to protect the particular. Living within such tension may be possible in small
groups where knowing the members of the community and dialogue with
them is possible. But in larger contexts, let alone national ones, neither is
possible. For this reason we look to such devices as law and constitutions to
provide determinacy in setting out the terms of reference for relationships
between individuals. Angus' approach seems then to suffer from the same
malaise as his existentialist influences, Grant and Innis, in not being able to
account for large-scale organizational needs.

Developing strategies for national identity must include an understanding
of how we can deal with anonymity and the impossibility of genuine dialogue
between the players across the nation. It must also deal with the fact that,
after developing to a certain size, communities inevitably fracture into smaller
units whose identity needs to be protected. Angus sees this tendency clearly,
as he prescribes the setting of borders, but he does not seem to deal
adequately with the demand at large-scale community or national levels for
a more formalized, universal conception of identity.

BRUCE MORITO, Athabasca University

Rhetoric and Hermeneutics in Our Time: A Reader
WALTER JOST and MICHAEL HYDE, Editors

This collection gathers contributions from an impressive list of scholars,
including Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, and David Tracy to name a
few. Many of the contributions are reprints of previously published essays,
while some are published here for the first time. The two essays by Gadamer
appear here for the first time in English translation. The editors provide a
thorough index to accompany the essays, and they offer both a Prologue and
an Introduction to the collected essays.
The aim of the collection is "to show the novice and expert alike what some
versions of contemporary rhetoric and hermeneutics look like and to propose
how the two can be thought of together, for each not only presupposes but
extends and corrects the other"(xii). While both rhetoric and hermeneutics
have experienced a rebirth in contemporary thought, these two fields have yet
to enter into a fruitful dialogue. In order to generate dialogue, the editors
intend to avoid the imposition of strict definitions and delineations on either
field. Instead, they offer an open-ended exploration that encourages the
novelty that a dialogue between the two fields can generate. In their view, the
importance of this coupling of rhetoric and hermeneutics is that it can
germinate inventive ideas within the sphere of praxis (xx).
The essays in the collection are structured around four sites (topoi) where rhetoric and hermeneutics intersect. Part I, “Locating the Disciplines,” provides an impressive examination of the capacities of each field, as Ricoeur puts it, for “arguing, fashioning, and redescribing” (71). Part II, “Inventions and Applications,” presents a somewhat unfocused examination of the role of prudence in both rhetoric and hermeneutics. Through investigations of a number of different contexts, Part III, entitled “Arguments and Narratives,” provides a fine discussion of how the notion of “the text” can establish an interrelation between the treatment of argument by rhetoric and the treatment of narrative by hermeneutics. The essays grouped in Part IV, “Civic Discourse and Critical Theory,” aim to show what the intersection of rhetoric and hermeneutics can contribute to ethics, but as a whole, they do not meet the full potential of this suggestive theme.

As a consumer, it is advisable to be cautious about volumes of collected essays, especially when the title contains the conjunction ‘and,’ since they often merely seek to accomplish some combination of the following goals: the widening of sales markets, the satisfaction of publication demands for contributors seeking tenure, and the proliferation of culture as a production industry. So, the following question must always confront such a collection: Does the volume reflect the conjunction ‘and’ in the sense of its function to signify parts joined into a whole or in its function to signify independent parts joined in a numerical series? This question pertains to two aspects of a collection. First, the question is whether the terms of the title — here the fields of ‘rhetoric’ and ‘hermeneutics’ — are truly investigated together in these essays. Second, the question is whether the individual essays in the collection are truly joined together by a common theme. Basically, this text successfully responds to the former question, but falls short with respect to the latter one as a result of unsuccessful editorship.

This collection faces the question of the relation between rhetoric and hermeneutics in a straightforward and insightful manner. It is noteworthy that each essay in this collection both possesses a high degree of scholarly sophistication and still remains easy to follow. Moreover, each contributor provides a graceful and unique articulation of his or her view of the relation between rhetoric and hermeneutics. This provides the reader with a clear understanding of the interrelation between these two fields. In particular, I would single out Gadamer’s insightful conclusion that rhetoric and hermeneutics are not activities performed only by specialists, but “belong to human beings as such,” (58) as a highly provocative claim that merits further exploration.

The shortcomings of this collection are not due to the contributors, but to the editors. In both the Prologue and the Introduction, the editors misrepresent the focus of the essays that appear in the collection. For example, the Introduction treats the connection between rhetoric and hermeneutics in such
thinkers as Heidegger, Lévinas, Gadamer, Vico, Wittgenstein, and Cavell. However, the works of Vico, Wittgenstein, and Lévinas are not significant for any of the contributions in the volume. A more preferable approach to this Introduction might have been to introduce the volume either through a brief sketch of the historical neglect of the fields of rhetoric and hermeneutics or through a discussion of the influence of a single thinker who is central to all the essays (e.g., Aristotle or Gadamer). As it stands, the editors do not provide a sufficient unity to the collection as a whole.

The disjunction between the editors’ discussion and the contributions appears most sharply with regard to the investigation into the ethical dimension of the intersection between rhetoric and hermeneutics. The Introduction suggests that the ethical concept of conscience provides a “Atopical ‘first principle’ for both disciplines” (2) that underlies all rhetoric and hermeneutic activity. Insofar as Part IV of the volume is introduced as the section that treats the ethical dimension of rhetoric and hermeneutics, one would expect to find this claim to be elaborated there in greater detail. For the reader, it is then quite disappointing to find that while the contributors indeed deal with the ethical dimension of rhetoric and hermeneutics, none of them mention the concept of conscience at all. The thematic disjunction between the Introduction and the essays leads the reader to conclude that the editorial efforts were misplaced. In the Prologue and Introduction, the editors are more concerned with developing their own ideas than with their editorial duties, in particular, the duty to introduce the essays by providing an appropriate contextual background for the reader. The collection could have been very significant, either if the editors had chosen articles to fit their personal interests, or if their efforts were spent in the interest of unifying the essays into an organic whole.

SCOTT C. DAVIDSON, Duquesne University

Working Through Derrida
GARY B. MADISON, Editor

Over the last decade Rodolphe Gasche, Christopher Norris, and David Wood have published books that attempt to illustrate the philosophical seriousness and rigor of Jacques Derrida’s work. Such publications have sparked a renewed interest in the philosophical significance of Derrida’s writings. Despite the initial rejection of his work in much of Anglo-American philosophical circles, Derrida’s thought has indeed proved to be an enduring inspiration for contemporary continental thought. Whether one is a critic or