

# Introduction: Working Through Postmodernity

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Thinking the death of metaphysics and the consequences of its demise for practical philosophy is an enterprise that has inspired some of the most important philosophical efforts of the past century. Philosophers following in the wake of Nietzsche and Heidegger in particular have confronted the necessity not only of comprehending the failure of modern rationalism but, perhaps more urgently, of working through the implications of its demise in articulating a postmetaphysical, postfoundationalist, and postmodern conception of philosophy. The much-heralded death of "the subject," "reason," "knowledge," and "truth"—as each of these is conceived, at any rate, by philosophical modernism—has prompted many in recent decades either to reinterpret these concepts in more viable ways or to articulate their postmodern successors. Included in their number is the philosopher to whom this issue of *Symposium* is dedicated. As the titles to three of his books attest—*The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity*,<sup>1</sup> *The Ethics of Postmodernity*,<sup>2</sup> and *The Politics of Postmodernity*<sup>3</sup>—Gary Madison is among those in the forefront of Continental philosophy in the postwar generation to trace the implications of the death of modernism and to define the contours of a postmodern philosophy. In both his writings and his practice as an educator, Madison continues to hasten the decline of a foundationalist, epistemology-centered conception of philosophy and to look forward to an intellectually responsible, and indeed rational, postmodernism.

If the idea of postmodernity has captured widespread attention in recent decades, this is of course due in large part to the continuing influence of Nietzsche and Heidegger, an influence discernible as well in Madison's postmodern hermeneutics. The reading(s) of Western philosophy proffered by Heidegger and Gadamer, particularly of the modern period, affords the premise from which Madison sets about identifying the contours of the postmodern. Although I shall not do justice here to the scope and complexity of that reading(s)—or indeed to the question whether it is one reading or two—it is a narrative in which classical metaphysics reaches its logical culmination in the philosophy of the Enlightenment. "The forgetfulness of Being" that originated with the Greeks and persisted through the scholasticism of the Middle Ages culminated in the modern age of science-technology, an age dominated by the duality of subject and object and by the notion of a natural affinity between cognizing subjectivity and a fully intelligible reality. Methodological rigor and accuracy of representation together guarantee the veracity of human understanding, while the object

of such understanding is a determinate and well-ordered cosmos, the exact nature of which readily lends itself to metaphysical description. Human reason, ostensibly the essence of our being, fully reflects and accords with the reason that is inherent to the order of being itself. The motivation, according to Madison, behind metaphysical rationalism, from Plato to the present,

... is the Promethean desire—a desire more often than not unadmitted—on the part of man to overcome the contingencies of existence and achieve a knowledge—a science—of reality, so as to become master of his own destiny. It is therefore evident that just like 'metaphysics,' in the Heideggerian sense, rationalism culminates in modern technology and in the nihilism which flows from it.<sup>4</sup>

Yet if the Western tradition exhibits for the most part the rationalism that Heidegger and others have discerned, it also contains a counter-tradition at odds with the former and originating among the presocratics. Among the principal figures in this counter-tradition Madison mentions

... Protagoras and Gorgias, who protested against the rationalist dogmatism of Parmenides and the early Greek cosmologists; Isocrates, who was opposed to the rationalist metaphysics of Plato; Sextus Empiricus, who criticized all dogmatic thought that preceded his time, stoicism in particular; Montaigne, who mounted an attack on rationalist thought of the Renaissance from which modern science was to emerge; Pascal, who was opposed to Cartesian rationalism; Kierkegaard, who attacked Hegel's rationalist claims; Nietzsche, who fought against more than two thousand years of rationalist orthodoxy.<sup>5</sup>

A tradition unto itself, Madison's counter-tradition is united in its opposition to the arid rationalism of Western metaphysics and epistemology. Without constituting a simple antithesis of its object of critique, this counter-tradition is no mere irrationalism, but constitutes a reminder of the finitude of reason and of the conditions and limits of human understanding. It is a tradition that extends into the phenomenological and hermeneutical, as well as the pragmatic, movements of the twentieth century and includes such figures as James, Dewey, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Gadamer, and Ricoeur.

