

Introduction: Being Here

Heidegger and Reception History

Whether or not Jerzy Kosinski intended it as such, his comic novel *Being There* (1970) can be read as a classic send-up of all things Heideggerian. The title, of course, is a giveaway, reminiscent as it is of the one term all translations of Heidegger have left in the original German: *Dasein*, which means, literally, “being there.” And the title is no mere coincidence. In an interview with George Plimpton and Rocco Landesman for *The Paris Review*, Kosinski admitted that while writing the book, his “code name” for it “was *Blank Page*, and sometimes *Dasein*.”¹ Kosinski’s biographer, James Park Sloan, tells us that “as much as Kosinski liked the idea of being identified with Heidegger,” he thought “the term ‘Dasein’ sounded pretentious and incomprehensibly foreign,” so he settled on “its English equivalent.”² Beyond titular qualms, though, Kosinski was probably even more ambivalent about being associated with Heidegger than Sloan lets on, for in *The Paris Review* interview, Kosinski went on to completely deny that *Being There* was a Heideggerian novel.³ Still,

¹ George A. Plimpton and Rocco Landesman, “The Art of Fiction XLVI – Jerzy Kosinski,” *The Paris Review* 54 (Summer 1972): 183–207; reprinted in Tom Teicholz, ed., *Conversations with Jerzy Kosinski* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1993), 20–36. The quote is on page 31.

² James Park Sloan, *Jerzy Kosinski: A Biography* (New York: Dutton, 1996), 289. It is worth noting here that when Sloan’s biography appeared, it caused quite a scandal, not because it exposed this Heidegger connection but because it maintained that Kosinski did not himself write all of his works. With regard to *Being There* specifically, Sloan argues that the novel bears an overwhelming resemblance to a popular Polish novel from 1932 entitled *The Career of Nikodem Dyżma*. For more on this, see Sloan, page 292.

³ “The Art of Fiction XLVI – Jerzy Kosinski,” 31: “One has to be careful with titles. If I had kept to that initial code name it would have connected the book, possibly, with the philosophy of Heidegger. As a matter of fact, one of the American critics learned from my publisher that *Dasein* was the code name, and months later wrote a very negative review of *Being There* as a Heideggerian novel – a terribly unfair thing to do. Had the code name been *Kapital*, he probably would have considered the book a Marxist novel.” This might be a reference to John Updike’s very critical review of *Being There* in the *New Yorker*. Updike noted the Heidegger connection, but did not call the book Heideggerian. See John Updike, “Books: Bombs Made Out of Literary Leftovers,” *The New Yorker*, September 25, 1971.

the Heideggerian residues in the text are hard to ignore, and they suggest that Kosinski may have been having a little fun with philosophy.

Chance, the simpleton protagonist of *Being There*, is an enigma. True to his name, he rises improbably from obscurity to ultimately influence both Wall Street and international political elites with his opaque mix of folk wisdom and utter naiveté. His rapid transformation from recluse to socialite gives Kosinski an opportunity to poke fun not only at the crassness of American media culture and the wealthy who control it, but also at all those who would champion such peasant pseudo-speak as the cure for modern society's innumerable ills. And if Chance is a simpleton who ends up ruling the United States because the gossip mills say he should, then Heidegger, his hypothetical inspiration (or so I am suggesting), is, well, not a simpleton exactly, but an equally misunderstood figure whose influence in the United States has been even more substantial.

Chance is, as Kosinski tells us, a "blank page" upon which his admirers as well as his detractors have projected any number of fantasies.⁴ Heidegger, for his part, may not be an entirely blank page, but his widespread and surprising reception in postwar American cultural and intellectual life – a world as different from Heidegger's rural Germany as Chance's backyard Baltimore garden is from the United Nations complex on the East River where he eventually ends up – is almost as baffling as the rise to stardom of Kosinski's protagonist. Like Chance, Heidegger seems to emerge out of nowhere, despite the fact that poets, writers, and artists all know his name. In the same way that *Being There* offers greater insight into American culture and politics than it does into its own main character, who remains a mystery till the very end, Heidegger's reception tells us as much – if not more – about the course of American intellectual and cultural history over the past half century as it does about Heidegger himself. It also tells us a great deal about how ideas and intellectual cultures travel in this, the age of globalization.

