-time, the inauthentic presence of the *Gestell*.

The proximity and relation between *Ereignis* and *Gestell* (for Being and for thought) is what Janicaud calls "contiguity." Janicaud faults Heidegger for not having sufficiently delineated the requirements of this connection, since the *Gestell* is not some Orwellian (or Nazi) totalitarian nightmare but makes unpredictable appeals to sense (2: iii). At the same time a presumption is rekindled by Janicaud, in that for him a question mark must be maintained in the sudden juncture found between the fragility of Being and the enormity of history (2: vi). This question mark, with the attending critical assessment of rationality as our allotment, which we cannot simply assign to the closure of metaphysics, leads Janicaud to an assessment of the dwelling of the "shepherds of Being" that we are, i.e., of authentic dwelling on the earth. This authentic dwelling reveals a path of "dissidence" (2: xvi). By pointing out what he calls "dated remarks" from "Ueberwindung der Metaphysik" (which are also present in other texts), Janicaud assesses that Heidegger was never able to conceive that the political regime most suited to the technological era was in fact democracy (2: xix). From the perspective of a view which sees the *Gestell* from within the clearing of an *Ereignis* out-of-season yet inherent in the sending of Being, the Heideggerian "will-not-to-will" is interpreted as the site of an originary

mögen, an originary possibility, in which the enframing of absolute scientific rationality finds an absolute limit to its power. Janicaud's second essay concludes not on the "not-to-will" (found problematic by many), but on the original "willing" of the formula, and interprets Jünger's "line" as an axis of fusion for man, truth, and willing. If the second part of the formula wins out, then nothingness ensues and Being ceases giving itself freely to humans, its shepherds. If the first part of the formula is still read as what initiates the meditative dwelling, then thinking is still open to an essential margin, a thought still moving and open to the unpredictable. Thus the final word is neither on the side of Being nor on the side of man.

Final words are perhaps hardest to come by in this collection of essays on the Heideggerian *Wege*. Janicaud has his own way of leaving his dialogue "Heidegger in New York" unconcluded by imitating the unconcluded end of Plato's *Critias*. . . . In viewing or experiencing a work of art we always assume that the artist added one final touch—wherever it might be—that sealed and concentrated the artwork in itself. But in Heidegger's thinking path, matters are different: What better way to invite others on its trails than to leave the last step of the itinerary on a sort of finality without end . . . on the mere signs of an expression without a given directing *telos*, . . . hence where other steps are possible . . . and yet not taken?

Jean-François Mattéi opens his investigation of Heidegger's paths by attempting a simile that may surprise the reader: it involves the peripatetic course of Socrates and Phaedrus, which leads both Athenians up the Ilisos and to a tree under whose shade they settle to conduct their inquiry. What do the Socratic experience of thought and the Heideggerian one have in common? If we cannot see beyond the contents of Plato's dialogues, apparently not much. But inasmuch as both thinkers were hesitant to entrust themselves to final words, they have indeed much in common, not least of all the notion of the meanderings of paths, the encounter of ideas represented by name-bearers and made possible by places

(Agathon's house in the *Symposium* or Hölderlin's hymn to dwelling). Mattéi attempts a cartography of the Heideggerian landscape by taking seriously the claim that Heidegger's corpus will be best thought of as a series of ways, rather than a row of books. But just as Janicaud sought to secure and measure through the "method" of the *Gestell* the ways of the possible, Mattéi is in the process of delineating a chiasmatic return to the simple in the texts of Heidegger. The reader may ask: Why should the simple be revealed through a chiasmus, the crossing of two lines in the form of the letter X? Why should the simple be revealed in a symbolic structure that presupposes the act of an originary *graphie* that no deconstructionism can ever impugn? Why should the reversal $a - b / b - a$, constitutive of the rhetorical figure of the chiasmus, be unequivocally present at the core of fundamental thinking, inasmuch as this thinking is on the path to the nonmetaphysical?

To these questions, it seems to me that Mattéi has the most obvious answer: because thought—inasmuch as metaphysics is *set apart from it*—is a path of return to the simple, and such a return to the simple can only occur by overcoming errancy, by trusting in a star—*nur ein Stern*.