It is, for Madison, as the contemporary successor to this counter-tradition that postmodernism is appropriately understood. While in Anglo-American thought the end of modernism remains largely on the horizon of "postanalytic philosophy," a nascent movement indebted primarily to

Wittgenstein and the early pragmatists, Continental thought witnessed the beginning of the end of modern rationalism in Nietzsche's radical critique of Western metaphysics. Yet it was not until Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche that the latter made a decisive entrance into the history, or prehistory, of postmodernity. It was an entrance roughly contemporaneous with that of James and Husserl, both of whom sought in their own ways to find their way clear of traditional metaphysical categories and oppositions. In advancing "beyond objectivism and relativism" (in Richard Bernstein's phrase), the phenomenological movement in particular endeavored to overcome in a gesture more thoroughgoing than Nietzsche's, or indeed than the founder of phenomenology himself, outworn concepts and dichotomies that have plagued the Western tradition since its inception. While Husserl himself, in Madison's estimation, was largely successful in overcoming the dichotomy of subject and object that sent much of modern philosophy on its course, this figure remained very much within the tradition of classical metaphysics that he sought to leave behind. In endeavoring to transform philosophy into a rigorous science, Husserl simultaneously pursued the final culmination of that tradition while advancing a powerful critique of the same. It would be only a later phenomenology, one that begins with Merleau-Ponty, that would eliminate remaining vestiges of the metaphysics of presence, a project by no means complete and which continues to call forth the efforts of contemporary philosophy.

Much recent discussion surrounding modernity and postmodernity, of course, centers around the thought of poststructuralists and neo-Nietzscheans such as Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, Deleuze, and Rorty. This facet of postmodern thought gravitates toward related deconstructionist and skeptical themes such as *différance*, undecidability, incommensurability, and alterity while opposing abstract totality, universality, convergence, and metanarratives. Most often it stands in opposition not only to these and related notions associated with Enlightenment philosophy but to many of the guiding concepts of the Western tradition as a whole, including reason, truth, knowledge, subjectivity, or indeed philosophy itself. For many influenced by these thinkers, such notions are irredeemably metaphysical and foundationalist as well as problematic in their ethical-political implications. A consequence of this thoroughgoing skepticism, Madison argues, has been the implicit introduction into postmodern discourse of a new set of dichotomies. We are often given to believe, for instance, that we must choose between Apollonian rationalism and Dionysian irrationalism, ahistorical foundationalism and arbitrary decisionism, objectivism and relativism, while at other times distinctions are jettisoned altogether. Self and other, nature and culture, physicality and mentality, rationality and irrationality become so many fictions of dogmatic metaphysics to be abandoned in a gesture of radical skepticism.

Yet postmodernism has a second facet associated less with post-structuralism and deconstruction than with phenomenological hermeneutics. Gadamer and Ricoeur in particular, as well as those influenced by them, prefer to navigate around modern rationalism while rejecting equally what they view as the irrationalist and historicist tendencies of poststructuralism and deconstruction. While generally sympathetic with the deconstructionist critique of ontotheology, hermeneutics, as Madison conceives it, insists upon identifying the constructive implications of that critique, and it is here that the two strains diverge. What deconstruction ultimately affirms, and for what reasons—or indeed whether it is possible to pose such questions without slipping into a vocabulary of metaphysics—are matters that this other strain of postmodern thought often views as mystifying. By contrast, hermeneutics seeks to overcome both the categories and dichotomies of traditional metaphysics as well as dichotomies of more recent origin.

Accordingly, while many postmodernists appear to seek the complete removal of classical notions of knowledge, subjectivity, reason, truth, and so on, on grounds of their (purportedly) inescapably metaphysical character, the phenomenological and postmodern hermeneutics that Madison defends proposes a nonmetaphysical and nonfoundationalist reinterpretation of such categories. Articulating the death of metaphysics on this view spells the end of neither philosophy itself nor its central categories but of their rationalist significations. The creative, and indeed radical, import of postmodern philosophy on this view consists not in any straightforward negation of received concepts but in their imaginative transformation into nonrationalist and phenomenologically adequate constructions. It lies in the construction of “a viable theoretical alternative to rationalist theory,”<sup>6</sup> one that refashions notions of understanding, reason, truth, and subjectivity in nonrepresentationalist terms and traces their implications in various areas of philosophical concern. In this respect, Madison directly opposes forms of postmodern discourse that fail to identify adequately “the positive, *philosophical* significance of the critique of metaphysics and epistemology.” As Madison writes:

What future, if any, is there for philosophy after the death of Philosophy (in Rorty's sense of the term, which is also that of Derrida, i.e., Platonism)? Is there nothing left for the philosopher to do, after the death of metaphysical seriousness, but to be an intellectual 'kibitzer,' a concern-free creator of 'abnormal' discourse, an insouciant player of deconstructive and fanciful word games, an agile figure skater on the thin ice of a bottomless chessboard?

