I am truly grateful to all three of you, both for the way you have spoken about my work and for the questions you have raised. I am honored; I am profoundly touched. I was not prepared for this kind of response to my work, and some of your questions, however hairy, have taken me by surprise. How should I respond to you, especially since your comments, even your criticism, have shown that you have spoken not only as philosophers, but also as friends. Furthermore, since philosophers are notoriously at war with one another, and thus cannot be friends, I will have to respond to you as friends and thinkers, as friends of thinking, as friends who honor thinking. But before I try to answer your questions please allow me to revel for a moment in your thoughtful and nuanced unraveling of some of my work. Not only the questions that you have posed, but especially the way you have spoken about my work, gives me the opportunity to try to reflect here, today, however briefly, on the kind of thinking that animates it, and in doing so, however sketchy and undeveloped my remarks will be, I hope to further this work just a bit.

Peggy Kamuf, especially, has highlighted the concern with clarity in my work—but so have Dennis Schmidt and John Sallis—and, quite unexpectedly, she has broached this issue also with respect to what in the interview I have linked to a singular linguistic deficiency on my part. But the concern with clarity and transparency is essentially a concern with universality, and as she has argued, is a way, my singular way, of seeking to do justice to another’s thought. The deficiency that in my case makes this concern with clarity necessary, however anecdotal, private, and personal it may be at a first glance—it concerns first of all only myself, and as such it would seem to be of no pertinence—points at the same time to something universal and necessary, namely the fact that, faced with the language of the other, with his or her discourse or thought, there is from the start the demand to respond, a demand which one must also be able to ignore if it to be a demand to begin with. Moreover, it also points to the equally universal fact that the other may refuse such an engagement. However, to respond with clarity to the demand in question, to what is each time singular about it, can also be the most efficient way of refusing to respond, of blinding oneself to the address of the other. This is the case when the demand for clarity and the drive toward rigorous generalization themselves become the obstacle to the challenge. This is seen when clarity would be of the order of that kind of light—a certain Platonic light, for example, which has been called a light without shadow—that is bright to the point of blurring all differences, a brightness indistinguishable from what Blanchot calls the night. The imperative for clarity and transparency is, as I have recently tried to show in a reading of Blanchot’s *the one who was standing apart from me*, at the same time a struggle to wrench a different light from the limitless and interminable light in which everything is leveled. If Blanchot writes: “*Lutter pour la transparence, il faut*” (“One must fight for transparency, it must be!”), it is clearly because transparency is not a given, and must each time be won in a struggle with generalization if there is to be a light in which the other as an other, as one who also can refuse transparency, can be encountered. As something that is necessarily the result of a struggle, clarity is also always necessarily idiomatic, always of the order of a generality or categoriality that is of necessity singular. The clarity in which alone one can do, and has to do, justice to the other is, therefore, also a clarity at the limit not only of a singular that remains opaque, but also of a generality that is bright to the point of being dark.

Denny Schmidt, speaking about my “penchant for the minimal, the wild, the para, and the proto,” has pointed to my “homing instinct for limits of a most unusual sort” and the new understanding of limit that this concern with the minimal, the bare, the merely, and so forth, implies. As John Sallis remarks, the replace-
limits as conditions of possibility—the investigation in question is perhaps no longer philosophical, or perhaps philosophical in another sense. If philosophy is, first and foremost, a concern with its own source, that is, with the limit from which it comes into its own, then these other limits that I am interested in are no longer the limits that philosophy recognizes as its own limits, as limits that belong to it, that are properly philosophical such as the founding limit in which it originates, and thus, the limits that Denny has called “the most unusual kind of limits” are perhaps no longer simply the limits of philosophy anymore.

