

# Introduction

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The ambition of this volume is to rethink the significance of facticity in its historical context and reflect on its contemporary relevance. This collection takes as its point of departure the young Martin Heidegger's remark that "a philosophical interpretation which has seen the main issue in philosophy, namely, facticity, is (insofar as it is genuine) factual and specifically philosophical-factual."<sup>1</sup> If it is the case that facticity is the horizon of philosophizing, and that philosophy is itself rooted in facticity, then facticity cannot be "reduced" through some idealistic or transcendental intellectual operation. Nor can facticity be overcome by a transcendent freedom, as Sartre at times implied, if facticity is a condition of that freedom. These considerations suggest the need to acknowledge both the question of facticity and the provocation that its pursuit offers for thinking today—once the dreams of various idealisms, Platonisms, and transcendences can no longer regulate the work of thought.

If facticity is the origin of sense, it then needs to be confronted not only as a point of departure of philosophy but also as its element. In this sense, the very object of philosophy is facticity, including its own factual origins. Despite the recognition of the importance of facticity in hermeneutics and phenomenology, it has not yet received the attention it warrants. It has too often remained unquestioned and in the background. The aspiration of this anthology is, consequently, to explore the ways in which facticity can emerge from its concealment and relative neglect so as to become a resource for thought and how more radical interpretations of facticity can be articulated from out of this context.

The term "facticity" began to assume its contemporary meaning in the late-nineteenth-century debate between Neo-Kantianism and

what has been retrospectively called “life-philosophy” (*Lebensphilosophie*). Whereas the first sought to exclude facticity as irrationality from philosophy, the second celebrated it in embracing the particularity and “facticity of life.” This debate influenced—and was itself transformed in—Husserl’s phenomenology and Heidegger’s early project of a “hermeneutics of facticity,” traces of which still inform later works such as “A Dialogue on Language.” The ongoing publication and translation of Husserl’s research manuscripts, as well as the publication of Heidegger’s *Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity* and other early writings, allows for a renewed and more rigorous attention to this facet of phenomenology as well as its radicalization in contemporary thought.

#### TOWARD A GENEALOGY OF FACTICITY

The word *fact* has a long lineage, originating with the Roman *factum*, which is not an assertion about nature, but primarily associated with human activity and production. The early modern Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico continued to use the word in this sense in the principle of *verum factum* (“the true is the made”). This sense of fact as human doing and making is still at work in German Idealism, especially in Fichte, for whom *factum* is still to be understood in relation to action (*Tat*), and in Marxism. Yet this “production model” was already falling into eclipse. Since the world was traditionally understood as a product of God’s doing and making, *factum* had already become associated with objective truths about the world and—through modern secularization—the empirical facts that are the data of modern scientific inquiry. Other meanings besides action and the factuality of empirical data are associated with “fact” during this period, even the possibility of a transcendental facticity in Kant’s grounding of morality in a transcendental fact of reason that cannot be demonstrated by reasoning but forces itself upon us.<sup>2</sup> Despite the emergence and dominance of empiricism and positivism, and thus the model of empirical factuality, the words *fact* and *facticity* have retained a wealth of meaning that should be kept in mind in interpreting their significance in twentieth-century European thought.

The articles gathered in this volume show that the concept of facticity has undergone crucial transformations and has been “reinvented” and given unprecedented meanings in the last century. Facticity designates a kind of “fact” that has not been previously thematized in the history of philosophy. Although clearly contrasted with transcen-

dental ideality and normative validity, it nonetheless does not designate empirical "factuality," a fact of nature, or an ontic occurrence. It points to another kind of fact, one that falls out of and subverts the transcendental/empirical duality. It is a fact that, as Jean-Luc Nancy wrote, is "undiscernibly and simultaneously empirical and transcendental, material and ideational, physical and spiritual," an "unprecedented fact of reason that would manifest at once the bare outline of a logic and the thickness of a flesh."<sup>3</sup>

In the hermeneutical "life-philosophy" of Wilhelm Dilthey, such a fact is identified with the resistance of the world to consciousness and will. Dilthey, however, still used the word *Tatsächlichkeit* to refer to both the facticity of life (i.e., its resistance and unfathomability) and the factuality of the sciences (i.e., the givenness of "facts" that call forth analysis and explanation).<sup>4</sup> Whereas Neo-Kantians such as Rickert and the Husserl of the *Logos* essay<sup>5</sup> perceived such facticity as a danger to the very idea of philosophy as rigorous science, Husserl soon after began to unfold in other writings, many only recently published, a phenomenology of facticity. In Husserl's phenomenology, facticity represents the passivity and alterity that resists reduction, dimensions traditionally neglected in modern idealism. Whereas his mature phenomenology has often been taken to task for its Cartesian, subjectivistic (idealistic and solipsistic) orientation, the recent publication of Husserl's research manuscripts has compelled commentators to re-evaluate this traditional reading and give greater attention to the dimension of facticity and historicity in Husserl's thinking in order to engage issues of passivity, alterity, and the ethical within subjectivity. Heidegger articulates facticity as the fact of the thrownness of existence itself in its essentially finite constitution and individuation. Such facticity cannot be reduced to and challenges the transcendental, logical, and constitutive conditions of transcendental philosophies. From Heidegger's early project of a "hermeneutics of facticity" to his reflection on transcendence and freedom in the late 1920s, it is Dasein's own finitude that calls forth interpretation and individuation and, as a number of essays in this volume show, an ethical as well as a philosophical response.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty famously proposed that phenomenology is not only a philosophy of essences, "But phenomenology is also a philosophy which places essences back into existence, and does not expect to arrive at an understanding of man and the world from any starting point other than that of their 'facticity.'"<sup>6</sup> Merleau-Ponty's turn to facticity raises multiple questions: What does it mean to take facticity as the starting point of understanding "man" and "world"? What does a phenomenology of facticity signify given that facticity

still remains obscure and given the theoretical primacy of ideality, universality, and validity? Can facticity be a basis for philosophy even though it radically undermines foundations by indicating the multiplicity, singularity, and alterity of the life and existence from which philosophy is born?

