



Notes on Transition

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Though arriving late, I am pleased to present the first issue of *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy* for the year 2022. Another issue, the second of 2022, featuring a short forum on Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* is forthcoming soon, rounding out a year of excellent and intriguing scholarship in the journal.

The present issue features four essays drawing on very different figures, sub-traditions, and approaches to philosophical thinking in the Atlantic world. Jacques Lezra offers a truly compelling reflection on parody and philosophy in Alain Badiou's work, drawing on a range of texts in order to say something new, something provocative about not just Badiou's work, but also by extension so much of post-1968 French philosophy. James Dutton and Daniel Cook have written long, interesting essays that shed new light on the work of Bernard Stiegler and Emmanuel Levinas respectively, reckoning with familiar texts in new ways, eliciting new insights and revitalizing the questions both thinkers raise in their key texts. Those essays are important reading and elevate our journal in such important ways. Norman K. Swazo takes on Jacques Derrida's later work on hospitality and its vicissitudes in order to make sense of the particular challenges of the refugee experience of the Rohingya. The result is a genuinely provocative account of responsibility in times of urgent political, ethical, and existential crisis.

We are also featuring a book forum on Geo Maher's immensely important and provocative *Anticolonial Eruptions: Racial Hubris and the Cunning of Resistance*, featuring responses by Begüm Adalet, Althea Rani Sircar, Kevin Bruyneel, Anna Terwiel, and Henry Aoki. These responses raise a number of critical issues around metaphors of sight, the limits and possibilities of radicalism, and the nuances of the relationship between critical theory and activist work. In that way, the critical responses extend the project of Maher's *Anticolonial Eruptions* by exploring the complex inner workings of the revolutionary underground – precariously suppressed, vibrant, enraged, and explosive. Maher's response, extensive and detailed, taps into the fecundity of his book and comprises a fully theoretical statement in its own

right. I am so grateful to the critics and Maher for the opportunity to host this forum. The thoughtfulness and seriousness of this book forum is a model for similar future work and also an excellent occasion for all of us to reflect on the interweaving of critical work with street and organizer level struggle for liberation. I appreciate you all. So much.

This volume is the first with a new editorial assistant, Fatima Seck (a doctoral candidate in Comparative Literature at University of Maryland), who is also a collaborator with the new journal-affiliated podcast *Conversations in Atlantic Theory* (atlantictheory.org). This volume is also the first without my long-time co-editor Scott Davidson, and the final issue with our review editor Kris Sealey. A few words on all of this.

Thank you so much, Fatima, for your close attention to editorial details. Proofreading is no glorious work at all. Yet, you have been extremely helpful and your eyes are no doubt better than mine! Grateful for the coming years of work together, too. And the launch of the *Conversations* series is unthinkable without you. Already in less than a year, we have covered an incredibly diverse range of thinkers, ideas, and geographies. All of that is so elevated by your thoughtful interventions and curiosities. Listen in, everybody.

Kris, I am so happy to have worked with you over this past decade-plus. Our friendship preceded our journal collaboration and will extend for whatever number of years we have together on this earth, but I think it is safe to say that our friendship has been transformed by this work. I love that so much. Journal editing is a thoroughly thankless job. Everyone is impatient, rightly (publication needs are real and urgent for all of us), we always make a mistake or two (editor eyes are still human eyes and get tired, miss things, and wake up to regrets the minute an issue is published – no sharper eyes than eyes *after* something goes to publication), and it can be tiring and burdensome when our lives hit busy, stressful periods. Those always come, don't they? But it is always worth it because this is intellectual work, animated by vision and commitment, and it draws out the best of us in collaboration. Or at least that is how I have always felt, Kris, and nothing has been more gratifying than watching the journal grow in our work together. That work together has made for a better intellectual friendship, one that bounces and smiles alongside our other friendship that is intimately tied to community, raising children, the everyday strangeness and pleasures of work and family and love and common friends. All of this survives. In this moment, though, as I prepare to send this issue into publication, I hold close to how our intellectual work has been so important to maintain alongside our other forms of friendship. That is, this has been about friendship in the whole of our personhood. Cannot say enough about my gratitude for all of that. Thank you, Kris.