Hence Mattéi takes seriously the transcendence of the starry skies above us and therein detects a Sign. Although no claim to a Kantian legacy is made in our text, a genealogy is made in an earlier text, *L'Etranger et le Simulacre*. In Kantian fashion it connects the thought of an order of the world (that addresses man's thought) to the fact that we find freedom in ourselves: the light—always present in the midst of the surrounding night—of the moral law. Cosmology, psychology, and theology are all dependent upon the transcendent irradiation of a very tenuous, yet irrepressible, sparkle of light—the polar star around which the regularly sweeping spin of the entire vault is inscribed and without which the night would be thoughtless because it would be a sundering rather than a silent inscription within the cosmos.

Can it be suggested that Mattéi is investing an ontical image—laden with symbolism—in the realm of ontology? To this question it seems that we have to answer yes and no. Yes

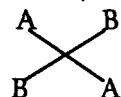
and no, first, because beyond the possibility of having any theory (in the modern sense) about the universe, there has to be a prior orientation that continues to be verified in the consistency of the data taken into account by the (ontical) discipline. But furthermore an essential dissymmetry seems to be revealed in the universe, allowing for the possibility of a cosmos: in the return of cyclical regularities the shining forth of the Same. Yes and no, second, because it is Heidegger himself who forces us to consider that his own thought with the injunction "*nur ein Stern*" (Only one star) is conducted under the guidance of a star-like dimension. If this is indeed the case, as Mattéi claims, would it not be possible to find the star-like dimension in the texts themselves? At the most radical ontological level there is inscribed a Pythagorean legacy: humans are grounded on the earth inasmuch as they greet the seasons and look up to the North star—the return of the Same—look up to an axis, Being, upon which the cosmos, the psyche, and the divine ones are rooted and around which the fourfold hinges?

Mattéi shows that the articulation of a return to the simple is presupposed in the underlying structure of the title of Heidegger's book *Being and Time* which calls for the reversal "Time and Being." Without this reversal we would have a mere tautology of the form $A = \text{non } A$, akin to the skillful constructions of German idealism. For Mattéi the escape from metaphysics can only be effective if metaphysics is set apart, as it is in paths of thinking that return to the simple. This setting-apart is "crucially" present in the chiasmic articulation of such essential Heideggerian texts as *The Principle of Reason*, with its famous chiasmus:

"*Der Satz vom Grund—der Grund des Satzes*"

(The Principle of Reason—the Reason of the Principle)

whose formal structure is $A - B / B - A$ or



The critical attention that Mattéi pays to this nonmetaphysical structure allows him to discover it in a great many other

instances in Heidegger's texts, or I should say, ways and paths, his *Wege*.

Beyond dialectics and its flight away from the simple, fundamental thought is magnetically pulled into the pentadic polarity of its star-like dimension to experience the return (*Kehre*). This return is not the idiosyncrasy of Heidegger the Swabian, a man who, for lack of a better project, indulged a song to his native land, the *Heimat*, and to the earth. This return must be experienced as a tearing away from the acerbic (scientific) determinations of a linear—and as such erring—method or away from the spheres of the Hegelian Absolute. This setting-apart of metaphysics is coeval with claiming a site for a future appropriation of authentic thinking. "Such is the profound meaning of the Heideggerian 'deconstruction' of philosophy, so profoundly misunderstood since Section 6 of *Being and Time*: it is the return to the original site of metaphysics in order to appropriate it within its own limits and to prepare a new beginning. To the intense longing for the distant succeeds the firm desire for the near" (54).

The profound misunderstanding of deconstructionism—which amounts to turning the errancy of metaphysics into a rhetoric of errancy, giving the new sophists carte blanche to fill grey volumes, where the past may be read only under erasure—is based upon the perversion of the Heideggerian chiasmus discovered by Mattéi. Deconstructionism's "childish pretension" to "demean history" (*ibid.*) is categorically denounced by Mattéi, whose earlier book on the foundation of philosophy and Plato, *L'Etranger et le Simulacre*, contained decisive corrections of the intentional (mis)constructions of partial evidence which permit the acosmic thought of a new sophistry to set itself adrift in what it appropriately calls the errancy (the line of escape, "*la ligne de fuite*") of its own deference.

