If we have yet to understand the valuable contributions made by Italian thinkers in the well-trodden paths of Continental philosophy, the essays provide a valuable set of new itineraries, and perhaps even a breath of *aria fresca* to enliven our older ones. This collection documents the wealth of a generation of Italian thinking and positions us eagerly on the border of new generations of thinking yet to come.

*Robert T. Valgenti, Lebanon Valley College*

**Issues in Interpretation Theory**  
*Edited by Pol Vandevelde*  
*Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2006; 299 pages.*

This volume offers a variety of loosely connected papers by scholars who participated in the seminar on phenomenology and hermeneutics at Marquette University over the past few years. The essays pertain in some cases to hermeneutic theory and in the rest to various issues on the general theme of interpretation. The title is slightly misleading; if one wishes to read a volume on what is new in hermeneutics, one will not find it here. It is, however, a rather good collection and relatively even in quality for a volume of this kind. It is better approached as a relatively thick journal issue than a volume with a clearly discernible theme. The contributors are Jacques Taminiaux, Stephen Watson, Ronald Bruzina, Hans Rainer Sepp, David Vessey, Keith D’Souza, Paul Gyllenhammer, David Ingram, D. R. Koukal, Kenneth Maly, and Anthony Steinbock. The essays cover a broad range of themes and figures, including Sartre, Beckett, Royce, Gadamer, Ricoeur, Vico, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and, of course, Heidegger. The volume also includes a rather perfunctory, two and a half page foreword by the editor, which serves no purpose that I can see.

The essays by Vessey, Maly, Gyllenhammer, and D’Souza are among the stronger contributions. In his well-written piece, “Engaging Across Traditions: Royce and Gadamer on Interpretation,” David Vessey takes up a few questions regarding the hermeneutics of Gadamer and Josiah Royce and the relation between them. As Vessey explains, Royce explicitly took up the question of interpretation in *The Problem of Christianity* (1913) and gave a surprisingly nuanced, phenomenological ac-
count. While it never attracted Gadamer’s notice, Royce’s pragmatic conception of interpretation is not incommensurable with philosophical hermeneutics, Vessey argues. His essay pursues some areas of possible rapprochement between Royce and Gadamer without attempting any straightforward compatibilism. The essay also finds Vessey engaging in some well-reasoned criticism of Kenneth Stickers’ treatment of the same theme.

D’Souza’s paper interprets Gadamer in relation to a philosopher of more obvious affinity than Royce: Paul Ricoeur. D’Souza’s contribution, titled “Ricoeur’s Narrative Hermeneutics in Relationship with Gadamer’s Philosophical Hermeneutics: Continuity and Discontinuity,” argues that Ricoeur’s “triple-mimesis” in Time and Narrative can be read not only as consistent with related concepts in Gadamer’s Truth and Method but as a reformulation of the same. Ricoeur’s concept of “prefiguration” importantly resembles Gadamer’s “effective history” while “configuration” for Ricoeur shares some features of Gadamer’s “mimesis”; finally, Ricoeur’s notion of “refiguration” may be compared to Gadamer’s “application,” although “in the area of application, Ricoeur takes structural, critical and morally normative criteria associated with practical action far more seriously than Gadamer.” (163)

Throughout this paper, the author makes a more convincing, if unsurprising, case for continuity than discontinuity. The discontinuity D’Souza sees pertains in part to Ricoeur’s sympathy for the hermeneutics of suspicion and to Gadamer’s ostensible opposition to it. In speaking of suspicion and critique D’Souza repeats uncritically an old caricature of Gadamer as “averse to [critical] analysis.” (161) As he writes, “unlike Gadamer, Ricoeur would maintain that any narrative should in principle be open to a critical assessment,” while for the former texts may be treated only as “the repository of wisdom with which to dialogue.” (161) It may be time to put this caricature to rest, but this essay does not do so.

Maly’s paper, titled “Emergence and Interpretation,” finds him engaging in some rather good Heidegger interpretation, particularly as it concerns “A Dialogue on Language” and Contributions to Philosophy. Maly’s prose is impenetrable to anyone not well versed in Heidegger, but those who are will find it a significant contribution and accompaniment to his recent book, Heidegger’s Possibility: Language, Emergence—Saying Be-ing (2008). Against certain postmodern critiques that continue to speak, as Maly puts it, of either “arbitrary ‘construction’ or interpreta-
tion,” he makes the case for “a more refined understanding of how things are, including the convergence of emergence and interpretation, convergence of what shows itself and the saying/showing of that showing.” (268–9) The theme of emergence and enowning is especially well treated in this essay, although in terms rather difficult to paraphrase. I therefore cite Maly again: “In the saying that hermeneutics does, ‘emergence and interpretation’ becomes the onefold of emergence that enowns the hermeneutic of enowned Da-sein. Be-ing as emergence and thinking/saying as hermeneutics is the originary turning of enowning.” (269)

Paul Gyllenhammer addresses “The Question of (In)Tolerance in Heidegger’s Account of World-Disclosure.” This paper is a step or two down from Maly’s in terms of originality. Gyllenhammer argues that “an engagement with foreign ways of existing is a necessary condition for becoming aware of one’s own historical limits and, consequently, for being authentic in Heidegger’s sense.” (168) Tolerance of and interaction with foreign ways of life are conditions of the possibility of an awareness of our hermeneutic situation. This suggests a Heideggerian affinity to virtue ethics, Gyllenhammer suggests. The virtue of tolerance “stems from its function in drawing us to an awareness of who we are: historically finite beings.” (196) With the exception of the quick reference to virtue ethics, this is not a startling hypothesis, although the author does at least an adequate job of demonstrating his case. In the event that any were in doubt about the value of tolerance, this essay advances a persuasive argument on its behalf.

Overall, this volume offers some very competent scholarship even while it does not provide a great deal that is new. Its contribution to phenomenology and hermeneutics may be modest, but as is so often the case with collections of this kind, the stronger essays make it worthwhile reading.

Paul Fairfield, Queen’s University