To speak to this kind of limits, a new terminology may be warranted. One such new term that comes to mind is Heidegger’s notion of Saum—hem, edging, border, trimming, fringe, margin, etc.—to which he resorts in “Words” in order to discuss the place wherein the poet finds the names for that which he seeks to portray. The poet, Heidegger writes, finds these names at “his country’s strand” (this is how the translator renders Saum), and he defines Saum as follows: “Der Saum säumt, er hält auf, begrenzt und umgrenzt den sicheren Aufenthalt des Dichters” (225). In English: “The strand bounds, it arrests, limits and circumscribes the poets’ secure sojourn.”1 Not unlike the Derridean notion of margin, the Saum is not a limit in a strict sense. If a limit marks the space where something ends, but also begins, then the Saum may still be a limit. However, in the case of the Saum there is no determined other on the other side of the limit. Rather, the Saum, or hem, is formed by the edge or margin of a fabric folded back upon itself. And, by thus referring only to what it bounds, the Saum performs a demarcation from an other that, because it remains undetermined, is no longer an other of itself. By edging and skirting the poet’s sojourn, by holding him up and lining his way with obstacles (Hindernisse), limiting and circumscribing his sojourn, the Saum is perhaps the space for limits properly speaking wherein the poet can have a secure sojourn, but it is not identical with them.3 Although Heidegger speaks of the Saum with respect to the poet only, it skirts the sojourn of the thinker as well. The Saum is the limit of philosophy’s own limit, that is, of the limit that properly belongs to it, the proper limit from which philosophy arises within the boundaries that it

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establishes itself, and which sets it off clearly from all its others.

In my attempt to map the fringes of philosophical thought I have centered above all on those instances in which this fringe is acknowledged by certain philosophers, but is at the same time folded back into traditional philosophical conceptuality by them. Since Denny has mentioned my “fondness for speaking of very small things,” one could also in this context invoke Benjamin’s passion for small, even minute things, or Adorno’s micrologies. As Hannah Arendt has noted about Benjamin, “the smaller the object, the more likely it seemed that it could contain in the most concentrated form everything else; hence his delight that two grains of wheat should contain the entire Shema Israel, the very essence of Judaism, tiniest essence appearing on tiniest entity, from which in both cases everything originates that, however, in significance cannot be compared with its origin.” But if the tiny is given such importance by Benjamin, it is after all for very traditional reasons. In spite of its apparent insignificance when compared to what it causes to come into being, the tiny is the manifestation of a concentrated substance, in short, of the essence from which everything originates. Let me take up two other famous examples of minimal things. From early on I have been fascinated by Lucretius’ notion of the clinamen, this light swerve which occurs “at times quite uncertain and in uncertain places” to “the first bodies as they are carried downwards by their own weight in a straight line through the void,” and which is the cause of their meeting. I was similarly interested when, in Rousseau’s Essai sur l’origine des langues, I came across the contention that He who wanted the human being to become sociable touched with his finger the axis of the globe and made it incline upon the axis of the universe. Rousseau writes: “As a result of this light movement, I can see how the face of the earth changed and the destiny of humankind was changed.” Without Lucretius’ light swerve or Rousseau’s flick of the finger, both of which happen to the falling atoms and nature, nothing would happen. However, nothing within the linear fall of the atoms or in the state of nature predisposes the atoms for the slight inclination in question or man in the state of nature to become a social and historical being. Nothing from within could have determined the atoms’ collision or demanded that the state of nature make place for society. The light tilt of the atoms, as well as the bare touch of the finger that makes the axis of the earth incline, happens from outside. Because of the immense consequences that devolve from these tiny events they are in truth giant things. In his commentary on the gentle push that, according to Rousseau, leads to the inclination of the axis of the earth, Derrida remarks that a force that is almost zero, almost nothing, is a force that becomes almost infinite as soon as it is rigorously foreign to the system that it puts into movement. Understood as something that comes from the outside, as something whose effect results in the formation of swirls that become worlds or in the production of a new order within the world, the tiny turns out to be the most powerful, gigantic, and important. Even where such causation is immanent, as when origination by these tiniest of all things takes the more subtle form of constitution, transcendental a prioris, conditions of possibility, and so forth, the difference that they make is equally important, and thus suggests that their exteriority is not entirely eliminated.