While largely sympathetic with poststructuralism and deconstruction in their critique of metaphysics, Madison parts company with both schools over the consequences of that rejection.

What indeed remains of philosophy after the demise of modernism, if by that term we understand the project, broadly conceived, of realizing

... philosophy's traditional goal of achieving a basic, fundamental knowledge (*epistémé, Wissenschaft*) of what is (*ta onta*) by turning inward, into the knowing subject himself (conceived of either psychologically or transcendently), where it seeks to discover grounds which will allow for certainty in our 'knowledge' of what, henceforth, is called 'the external world' ... [?]<sup>7</sup>

What remains in the first place is the critique of reason itself, where critique signifies both the rejection and replacement of that concept's received connotation with a properly phenomenological and hermeneutical signification. For the critique of rationalism not to deteriorate into mere negation, that critique must itself be rational in a sense connoting dialogical responsibility. It is in an alternative conception of reason rather than its straightforward negation that a responsible postmodernism consists. In adopting this view, Madison takes up an essentially communicative conception of rationality analogous in important respects not only to Gadamer's and Habermas's related notions but to those of Merleau-Ponty, Jaspers, and economist Frank H. Knight. The rational critique of reason amounts to a recognition of the conditions and limits of knowledge and a rejection of the Enlightenment reductionism that wedded notions of reason, understanding, and truth to science-technology. While in no way opposed to science or the order of instrumental rationality, the postmodern critique of reason situates both within a broader conception of discursive reason, or reasonableness. This essentially hermeneutical conception regards scientific knowledge not as a uniquely and supremely authoritative mode of understanding but as one mode among others. The Enlightenment reduction of truth and reason to method and science-technology has so pervaded modern discourse that what is needful in postmodernity is both an enlarged conception of human reason and a recognition of the values attendant upon that conception. This is a dialectical and hermeneutical rationality that prizes the capacity of interpreters to speak and respond in common with others. It is a conception of reason as an ethical, not metaphysical, category, as the set of conversational virtues that includes equal freedom, openness, civility, *phronesis*, and intellectual responsibility.

Inseparable from this postmodern conception of reason, Madison argues, are nonfoundationalist and nonrepresentationalist interpretations of knowledge, understanding, truth, and method, none of which the death

of metaphysics calls upon us to dispense with except in their rationalist significations. Siding again with Gadamer over Derrida, Madison maintains that interpretive conflict allows for principled adjudication, albeit one that is never final or that in principle could bring the course of inquiry to an end. Such hermeneutic principles as coherence, agreement, contextuality, and appropriateness make possible a reasoned appraisal of interpretations without constituting yet another form of the metaphysics of presence. Nor do principles of this kind constitute an objectionable methodologism, but are indispensable, like the hermeneutic circle itself, to the practice of interpretation. Related notions of understanding, knowledge, and truth as well permit of interpretations that make no appeal to vocabularies of representation and correspondence. The conception of truth defended within the pragmatic tradition, as of knowledge and understanding within philosophical hermeneutics, evidence the possibility of extricating philosophical concepts from earlier metaphysical and epistemological contexts and deploying them in a postmodern vocabulary.

If what is needful in modernism's aftermath is an appropriately postmodern conception of reason, one that continues to speak of the human being in classical fashion as a rational animal—or, in hermeneutical terms, a speaking animal—then it falls to practical philosophy to articulate the ethical, political, and also the economic implications of that conception. It is, accordingly, in this direction that much of Madison's recent research turns, beginning with *The Logic of Liberty* and continuing in *The Political Economy of Civil Society and Human Rights, Is There A Canadian Philosophy?*,<sup>8</sup> and *The Politics of Postmodernity*. These works as well as numerous shorter texts demonstrate an abiding concern to apply premises of postmodern philosophy to questions of political economy. Communicative reason in particular serves an especially prominent role in fashioning political principles, several of which are understood as direct entailments of the virtues of hermeneutic *praxis*. First among these, Madison maintains, is the freedom of all, which in concert with other principles of liberal democracy afford a theory of the state that not only fully accords with postmodern philosophy, but is directly entailed by it.

