

aesthetic judgment of the beautiful. For Kant, the judgment of beauty cannot be reduced to subjective feeling while being rooted in it; it makes a claim to universal validity and defies the paradigm of the constitutive laws of understanding elaborated in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. For Kenaan, beauty provides a model of the personal dimension of speech in that both alike become manifest in the reverberation—the irreconcilable tension—between subjectivity and objectivity.

Kenaan's approach to the personal primarily draws upon Kant and phenomenology as well as the literary work of Kafka and Kundera, among others. Unfortunately, the book provides little to no discussion of such noteworthy Continental figures as Gadamer, Ricoeur, Derrida, Foucault, Habermas, and Lévinas. Although Kenaan would likely offer a similar assessment of these philosophers to his critique of Kierkegaard and Heidegger, one wonders whether his project might be able to appropriate at least some of their work (Gadamer on dialogue, for instance, Ricoeur on metaphor, or Lévinas on the said/saying distinction) or, if not, then to offer a novel critique of the same. In any event, *The Present Personal* deserves a strong recommendation. It is undoubtedly an original contribution to the philosophy of language and will be of interest to philosophers in both the Continental and analytic traditions.

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The Fragmentary Demand: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Jean-Luc Nancy

IAN JAMES

Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006; 274 pages.

In the last decade Jean-Luc Nancy has come to occupy a prominent place in Continental philosophy. The growing importance of Nancy's work can also be witnessed in the secondary literature in English. This past year, two books have appeared which proposed an overview of Nancy's wide-ranging thinking: B. C. Hutchens' *Nancy and the Future of Philosophy* and Ian James's *The Fragmentary Demand*. While the former focusses more on the relevance of Nancy's thought to current discussions around (for the most part political) issues such as nationalism, racism, and the media, the latter is more intent on situating Nancy's thinking in the history of philosophy and contrasting it with other contemporary Continental philosophers. It offers both a discussion of all major themes in Nancy's thinking as well as an account of Nancy's readings of Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Bataille, among

others. Its most valuable contribution, however, is its concise but enlightening analyses of the philosophies directly discussed by Nancy or used by James to contrast with Nancy's thinking. These summaries are essential for any introduction to Continental thought, and their absence is too often what prevents neophytes from grasping the stakes of Continental philosophy. This book is presented after all as an introduction to Nancy's thought and is intended either for those familiar with parts of Nancy's corpus and wanting to understand its originality and importance within twentieth-century philosophy, or for those with some background in Continental philosophy who want to see what new insights Nancy's thinking can offer.

In the introduction, James explains the significance of the book's title. Using Blanchot's discussion of Nietzsche in *L'entrelien infini*, from which the phrase "fragmentary demand" stems, James claims that the diversity and eclecticism of Nancy's corpus represents an attempt to do justice to the demand imposed on thinking by exposure to the multiplicity and fragmentation (of philosophy, of the world, of sense). Far from using the fragmentary and non-systematic nature of Nancy's work as an occasion to bask in abstruse and intricate formulations, James presents Nancy's thought in a well-structured way and in clear language. The book is divided into five chapters, each presenting a main theme in Nancy's work: subjectivity, space, body, community, and art. James shows how each theme leads into the next, removing any appearance of arbitrariness that Nancy's scattered discussions might have and uncovering a certain unity (though not a systematic one) in Nancy's philosophical concerns.

A short summary of the first, and by far the strongest, chapter illustrates the tight structure and breadth of James's book. After situating Nancy's thinking in the French reception of Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche by discussing a crucial but unfamiliar article of Nancy's ("Nietzsche: Mais où sont les yeux pour le voir"), James turns to a discussion of Nancy's book on Kant, *Logodaedalus: Le discours de la syncope*. He begins with a five-page summary of the stakes of Kant's first Critique and of the schematism in particular. This summary leads into a concise discussion of Heidegger's *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. James then shows how Nancy takes up the issue of grounding and groundlessness from Heidegger, followed by a discussion of the undecidable relation between *Darstellung* and *Dichtung* (presentation and poetry). This allows him to underline a subtle but crucial difference between Heidegger and Nancy: while for Heidegger the absence of foundations within (critical) philosophy is encountered only in the moment of recoil before the abyss, for Nancy this absence of foundation is constitutive of philosophical discourse as such. For Nancy,

it is the whole language of metaphysics that is groundless and that resists, as language, any grounding. This shows why Nancy must oppose Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche as the last metaphysician. The subtle but crucial distinction between Heidegger and Nancy would not become apparent to a reader unfamiliar with either of these texts and their respective stakes if no concise summary were offered. Indeed, one of the strengths of the book is how it shows not only Nancy's indebtedness to Heidegger, but also his radical departure from him. This is achieved, oddly enough, without any in-depth discussion of *Être singulier pluriel*.

Throughout the book, James offers many similarly concise discussions. Chapter 2 on space offers an interpretation of Husserl's *Thing and Space* and of Heidegger's account of space in *Being and Time* and in the *Beiträge* before moving to a discussion of spacing as sense. The opening section on the classical debate around space seems less relevant since it is only used as a foil for a phenomenological account and discarded right away. Chapter 3 offers a discussion of Merleau-Ponty's *Phénoménologie de la perception* and *Le visible et l'invisible* and of Derrida's *Le Toucher* before moving on to a discussion of Nancy's rethinking of incarnation and his deconstruction of Christianity. Chapter 4 on community offers a thorough discussion of Bataille, Blanchot, and Nancy, and also addresses criticism of the political aspects of Nancy's thought from Lefort, Critchley, Fraser, and Norris. Chapter 5 offers a discussion, first, of Hegel and the plurality of art forms and, second, of Nancy's recent works on painting. The wide scope of the book and the versatility of its author are undeniable, despite some inaccuracies (for example, the equation of the death of the others and the death of *das Man* in Chapter 4), which do not endanger the interpretation as a whole. Of course, as is always the disadvantage of a book on a prolific writer, James could not take into consideration the most recent works of Nancy on dance, painting, the body, skin, the poem, etc. published since 2005. Some of those works are listed in the bibliography, but the bibliography is already outdated. We must also mention some typos in the French titles, the most important one being Jean-François Lyotard's *Différend* which has been twice transformed into a Derridean *Différand*.

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