By contrast, the things that make up the hem of philosophical thought are minimal, tiny things, barely things, or, as Derrida writes, “nothing or nearly nothing.” Because they are not outside, unbreached and present state of affairs, they are also not things which turn out to be giant. But to speak about these things as almost zero, or almost nothing, still conforms to the way in which the tradition has accounted for, conceptualized, and appropriated the fringes of philosophical thought. Although Friedrich Schlegel declared himself “disappointed in not finding in Kant’s family tree of basic concepts the category ‘almost,’” this “category” which, according to the Jena Romantic, “accomplished, and spoiled, as much in the world and in literature as any other,” is, indeed, ubiquitous in philosophical discourse. To speak of the moral law in Kant it is nearly impossible not to refer to it as almost nothing, and the same is the case with Heidegger’s understanding of Being. Is it not revealing that Vladimir Jankélévitch even subtitled his Philosophie première, an Introduction à une philosophie du ‘presque’? Besides its scepticist reservation, the “category” of the
almost continues to implicate substance, presence, and Being. But, at the same time, this “category” also blurs the lines between, in this case, the transcendental and the empirical, the essential and the factual, intimacy and exteriority, and even Being and Nothingness, and it is thus a “category” that, perhaps, allows one to approach, however cautiously, the margin of philosophical thought. Cautiously I said, so as to avoid, in spite of the inevitable need to resort to classical language and regressing to conditions of possibility, these minimal things taking on the significance of origins, causes, reasons, a priori, or enabling conditions. They do not produce, constitute, enable anything, and yet they are “there” in that, without such a margin which in itself is inconspicuous, insignificant, and inessential, nothing would have the means to establish the limits within which it can come into its own through distinguishing itself from its others.

I have already taken up a lot of time and still have to address all three of your interventions. All of you have posed a series of critical questions, even some hairy ones. But in order to prevent the expected on an occasion like this, that is, simply “doing the honors,” Peggy, apart from asking questions and making remarks, has also sought to engage my work “elsewhere or otherwise, otherwise than in its own clear terms.” For me to do justice to this engagement is a formidable task, and I can only hope that in my response I will at least not lose sight of this task. It is, in particular, an arduous task in that I also do not fully master the idiom in which Peggy writes and thinks, and I must, therefore, be extremely cautious in deciding what, indeed, she has said, and this, as she has also reminded us, necessarily implies cutting and leaving out some of the things she has said. The first moment in which Peggy has chosen to engage my work otherwise than in its own clear terms is by way of what I say in an interview about a certain linguistic disability and deprivation of mine that has led me to cultivate discursive clarity free of idiomatic singularity in order to respond in responsible fashion to the thought of the other. What Peggy asks is whether this supposed deficiency is not at the same time what singularly signs a universal discourse intent on honoring the singular thought of the other, a signature that thus, in turn, also allows the countersignature of the other. In more general terms, I understand her engagement to take its departure from that which, within the light of the universal itself, is necessarily indebted to a certain obscurity, that from which alone a discursive clarity freed of idiomatic singularity for the expression of the thought of another becomes possible. Thus, more concretely, I understand Peggy’s engagement with my work to focus on that which, within the necessity of seeking transparency, inevitably bears the mark of singular contingency, of a non-generalizable experience that concerns only me, in other words, on the limit that is necessarily inscribed in transparency, a limit that restricts its scope, no doubt, but without which, paradoxically, transparency would also remain opaque and would not permit the other to countersign the response to what is both singular and universal in his or her thought.

Peggy wonders whether what I described as a singular, non-generalizable experience of linguistic deprivation—my uneasiness in the foreign idioms in which I think and write—“is the signature of a singular contingency or a binding general necessity?” She then asks “Is this necessarily an alternative?” and thus bows to the necessity that light (the universal, the general, the conceptual) inscribes within itself an idiomatic limit from which it shines forth—like the tain that no mirror can reflect, but without which reflection would be impossible—but only to, then, “try converting or displacing this sort of question by means of [another story then my own, namely] the story of Kafka’s first encounter with Oskar Baum.” This is another anecdote about a deficiency, or rather a disability—Oskar Baum’s blindness—that, at first, seems to concern the narrator alone and to be without pertinence to the recounted scene’s general significance of honoring an other. But Peggy’s recourse to this story also suggests

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that, by declaring a disability to be without pertinence, all significance of singularity is effaced only for the benefit of the recounted scene’s general significance (namely, of honoring an other, no doubt, but only an other in general), or in favor of a seemingly pure conceptual discourse that responds solely to what in another’s thought is itself transparent. By declaring any such singular deficiency to be without pertinence no one signs, in fact, and no one countersigns since nothing has happened, no event, no oeuvre worthy the name has occurred. But, as “the chance grazing of O’s forehead by K’s hair as their two heads were lowered in silence before the other,” both in Oscar Baum’s account of the encounter and in Hélène’s Cixous’ rewriting of the anecdote demonstrates, it is precisely this disability that (by having first been bracketed) makes possible the expression of respect due to another, but that in all its unbracketed singularity also causes the encounter to have been an event and to “faire oeuvre.” By, in the interview, linking my obsession with clarity to a linguistic deficiency, I may have rationalized this deficiency away and hence relegated the contingent singularity as the mark of my devotion to transparency. By arguing that such deficiency is also “a singular signature of the general,” Peggy not only has highlighted the necessary mark of contingency and idiomaticity in a discourse that seeks to make the thought of another transparent, but has, indeed, engaged my work not only otherwise, but from the place of the other—her place—and countersigned what I have taken to be only a limit that concerns me alone.