That the German philosopher Martin Heidegger's most recognizable philosophical term could grace the cover of a best-selling novel, which was itself transformed into an award-winning film starring Peter Sellers, says something about Heidegger's curious afterlife on this side of the Atlantic.⁵ Kosinski's appropriation of Heidegger's terminology, I want to demonstrate, is but the tip of the proverbial iceberg: Heidegger's reception in the United States has been widespread and far-reaching. It has transformed – and simultaneously been transformed by – developments both within and beyond the American academy. As the examples of Kosinski and Sellers suggest, traces of Heidegger's philosophical work can be found in American popular culture. They can also be found in philosophical debates, theological controversies, architectural

⁴ Jerzy Kosinski, *Being There* (1970; New York: Grove Press, 1999), 127.

⁵ Peter Sellers won an Oscar for Best Actor, and Kosinski won more than one award for Best Screenplay.

discourses, political posturings, and literary scandals. In all of this, Heidegger's American reception is part and parcel of a wider international phenomenon. In the same way that Heidegger wanted to use an analysis of human existence (*Dasein*) to gain access to the larger question of Being, I want to suggest that an analysis of Heidegger's American reception illuminates broader issues in the recent intellectual and cultural history of the United States, especially insofar as they hinge upon developments in the international circulation of ideas more generally. Detailing how Heidegger was (re)made in the U.S.A. will demonstrate how the history of ideas might be reconfigured for a new era.

At the heart of this story is a paradox: how could a philosopher so suspicious of the very process of intellectual popularization become one of its most easily recognizable exemplars? Martin Heidegger was born in rural, southwestern Germany in 1889. His studies and the philosophical fame he later achieved did not take him far from these surroundings. Choosing the rootedness of his native *Heimat* over the allures of rootless, cosmopolitan opportunities, Heidegger self-consciously decided to present himself, like his philosophical work, as an organic product of the Black Forest region where he was born, where he lived and worked, and where he eventually died and was buried in 1976.

Despite this carefully cultivated image, however – that of the *Schwarzwald* prophet, perched high above the everyday world – Heidegger, the one-time defender of all things *Heimat*-related, is now a cosmopolitan point of reference.⁶ Indeed, no part of the world has remained entirely immune to some kind of Heideggerian reception. Within Europe, as we will see in Chapter 1, distinct Heideggerian lineages can be traced in France, Italy, Scandinavia, and what is today the Czech Republic. Elsewhere we can find significant pockets of Heidegger scholarship in Japan, throughout Latin America, even in the Middle East. Heidegger may have been a philosopher who, from his earliest student writings, decried the cult of “personality” that defined all the “interesting people” of modern, mass society, but his legacy depended almost entirely on it. He could present himself as the philosopher of authenticity, thinking at an alpine remove from the degraded world below only via the networks of “idle talk” he supposedly so despised.⁷ His many international interpreters, whether

⁶ On Heidegger's defense of the idea of *Heimat*, see his “Why Do I Stay in the Provinces?” from 1934, which can be found in Thomas Sheehan, ed., *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker* (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1981): 27–30. For a different perspective, but one that also points to the affected nature of Heidegger's Black Forest persona, see Adam Sharr's *Heidegger's Hut*, foreword by Simon Sadler, prologue by Andrew Benjamin (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2006).

⁷ Martin Heidegger, “*Per Mortem Ad Vitam*: Thoughts on Johaness Jørgensen's *Lies of Life and Truth of Life* (1910),” translated by John Protevi and John van Buren, in Heidegger, *Supplements: From the Earliest Essays to Being and Time and Beyond*, ed. John van Buren (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), 35. On “idle talk,” see Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1962), 212–213.

hagiographically or critically inclined, have kept the conversation going, and their commentary, thanks in no small part to the power of idle talk, has taken on a fascinating life of its own.

As the late French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu pointed out some time ago, the dissemination of ideas in the age of globalization is a messy process. Using Heidegger's reception in France as his case study, Bourdieu made a compelling argument for the importance of seeing social conditions as a determining factor in the "international circulation of ideas."⁸ Given the realities of academic politics, the profit-motives of publishers, and the prestige-granting powers of cultural arbiters, who come in many different shapes and sizes, it is all but impossible to think of international intellectual exchange as an idealized space of free and open discourse – as a true public sphere in the sense that the contemporary German philosopher Jürgen Habermas intends it.⁹ This is especially true when intellectual exchange takes place across national borders, requiring translation and mediation, not just on the conceptual level but on the level of language itself. According to the literary theorist Pascale Casanova, "translation, like criticism, is a process of establishing value."¹⁰ In the imagined international space that Casanova has evocatively dubbed "the world republic of letters," texts do not circulate in a pure and unmediated sense. On the contrary, they are shaped and reshaped, repackaged even, according to the needs of readers and writers situated in many different contexts. Consequently, the intrinsic value of texts can only be appreciated in relation to the contexts of their creation and reception. Texts and contexts, like the internalist and externalist modes of criticism that respectively serve them, go together.¹¹