Merleau-Ponty articulated the facticity of embodiment and flesh from *The Phenomenology of Perception* to its crystallization in *The Visible and the Invisible* via texts of seminars such as *La nature*, translated by Robert Vallier. The stress on facticity, or the need to resituate the origin of thought in the factual site of the lived body, orients a rethinking of reflection and philosophy in its relation to nonphilosophy. If the lived body is indeed the origin of thought, then the task of philosophy can only be to reflect such original perception, that is, to bring into language the mute experience of the perceptual world, to make the implicit explicit. There is therefore no philosophical reflection or proper realm of thought independent of the chiasm between perception and philosophical reflection, each engaging the other. Once brought back to its factual soil from which it springs, reflection loses its pretense to independence or autonomy as well as its presumption of accessing an idealized objective realm. It is not a matter of departing from all reflection in order to be lost in the supposed immediacy of life. For Merleau-Ponty, it is a question of reflecting on reflection, of a “hyper-reflection” that would contrast with the absolute reflection of modern idealism in the sense that philosophy would recognize its birthplace in facticity, in a radically nonintellectual origin. Philosophy loses in this recognition its—not so innocent—illusion that it can have a transcendent overview of the world and life. Instead it assumes its finitude—as a vision happening from the invisible, bordered by invisibility—and responsibility for its finitude. Merleau-Ponty shows how there can be no truth without facticity and that facticity transforms the very concept and understanding of truth.

In the works of Jacques Derrida, we find the thought that *différance*, and the work and possibility of sense, are never grounded in a “transcendental signified,” but operate in an immanent process (albeit in a disrupted and aporetic way), engaging us into a rethinking of materiality and materialism understood in a radically nonmetaphysical way as an effect of *différance*.<sup>7</sup> We are here called to a thought of a trace and of an expropriation or ex-appropriation that defers any metaphysical dream of full presence and appropriation. From a deepening of this perspective, Giorgio Agamben underscores how facticity entails an irreducible element of non-originaryity, and therefore of nonpropriety. The improper is the very mark of finitude. The emphasis on facticity—

with its senses of opacity, singularity, concreteness, factuality, finitude, and expropriation—could be seen as a challenge to the values and ideals of modernity, and its model of the absoluteness and transparency of subjectivity. More precisely, does facticity not challenge the very possibility of a free self-assumption of subjectivity, a freedom that posits and constructs itself, since it represents precisely what I cannot in principle appropriate? In each case, facticity represents a challenge to the identitarian and totalizing dreams of a full appropriation in thought or in practice—whether in contemporary theoretical philosophy, transcendental idealism, traditional metaphysics, or in conventional modes of thinking. Thus, for instance, Jean-Luc Nancy's rethinking of the facticity of existence as signifying that existence is without essence, the essence-less itself, challenges the construction and imposition of such idealities. For Nancy, facticity means exposure, the "in-common" of factual and singular existences exposed to one another, and so is a fact that challenges conventional understandings of identity and demands a rethinking of traditional categories.

Yet facticity should not be simply approached as a negative phenomenon marking the limits and impossibility of projects of meaning, foundation, intelligibility, and appropriation. Such an account continues to govern the work of Jürgen Habermas, whose distinction between *Faktizität* (facticity) und *Geltung* (validity) remains within the logic of the Neo-Kantian bifurcation of the concrete particularity of factuality (systems and institutions) and universal normative ideality.<sup>8</sup> The task then is not to reiterate and reify this negativity but conceive of these limits—or "edges," as Edward Casey invites us to consider them in his essay—as truly opening the space of the world and of our ethical coexistence as ungrounded freedom.

In his recent book, *The Creation of the World or Globalization*,<sup>9</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy insists that the world manifests a radical absence of (theological) ground and foundation, a withdrawal that constitutes the world as a *fact*. Nancy goes so far as to equate the emergence of the world as such and as fact with a "de-theologization." He identifies "world-formation" (*mondialisation*, which is not to be confused with *globalization*)—i.e., the immanent structure of the world and the fact that the world only refers to itself and never to another world (the postulate of onto-theology)—as a "detheologization" (CW, 51). The meaning or sense of the world is not transcendent to that world but radically immanent to it. It lies in the world's own self-creation, the world making sense of itself. The world makes sense without any reference to an outside of the world (an essence). This is why one could follow Nancy in thinking that the making sense of the world is taking place

from an absence of the given—a creation *ex nihilo*, coming from nothing, and going into nothing<sup>10</sup>—that allows us to conceive of the world as fact. Such a fact appears as a nothing-of-given and as without-reason. Recalling Heidegger's *Principle of Reason*, where it is said that "neither reason nor ground support the world" (cited in CW, 120, n.20), Nancy proposes that the world is a *fact* and only a fact—even if it is a singular fact, not being itself a fact *within* the world, but the fact *of* the world, the fact of itself as world. It is the fact of a "mystery," the mystery of an accidental, errant, or wandering existence (according to Wittgenstein, what is mystical is the *fact* that the world is). It is an absolute fact absolutely deprived of relation to an "other" world beyond this one. The world is a fact without cause and without reason. It is consequently, according to Nancy, "a fact without reason or end, and it is our fact" (CW, 45). We are thus called, in this thought of the world as absolute immanence, to take on its facticity without reason—as well as its non-sense—or rather the fact that its sense only lies in such a fact: "To think it is to think this factuality, which implies not referring it to a meaning capable of appropriating it, but to placing in it, in its truth as a fact, all possible meaning" (CW, 45). The world is without reason; it is to itself its entire possible reason. The world is a significance without a foundation in reason or, as Nancy writes suggestively, a "resonance without reason" (CW, 47).