Mattéi found the evidence of a cosmos revealed in a moment of vision in the texts of the nonmetaphysical Plato and of Heidegger. Therein a matter arises for thought, it is a matter for crossed articulation, giving right to high and low, left and right, earth and sky, humans and the divinities. This matter of chiasmic articulation clearly—before any "the-

sis" of metaphysics—is revealed at once, once the will of certainty is suspended within the metaphysical epoch. Therefore Mattéi interpreted the graph of the X-shape crossing (*die kreuzweise Durchstreichung* [94]) against any rhetorical or sophistical trick playing in the intertextuality of texts, as the site where the fourfold is revealed, where the clearing and the appropriating event (*Ereignis*) emerge. This emergence is the reiteration of the original site of metaphysics, a site of which, however, the discipline metaphysics has lost sight since it has now reached its completion in the *Gestell*. To rekindle the possibility of marveling in the face of the simple, our thinking must become attuned to the eternal within the present, attuned to what is revealed in the instant, in the flash of lightning, and in what Mattéi calls the "storms of the originary." This figure of the chiasmus is thus the least impugnable, non-nihilistic "archaic" path within which Being itself withdraws while revealing a site for poetic saying. And this nonnihilistic archaic path in turn reveals the nature and the requirements of the paths of fundamental thought, each of which leads to a vista, thus orienting our progress and countering the errancy of a modernity and post-modernity terminally caught in the dissemination of deconstruction.

In detailed analyses of many of the terms of the nonmetaphysical thinking of Heidegger and Plato (from the themes of the "counterpoint" to that of the "open"), Mattéi shows that no conceptual mediation is required to experience the living tensions that precede the conceptual elaboration of metaphysics. Rather, the counterpoint itself exudes the vibrant life that in Plato's texts animates the existential questioning of his interlocutors by Socrates. It punctuates Heidegger's ontological dismissal of nihilism "by sending the negation back to nihilism itself" (66). The counterpoint is thus the rhythm of Being thanks to which our kinship with the order and measure of the simple can be experienced. Consider also the term "the open." It does not function metaphysically as a Hegelian space of mediation for what is still to be disclosed, but rather reveals that Being is givenness that takes place in the instant. Hence, the open is the source of every prephilosophical medi-

ation, of every return to the source, and at the same time is itself "immediate" (135).

"Being as ground" means for Mattéi that Heidegger has to be taken seriously when he says that Being is Ground, and that Being has no ground, no prior ground for being. Being is thus a mystery—on the one hand the most elusive revelation at the center of the cosmos and on the other hand the firm status, i.e., the firmly articulated connection of earth and light, humans and divinities present in some essential myths of Plato (*Gorgias* and *Republic* in particular) as well as in Hölderlin's poetry (124–25). The abyss, therefore, holds no infernal fascination in the interpretation that Mattéi gives—as opposed to what we witness in the spacings (out) of de(con)structed reason which has been sucked into errancy or, metaphorically and tautologically speaking, into the abyss of intertextuality. Mattéi suggests a strong kinship between the nonmetaphysical sense of *koinonia* and *metron geometrikon* (of the "cosmic" myths of Plato) and the appropriating event of *Ereignis* and the firm status of measure and order intrinsically present in the "in-between" (*das Zwischen*), "diametral measure" (*Durchmessung*), "Dimension" (*die Dimension*), and also "difference" (*Differenz*).

In his fifth chapter Mattéi conducts an original confrontation of the Heideggerian *Ereignis* and the Chinese Tao, both of which are absolutely untranslatable in the categories of conceptual thinking since both entail the "appropriation of the peace of silence" (131). Such revelations are also traceable in the Hermes/Eros of *The Symposium*, whose *exaiphnes* (instantaneous fulguration) prefigures the nonmetaphysical gaze (*Einblick in das, was ist*) and attunes love and thought within the harmony of the simple. It may be noted in passing that this chapter, perhaps more than the preceding ones, presents striking similarities with Ernst Cassirer's investigation of mythical thinking in *The Philosophy of Symbolical Forms*.² To be sure, Mattéi wrote this piece before giving critical attention to Cassirer's great work,³ but the conclusions he reached in 1983 on the Heideggerian *Geviert*—notwithstanding the Davos "disputation" between Heidegger and Cassirer echoed in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*—agree to a

significant degree with Cassirer's foundation of a theory of mythical forms, space, time and number. For Heidegger would surely concur with Cassirer that what is at stake in nonmetaphysical and mythical thought is not a specific content, but a specific orientation. "The fact that similar systems are found all over the world shows that what we have is not an isolated offshoot of mythical thinking, but one of its typical and fundamental intuitions—not a mere content of mythical thinking but one of its determining factors" (*The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, Volume Two: Mythical Thought, trans. Ralph Manheim, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955, p. 87, note).

