

considering all categories of understanding, “man” and “woman” included, as contingent, social-historical constructions. Kristeva sides with this third group and solicits her female colleagues towards a post-feminist future.

While we might normally consider such a “portable philosopher” book as a commercial operation having little scholarly expertise behind it, this is not the case with Oliver’s edition. Her selection of texts is careful, honest, and wide-ranging. Her organization of Kristeva’s representative works shows a deep understanding of the author’s originality, background, interests, and goals. Furthermore, Oliver’s comments, which are not limited to the long preface and introduction at the beginning of the book, but which also open each of the five sections outlined above, are insightful and helpful to connect Kristeva’s works with the many thinkers and fields to whom she is indebted. The consequence, however, is that this “portable” edition is not at all very “portable.” In other words, Oliver’s exposition is so rich and detailed that it makes the book sound more like a critical study of Kristeva’s thought than like an introductory, essential companion for the occasional reader who is curious to get to know one of the most prominent intellectual figures on the contemporary European scene. In other words, this critical remark is not meant to be an admonition against the professional zeal displayed by Oliver. On the contrary, we should applaud her highly academic book, despite the fact that Oliver’s potential readers will be narrowed considerably.

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***Being and God in Aristotle and Heidegger: The Role of Method in Thinking the Infinite***

CATRIONA HANLEY

Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000.

With *Being and God in Aristotle and Heidegger*, Catriona Hanley offers an excellent example of scholarly literature and provides a competent, scrupulous comparative study of Aristotle and Martin Heidegger. Admirably, Hanley avoids any preposterous conflation of their philosophies, as her two detailed, separate sections on the two thinkers exemplify. The first part, which mainly orbits around Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, and the second part, which limits its scope to the early Heidegger (i.e. till the mid 1930s), are intended to furnish all the relevant information needed to target five major problems: (1) What Heidegger took from Aristotle; (2) How Heidegger transformed Aristotle; (3) How Heidegger should be read now that his debt to Aristotle is widely recognized and richly documented; (4) How the relationship between being and God figures in their philosophies; (5) What the role of methodology is in determining this relationship.

Hanley focuses her attention on (4) and (5). (1)—(3) are expected to become clear through the analysis of this conclusive pair of more specific issues. In addition, she admits that an extensive, explicit study of (1)—(3) would commit her to an overly demanding task. As a consequence, she determines her position on (1)—(3) indirectly, working inside the academic tradition of scholars such as Volpi and Van Buren, whose contributions she takes as generally familiar to the reader. Naturally, the audience to whom her book is directed is a selected elite of historians of philosophy in the Ancient and Continental areas.

The pivotal element in Hanley's treatment of (4) and (5) is placed on the explanation of the *a-theistic* shift of Heidegger's ontology. Whereas Aristotle develops an onto-theology, i.e. a science of being grounded in the notion of a temporally infinite God, Heidegger, at least till the mid 1930s, formulates a mere ontology, i.e. a science of being *qua* being devoid of any reference to the divine. Hanley is convinced that Heidegger's exclusion of God from the picture is a logical consequence of his methodological approach, which she reads as capable of dealing only with the realm of the finite. Heidegger proceeds via phenomenology, tackling the problem of being from the point of view of the temporal, contingent, *in possibilitatibus vivente Dasein*, thus from the start leaving no room for the infinite. Aristotle's philosophy, on the other hand, allows for the infinite, as well as the divine, since it includes a way to attain knowledge of absolute, eternal, universal principles: theoretical understanding. More precisely, Hanley outlines Aristotle's notion of *episteme*—which she translates as “science”—as the “search for universal grounds of phenomena peculiar to a particular subject genus.” (1) Ontology, as the *episteme* of being *qua* being, is therefore the search for being's universal grounds. Significantly, at least according to Hanley's reading of his *Posterior Analytics* and *Physics*, Aristotle's entire scientific enterprise is, at its core, etiological: namely his investigation aims at determining the primal source of movement, the ultimate ground of all passages from potentiality into actuality. Such a source, or ground, is described as necessary, fully actual, eternal, non-kinetic and immaterial, and it constitutes that which our “rational psyche” (26) detects as required to make sense of all forms of movement perceivable and cognizable in the universe. Starting from empirical observations, in fact, human knowledge moves from such particulars to higher and higher degrees of abstraction, determining the “essence or species form” of larger and larger categories of cases, which are “expressed as a universal in the definition.” Eventually, by employing “identification and noetic intuition of universal principles,” (1) we can achieve the understanding of the primary source of movement, the essential root of all forms of being. Knowledge itself, as a form of passage from potentiality into actuality, calls for an ultimate *aitia* (“universal ground”) of movement, which, in the *Metaphysics*, finds a name: God. This is how God enters the equation: it represents the primal mover, the fundamental *aitia* of “the physical cosmos.” (2)