This fact, without reason of the world, opens a *praxis*, an inhabiting, and an ethics. Nancy explains that if the world is not to be a land of exile—or what he describes as an "unworld" (*immonde*), i.e., the contrary of the world as it becomes increasingly inhabitable—then the world must be the place of a possible dwelling, a place to inhabit. More precisely, it is the place of a possible taking-place, where there is a genuine place, one in which things can genuinely *take place* in the world. The world is the place of any possible taking-place, the opening of space-time, the dimension where everything can take place. The world as fact is a place and a dimension to inhabit, where to coexist. Further, thinking together the stance of the world and the originary sense of *ethos* as dwelling, Nancy shows how the world as fact is also a *praxis*. The sense of the world is not given a priori. Our coexistence in the world is not given nor is it able to rely on any substantial basis. Unable to rely on any given, the world can only rely on itself. That is to say, the world suddenly appears from nothing . . . from itself: there lies its facticity, as well as its finitude. The sense of the world, not given, is to create, because: "The withdrawal of any given thus forms the heart of a thinking of creation" (CW, 69). The world, resting on nothing, is to invent meaning in an original *praxis*: "[M]eaning is al-

ways in *praxis*" (CW, 54). It is never established as a given, fulfilled or achieved. It is to be made and enacted. Being itself, as it is always "being without given," has the meaning of an act, of a making. It is in this sense that there is a world only for those who inhabit it. It is a place for a proper taking-place and dwelling, because to take-place is not simply to occur but to properly arrive and happen. This properness indicates the ethical dimension of the world, an originary ethics of being-of-the-world. However, such an ethics, as Nelson shows in his essay on "The Ethics of Facticity," needs to be situated and rooted in facticity.

Heidegger reveals in *Being and Time* the constituting role of facticity, understood as thrownness, in his thinking of ethical responsibility beyond any doctrinal ethics. Facticity seems at first a principle of inappropriability at the heart of his analytic of Dasein, a veritable challenge to the very possibility of responsible agency and a free self-assumption of subjectivity in responsibility, since facticity indicates not only what I am not responsible for but also precisely what I cannot possibly appropriate. Facticity, it would seem, would represent the impossibility of ethics and responsibility. Whereas Sartre attempted at times to reduce or overcome such facticity by appealing to the irreducible (idealistic and abstract) freedom of the for-itself in its transcendence, Heidegger shows the constitutive role of facticity for responsibility and choice. Let us think here briefly of three figures of facticity in Heidegger's *Being and Time*: mood, birth, and (ontological) guilt.

Whenever Heidegger describes moods in *Being and Time* (that is, mostly in terms of thrownness), it is in order to emphasize the element of opacity and withdrawal that seems to break and foreclose any possibility of appropriation. Moods reveal the opacity and inappropriability of our origins. Moods are like the "enigma," he says, of Dasein's pure "that-it-is," that is, Dasein's facticity. In the course entitled *Introduction to Philosophy*, Heidegger claims that the fact "that by its own decision Dasein has nothing to search for in the direction of its origin, gives an essential prod to Dasein from the darkness of its origin into the relative brightness of its potentiality-for-Being. Dasein exists always in an essential exposure to the darkness and impotence of its origin, even if only in the prevailing form of a habitual deep forgetting in the face of this essential determination of its facticity."<sup>11</sup>

Birth, our very coming into being, seems to evade any appropriate engagement as an origin from which we are excluded. Despite what some commentators claim, namely, that Heidegger privileged death over birth, mortality over natality (on natality as a resource for phenomenology, in particular in Husserl, the reader will consult

Anthony Steinbock's essay in this volume, "From Phenomenological Immortality to Natalivity"), Dasein is said to exist *between* birth and death. Yet Dasein does not occupy an actual place between two external limits. Dasein exists as stretching itself between birth and death such that it *is* the between of birth and death. Being that between, Dasein exists toward each of them. Dasein exists toward death, *and Dasein exists toward birth*. This is why Heidegger speaks of a "Being-toward-the-beginning" (*Sein zum Anfang*).<sup>12</sup>

We exist both in a "natal" way, and in a "mortal" way, in the sense that we relate to both ends, "our" ends. But are they really "ours"? In fact, they remain for Heidegger inappropriate: I can no more go back behind my coming into being than I can appropriate death by making it somehow actual. Facticity, understood as thrownness, reveals that Dasein can never go back beyond this "throw" to recapture its being from the ground up. Dasein in no way masters and appropriates its own ground and origins. As Heidegger put it: "'Being-a-basis' means never to have power over one's ownmost Being from the ground up" (SZ, 284). I am thrown into existence on the basis of a completely opaque (non)-ground that withdraws from all attempts at appropriation. It would seem that I am expropriated from my own being, thereby rendering any meaningful sense of responsibility impossible.

Yet we should not be too quick to conclude that facticity marks the impossibility of ethics, unless it were to say, following Derrida, that the impossibility of ethics and its aporias constitute its very site and possibility. Derrida insists that the aporias and limits of ethics, what he also calls the "an-ethical" origins of ethics, do not point to the simple impossibility of ethics. On the contrary, they reveal the aporia *as* possibility of ethics. As he puts it, it is a matter of making the impossible possible, as impossible . . . This indeed is what the reader can see in Heidegger's analysis. For the inappropriability of moods, birth, and death, although it indicates the *impossibility* and radical expropriation of the human being, also and at the same time proves to be the secret resource of appropriation. It is the secret resource of responsibility, a paradoxical phenomenon that Derrida approaches with the neologism of "ex-appropriation." In *Introduction to Philosophy*, Heidegger explains that precisely that over which Dasein is not master must be "worked through" and "survived." He writes: "Also that which does not arise of one's own express decision, *as most things for Dasein*, must be in such or such a way retrievingly appropriated, even if only in the modes of putting up with or shirking something; that which for us is entirely not under the control of