The second set of questions that Peggy raises, which she develops in a discussion of my response in “A Relation Called ‘Literary’” to Derrida’s “Before the Law,” concerns the inevitable decisions that enter the process of interpretation and permit generalization. In the case of “A Relation Called Literary,” it is the decision on my part that Derrida’s “Before the Law” is “philosophical more or less, more rather than less, more at least than it is literature.” Peggy focuses on the necessity that drives such a decision, not in order to suggest that it could have been averted or that it cannot be justified, but rather to ask how my “response [to Derrida’s text], in all its generalizing, clarifying rigor, at the precise conjunction from which it responds as it must, necessarily” proceeds to such decision and selection. In other words, she asks about the singular way in which this necessity imposes itself on that precise occasion. Only because of the singular way in which the law in question marks my intervention will my response have been one of an invention as that which all response requires and will it have accomplished this, in particular, by developing the law that causes literature and philosophy to generate within themselves the possibility of their mutual other. At the same time, however, a decision has presided over this response, a decision that also implies “a kind of effacement of whatever could tend to impede the clarity and neutrality of understanding for the other, at the other’s address.” This decision to neglect other possible contextualizations by following up on the references in “Before the Law” to Kant’s Second Critique and Freud’s remarks about disgust at the genital zone which can shed light on Kafka’s story insofar as it is also a story of hair. Peggy is right to point out that my “necessarily selective reading is clearly more reluctant to ignore the hints that led back to Kant rather than those that point toward Freud and his disgusting theory.” Undoubtedly, my concern in “A Relation Called Literature” was to argue for the predominantly philosophical nature of that essay, a decision motivated by the context in which it was written. In granting a nod to the universal, here understood in terms of conceptual clarity, and in attempting to prevent the discourse of the other from obscuring itself in my writing, I necessarily could not but blind myself, as it were, to what in the oeuvre of the other refuses clarity, even if this other be a philosopher. Undoubtedly, without recognizing the “right,” if I may call it that, of the other to obscurity, the attempt to do justice to his or her discourse by responding with clarity to clarity lacks the full singularity required for it to be the singular happening of a response. By observing that in “A Relation Called Literature” I “managed to prevent something like a hair from protruding above the text” that I write, Peggy has put her finger on a deficiency of any discourse aspiring to clarity, a deficiency that this necessary aspiration inevitably inscribes within itself.

I now turn to Denny’s question about “far more radical [limits]” than I or Kant are ready
to acknowledge, limits regarding the relation of the human to nature. The “mere” of “mere judgment” and “mere form” is, indeed, one of the smallest of sites (as Denny has put it) where the limits that the human being experiences in his encounter with nature can be apprehended, and which are of the order, first of all, of cognitive limits. Denny is certainly right to suggest that it is “a sensitivity to limits properly understood” that made me highlight these problematic limits in the first place. But it needs to be added that, however small this cognitive limit of mere reflection or judgment may be, it is also a limit that has its systematic place within the Kantian system. Although Kant does not explicitly expand on this limit, it remains a limit that is an intrinsic part of the constellation of limits that his Critiques have laid out. It is unmistakably a limit of philosophy in the objective sense of the genitive, rather than a limit of philosophy in a subjective sense. Before I try to answer the question about far more radical limits, let me say a word or two about my reading of the *Critique of Judgment*. If, in *The Idea of Form*, I limited my account of the Third Critique to its first part, this is because that part has been historically the most influential. However, this does not mean that I did not consider the part on the teleological and the order in which the parts follow one another to be without significance. Indeed, I could not agree more with Denny when he claims that “Kant’s Critique of Judgment is a self-rewriting text,” and that “the insights of the investigation into teleological judgment retrospectively changes how we are to understand the analysis of aesthetic judgment.” As you know, in the section devoted to the judgment of the beautiful, the free play of the faculties concerns the relation between the imagination and the understanding, whereas in the judgment of the sublime the imagination relates to reason. If I argued, and in fact against much of the existing scholarship on the Third Critique, that even in the judgment on the beautiful reason plays a decisive role—for example, in that the aesthetic judgment of a singular thing according to its form alone requires not only a schematic presentation (though without determined concepts), but a symbolic presentation as well, by which the mere idea of a maximum of reason is brought to bear on such a judgment—it is in the full awareness that the significance of reason only increases as one progresses in this work, and that this increase culminates toward the end of the exposé on the teleological judgment with the incarnation of the sovereign Good in a cosmopolitan state. In my reading of the *Critique of Judgment* I have tried to expand on what, ultimately, will turn out to be the primacy of practical reason over the cognition of nature, but have done so only within the conceptual limits of the first part and the tools provided therein. This is also one of the reasons why I have resisted drawing on what Denny has called the appropriation of Kant’s third *Critique* by German Idealism and early German Romanticism. Before drawing on these resources I want to force myself, and my readers, to stay with the text, with the letter and the spirit of Kant’s text.