The world is always a threshold, a delimitation where chiasmatically the fourfold is brought to a juncture through the silent injunction of Being that withdraws. The thinking paths of Heidegger are thus intrinsically open to the correspondences that Mattéi detects inasmuch as nonmetaphysical thinking firmly attunes Being to Time and firmly attunes the tenuous thought of Being to the cosmic adjoining of prephilosophical figures, without which dwelling and safekeeping are impossible for humans. When his journey in the Heideggerian landscape comes to a close, Mattéi takes his leave—how could it be done more appropriately?—by evoking the gestures of mortals—greeting, praising, praying. . . . "As do children, in wonder, men stare at the night whose course has begun—the night that is, and remains, 'the stitcher of stars.'"

This collection of essays—organized chiasmatically around Mattéi's five pieces—then lends Dominique Janicaud his unique insights to explore two different sets of paths along the Heideggerian landscape. In the first of the last two chapters, Janicaud's effort is one of critical appraisal of the undecidable character of metaphysics in the wake of the Heideggerian questioning of its unthought. The blossoming of the flower—the revealing that it is, to which we (cor)respond by showing and celebrating the flower in poetry—is without why. Echoing Heidegger's famous text, Janicaud explores this "without why" and takes it to heart, protecting it from those detractors that accuse Heidegger of

fleeing into an abyss of mysticism. Janicaud grants that the word "undecidable" (*unentscheidbar*) probably came to Heidegger's attention as a result of Gödel's work. Although Gödel himself claimed to have in view only two formal systems (on the one hand the one found in Russell and Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica*, and on the other hand the axiomatic system of Zermelo-Fraenkel), Heidegger expands the thematic of the undecidable to the contemporary world as a whole, inasmuch as it is ruled by the *Gestell*, the completion of metaphysics. Janicaud points out that if Gödel's undecidable can be "demonstrated," this is far from being the case for Heidegger's. Rather, the word *demonstration* will have to gain a different meaning, since it is a delinication of "the essence of metaphysics" as such.

Contrary to Derrida's favorable sense of the undecidable, Heidegger's sense as shown by Janicaud is entirely negative and in no way should be confused with its deconstructed version. Having made this correction to avoid a slippage, Janicaud can point out that from the perspective of the overcoming of errancy—i.e., the essential—the foundation of metaphysics can become "capable of decision (*entscheidungshaft*) as decisive event (*Ereignis*) of the history of Being" (157). Viewed thus, the essential is no longer undecidable, but *undecided* (*ibid.*). What remains undecided is whether nihilism is a mere void (endlessly increasing without gaining the dignity of the Nothing), and whether the originary saying of poets and thinkers can measure up to the task of facing nihilism down. The signs of the proximity are only a matter for poetic saying and are a matter of the "crossing of gazes in the Crossing of the fourfold" (158). Citing Walter F. Otto—one of the few contemporaries from whom Heidegger drew inspiration—Janicaud points out that an instant of revelation can allow venerable figures to shine forth in spite of the fact that no temple was ever built to them. Such a decisive gaze—which, for Janicaud, is the seal of a genuine philosopher—is also called the trait of allotment inasmuch as each time one is to decide where and how the divine shines forth, where and how humans can respond, where and how heaven and earth meet in their hierogamic unity. This allotment is the trait of

the poet, the delineation of which his art is capable. The poet's unique *mögen* is a reserve settled against the rule of nihilism and the wasteland of the technological world set in motion by the Cartesian method and against the metaphysical epoch. The uniqueness of Janicaud's voice—and I should say gaze—is the fact that he insists that this reserve is a capacity for deciding where our allotted residence is and should be in its proper measure. This capacity necessarily involves what he calls a certain "empathy with Being" (*une intelligence de l'être*) (163). In light of this empathy, Janicaud claims that we should aspire to maintain "the freshness of the possible" in the midst of all ontical decisions since ultimately every ontological decision is relayed by the possibility of symbolic (i.e., necessarily ontical) analogies where we do find living echoes of our "ultimate questions" (ibid.).