freedom in the narrow sense . . . is something that is in such or such a manner taken up or rejected in the How of Dasein" (GA 27, 337, emphasis added). The inappropriable in existence, as we saw in the phenomena of moods, is primarily felt as a *weight* or a *burden*. What weighs is the inappropriable. The being of the there, Heidegger writes, "become[s] manifest as a burden" (SZ, 134). Of course, the very notions of weight and burden make manifest the problematic of ethical responsibility. In a marginal note, later added to this passage, Heidegger clarified: "Burden: what one has to carry; man is charged with the responsibility (*überantwortet*) of Dasein, delivered over to it (*übereignet*)." It is this withdrawal itself that calls Dasein, which summons it to be this being-thrown as its own and be responsible for it. It is the withdrawal that calls, to be and to think, and to be "responsible" for it. What I have to make my own is thus what can never belong to me, what evades me, what will always have escaped me. Heidegger underscored this incommensurability when he claimed that: "The self, which as such has to lay the basis for itself, can never get that basis into its power; and yet, as existing, it must take over *being-a-basis*" (SZ, 284, emphasis added).

It is ultimately the inappropriable itself that is to be appropriated, precisely as inappropriable. I am not responsible, as Kant argued, because I am a subject who is the absolute and spontaneous origin of a series and therefore a subject to whom actions can be assigned. I am responsible because I am thrown in an existence that I do not originate yet which I have to answer for. To be thrown (facticity) means to be called (responsibility), they are one and the same phenomenon, such that Heidegger could speak of the "Facticity of Responsibility" (SZ, 135). Ethical responsibility is brought back to facticity as its most essential resource.

Revisited in contemporary thought, facticity would subsequently allow us to problematize regions that have been "reduced" in traditional metaphysical and onto-theological thinking. There is in facticity a dimension in our being that resists appropriation and reduction, whether practical or theoretical. These regions, not constituted by and challenging transcendental subjectivity, testify to the alterity and the passivity (i.e., finitude) of our experience, and call us to rethink the very notion of experience. What thoughts of experience, of subjectivity, of finitude, of nature, of the body, of racial and sexual difference does it mobilize? What thinking of language, of history, of birth and death, of our ethical being-in-the-world? These are some of the questions that the contributors of this volume address and explore.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD RETHINKING FACTICITY

The first section of this collection reassesses the history of facticity from German Idealism, especially Fichte, to the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and the young Martin Heidegger. Anthony J. Steinbock's contribution explores the role of facticity in Husserl's genetic and generative phenomenologies from the perspective of issues of immortality, mortality, and natality. Given that transcendental subjectivity is neither born nor dies from the perspective of genetic phenomenology, which considers the facticity of the concrete transcendental self-temporalizing subject or monad, Steinbock examines how birth and death can become significant for the constitution of meaning. Tracing Husserl's transition from genetic to generative phenomenology, Steinbock contends that Husserl's thinking of phenomenological immortality should be situated within natality rather than mortality, birth instead of death. Due to the constitutive asymmetry between being born and dying, and the apodeictic character of the past that the future lacks, phenomenology opens itself to mystery, vocation, and hope—and consequently the religious—not from the mere assertion of immortality but rather from this dimension of natality. He concludes this powerful reflection by arguing that natality should be "the new guiding feature for phenomenology" since, "[o]nly phenomenological natality can respond to or convert a phenomenological immortality such that immortality is integrated into and situated by natality."

Theodore Kisiel's historically rich and systematically complex analysis of the emergence of facticity and its synonyms in Heidegger's early works corrects the often repeated yet mistaken opinion that "facticity" only emerged as an important issue in the works of the early Heidegger. By understanding the contexts and intersection of tendencies that informed Heidegger's emphatic posing of the question of facticity, we begin to more fully appreciate how radically Heidegger reworked the notion of facticity in contrast with its earlier uses. Kisiel considers Heidegger's post-World War I project of articulating philosophy in relation to life by investigating how Heidegger's methodological reflections on the formal indication of facticity can be situated in relation to attempts to conceptualize facticity from Fichte's Idealism—for whom the self posits and throws the world rather than feels its thrownness—to Emil Lask's inquiry into transcendental logic and the doctrines of categories and judgment that helped inspire and shape Heidegger's early methodology of a formal indication of factual life. Drawing on Heidegger's sources as well as the earliest reception of Heidegger, Kisiel traces how

Heidegger, as part of his early concern with transforming transcendental philosophy and logic, resituates and transforms facticity in response to its employment and questionability in German Idealism, Neo-Kantianism, life-philosophy, and phenomenology.

François Raffoul approaches the early Heidegger in relation to questions of life in the context of the German philosopher's early response to life-philosophy and Neo-Kantianism. Raffoul attempts to measure the impact that the problem of facticity has had on the very definition of philosophy and thought. He first reconstitutes how in the early 1920s Heidegger reorients philosophy from the problematic of consciousness and the transcendental self to the question of the immanent movement of finite and factual life interpretively explicating itself. Stressing how life displays a singular immanence, to the point of being tautological, Raffoul also underlines the radical immanence of philosophy to life: facticity calls forth philosophy as its self-articulation and philosophy is to be understood in terms of the facticity that it itself unavoidably always is. Raffoul argues that for Heidegger, thought cannot be the reflexive grasp of an objectivity and can never be an external gaze *upon* life, from a position outside of life. Thus, "[o]ne should not fear facticity, one should not fear so-called relativism by appealing to an illusory 'freedom from stand-points,' for in fact the issue in relativism is not the relativity of perspectives with respect to (a nonexistent) universality, but *the very facticity and finitude of experience.*" Rejecting the understanding of thinking as a theoretical overview detached from what it sees, Heidegger conceives of thought as entirely grounded in life, and enjoying no independence with respect to its life. Reflection will be understood by Heidegger as a motion proper to life itself, life reflecting on itself. "Reflection thus means: Life coming *back* to itself. Thinking is to reflect in the sense of *repeating.*" Such repetition and reflection are in fact required by life: life is "compelled" to reflection in the sense of repetition. Life *needs* to repeat itself as "interpretation can only arise out of an 'existentiell concern.'" Philosophy thus arises out of need, which Raffoul explores in the last part of his chapter. It appears that such a need expresses a tear within life itself, which Heidegger designates as "ruinance," a motion of expropriation that calls for philosophizing as homecoming. Heidegger thus speaks of the countermotion of thought, going against life's "own" tendency to move away from itself and fall into expropriation. Ultimately, it is not a matter of philosophy attempting to overcome the ex-appropriative event of facticity but rather of giving thought to it and being responsible for it.