While it is liberal democracy that Madison identifies as the practical entailment of communicative rationality, it is imperative that a politics of postmodernity not have recourse to metaphysical assumptions of the kind that liberalism traditionally employs. While "the politics of liberty" that Madison defends "constitutes a unitary, coherent, and all-inclusive philosophy of human affairs," one that aspires furthermore to universal legitimacy, it is not for all that one that requires foundationalist grounding. Instead it is one that articulates the significance and implications of hermeneutical reason. If "liberalism constitutes an all-inclusive philosophy of human being-in-the-world," it is a philosophy that bears upon multiple

domains of human *praxis* including not only the explicitly political, in the narrow sense of the term, but also the different "orders" within civil society within which human agency is exercised.<sup>9</sup>

Madison notes with approval in *The Political Economy of Civil Society and Human Rights* the apparent renaissance that the concept of civil society is presently enjoying, however he argues that the concept has often been misunderstood by its contemporary proponents and critics alike. Civil society is commonly conceived as a public domain intermediate between the state and private (particularly family) life rather than, as he prefers, in the broader connotation of classical liberalism. The latter signification (expounded by Locke among others) regards civil society as a relatively all-inclusive category roughly interchangeable with "political society" and comprising matters of political, ethical, economic, and cultural import alike. It designates not a special domain of society but society itself organized in accordance with liberal-democratic principles. Civil society, Madison maintains, is constituted by three identifiable "orders" of human agency. These are the moral-cultural, the political, and the economic, each of which constitutes a "spontaneous order" in the sense employed by Friedrich A. Hayek and others influenced by the Austrian school of economics. This is a rule-governed order, neither "natural" nor "artificial," which is the spontaneous outcome of human action and intersubjectivity while not a product of express design. Each order is organized around a particular object: truth in the sphere of the moral-cultural (or, more precisely, truths in the plural, and in that term's hermeneutical connotation), justice in the political, and prosperity in the economic. Further, each order possesses relative autonomy while exhibiting subtle and synergetic interrelations with other orders of social *praxis*. While oriented toward distinct ends and constituted by a logic peculiar to each, such orders more fundamentally display an immanent dynamic which is animated by communicative reason and the freedom that is its principal condition. As Madison writes:

... no civil society can be said fully to exist where individual agents are not endowed with the freedoms and rights appropriate to each of the three major spheres of human agency. As classical liberals would have said, freedom is indivisible: no one can be genuinely free who is not free culturally, politically, and economically.<sup>10</sup>

In their combinations and interrelations, the social orders Madison describes as comprising civil society constitute an interpretive account of social reality broadly conceived. It is therefore as an exercise in political hermeneutics that Madison pursues the theoretical task of explicating the logic or immanent dynamic of civil society as well as its implications for questions of democracy, human rights, globalization, and the market economy.

It is, Madison notes, within the nations of Eastern Europe and the Far East (particularly China) that the challenges of understanding (theoretically) and fashioning (pragmatically) institutions of civil society are particularly pressing, and it is toward these nations that Madison directs much of his political-hermeneutical analysis. The revolutionary events of Eastern Europe that culminated in the collapse of the Soviet system signify not only the demise of authoritarian rule but the revival of the idea of civil society, an idea that constitutes the best hope that nations of Eastern Europe and elsewhere around the world possess of fashioning nonauthoritarian and civil societies.

On the occasion of Gary Madison's retirement from teaching at McMaster University, where he remains as Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, the essays that follow are written in honor of Professor Madison by scholars in the fields of phenomenology and hermeneutics, political philosophy and economics, each of whom takes up in this issue a particular theme relating to Madison's research in each of these fields and to the idea of postmodernity more generally. Since it is as an act of friendship that these texts are presented, it is fitting that the volume's two opening contributions provide postmodern ruminations upon "the ethics of the gift" and the concept of friendship itself. The essays of Part 1, "Postmodernity and Practical Philosophy," seek to trace the implications of several postmodern themes for ethics, politics, and economics, beginning with Calvin Schrag's "On the Ethics of the Gift: Acknowledgment and Response." Schrag provides an interpretive account of the *logos* and ethics of gift giving as it is played out within civil society, one that recognizes fully the perils of gift giving and receiving while endeavoring to elude the economy of exchange relations which, as Derrida had noted, generates the paradoxical condition in which gift giving degenerates into an ethic of expected return, guilt, and enslavement. Schrag proposes to domesticate Derrida's depiction of the aporia of the gift and to proceed beyond it both by elucidating the conditions that give rise to the aporia and by sketching an ethical vocabulary of gift giving organized around a notion of "the fitting response." Without itself constituting a new form of normative theory, an ethic of the fitting response—one that originates in the face of alterity—governs the granting and receiving of the gift in a way that transcends the expectation and obligation of return.