These ultimate questions are echoed indeed in the dialogue and the setting of Janicaud's "Heidegger in New York." How can the city that is the emblematic seal of the modern *Gestell* lend a space for a thinking meditation, apart from police sirens and the noise of screeching brakes, possibly from the cars of gangsters? The answer is that every genuine human questioning is a space of endurance, where the most profound depths of human nature are to be tested.

For in New York, inasmuch as four friends have gathered in a sort of symposium where their diverging itineraries can be compared, a crossing is set where thought can collect itself. Perplexities and expectations, refusals and openings result from the crossing of these itineraries where Janicaud's empathy with Being allows him to be attuned to one of the most reticent objections one could level against his views. They come, it seems to me, from Sue, his first protagonist, whose acknowledged near mental collapse was noted by Hans-Georg Gadamer in the review he wrote for this collection of essays in *Philosophische Rundschau* (1985, 32: 21–25). It is hard to be insensitive to the plight of Sue, the young scientist who had meditated deeply on *The Principle of Reason*, but after a serious bout with depression could no longer experience the rose without why, or the rose in the cross of the present to use Hegel's expression. But more than to her plight, one must be

sensitive to the argument she brings forth, in particular her observation that the ontological experience is far from being simple (171). She also forces her audience to concede that, contrary to what Heidegger claimed, human language does contain something human (172). These (and other) objections force David to articulate the suspicion—not only against his intensely critical friend or against the common run of Heideggerian scholasticism, but also against every probing reader of Heidegger—that "we consider wrongly Heidegger as a sort of monument blocking our view of the landscape" (175). When it is conceded that Heidegger's absent ethics might be a mixed blessing, Francis (176–78) points out that he sees it as the site where "more fundamental questions" (176) are to be raised. But Joan, who has sensed the depths of the objections of her friend Sue, replies that in this discussion there is much ado about the unspeakable, perhaps hinting at Wittgenstein's suggestion that the unspeakable should be left to itself, *an sich*. But against such a view she points out that signs point to us, as much as we point signs to things in order to think at all. Thus, willing or nilling, we are always assigned to the disclosing of the enigma of things (180).

This dialogue is too rich to be summarized and deserves one's patient exploration in order that one may become sensitive to the various critical remarks made by its protagonists. For example, David talks about the Heideggerian "nominalization" (185) of Being and seems to be giving more ammunition to Sue's rejection of the "gloss" (187) and to the verdict that the articulation of the simple is mere "acrobatics" (190). A certain reinflexion, a renewed tension within Heidegger is found by Francis and Joan (in 193). Francis rejects the "strategies of reversal or distancing" (i.e., deconstructionism) and is thus led to affirm with greater decisiveness that Heidegger's thought escapes any understanding by those who deny it a space of intimacy where meaning is gathered together, and who then throw it to the winds of textual dissemination. To which Joan concurs by observing that the requirement of unification is proper to thought (while it would be fatal to the arts) and as such constitutive of the relationship between the human being and Being.

After Janicaud allows the sounds of New York to break the dialogue of the four participants (198), the question of the value of Taoist noninterventionism is raised. Although Janicaud does not allow anyone to object to David's echo of the "internal truth and greatness" of National Socialism by raising the specter of Heidegger's horrific silence on his own "engagement" (he takes up the issue in *L'ombre de cette pensée*—see note 1, pp. 227–28), it is clear at this point in the argument that noninterventionism is the only path of resistance to nihilism. This resistance does not amount to severing thought from any future growth, as Sue still fears, for David rekindles the notion that "contiguity becomes dynamic if the will is reactivated" (212) apart from the requirements of the dominating (world) language. Even Manhattan is now felt by Sue in the final exchanges as a place which can, with its distant lighted buildings, render "sensible the capacity to take a distance" (220), to create a reserve thanks to which thought is still alive, still open to time. Out of this reserve, an act of showing, a "monstration," will appropriate humans to the ultimate questions, and "correct monstrosity so as to make it akin to greatness" (ibid.). Hence Sue was also able in the end to dispel the dubious connection of truth and monstrosity—which has become a stale staple of deconstructionism. But, if we are truly ones concerned with monstration ("les montreurs que nous sommes"), we will have understood that all these are signs—oracles spoken by men and women wherein the sense of our belonging to the simple of the fourfold is decided each time—pointing to openness, givenness, and time, pointing to a future of thought, because some books, as well as the ultimate journey of life, will always leave stones unturned, pages unwritten, words still pending. . . .