In the second section, attention is given to questions of how Heidegger's hermeneutics of facticity informs the development of his

thought in the 1920s, particularly how the complexity of the issue of facticity sheds light on the structure and significance of *Being and Time*. Giorgio Agamben unfolds facticity as fallenness, finitude, and thrownness from Heidegger's early confrontation with issues of love, passion, and religion. Whereas the tradition stemming from Augustine judges facticity, fallenness, and finitude negatively as distance from the transcendent, Heidegger radically reworks religious concepts by exhibiting the profoundly "positive" character of these phenomena condemned by traditional theology. Facticity, fallenness, and finitude are not accidents or negative categories of human existence but constitutive. They are not merely sinful imperfections but, as they express existence's radical expropriation and "improper" structure, are the very passion and sense of human life. To articulate these claims, Agamben analyzes facticity in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, beginning with its paradoxical affinity with disclosure and openness: "How is it possible for Dasein to open itself to something without thereby making it into the objective correlate of a knowing subject? . . . It is in this context that Heidegger introduces his notion of "facticity" (*Faktizität*)." Agamben traces Heidegger's account of facticity to his reading of Augustine, who contrasted *facticius*—that which is unnatural, artificial, and made by humans—with *nativus* as that which is natural and created by God. This indicates that the term *factical* can be situated in "the semantic sphere of non-originary and making." For Agamben, the "originary facticity" of Dasein signifies that Dasein's opening is marked by an original impropriety. He concludes that "for Heidegger, this experience of facticity, of a constitutive non-originary, is precisely the original experience of philosophy, the only legitimate point of departure for thinking." Love is the passion of such a facticity, a passion "in which man bears this nonbelonging and darkness."

Jean-Luc Nancy responds to the perplexity of why *Mitsein* (being-with) and *Mitdasein* are deployed and presupposed throughout *Being and Time* without any extensive analysis being devoted to them: "It is therefore all the more striking that a specific interrogation of what was at stake with the terms of *Mitdasein* and Being-with-others [*Miteinandersein*] has never been attempted, given that the *with* was declared essential to the very essence of the existent (nothing in the later work allows us to believe it was forgotten or minimized: Heidegger never ceased to think in a collective or communal dimension and nothing in his work even approaches solipsism)." Nancy interrogates the factual character of the "with" of "being-with" as an unsubstantial between rather than as a common essence or identity. The issue for Nancy is to reengage the question of the "with" as it

affects the very meaning of being. His question bears on the entire Western philosophical tradition, even while focusing on Heidegger as a privileged entry to these questions. As he puts it: "This question I also want to indicate straightaway did not concern Heidegger alone. Far from it. It concerns the whole of Western thought in its manner of grasping or failing to grasp in general what Heidegger first precisely revealed: the essential character of the existential *with* (that is to say, of the *with* as a condition of the possibility of factual existence—if not the very existence of all beings . . .)." Nancy invites us to think the "enigma of being-with" in several provocative steps, speaking of a "with" happening "between the proper and the improper," in a peculiar intertwining: "The intertwining of the limit and of the continuity between the several *theres* must determine proximity not as pure juxtaposition but as *composition* in a precise sense, which must rest on a rigorous construction of the *com-*." Since such an intertwining affects being and being-there, and thus must affect being-toward-death, Nancy evokes the question of a "sharing of death." "For, if it is exactly at the site of the *with* that both the opportunity and risk of existence are manifest, then one must also accept—still in accordance with the Heideggerian paradox—that this site is the site of death." Wondering how one can conceive such a sharing of death, between the solitary death of dying and the sacrificial death in the struggle for the cause of the people, Nancy asks: "How can we give thought to death between us, indeed, to death as the very co-opening of the *there*?"

The next two contributions consider the possibility and impossibility of the ethical in light of Heidegger's thinking of finitude and facticity and in response to Levinas's critique of Heidegger in the name of an ethics of transcendence and humanism of the other. Eric Sean Nelson raises the question of the continuity and difference between different senses of facticity at work in Heidegger's thinking of the 1920s, exploring them in relation to the possibility of an ethics of facticity. He contrasts the tranquilizing facticity of average everyday being-with, which is indifferent to its own possibilities, with the interruptive facticity of the uncanniness that potentially disturbs common life allowing a more radical individuation to occur. Arguing for the responsibility of individuation and promoting the individuation of the other, he rejects the standard view that Heidegger's thinking has no ethical import. Although Heidegger rejected ethics as theoretical doctrine and arbitrary assertion of value, practical questions of responsibility and individuation are crucial to the structure and argument of *Being and Time* and related works. Yet given the inescapability of everydayness, tradition, and the sociality of being-with, authenticity or

responsibility can never fulfill or fully claim itself. Authenticity can only be in each case a reclamation and a modification of inauthenticity, a “proper” inevitably defined by the improper, or an interpretive individuation that responds or does not respond to its own finitude and facticity. An “ethics of facticity” accordingly occurs as responsiveness to the immanent alterity and conformity of factual life rather than as its transcendence.