John Caputo follows up Schrag's investigation of the hermeneutics of the gift with a closely related discussion of the hermeneutics of friendship in "Good Will and the Hermeneutics of Friendship: Gadamer, Derrida, and Madison." Caputo observes that despite the "ill-fated nonexchange" between Gadamer and Derrida in Paris in 1981, Derrida's writings of the 1990s have brought deconstruction into remarkably close contact with philosophical hermeneutics in accentuating ethical and political themes of friendship,

hospitality, justice, and alterity—themes that qualify in important ways Derrida's earlier critique of hermeneutic "good will," thereby replying to Madison's charge that Derrida's position issues in a "debilitating relativism." In so doing, Caputo argues, Derrida provides greater elucidation of the positive significance and normative import of deconstruction which Madison and other hermeneuticists have called into question. Accentuating the Levinasian dimension of Derrida's recent work, Caputo speaks of a "structural friendship" at play in all speaking, listening, and understanding, a friendship less at odds with Gadamerian good will than the encounter of 1981 would have led many to expect.

Following this, Richard Kearney's "Postnationalism and Postmodernity" investigates the consequences for nationalist politics of related postmodern and hermeneutical themes which Madison urges us both to integrate together and to test in practical contexts. The context that Kearney selects is contemporary Ireland within the framework of European politics and the seemingly interminable debate surrounding national identity which that nation has long witnessed. Kearney argues that while postmodern politics must abjure ethnocentric nationalism, the same need not be said about a properly civic nationalism which effectively binds together a nation or community by means of common rights of citizenship without deteriorating into ethnopolitics. A postmodern and postnationalist politics, one that overcomes "the 'modern' alternatives of national independence and multinational dependence," must heed appeals from the likes of Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault for a decentering of power while also fostering forms of civic participation that give pragmatic expression to the concept of a shared polity. To this end, Kearney notes with approval the emergence of "a postnationalist model of interdependence," one taking "the form of a new federalism counterbalanced by a new regionalism."

Steven Horwitz then takes up a few questions in the philosophy of economics in "Money and the Interpretive Turn: Some Considerations." Traditional forms of economic and social scientific analysis, Horwitz notes, have come under increasing criticism of late, including not least the notions of instrumental rationality and atomistic individuality at the heart of neoclassical economics. What form economic analysis in a postmodern age might take is the issue that Horwitz addresses, particularly as this applies to the institution of money within a market economy. Horwitz shows how the incorporation of hermeneutical and postmodern premises into economic methodology which Madison, following the lead of Hayek and the Austrian school of economics, proposes in his research in this area allows us to understand in a more adequate and thoroughgoing manner this most basic economic institution. How money is to be conceived after the interpretive turn and related issues of economic analysis are the questions that Horwitz pursues in an intriguing application of postmodern hermeneutics.

In the concluding text of Part 1, Peter McCormick provides a contribution to philosophical ethics which takes as its point of departure some provocative statements of Kant's on the subject of warfare in "Warfare, Reason, and Moral Truths." Kant speaks in *Perpetual Peace* and elsewhere of warfare as possessing a certain "nobility," or indeed as "sublime," while undoubtedly regarding it at the same time as a violation of the moral law. McCormick interprets these puzzling remarks in light of Kant's overall conception of the sublime, a notion understood by Kant as a disposition occurring in the forms of the noble, the splendid, and the terrifying. McCormick renders the terrifyingly or "negative sublime" as an aesthetic, not a rational, idea. It is an idea that is not capturable in determinate concepts of the understanding, yet which does lend itself to imaginative presentation in poetry and other aesthetic forms. As with other aesthetic ideas, the negative sublime serves as a regulative principle of ethical import. McCormick's observations are placed in the context of an historical account of one of the most gruesome examples of twentieth-century warfare and its aftermath. The negative sublime makes it possible to apprehend ethically the ungraspable immensities of human suffering.