Heidegger, on the other hand, condemns Aristotle's approach as oblivious to the distinction between the ontic and the ontological. Just as all his predecessors have done—so Heidegger immodestly claims—Aristotle too subsumes all beings under unifying logical categories of understanding, “freezing” the fluid, all-interdependent reality within the cold pigeonholes of conceptual distinctions. Doing so, Aristotle is betraying such beings's unique individuality, and he is neglecting the fact that our faculty of understanding is itself as kinetic, as contingent, as non-actual, as the sensible cases from which it takes the moves. Aristotle is said to have failed to grasp the “radical” being of the existing world in which *Dasein* dwells, thus denying its ontological evidence, rejecting its all-encompassing embrace and, instead, reifying it as an ontic, theoretical object. In order to avoid this kind of self-deception, Heidegger takes a phenomenological stance, which he sees as the only alternative to the millenary metaphysical tradition that Aristotle exemplifies. In phenomenology, in fact, no detached “rational psyche” abstracting an object's essential features is given. The very starting point is a subject-object relationship, informed by the human practical concerns and linguistic structures of signification, which delimits the “possible horizon” (102) of our experience and, *a fortiori*, of our knowledge. Henceforth, Hanley can list a series of sharp oppositions between Aristotle's and Heidegger's approaches. Whereas Aristotle stresses the ethical imperative derived by the knowledge of the fixed form of rationality proper to human nature, Heidegger stresses the nihilistic tragedy connected with the implausibility of such an absolute knowledge. Whereas Aristotle stresses the theoretical, universal, and eternal character of the noetic intuitions on which science is based, Heidegger emphasizes the practical, idiosyncratic, social and historical malleability of structures of signification. Aristotle stresses actuality, while Heidegger stresses potentiality; we are nothing, according to Heidegger, but a finite set of possibilities, an on-going cluster of drives, for we are limited by temporality, ignorance, and mortality.

Thus, Hanley concludes, Heidegger's methodological position cannot but close off theology from the scene; there is no place for eternal, pure actuality but, rather, there remains only possibilities and potentialities. Quite dramatically, God has been “bracketed” out at the beginning of the phenomenological inquiry, and now it cannot be reintroduced, since its alleged features do not pertain to the realm of entities that phenomenology can legitimately ascertain.

However, Hanley wonders, is this an irrecoverable case? Shall we conclude that a phenomenological stance strictly implies “God's death?” Hanley does not think so. At the end of her study, in a rather summary way, Hanley sketches a possible alternative to Heidegger's nihilistic verdict. In the first place, she argues that Heidegger's method excludes the possibility of talking about the infinite and God, but not the possibility of their actual existence. In the second place, she affirms that Heidegger's phenomenology of the finite might even admit an experience of the infinite (and of God) as “the non-finite Other.” (198) In other

words, there could be a way to reintegrate the infinite and God as the “other than the given,” or “other than the realm of the finite where *Dasein* dwells.” If it is assumed that Heidegger’s ontology is not exhaustive and, in fact, a neglected “opening” to the possibility of a “non-finite Other” may have a place in the ontological, radical experience of “gratitude”—a possibility that Heidegger has not taken into consideration. Re-interpreting Heidegger’s use of the concept of “guilt” (*Schuldigsein*), as meaning “owing” or “being indebted,” (193) Hanley praises *Dasein*’s *being alive* because it did not have to *be*. By stressing this peculiarity of *Dasein*’s condition, Hanly wants the reader to note the debt that *Dasein* has contracted with the mysterious “thrownness” (Id.) of its own being. *Dasein* is thrown amid beings, thrown between mortality (as Heidegger points out) and being alive (as Hanley interestingly adds).

In conclusion, I can state that Hanley’s book is, on the one hand, a rich, interesting perspective on the history of philosophy. Aristotelian and, above all, Heideggerian scholars can surely find much well-documented, well-thought-through, and well-articulated material on the relationship between Heidegger’s ontology and Aristotle’s onto-theology. On the other hand, Hanley’s brief theoretical venture, as it is outlined at the end of her work, is indeed still too embryonic to be seriously regarded. Optimistically, it might develop into a more powerful reinterpretation of Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit* in a future writing. Nonetheless, there are some fundamental problems with the author’s approach. First, it is objectionable that *Dasein* would have any grasp of a non-finite Other. Second, the possibility of a non-finite Other does not imply this Other to be God (whether this is understood in personal or non-personal terms). In truth, this Other could be mere otherness, as the totality of what is not the individuated *Dasein* (whether conceived as a plurality of gods, a boundless field of consciousness, a law-body of spatio-temporal instances, or a chaotic flux of colliding atoms). Third, the experience of gratitude seems to be overly episodic, anthropological, and psychological to be granted a place in a serious phenomenological ontology of *Dasein*. We can easily imagine that thinkers such as Giacomo Leopardi, Arthur Schopenhauer, and Emile Cioran would probably dissent over the feasibility of such a positive experience.

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**Gilles Deleuze. *Une Vie Philosophique*.**

ÉRIC ALLIEZ, ed.

Le Plessis-Robinson: Institut Synthélabo pour le Progrès de la Connaissance, 1998.

With the exception of four contributions, this collection of thirty-three essays represents the intellectual labour of those who participated in the June 1996