Rudi Visker also addresses Heidegger’s thinking of facticity in the context of contemporary discussions of alterity and ethics, but takes this issue in a different direction. He begins his chapter with a critical analysis of the problematic presuppositions underlying current discourses—which stem primarily from the work of Levinas and involve a questionable interpretation of Heidegger’s thinking—of alterity and the other. Broaching the question of the untranslatability of Dasein, and how it and its characteristic of being “my own” defy common interpretations and criticisms, Visker carefully investigates Heidegger’s uses of this term. Visker provocatively contends that what currently seems unfashionable in Heidegger’s thought, his lack of attention to alterity, the other, and ethics, is in point of fact his strength. Heidegger is defenseless before this criticism and yet not in need of a defense. According to Visker, the intransitive character of facticity in Heidegger challenges the transitivity of self and other. Visker illustrates this point by delving into the possibility of liberation via the world rather than in its denial as well as in the phenomena of radical boredom and the “there is.” Yet Visker does not only interrogate the ethical in response to Levinas’s critique of Heidegger, he also finds unexpected agreement between them.

The contributors to the third section approach the topic of facticity in relation to questions of race and racism, fact and essence, the body, sensibility, and the unconscious in postwar French and French-influenced thought. In view of the idea that race is a socially constructed object and the resulting belief that racism can be easily surmounted by constructing the idea of race differently one individual at a time, Robert Bernasconi assesses whether such a conception of race has achieved its critical liberatory aspiration. Maintaining that “social constructionism, far from empowering a marginalized group that has historically been seen as a race, leaves that group deprived of agency and the specific kind of identity that it needs in order to combat racism,” Bernasconi turns to the question of whether race should be thought of as involving a kind of facticity. On the basis of Jean-Paul Sartre’s thinking of facticity, and its tension with his own interpretation of race as a construct imposed by the racist in works such as *Anti-*

*Semite and Jew*, and Frantz Fanon's varying articulation of the experiential facticity of race, in which race is seen in terms of practices and institutions rather than ideas and beliefs, Bernasconi argues that a richer, thicker, less individualist and more sociopolitical approach to race as facticity is called for. Responding to critics of Sartre, he suggests that Sartre's multilayered approach to facticity is more useful in approaching social-political issues than that of Heidegger. While continuing to challenge the reduction of race to a brute identity or a fixed unchanging essence, questioning the facticity of race would more profoundly address issues of how race actually functions at multiple levels in society and how it is lived, experienced, and actively interpreted and reinterpreted. Such an approach to the facticity of race would help to existentially articulate experiences of race and thus better identify and combat the intransigence of racism.

The following two chapters illustrate the importance of facticity in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and ethics as well as how vital these domains remain for the contemporary encounter with facticity. Bernard Flynn argues that Merleau-Ponty deconstructs the opposition between fact and essence, the personal and the impersonal, and the proper and improper via the fissure and the chiasm. He argues that for Merleau-Ponty, more radically than Nietzsche, "there are neither facts nor interpretations, which is to say, neither independently given facts nor interpretations, but rather a fundamental *écart*, or fissure, where Being gives itself in the register neither of the factual nor of the intelligible." Flynn shows how Merleau-Ponty deconstructs the opposition between being and consciousness. Merleau-Ponty, through flesh and facticity, rejects the "frontal confrontation with Being" that still informs Sartre's existential phenomenology. Contrary to this frontal encounter with Being—the model of modern subjectivity—Flynn cites *The Visible and the Invisible*, "Being no longer being *before me*, but surrounding me and in a sense traversing me, and my vision of Being not forming itself from elsewhere, but from the midst of Being." Merleau-Ponty thus complicates the relationship between fact and essence, moving it away from an opposition, insofar as vision is a relation to Being formed within Being: "Vision is engendered by a fold of the visible on itself." Flynn proposes that Being, what there is, is neither fact nor essence but "a certain style." He writes: "Merleau-Ponty displaces the problematic of fact and essence by the notion of *style*. Every style, unlike the traditional concept of essence, is encrusted with the thickness of Being." Flynn shows how the very concept of essence, of the pure epistemic subject, was constructed to cover over such a thickness. Arguing that the "there is," the *il y a*, does not have the nefarious quality that it has for Levinas,

he concludes that nature, the body, and immanence are conditions for rather than threats to ethics.

In a rich and complex essay, Jacob Rogozinski reflects on the facticity and aporia of touch touching itself and the tactile chiasm in Merleau-Ponty. Rogozinski claims that the question of touch or of the tactile chiasm imposes itself today as a fundamental stake in French philosophy. After being eclipsed in the sixties, under the predominance of structuralism, questions pertaining to the body, the flesh, have returned to the center of French philosophical reflection. Rogozinski focuses on the phenomenon of tactile auto-affection, on the singular experience of *touch touching itself*. "When one of my hands touches the other, it perceives it at first as a physical thing; but this hand-thing also senses itself being touched. Tactile impressions awaken in it, and 'it becomes flesh' [*Es wird Leib*], a hand of living flesh that also touches the hand that touches it." The flesh is thus originally constituted in a double mode, both flesh and material thing. Merleau-Ponty described this experience as an "intertwining" or a "chiasm." Rogozinski endeavors to problematize this enigma of what he calls "originary flesh," and challenge its supposed obviousness: "[W]e must suspend the naive certainty of being in the world and having a body; and confront both the strangeness of a primordial flesh that does not yet have eyes and hands, but only carnal poles, and the strangeness of an ego that is not yet a subject or an individual human, but that is rather dispersed into innumerable splinters of one or more selves." From this perspective, Rogozinski radicalizes the chiasm by showing both its irreducible character and by recognizing its universal scope. The chiasm not only encroaches upon the difference between myself and the other, but also the divergences between myself and things and between myself and the world. Recognizing this universal chiasm, Rogozinski nevertheless identifies an aporia in the chiasm, an impossible, which Merleau-Ponty designated as "the untouchable of touching, the invisible of vision, the unconscious of consciousness." Rogozinski wonders how one can assure the juncture or the knotting of this impossible chiasm and addresses this aporia by appealing to Derrida's claims that one needs to recognize in the chiasm and in touch that the "I touches itself by spacing itself, by losing contact with itself," that is, that it is *touched without touching itself*. Indeed, Rogozinski states that every event as event can be defined as *the possibility of the impossible*, "and this is also true for the inaugural event that is the chiasm." Touch, the flesh, its chiasm, reveal the impossible as condition of their happening.