The essays of Part 2, "Postmodernity and the Philosophical Counter-Tradition," each address a particular figure or theme related directly to the end of modernism and to the sources and implications of postmodernity within the Continental traditions. Part 2 investigates several key figures in the history and prehistory of postmodernism—including Kant, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Gadamer, and Derrida—while looking forward to the prospects of a continuing counter-tradition informed by a postmodern hermeneutics. The first text of Part 2 is Claude Piché's "Kant and the Problem of Affection," in which Piché investigates the problematic issue of the source of affection within Kant's critical philosophy. Noting obvious difficulties with standard explanations offered to account for the affecting object, Piché investigates the possibilities of regarding either the thing in itself or objects in space as the source of affection for Kant. Despite the difficulties to which both options are subject, Piché provides an account that seeks to harmonize both interpretations while resolving the apparent contradiction that this creates. In particular, he argues for an interpretation of the category of causality which Kant used in designating the thing in itself, as a dynamical rather than a mathematical principle, a reading that allows for causality special privileges germane to the problem of affection.

Following this, Martin C. Dillon provides in "Art, Truth, and Illusion: Nietzsche and the Logics of Being and Becoming" an interpretation of several related concepts in Nietzsche's thought of central importance to contemporary postmodernism. Dillon critically reconstructs Nietzsche's argument in support of the proposition that illusions created by art vindicate reality while addressing as well some of the normative implications of the

argument and its premises. Dillon's specific focus is the issue of truth in art or the conception of truth at work in Nietzsche's texts in which art is thematized. The totalitarianism of Nietzsche's early writings, Dillon maintains, is a consequence not only of his skeptical perspectivalism but of the dualistic ontology of Being and becoming upon which that skepticism is based.

A thinker no less consequential than Nietzsche to the advent of postmodernity is taken up in the following contribution by Thomas W. Busch, "Merleau-Ponty and the Circulation of Being." As Busch recounts, Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the expressive subject in *Phenomenology of Perception* underscores the role of "sedimentation," thus decentering the subject's role in the production of meaning through emphasis upon given sources of meaning. Sedimentation evolves subsequently into the notion of "institution" and its role in the public "interworld" where subjects's lives inevitably intertwine through various "hinges" of meaning and practice. Busch argues that the turn to the interworld promotes in Merleau-Ponty's later work a developing communicative rationality and communicative ethic with a stamp peculiarly his own.

Jean Grondin then takes up the question of "The Universality of Hermeneutics and Rhetoric in the Thought of Gadamer." This key premise of philosophical hermeneutics Grondin discusses in the context of Gadamer's reading of Plato and Augustine in *Truth and Method*, particularly in a chapter of that text ("*Logos and Verbum*") in which Gadamer states that Augustine, in his conception of the Incarnation, constitutes the only exception in the history of the West to the forgetfulness of language, a forgetfulness that begins, Gadamer maintains, with Plato. Noting the oddness and hyperbole of Gadamer's statement, Grondin remarks both that it is the same Augustine who defended an unmistakably instrumental conception of language whom Gadamer in this chapter identifies as the lone exception to the forgetfulness of language, and that it is the same Plato who provides for Gadamer a model of dialogical *praxis* who is here identified as the originator of the forgetfulness of language. Gadamer's appropriation of the Augustinian-Christian notion of the Incarnation in his reflections upon language in *Truth and Method* enables him to elucidate the unity of language and thought and thus to open the way to a rhetorical conception of language, i.e., one that does not distinguish the thinking process from its linguistic unfolding. While *Truth and Method* insists on this unity of thought and language, in his later writings Gadamer seems to have shifted to the inadequacy or incapacity of linguistic expression and to the limits of language. It is, Grondin argues, the Augustinian conception of language that can help us explain this new accent.