I have not only restricted my study to the mere judgment on mere form and on the formlessness of the sublime, but I have also contended that even this smallest of all sites still needs further exploration before one proceeds to a consideration of what Denny has called far more radical limits. In fact, I have already done additional work on the enigmatic notion of a schematism without a concept and how it bears on the formation of mere form. In the future, I would also like to examine what, exactly, the role of the categories amounts to in a reflective judgment on something that lacks determined concepts. After all, the limit of the mere is a limit concerning the cognition of nature.

Denny wonders whether, in *The Idea of Form*, I did not overstate “the para-epistemological character of the aesthetic judgment, and understate the proto-ethical character of what is disclosed by it.” (In general, as I have already acknowledged, trying to make one point takes place at the expense of another. My first aim in the book was to counter aestheticist and formalist interpretations of the Third Critique). I highlighted the accomplishment of judgments concerning singular objects for which no determining concepts are available because, first and foremost, the discussion of the aesthetic judgment of the beautiful concerns this phenomenon through which cognition comes to a halt. As I pointed out already, the mere form of an object that is judged in a judgment of taste, although it primarily animates the imagination and the understanding to enter into a relation for what Kant calls

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“cognition in general,” also involves reason to some extent. But reason is employed here only at the service of making a cognition in general possible when determined concepts are missing. If what is disclosed by the accomplishment of an aesthetic judgment has paraepistemological character, then it is because such a judgment succeeds in establishing the conditions for a cognition in general where determining reflection has come to a halt. This accomplishment only signifies that nature and our cognitive faculties stand in a relation of agreement, and there is, at best, only a hint that such agreement has ethical implications. In the “Analytic of the Sublime,” the performance of this kind of judgment in the presence of absolute formlessness points already to the leverage that reason, and the cultivated human being, have over nature and explicitly evokes the supra-sensible destiny of the human being. Finally, the famous paragraph fifty-nine speaks of beauty as a symbol of morality, though only as symbol and not a schema, insofar as the judgment about the beautiful (rather than beauty itself, I would say) is structurally analogous to a moral judgment. This is as good it gets in the first part of the Third Critique regarding the significance of the ethical.