It is often said that Lacanian psychoanalysis privileges the symbolic order of signifiers over the materiality of the body and the im-



manence of affects. David Pettigrew explores the extent to which Lacanian psychoanalysis offers unique access to the body and its facticity, arguing that with Lacan and Nasio the signifier is the carrier of the materiality or facticity of the body and that the signifier permeates the body-unconscious. Addressing the work of contemporary French Lacanian psychoanalyst J.-D. Nasio, Pettigrew responds to criticisms that psychoanalysis has neglected the body by reducing it to little but fragmented and repressed modes of representation. Confronting this critique, Pettigrew catalogues the dimensions of the fragmentation, the disembodiment of the body in the alienation of the mirror stage, symptomatic eruptions that accompany the psychical memory of trauma, the constitutive instability introduced by the phallus, *objet a*, and partial *jouissance*. Pettigrew asserts that through its psychoanalytic disembodiment, the body is cast out into the exile of a "body-less hole" and suggests that through psychoanalysis the body is rendered "impossible." In the second part, Pettigrew shows that a meaningful encounter with the facticity of the body must engage this impossible body—a body that does not ever cohere but only persists in excess of itself, a body without coherence, its being everywhere at once, and without subjective agency. To this end, Pettigrew interprets Nasio's more innovative formulations concerning the body, including the unconscious body "to come" that inhabits an ecstatic field, and the *semblant*, situated in the analyst as *objet a* who activates the transference, further extending the ecstatic nature of the unconscious body, and the intercorporeality of the bodies in the ecstatic experience of transference in psychoanalysis. Pettigrew identifies the need for a conceptual reorientation that gives proper consideration to the facticity of such an ecstatic experience of bodily being by turning to Heidegger. Pettigrew finds convergence between the psychoanalytic account of a desubstantialized and ecstatic body and Heidegger's thinking with respect to "bodying forth" and the ecstatic experience of being.

The chapters gathered in the final section unfold contemporary perspectives and reflections on facticity. Ed Casey reminds us that when we rely on our usual modes of classification, starting with those that belong to what we call aesthetics, "by the time we designate something as 'art,' " it has lost its disruptive presence, its radical novelty, its challenge. . . . More specifically, there is a danger in the institutionalization of aesthetics that art *as art* would have "lost its edge." Reflecting phenomenologically on the motif of the "edge," Casey shows that edges are sites of openings insofar as they disestablish and upset those structures that by their very nature obstruct "what is coming and to come," that is, the sudden, the surprising, the new. In this

sense, facticity, that is, the way something happens, is precisely happening as an edge, a "cutting-edge." The work of art is exemplary in such cutting-edge opening; it is a work, Casey tells us, that "creates its own edge," recalling what is called "avant-garde art," or art "on the edge of our usual expectations that we cannot anticipate its inception or control its course once it has emerged." Casey develops a phenomenology of the edge—structure of the event, edges or limits/openings of the world—through the work of art and the motifs of frame, delineation, and representation exemplified in the works of such artists or architects as Marin, Monet, Cage, Cézanne, and Wright. According to Casey, the role of edges in art, "is not that their presence guarantees artistic creativity, nor even that it is necessary to such creativity. Instead, I am pointing to the pervasive ingredience of edge in many artworks and many kinds of such works—an ingredience that is not often assessed as such. But I am also contending that attention to edges fosters and enhances the production (and eventually the appreciation) of art." Since every site or place comes edged, and "there is no edgeless place," Casey contends that art itself must be seen as an edge and the ultimate edge-work. The edge is the place for the happening of openness. Not only since art "edges us out of habitual patterns of experience," allowing access to the unexpected and the disruptive, but also because the work of art as edge-work opens a new world, or the world as each time new. "We need to come to the edge of the work—to the work of its edges—to have such an experience, as intensive as it is ecstatic, as incoming as it is outgoing, as invasive as it is exhilarating." Recalling Merleau-Ponty's remark that artworks "have almost their entire lives [still] before them," Casey ends with the notion that edges are the future or the very form of the future.

Namita Goswami and Patricia Huntington return to the problem of facticity in Heidegger, and some of the issues raised earlier by Bernasconi such as the critical and liberatory potential of engaging facticity, in a new context of questioning. Goswami and Huntington critically explore Heidegger's thinking of facticity in light of contemporary questions of gender, race, and the postcolonial (the facticity of the lingering traces of colonialism) as well as of childhood, the family, maternity, and woman. Namita Goswami tracks the issue of facticity in Heidegger in reference to contemporary social-political discourses such as critical social theory, feminism, and postcolonialism. She provocatively demonstrates in this important and multifaceted essay that, far from reifying power and identity, facticity can be used to critically engage them and the logic of identity that they presuppose. The facticity of existence is not the assertion of a common essence or reified iden-

tity, but is something that we simultaneously belong to and transgress, are at home with and foreign to, that is, it is both proper and uncannily improper. Goswami consequently examines Heidegger's thought from the perspective of his project of a hermeneutics of facticity and in relation to the critique of identitarian thought expounded in Adorno's critical theory, the transformative facticity and reversals of Hegel's master/slave dialectic, and in response to the postcolonial feminism of Spivak in order to articulate the facticity of and possibilities for hearing the subaltern. The issue of whether the subaltern can speak, whether it is a mere construct of power or has its own resistance and facticity, leads Goswami to consider Adorno's criticisms of Heidegger in light of the project of a critique of ideology. She contrasts this with the critical and uncritical aspects of Heidegger's confrontation with "world-views" and "value-thinking." Goswami additionally confronts issues of the home, "Europe," and "the West," in light of issues of masculinity and mastery so as to place the subject of postcolonial reason in question. Her analysis suggests that thinking facticity can help problematize the very facticity of authoritarianism and the compulsion of identity.