The relation of two of postmodernism's most influential figures is subsequently taken up by Tom Rockmore in "Derrida and Heidegger in

France." From the end of the Second World War until the emergence in the late 1980s of the Heidegger-Nazism controversy, Heidegger has been the preeminent thinker of "French" philosophy. Rockmore examines the complex association of Derrida and Heidegger in the context of the twentieth-century French scene, focusing upon the decisive influence of the latter upon the course of Derrida's thought and writings. Rockmore takes the view that unlike two of Heidegger's other leading exponents, Gadamer and Sartre, both of whom succeeded in gaining measurable distance from Heidegger in their own philosophical undertakings, Derrida has remained very much within the orbit of Heidegger's philosophy. Rockmore argues that Derrida's encounter, and thorough captivation, with Heideggerian thought produced the unfortunate consequence of deflecting the French thinker from taking an independent philosophical course, effectively reducing Derrida to the status of disciple—albeit a leading disciple—of Heidegger.

The next two contributions turn to the question of subjectivity, looking in both a backward direction to the manner in which this central category in modern philosophy was conceptualized by a variety of figures and toward possible alternatives to modern subjectivism. In "Rereading the History of Subjectivity," David Carr observes that prior to posing the question of what is to come after the subject we must recall and critically appraise the case for the rejection of the subject. That case, advanced in related ways by Nietzsche, Heidegger, French structuralists and poststructuralists, and Habermas among others, too often overlooks important differences between modern conceptions of the subject, Carr maintains, and it is with an eye to highlighting these differences that he outlines the conceptions of subjectivity operative in the thought of Kant and Husserl. Both of these figures, Carr notes, regarded themselves as critics rather than proponents of the metaphysics of the subject, if by that phrase is intended the subjectivism of Descartes, Leibniz, or Hegel. Lumping these figures together under the category of "the metaphysics of presence" or "the philosophy of the subject" ignores the self-understanding of transcendental philosophy as a critique of such metaphysics. The alternative reading of Kant and Husserl that Carr provides seeks to correct this by accentuating significant differences between metaphysical subjectivism and transcendental philosophy—a necessary step, according to Carr, in identifying what comes after the subject.

Jeff Mitscherling then provides an unabashedly postmodern rendering of subjectivity in "Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow." This paper announces a postmodern Copernican hypothesis that takes us beneath subjectivity and into the flesh of the world. Instead of regarding consciousness as intentional, we are now to regard intentionality as giving rise to consciousness: consciousness arises as intentional activity grows more complex in an organic unity. This hypothesis is employed in a realist phenomenological

examination of concepts as habits of thought, or "ways of being thoughtfully." The object/patient and subject/agent of the intentional activity, along with the activity itself, are seen to enjoy "intentional being"—not merely real/material being or ideal/immaterial being. Mitscherling identifies the implications of this hypothesis regarding the nature of mind and soul while mentioning as well some of the questions to which this hypothesis gives rise in the areas of physics, metaphysics, religion, epistemology, and ethics.

This Festschrift concludes with an Afterword and Appendix by Gary Madison. The latter provides a philosophical-historical analysis of "The Interpretive Turn in Phenomenology," in which Madison recounts the story of one hundred years of phenomenology from its original, transcendental moment through its subsequent existential and hermeneutical turns. Madison analyzes the contributions of several leading figures in twentieth-century phenomenology, from Husserl and Heidegger to Merleau-Ponty, Gadamer, and Ricoeur. Madison traces, while supplementing, the century-long attempt on the part of phenomenology to overcome metaphysics and to recast thought along more fruitful lines.

The articles in this special issue of *Symposium* present original and important ruminations upon the end of philosophical modernism and the implications of its demise in several areas of investigation. In related ways they attempt to think, together with Madison, the death of metaphysics, to work through its demise, and to trace the implications of a philosophy of postmodernity.

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## Notes

1. Gary Brent Madison, *The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity: Figures and Themes* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).
2. Madison and Marty Fairbairn, eds., *The Ethics of Postmodernity: Current Trends in Continental Thought* (Bloomington: Northwestern University Press, 1999).
3. Madison, *The Politics of Postmodernity: Essays in Applied Hermeneutics* (Boston: Kluwer, 2001).
4. Madison, *The Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty: A Search for the Limits of Consciousness* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981), 292.
5. Madison, *Understanding: A Phenomenological-Pragmatic Analysis* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982), 13.

6. Ibid., 14.

7. Madison, *The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity*, 107, 107, x.

8. Madison, Paul Fairfield, and Ingrid Harris, *Is There A Canadian Philosophy? Reflections on the Canadian Identity* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2000).

9. Madison, *The Logic of Liberty* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1986), 275, xii.

10. Madison, *The Political Economy of Civil Society and Human Rights* (London: Routledge, 1998), 37.