Such could be a presentation of Janicaud's and Mattéi's essays. The delineation of the nonmetaphysical thinking of Heidegger emerges as an opening of paths and ways. Along these paths it is possible to experience metaphysical thinking in contrast to nonmetaphysical thinking and the probing of the history of Being. Against the playful word-games of

deconstructionism, these essays attempt a monstration of the clearing that occurs when metaphysics is remembered and borne through (*verwunden*) in its truth, when a possibility for another gaze attuned to the fourfold and its crossings emerges in the endurance of the questioning. What also emerges is the sense that metaphysics came to its limit in Heidegger. In his philosophy it came to be considered *anew* and *more fundamentally*. A phenomenological hermeneutic, attuned to the ontological difference, remains the only path by which humans may still encounter the simple. Taking one's bearings in the Heideggerian landscape—even if some other fundamental criticism is necessary as Janicaud attempts in *L'ombre de cette pensée*—could only take place if one is able to be guided by the star of Being—withdrawing though it is—(rather than the "stars" of the world, as Mattéi puts it with discreet but firm irony) toward the clearing of *aletheia*. Such may be the requirements for a thinking still epochal, still to come, still in suspense, still reserved in *Ereignis*.

Acknowledgments

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Foreword

DOMINIQUE JANICAUD
AND JEAN-FRANÇOIS MATTÉI

Heidegger *bifrons*. What thinker of the twentieth century more than he followed the furrows of metaphysics, delineated its constitutive difference, measured its structure, reassigned it to unity? There is another aspect, found by many worrisome or inconsequential: the "destruction" of that tradition, the discovery that its rational foundation (*Grund*) is an abyss (*Abgrund*), that the enigma of Being is still unthought, and that our "salvation" is still as fragile as the quivering of speech on the verge of silence. A historian of thought reassures; a thinker is disconcerting. *On that limit*, isn't he yet still a metaphysician—the most original and powerful of our times? In other words, didn't he bring metaphysics to its extreme limit, similar to an octopus that has emptied out its ink, so much so that every thing now plays out *differently*?

The *limes* is not at all a straight line drawn on a map. It is a path that can, either directly proceed between two fields, opening an access to them while delineating them, or surround and close a domain upon itself, as was the case for the border of the Roman Empire. Both meanings are applicable to Heidegger, and we do not intend to disjoin them: we seek first a free encounter with metaphysics, better encompassed and mastered; and second an advance into the inviolate or a path that leads beyond the acknowledged ways and perhaps beyond what can be traveled. It is true, as Jacques Derrida notices in *Margins of Philosophy*, that philosophical discourse "has

always been intent on ensuring for itself the mastery of the limit." On this view, wouldn't Heidegger's thought be a mere *repetition*, one perhaps involving genius but nonetheless much less remarkable than it first seemed? "In other words, does the limit, obliquely, and by surprise, always reserve one more blow to philosophical knowledge?" This question, which Derrida raises in the most general terms, seems pertinent concerning Heidegger only if its terms have been slightly modified or shifted. The Heideggerian gaze indeed reserves, in its very fulgurating, a certain part of the oblique *limus* (another possible etymology for our question on the "limit"); but if such a gaze is surprising, it is also because of its refusal merely to contribute to the increase of knowledge, because of its own way of suspending the quest for "more" and of allowing the advent of the Antecedent.

Indeed, Heidegger's thought is unique. Everyone is bound to grant the following: Every major thinker worthy of the name should be studied in terms of his irreducible specifics, if his originality is not for show. However Heidegger, whatever the judgment that may be passed on his work by each reader, has not perhaps been recognized in his most demanding uniqueness. Hundreds, thousands of papers and books have been written on him all over the world. In France, intellectuals have greeted him first as the grandfather of existentialism, then as the godfather of structuralism. But today people talk a lot about difference, yet hardly have reread *Identity and Difference*; there is ample concern for the crisis in rationality, but people have hardly reread *The Principle of Reason*; alarms are sounded around the enormous dangers that technological civilization seems to pose and heap upon us because of its own movement, but one hardly takes into consideration *The Question Concerning Technology*. Is an illustrious example necessary? Ilya Prigogine, winner of the 1977 Nobel Prize for chemistry, disparages in *Nouvelle Alliance* (New Alliance) "Heidegger's more than dangerous theses" (p. 38). After devoting exactly thirty-five lines of text (filled with very general quotes which, he claims, manifest Heidegger's "radical hostility" toward technological work as well as every "communicable knowledge"), he does not stoop to articulate any

sort of refutation, but instead prefers to move on to the next critics, Bergier and Pauwels, who obviously were contestants much easier to unmask.