The following richly descriptive essay might be described as a hermeneutics of the facticity of ethical life, addressing basic familial relations between woman and man, parent and child. In this insightful contribution to "rethinking facticity," Patricia Huntington considers the contemporary import of Heidegger's thinking of the primordial attunement and bearing of Dasein in relation to "bearing with" others and the phenomenon of hardening in order to interrogate the facticity of the "being-with" (*Mitsein*) of childhood, family, and woman. Beginning with the claim that "learning to bear one's life journey well is a lived precondition of bearing-with others well," Huntington addresses facticity as a profoundly ethical challenge and task with the purpose of exploring our willingness to bear life as attunement, comportment, and exposure. In light of Heidegger's discussion of attunement and fundamental moods, Huntington examines the thrownness of being in the family, of being with child and with youth, and being woman. This leads to a series of reflections on the decried hardening of woman, of her so-called fickleness vis-à-vis the facticity of maternity, the "domestic" realm, and the child-parent relation. Huntington explicates both the implicit strength of Heidegger's thinking of being-with as well as revealing its limits and possibilities for redeploying it. She accordingly shows the deeply social and ethical dimensions of Heidegger's thinking of attunement and moods and their implications for gendered social relations.

In conclusion, Gregory Schufreider asks us to consider the very facticity of this book and any attempt to “re: think” facticity: “Can we be confronted with facticity in a text or must we be struck (perhaps, dumb) by the brute fact of the book itself, as if it (and not the text) might hit us over the head and strike us senseless?” In order to face the facticity of the book itself, “Re: Thinking Facticity” engages the reader in an act of thinking at the end of the text. Schufreider wonders about the necessity of moving from a hermeneutics of facticity to a facticity of hermeneutics, that is, the return to a facticity that would not be neutralized or idealized in the hermeneutic work of making sense. Schufreider questions the fact that as a book, *Sein und Zeit* is bound to “theorize” death: “to make (a certain) sense of it by turning the brute fact into a ‘being-towards-death’ that we can live with.” It is striking that Heidegger speaks of the end of our being, namely, death, as possibility, never to be taken as sheer actuality. Further, once derealized or virtualized as a possibility, Heidegger posits death as our ownmost possibility, as each time mine and the horizon for an authentic selfhood. Death becomes the site of appropriation and possibility of sense when perhaps its facticity would indicate the very opposite: the end of sense, the end of possibility, and the end of “me.” Regarding this virtualizing of death, Schufreider argues that the “script of selfhood effectively neutralizes the brutality of death, fictionalizing the fact by turning it into a histrionic act.” Schufreider wonders whether the thinker of the irreducible mortality of Dasein did not “take death seriously (enough)”; for “the ultimate (in) facticity is the end of Dasein, which brings facticity itself to an end. To resolve this double bind, the text must project a fictional end in which Dasein stands alone, “before” death. In the end, it is an issue of rethinking facticity in the following way: “[W]e would have to think, not just in terms of the hermeneutics of facticity but of the facticity of hermeneutics, and of the ergonomics of an understanding that turns the opening of the book into a historical breach: a concrete opening to freedom that is created through a new apparatus of thinking.” Such a freedom would give us this sense of facticity: “This is to insist that freedom is not free to act before it does, since it does not exist as a fact until it acts; not as an initial freedom that initiates itself through action. Only in the act does freedom become a fact; in which case, we might say that the free act takes place after the fact, *ex post facto*, as if the “law” of freedom. By organizing the discussion around the X that is marked over the word “being” in Heidegger’s *Zur Seinsfrage*, Schufreider argues that we are put in a position to raise the question: What becomes of Dasein when “Sein” is crossed off the page? Through a type of etymological back-formation, Schufreider reads the X back into “Dasein,” as a graphic indication of the f/acticity of the

“Da” in *Being and Time*. The  $\times$  functions not only as a sign of death but as a signature mark: a common proper name that may be seen to operate as a sign of the facticity of writing in the free hand of Dasein. In a final act of signing, that not only faces death in the text but acts in the face of the page, the book comes to an end by tracing an opening in the name of Dasein $\times$  that the reader is free to create.

This volume has gathered an international group of philosophers who address questions and consider the sources—some of which have only recently become available—of facticity in the works of Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Fanon among others in order to explore facticity from life-philosophy to contemporary European thought. This inquiry from multiple directions will, hopefully, evoke further philosophical engagement with the question and questionability of facticity. It is our hope that this work would contribute in drawing this new geography of thought, when its facticity becomes what is—indeed, what remains—to be thought.

#### NOTES

1. Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 74.
2. *Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft / Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. L. W. Beck (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 5:31.
3. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Gravity of Thought*, trans. François Raffoul and Gregory Recco (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1997), 60.
4. For a closer examination of the issue of facticity in Dilthey, see Eric Sean Nelson, “Begründbarkeit und Unergründlichkeit bei Wilhelm Dilthey,” *Existentialia*, 12, no. 1–2 (2002): 1–10; and “Empiricism, Facticity, and the Immanence of Life in Dilthey,” *PLI* 18 2007, 108–128.
5. Edmund Husserl, “Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft,” *Logos* 1 (1911): 280–341.
6. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), vii.
7. As Jean-Luc Nancy explains in *The Sense of the World*, “‘matter’ is not first the thick immanence absolutely enclosed within itself, but first, and quite to the contrary, the very difference by which some *thing* is possible, as a *thing* and as a *some*.” *Le sens du monde* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), 95.
8. Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996).
9. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Creation of the World or Globalization*, trans. François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007). Hereafter cited as CW.

10. In the chapter entitled "Of Creation," Nancy would analyze the expression "to come to the world" as follows: "That 'to come to the world' means birth and death, emerging from nothing and going to nothing" (CW, 74).

11. GA 27: *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (1928–29), (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1996), 340. *Introduction to Philosophy*, trans. Eric Sean Nelson and Virginia Lyle Jennings (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, forthcoming).

12. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1927, 1953), 373. Hereafter SZ.