Indeed, in the reflective judgment, in mere reflection, “reflection [is, to quote Denny] lodged in, and proper to, an elemental limit: the cognitive halt of the understanding and the endless play of the imagination before the wild.” But what the third Critique seeks to demonstrate is that reason has ways of coming to grips with that limit and that, in the judgments of the beautiful and the sublime, it succeeds in actualizing conditions that make a cognition in general possible, whereas in the teleological judgment reason helps producing something like a cognition by way of the thesis of an “as if” causality. Reading the third Critique backwards, it is clear that it is practical reason which, in the face of the strictly cognitive limits regarding nature, compels the mind to proceed to such an expansion [Erweiterung] of the cognitive faculties and their reach. In The Idea of Form I have sought to highlight in particular the precise accomplishment of these limit-judgments (Grenzurteile) that are the judgments on the beautiful and the sublime in the face of the elemental limit that certain phenomena of nature pose to cognition: above all, that of the singular objects of nature and the absolutely formlessness of a nature in upheaval. Now, Denny asks, does the focus on these accomplishments, as well as the idea of form involved in them, “expose enough of what is arguably the most important insight of Kant’s Critique of Judgment and indeed of aesthetic experience in general, namely, how it is that in such experience we are placed in a relation with that which we cannot define, control, or bid into being?” In relation, that is, with nature and the non-human! Let me say, in passing, that reason, as Kant understands it, is something non-human as well, and that we can neither define, control, or bid it into being. Furthermore, Kant’s suggestion in Religion within the Limits of Reason that radical evil can only stem from reason itself points to such an inhuman limit of reason as well. Now, I agree with Denny that nature in the third Critique, but also in the Metaphysics of Morals, reveals itself as potentially a threat to reason. Kant acknowledges such a threat in what he says about what is nauseating as well as about morally abject sensuous desires. But above all the very need to expand cognition to cognition in general where cognition fails demonstrates that nature poses a threat that must be warded off. Potentially non-reasonable nature is, indeed, a limit more radical than the limits of cognition and the limits of the kinds of judgments that serve to mend its shortcomings. The threat of a radically non-reasonable nature is the presupposition of the whole enterprise of the third Critique, wherein it eventually becomes clear that the aesthetic and the teleological judgments are ethically significant judgments in that they successfully hold that threat in check and thus secure a however fragile world for the human.

However, this far more radical limit that nature itself represents to the human being is still a philosophical difference. It is “the most important insight,” as Denny put it, that is, in short, the foundation of Kant’s philosophical thought, but hence also part and parcel of what it founds.

Finally, I come to the questions that John Sallis has posed with respect to the essays dealing with Heidegger in Of Minimal Things. I will focus above all on his comments and critical questions about my 1989 essay “Floundering in Determination,” and I begin by re-
calling that, at the time I wrote this piece, I was working on a project that intended to explore how, in German Idealism, Bestimmung in the sense of determination, is linked to Bestimmung as vocation in the sense, for instance, as when Fichte refers to the Bestimmung des Menschen. Nothing became of this project, except for a couple of smaller pieces such as this one which is limited to a discussion of Bestimmung in the sense of determination, particularly in Being and Time. John has accurately described the question from which I start this essay: because the concept of determination has been shown to be only a restricted mode of dis-covering, and to apply exclusively to the ontological realm of the present-at-hand, it is hence totally inappropriate with respect to Being which “demands that it be conceived in a way of its own.” Heidegger nonetheless continues to rely on this concept in his elucidation of Being without seeking to reconceive the term, as one would have expected, by establishing its fundamental, originary, or proper meaning. I agree with John that the specific way in which Being and Time carries out “the ontological analysis of Dasein” shows a different way of determination at work, but this mode of determination is never explicitly, never conceptually clarified, and Heidegger continues to use the concept and its derivatives as if the unambiguous relegation of this concept to the realm of the present-at-hand had never occurred. Even though, in what John has called a “methodological sketch,” Heidegger claims that, in his analysis of Dasein, interpretation partakes in the originary disclosure that characterizes Dasein “in order existentially to raise to the level of the concept [in den Begriff zu heben] the phenomenal content of what has been disclosed,” such conceptualization is still to be thought as a giving definiteness to—in the original, as a “in die Bestimmtheit bringen.”

Considering the lack in Being and Time of a concept of determination specifically cut to the size of the task of thinking Being, I inquire into the question of whether Being and Time offers “an originary synthesis that would account for all forms of determination.” And my answer, I quote John, “is that there is not—or rather, more precisely, that the development of such an originary synthesis ‘cannot but flounder.’” “Flourding” is the term that the translator of “What Is Called Thinking,” uses to render Taumel im Gewöhnlichen. Flourding in commonness, Heidegger explains here, is an inevitable danger in thought’s proper life, in thought’s concern with what is proper, with the proper meaning of words. To flounder is not to founder or fail, and, if I speak of “flourding in determination,” I am not faulting Heidegger for some deficiency. So, if I hold that Stimmung (state-of-mind, mood, attunedness), as an originary synthesis of various modes of determination in Being and Time, flounders in accounting for all the modalities of determination and related terms, this is not only in the full recognition of the inescapable necessity of thought to seek an originary synthesis, but also in recognizing that the danger of flourding in commonness is part and parcel of this “high and dangerous game and gamble” that is thinking. But I must admit that, however much I subscribe to the necessity for thought to retrace concepts back to an originary sense, and to account for a manifold of phenomena, conceptual or not, by way of fundamental, or originary, syntheses, I also think that this very gesture and exigency of thought must be confronted with its limits and be reinscribed into a law, and I gesture toward this at the end of the essay, which, rather than being a synthesis, would have to be of the order of a Geflecht, a network capable of interlinking heterogeneity in a way synthesis cannot.