And yet many intellectual historians continue to work as if such messy realities do not impinge upon the life of the mind, as if the widest context necessitated by intellectual-historical inquiry is that of an intellectual's biography. In doing so, they needlessly narrow the scope of the history of ideas when, in truth, intellectual history is relevant to almost all aspects of historical reality. Philosopher R. G. Collingwood famously claimed that "all history is the history of thought," and classicist Gilbert Highet similarly suggested once that world history could profitably be "written as a history of the movement

⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, "On the Social Conditions of the International Circulation of Ideas," in Richard Shusterman, ed., *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1999), 220–228.

⁹ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, translated by Thomas Burger, with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989).

¹⁰ Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, translated by M. B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004), 23.

¹¹ In *The World Republic of Letters*, Casanova aims "to overcome the supposedly insuperable antinomy between internal criticism, which looks no further than texts themselves in searching for meaning, and external criticism, which describes the historical conditions under which texts are produced, without, however, accounting for their literary quality and singularity" (4–5).

of ideas.”¹² If these assessments are correct, then it can only be beneficial to view all history of thought in terms of reception history. What the intellectual historian does, fundamentally, is trace networks of reception: he exposes hidden and not-so-hidden influences; he charts legacies of thinkers, books, ideas, discourses, and concepts.¹³ Indeed, as Highet thought, intellectual history as the study of reception is “like making a new map, in which we can see distant countries connected by invisible tides, intellectual currents moving by strange paths around the globe.”¹⁴

In showing how – let alone trying to explain why – certain ideas become influential in certain places at certain moments in time, all intellectual historians are interested in the fate of ideas as much as their origins, especially since every origin is always already a point of reception itself. Although the dynamics of reception are more noticeable when translation across national or linguistic boundaries occurs, because the distances between the contexts of creation and reception are often greatest in these instances, we should not lose sight of the fact that ideas are always and everywhere caught up in a process of reception. We need not go so far as to claim, like Highet, that this process is indicative of the workings of some Hegelian “superhuman Reason” unifying peoples across the globe in a universal intellectual evolution; but it will help us to understand the world in which we currently live if we begin to see ideas as both malleable and mobile.¹⁵ From the moment an idea is expressed, either verbally or in print, it is traveling. And in this globalized day and age, it is imperative, I think, that we take all aspects of this process very seriously.

This book is a work of intellectual history as reception history (*Rezeptionsgeschichte*). As such, it attempts to narrate the genesis, the rise, and in some cases at least, the eventual fall of certain ideas in certain historical contexts – in this case, the philosophical writings of Martin Heidegger as they were encountered by readers and thinkers in the United States. Behind this narrative intent, there exists a second aim animating the following pages: to demonstrate, if not always to explicitly argue, that a new way of conceptualizing the very tasks and aims of intellectual history can be found in the many possibilities of reception studies. Read in this way, it is my hope that this book can serve as a case study in the application of reception studies to the history of ideas. Philosophers, who often look askance at contextual interpretations, might find this approach inessential, or even, along Heidegger’s lines, inauthentic. It seems to me, however,

¹² R. G. Collingwood, *Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 110. Gilbert Highet, *The Migration of Ideas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 10.

¹³ Among the places where these issues have been discussed recently, see the inaugural volume of *Contributions to the history of concepts* 1:1 (March 2005) and Donald R. Kelley’s *The Descent of Ideas: The History of Intellectual History* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2002). For Kelley’s take on reception history in particular, see pages 301–302.

¹⁴ Highet, *The Migration of Ideas*, 28.