If acknowledging Heidegger's singularity is to consist of bringing a great name under a classification, then this is not our business. In this respect, praise is at least as dangerous as attack: against both sides we are on the defensive because, in the background, we nurture no recuperating afterthought, no ideology. We don't even intend to propose a new interpretation. More modestly, we suggest taking into account—by thinking them anew—the *requirements* of such a singularity which, beyond the invitation to a sobriety of language and rigor in reading the major texts of metaphysics, are centered around the will to unmask always better the unthought of Western metaphysics. Heidegger is therefore unique not only in his ambiguous *bifrons* situation vis-à-vis metaphysics, which he both announced and denounced, but also in the dynamic he creates by claiming over and over again—for example in *What Is Called Thinking?*—that "we do not think yet." Has anyone, at least in the Western tradition, sacrificed so much to the task and work of thinking while claiming that just about the entire path still needs to be traveled? Has anyone gone so far in his meditating quest while still calling for an even deeper gathering recollection, as for the miraculous catch of a thinking still to come?

Such a requirement is all the more demanding as we are not attempting to repeat the Master, but instead to undergo the apprenticeship of what one of us has called "contiguity" and the experience of dizziness in the face of the domination of the earth and its worrisome results. At the time when the numbers are growing of those who have doubts concerning the way taken by the Western world and seek another outcome in vain, it would be paradoxical that in neglect one should overlook the smallest seed sown in the field of thought and, among others, the seed of the Heideggerian meditation.

In deciding to join our efforts, yet without confusing them, we produced the five following studies while remaining

aware, each one of us, of what brings us together and what differentiates us in encountering Heidegger's literally crucial challenge to "overcome" metaphysics.

Since the issue was to follow Heidegger to the most extreme limits of this thought, to push the questioning as far as possible along with, or against, him and not to summarize the *corpus* nor to claim that we had finally isolated its definitive quintessence, there was no reason to have a unified approach. On the contrary, as much as possible the ways of access, the angles of attack were diversified. To an essay of traditional interpretation—traditional perhaps only by its form, since nothing is more contemporary than the reexamination of the figures of writing leading to the *chiasmus* as a central piece—four essays respond whose orientation is more toward modernity (its metaphysical essence, its undecidable rationality, its possible *both* revealed and reserved), each of these four being also different from one another: two paper-like articles, a deliberately fragmented meditation, and a dialogue with four voices.

"Crossroads" punctuate the meditation on the Heideggerian *chiasmus*, and silences surround exchanges between the four friends in New York, the capital and crossroads of the technological world. The questioning precipitates, then suspends itself, as the gravity of night settles. Plato and Lao-Tse with their ancestral wisdom slip within the star-like emergence of our common perplexities. Unplanned encounters . . .

We wish to be allowed to associate in the memory of Jean Beaufret all those who do not entirely despair of thought and patiently attempt to delineate a path amidst what *Holzwege* names "the night of the world."

Dominique Janicaud and Jean-François Mattéi
1983

List and Abbreviations of the Works Quoted

BT=*Being and Time*, (*Sein und Zeit*) trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, New York: Harper and Row, 1962. Also SZ.
BW=*Basic Writings*, ed. David F. Krell, San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1976.

EB=*Existence and Being*, trans. Werner Brock, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1965.

EB (RP)="Remembrance of the Poet," in *Existence and Being*, trans. Werner Brock, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1965.

EB (HEP)="Holderlin and the Essence of Poetry," in *Existence and Being*, trans. Werner Brock, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1965.

EB (ET)="On the Essence of Truth," in *Existence and Being*, trans. Werner Brock, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1965.

EB (WM)="What is Metaphysics?" in *Existence and Being*, trans. Werner Brock, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1965.

EC=*Essais et Conférences*, trans. A. Préau, Paris: Gallimard, 1964.

EGT=*Early Greek Thinking*, trans. David F. Krell and Frank Capuzzi, New York: Harper and Row, 1975.

EP=*The End of Philosophy*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, New York: Harper and Row, 1973.

FD=*Die Frage nach dem Ding*, Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1962.