It is difficult, really just impossible, to say enough thanks to Scott Davidson. I am so happy for your next phase of professional work, but most

of my feelings as I type these letters are about the heavy heart I have as we hit publish without you. You have at times carried this journal, especially the past couple of years when my work life was upended by a move and starting anew at University of Maryland after years at Amherst College. Your graciousness in those moments was amazing. Thank you, Scott. I am thinking so much about our years working together, how it started, the steps along the way, the shared commitment to the eclecticism of our journal offerings, and our expansive view of what makes philosophy and philosophical thinking in the Atlantic world. I cannot imagine a better co-editor over these now many years. It has been amazing.

Let's be real, Scott. It was kind of crazy when we took over this journal. What were we thinking? The journal had previously been edited by Diane Perpich and Dan Smith under the title *Journal of French Philosophy*. They produced so much good work, but had hit the wall with exhaustion – something I understand so much better now, that is for sure. Diane and Dan approached us asking if we would take it over. We were willing to do so, but under two conditions: we change the title (and therefore mission) of the journal to *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy* and we transition the print journal to open access with University of Pittsburgh Library System. It was an audacious proposal in many ways, especially given the suspicion so many senior scholars had, at that time, about open access publishing. I wore out a keyboard and cellphone plan talking through what open access means, why it is important, how it is actually *not* just uploading to a blog, and, in the end, how it is really no different than how we access work generally: click download, read PDF on a device or print out. All the refereeing work is the same. And so on and so forth. *Please trust me!* We said that so many times. It was the right battle to fight because the result is that a journal treating the francophone world is now accessible anywhere in that world if one has an internet connection. The ethics and politics of that have always sat well with me and I am always so pleased when I see our global reach. Scott, your vision and ambition – putting together forums or special issues on diverse figures like Albert Memmi, Jean Améry, Claude Romano, Jan Patočka, and many others – has always secured our reach and you have always solicited, without exception, excellent and rigorous scholarship.

More than anything, as I get ready to hit publish on this issue, I am thinking about where we were at that time as professionals and as people. We had young kids (they ain't so young anymore), academic couples struggling to find satisfying work at good places (we arrived, my friend, both of us), and at the time we were taking on a journal editing project without the resources or prestige of working at a research institution. You had not yet arrived at West Virginia University. You were working as a just tenured professor, I believe, or perhaps still tenure track, at Oklahoma City University and I was a visiting assistant professor at Hampshire College without a clear future in the profession. That is not how most journals get taken on and transformed.

But we did it and we did it without any of the corny professional value we call “prestige.” We did it because we wanted something from the world of ideas and figured, fuck it, let us give it a try and see where things go. They went somewhere quite great. It was an adventure without much of a map, so relied on our effort, ambition, vision, and, honestly, little bit of recklessness. I am proud of the journal’s history at this point, so happy to have my name associated with it. Mostly, I am so happy to have deepened and expanded our friendship through this work and collaboration. I will miss working with you, Scott. But I will also forever value our time working together and what it has meant for me as a person and as a professional – making a friendship bigger and better through shared ambition, vision, and grunt work labor over years and years. Scott, you are the very, very best. Thank you. And thank you again.

The production of this issue has had its own twists and turns. Delays due to referee turnaround, press-related pauses and complications that are part of the game, and my own struggles with COVID-19 recovery over the spring and summer months as I took over sole editorial responsibilities. I appreciate the patience of authors and contributors and former editors who are still on the “what’s happening, when it is coming out?” email chains. It is all delayed. So it goes in pandemic times. Patience pays off. This is a superb collection of theorizing that ranges from the textual to the activist and everything in between. Enjoy reading. There is so much to be learned in these pages. Share and read and discuss and contemplate. That is what we do.

Abrazos,
John E. Drabinski, Editor