¹⁵ Ibid.

that questions of reception form an indispensable part of our attempts to examine what Heidegger himself called the “historicality” of our existence.¹⁶ In this sense, the only path back to authentic thinking (if such a thing even exists), is through the inauthenticity of “idle talk.”¹⁷

I am not the first to highlight the importance of reception history. From theoretical overviews to case studies, reception history has had its fair share of proponents.¹⁸ But in the context of the current moment, I think its imperatives are worth restating and, furthermore, worth reviving. Given the globalized conditions of the academy today, reception history holds out the possibility that the history of ideas can serve as, in Anthony Grafton’s words, “a place where many forms and traditions of scholarship can converge.”¹⁹ Its pluralist possibilities in fact go back to the founding of the field, and to the journal that represented it, *The Journal of the History of Ideas*. As Grafton reminds us, the history of ideas was, during this time, “an intellectual seismic zone where the tectonic plates of disciplines converged and rubbed against one another, producing noises of all sorts.”²⁰ Insofar as reception history borrows from, and points toward, methodological innovations from a host of other scholarly discourses, including literary studies, sociology, philosophy, and cultural studies, it has the ability to make the current moment just as noisy.

¹⁶ See, for example, Heidegger, *Being and Time*, ¶ 76.

¹⁷ As a philosopher who indeed looks askance at contextual readings (they result, in his words, in “a reductive external interpretation”), Simon Critchley has nevertheless attempted just such a revaluation of Heidegger’s notion of inauthenticity. See Critchley, “Originary Inauthenticity: On Heidegger’s *Being and Time*,” in Simon Critchley and Reiner Schürmann, *On Heidegger’s Being and Time*, ed., Steven Levine (New York: Routledge, 2008), 132–151, quote on 149.

¹⁸ The following titles are a mere beginning. For a theoretical overview, see James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein, eds., *Reception Study: From Literary Theory to Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2001). On the reception of European ideas in America, see, for example: George Cotkin, *Existential America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Nathan Hale, *Freud and the Americans: The Beginnings of Psychoanalysis in the United States, 1876–1917* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971); and *The Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis in the United States: Freud and the Americans, 1917–1985* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Other similar studies in reception history include Jerome Huyler, *Locke in America: The Moral Philosophy of the Founding Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995); Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, *Neither Rock nor Refuge: American Encounters with Nietzsche and the Search for Foundations* (PhD dissertation: Brandeis University, 2003); Paul Spurlin, *Montesquieu in America, 1760–1801* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1940); *Rousseau in America, 1760–1809* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1969); and Thomas Perkins Wheatland, “Isolation, Assimilation, and Opposition: A Reception History of the Horkheimer Circle in the United States, 1934–1979” (PhD dissertation: Boston College, 2002). Perhaps the most recognizable work within the field of reception studies is Steven E. Aschheim’s *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890–1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

¹⁹ Anthony Grafton, “The History of Ideas: Precept and Practice, 1950–2000 and Beyond,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67:1 (January 2006), 32.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

As recent commentators have shown, just about anything can be the object of a reception study. And, depending upon the item being analyzed, any number of methodological approaches can be deployed to examine it. Whether “formalist, sociological, bibliographical, or historical,” reception studies take as their central task the narration of diffusion.²¹ In Heidegger’s case, this diffusion can be categorized in any number of ways. Consequently, as the following chapters will reveal, only an ecumenical deployment of the many methodologies available to the reception historian will yield an accurate portrait of the wide and varied reception of a figure such as Heidegger, a philosopher who spent his entire career searching for the authentic origins of Western philosophy beneath the supposedly contaminated layers of intellectual sediment that the tides of history had washed upon them – “the rootlessness of Western thinking,” he once suggested, began with the (mis)translation of Greek philosophy into Latin.²² Sidestepping Heidegger’s own obsession with origins, and avoiding the erroneous separation of text and context, which, as Thomas Bender has shown, animated early work in the history of American ideas, we can see in the reception of Heidegger’s work some of the many ways that philosophical and theoretical discourses are constructed, defended, and deployed in sites far from those of their initial inception.²³

Instead of simply following the bouncing ball that is Heidegger’s concept of Being as it makes its way to America, then, this book proceeds by exploring the diversity of the reception of his work – by examining, in other words, the construction and reconstruction of many different Heideggers by many different readers. Various read as, among other things, an ontologist, an existentialist, an anti-humanist, a proto-postmodernist, a phenomenologist, a theologian, a reclusive sage, and even as a cultural critic, Heidegger has been appropriated in any number of ways. The same is true of what we might call the Heideggerian persona or image, whether that of the Black Forest prophet, the philosopher’s philosopher, or the Nazi.²⁴ Recounting the evolutionary development of these many different readings will give us greater insight not just into Heidegger – a German philosopher who studied under Edmund Husserl; taught at the universities of Marburg and Freiburg; published one of the most important books of twentieth-century existentialism, *Being and Time*, in 1927; was

²¹ Anna Vaninskaya, “The Orwell Century and After: Rethinking Reception and Reputation,” *Modern Intellectual History* 5:3 (November 2008), 600.