Now, John takes issue with the way I explore, in Being and Time, the possibility of a synthesis that would make it possible to derive “determination” as a phenomenon derivative from a more originary way of relating and even to account for the abundant additional derivatives of determination to be found in Heidegger’s work. But such exploration is no longer strictly speaking the search for a more originary unity. Rather, it is an attempt, admittedly violent, to weave together heterogeneous items in a network that binds them together in spite of their heterogeneity without, however, deriving them from a unifying substrate. Now, John questions my contention that, in Being and Time, Stimmung is this “most primordial unity” and deems this prioritizing to be “less than justified” in that Stimmung or Befindlichkeit, in Being and Time, “is presented, not as the most primordial unity, but as one of three equiprimordial components of Dasein’s Be-

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most importantly, if I construe Stimmung is, in a certain sense, the whole itself). But Stimmung as the synthesis in question. How articulation would have no meaning. All of this may still not justify construing Stimmung as the synthesis in question. However, if I grant such importance to Stimmung and construe it as an originary synthesis from which not only determination can be derived as a mode of understanding, but also other concepts as well, such as Übereinstimmung (the whole problematic of homoiosis and adequatio), it is because, basing myself on certain developments by the later Heidegger on Stimme, I hear in the word Stimmung not only “state of mind,” “mood,” and so forth, but a most elemental cohering and relating without which no synthesis is conceivable. Needless to say, some interpretative violence is involved in interpreting Stimmung in Being and Time in this manner, and, if I understand correctly, it is this violence that John has implicitly in mind when he objects against my raising of Stimmung to a fundamental synthesis. If my aim had been to construe a fundamental synthesis, then, indeed, prioritizing Stimmung as I do would be problematic. The aim, however, was “only” to sketch out an interconnecting network for Stimmung and all related concepts in Being and Time, and this attempt, needless to say, entailed emphasizing Stimmung in the said sense of “cohering.” Yet I wish also to add that I believe that all the resources provided by the verb stimmen and the noun Stimme must be of recourse, even where it is only a question of understanding the scope of Stimmung as a state of mind of Dasein.

To conclude, I would like to briefly take up John comments on the chapter of Of Minimal Things entitled “Tuned to Accord.” John has noted that, in following Heidegger through the three regresses in “On the Essence of Truth” that move toward an essence more originary than essence, an essence that would be the ultimate condition of truth as accordance, I ask the question about the criterion that would demonstrate that the regress has been fully carried out. The kind of broad accord with which the regress comes to an end is, I argue, by necessity an accord unlike any other accord, distinct from what it makes possible. Now, John remarks that my interpretation of this latter accord would have significantly augmented my account had I taken into account a marginal note from Heidegger’s own copy of the essay. I agree with John that the more original essence Heidegger has in view here, one which follows from his reinterpretation of truth, is an essence unlike all other essences, “an essence in the most originarily reetermined sense.” Certainly! However this result with which the regress comes to an end culminates in what I would call a criss-cross speculative gesture of intertwining truth and essence—by which it is shown, in John’s words, “that the question of the essence of truth is the question of the truth of essence.” In retrospect, however, I wish to say that however much I think the Heideggerian regress to a fundamental and originary understanding of essence and truth is necessary (or incontournable, as one says in...
French), I no longer wish to limit myself to such a gesture. Not because I think one can go deeper and be more radical. The limits I am aiming at are not of the order of roots, therefore also no longer essential, and thus, to arrive at them is perhaps also no longer a question of regress.

I humbly nod to all three of you, and it is as if our foreheads touch—almost, within a hair’s breath.

ENDNOTES

1. Maurice Blanchot, *the one who was standing apart from me*, trans. L. Davis (Barrytown, NY: Station Hill, 1993), 42.
8. Ibid., 257.

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