²² See, for example, Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” *Off the Beaten Track*, edited and translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6.

²³ Thomas Bender, “Intellectual and Cultural History,” *The New American History, Revised and Expanded* (Washington, DC: The American Historical Association, 1997), 4.

²⁴ As Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen has shown, an intellectual’s image forms an important part of his legacy. See her insightful essay “Conventional Iconoclasm: The Cultural Work of the Nietzsche Image in Twentieth-Century America,” *The Journal of American History* 93:3 (December 2006): 728–755.

affiliated for some time with the Nazi regime; and later went on to become one of the most talked about philosophers of the twentieth century, both despite and because of his disastrous decision to support Hitler – but into the afterlives of his thinking and the intellectual cultures they have so transformed.

The American reception of Heidegger was not, however, a passive process. This is not another story of how Europe continues to hold sway over American thought and culture. One of the strong claims of this book is that, to the contrary, it was the American reception of Heidegger that helped make him into the household name he currently is. In other words, in the same way that I want to question the Hegelian faith in universal, “superhuman Reason” that we find in figures such as Highet, I also want to resist the Hegelian claim that “what happens in America has its origins in Europe.”²⁵ American historians since at least Frederick Jackson Turner have called such thinking into question, preferring to see in the interaction of Old World ideas and New World contexts a dynamic and constructive process as opposed to a passive and subservient one.²⁶ In the case of Heidegger’s reception, this is all too apparent. The submissive overtones of the very term “reception” have to be suspended so that we can recognize the moments of creative alteration, construction, and reconfiguration that comprise it. Heidegger was in fact made in places far away from Freiburg – in places such as Paris, where philosophers from Jean-Paul Sartre to Jacques Derrida pronounced on his importance; in New York, where émigré intellectuals taught his philosophy; and even in San Francisco, where publishers have kept translations of his writings in print for almost a half a century.

The history of Heidegger’s reception in the United States can be recounted chronologically at same time that it is explored thematically via the various methodologies available to reception studies. The story begins with Heidegger’s influence as a teacher of philosophy. Although he is known today primarily for the books he wrote during his lifetime, Heidegger’s earliest reception in the United States, like that in Germany and elsewhere, was predicated as much upon his persona in the lecture hall as upon any of his written works. Chapter 1, “Freiburg Bound: The Early Years of American Heidegger Scholarship,” recounts the journeys that took Americans to Europe, young Americans such as Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss, Sidney Hook, and Marjorie Grene, who, as she put it many years later, learned

²⁵ G. W. F. Hegel, “The Geographical Basis of History,” *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, translated by Leo Rauch (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988), 90.

²⁶ See Turner’s *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt, 1920). By invoking Turner, I do not intend to raise the specter of American exceptionalism. To the contrary, despite the many valid criticisms of his work, I think we can also see in Turner what Thomas Bender has called a “historiographical and civic worldliness,” which is much needed today. See Bender’s *A Nation Among Nations: America’s Place in World History* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2006), 299.

her philosophy “at the feet of Martin Heidegger.” Returning to the United States, these students were among the first to introduce Heidegger’s unique philosophical perspective to wider American audiences. They were also, as we shall see, among the first to critique it.

Like the many philosophers and writers who followed in their footsteps, the first Americans to come into contact with Heidegger were, at best, ambivalent about him. For them, Heidegger was both a positive and a problematic inspiration. Consequently, they learned to express both admiration for, and disappointment with, his work in almost the same breath. This ambivalence, which reminds us that reception is not synonymous with adulation, can be traced in many of the figures this book covers, including Hannah Arendt, J. Glenn Gray, Richard Rorty, and Daniel Libeskind.

Part of the critique that early Americans such as Hook and Grene leveled against Heidegger was political. Many of them, like Grene, had seen the rise of Nazism up close while studying or traveling in Germany, and when Heidegger enthusiastically espoused the principles of the budding National Socialist regime, they were quick to find evidence of a flawed approach to politics at the very core of his philosophy. The political question was deemed important from the very beginning. For Americans, Heidegger’s work was destined to inhabit a contested space – between the lessons of history and the needs of philosophy.

The role that politics played in the process of coming to terms with Heidegger’s influence as a teacher was especially apparent in the writings of some of Heidegger’s German-Jewish students, who were forced to flee totalitarian Europe in the wake of Hitler’s rise to power. Many of these intellectuals, the more famous of whom Richard Wolin has dubbed “Heidegger’s Children,” went on to enjoy long and respected careers in the United States – among them most notably Hannah Arendt and Herbert Marcuse.²⁷ But Arendt and Marcuse were by no means the only émigrés to be driven out of Hitler’s Europe, nor were they even the only students of Heidegger’s to arrive as refugees on American shores.²⁸ Indeed, their later renown within American intellectual culture has led many to depict them as the sole inheritors of Heidegger’s American legacy, when in fact the roles they played, like those of their less illustrious siblings, in the dissemination of their former mentor’s thought were minor at best. As much as Arendt, Marcuse, Günther Anders, Hans Jonas, Paul Oskar Kristeller, Hans Loewald, Karl Löwith, and Leo Strauss were stamped by their time studying with or under Heidegger, none of them spent much time

²⁷ Richard Wolin, *Heidegger’s Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

²⁸ Like Mitchell G. Ash, I am trying here to widen the scope of the discussion of the émigrés. This book is also part of recent attempts to move from, as Ash puts it, “assessing the *products* or contributions of the émigrés to the *processes* which produced them.” See Ash, “Forced Migration and Scientific Change After 1933: Steps Toward a New Approach,” in Roberto Scazzieri and Raffaella Simili, eds., *The Migration of Ideas* (Sagamore Beach, Massachusetts: Science History Publications, 2008), 161–178, quote on 162.

explicitly introducing Heidegger to American audiences. Unlike that of their American predecessors, the part played by Heidegger's children in the reception was not necessarily expository. Many of them wrestled with their mentor's influence – an anxiety of influence made all the more powerful given the context of their emigration – but they rarely did so publicly.²⁹ And while Hannah Arendt may have lobbied presses to publish Heidegger's works in translation, she actually wrote very few pieces introducing Heidegger, or Heideggerian themes, to the American public.³⁰

Must reception be synonymous with exposition? In following the careers of four Heidegger students not discussed by Wolin, Chapter 2, "Exiles and Emissaries: Heidegger's Stepchildren in the United States," argues that intellectual transference takes place not simply at the conceptual level but at a deeper, more existential level, one that molds not only textual discourses but scholarly personalities as well. By examining what Ian Hunter has called the "persona of the philosopher," we begin to see that these students took from Heidegger not just a body of knowledge that could be passed on to others, but a whole outlook or methodology, an approach to reading, writing, and teaching that reflected the new philosophical persona Heidegger sought to embody.³¹ In addition to offering a window onto the famed migration of Weimar thought to the United States, an examination of the lives and works of Heidegger's Jewish students such as Kristeller, Strauss, Anders, and Loewald serves as a reminder that reception often occurs via intensely personal interactions – in this case, via the relationship between student and teacher.³²

Chapter 3, "Nihilism, Nothingness, and God: Heidegger and American Theology," discusses the influence of Heidegger's writings themselves. As it turns out, the theological dimension of Heidegger's work made possible some of the earliest engagements with his thought. Insofar as Heidegger was initially appropriated via theological discourses in the United States, he was introduced in a way that current readers of Heidegger might find curious. Even then, the theological reading of Heidegger required some interpretive sleight of hand, for by the time Heidegger came to be read by American theologians, he could not be considered a theological thinker, and reading him as such meant engaging in a kind of blinkered hermeneutics. To be sure, Heidegger's biography

²⁹ See Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

³⁰ And on top of this, not all of them were laudatory. Take, for instance, her early dismissal of Heidegger as "the last (we hope) romantic" in "What is Existenz Philosophy?" *Partisan Review* 13:1 (Winter 1946): 46.

³¹ Ian Hunter, "The History of Philosophy and the Persona of the Philosopher," *Modern Intellectual History* 4:3 (2007): 571–600.

³² These figures need to be examined not only in relation to Heidegger, but also in relation to their own readers in the United States. As Benjamin Lazier has suggested, Strauss in particular awaits a proper reception study. See Lazier's "Natural Right and Liberalism: Leo Strauss in Our Time," *Modern Intellectual History* 6:1 (2009): 188. A study of Strauss's connection to Heidegger, I would argue, serves as the first step toward this goal.