BOOK REVIEWS / COMPTES RENDUS

Laurent de Sutter, *Deleuze. La pratique du droit*. Paris: Éditions Michalon, 2009; 124 pages. ISBN 978-2841864829.

Review by Constantin V. Boundas, Trent University.

Many a time, the readers of Deleuze have had the opportunity to notice that his critique of the Law and his desire to be done with judgment (*pour en finir avec le jugement*) are often followed by an appeal to the art of jurisprudence. It is as if the latter represented the way out of law and judgment and the only constructive alternative to both. But until recently Deleuze's commentators have not exactly lavished on their readers their efforts to explain how exactly jurisprudence is supposed to live up to the promise that Deleuze did place on it. Laurent de Sutter's *Deleuze: La pratique du droit,* published in 2009 in the series "Le Bien Commun" of the Ėditions Michalon, breaks the long silence by defiantly proclaiming that Deleuze's philosophy of Right has nothing to offer the jurist other than sending her back to work with a clear conscience: *jurisprudence has no need for philosophy to flourish*.

With his book, de Sutter attributes to Deleuze's critique of the Law and to his positive reception of jurisprudence the intention to show the fly the way out of the infamous bottle: *libérer le Droit de la philosophie*! (68) In its first part—the part of the critique—de Sutter discusses Deleuze's view that the Law is capable of being thought only humorously. The classical image of Law gives the Law a place between *the* Good—its foundation—and the Best—its consequences, the reason for our obedience**.** Its modern Kantian image, on the other hand, subsumes the Good under the form of the Law, pronounces the consequences of our actions irrelevant to their moral value and proves equally irrelevant our opinions as to whether obedience to the law is or is not for the Best. The classical image, in de Sutter's opinion, "requires a lot of irony to raise the Law to the absolute Good as its founding principle," and "a lot of humor to bring it down to the relative Best that convinces us to obey."

(22) This image contains the seeds of its own deconstruction because, as soon as the Law needs crutches in order to function, the Law is no longer the Law. In the case of the modern image, law means the form of the Law; hence, to the extent that nothing other than this form qualifies it as law-ful, the essence of the Law is always to flee its "proper" place—to be always absent from its place. (24) Freud and de Sade, writes de Sutter, presuppose the Copernican revolution of the modern image: The Freudian paradoxes of holding moral conscience to be the effect of the repression and sublimation of the drives, and Law to be nothing but the repressed desire could never make sense without it. (26) Similarly, de Sade's appeal to an evil nature the most adequate expression of which is the Law and the elevation of the principle of Evil to the place formerly occupied by the Good is the reconciliation of law and nature that Kant's transcendentalism was dreaming about but had failed to achieve. (28)

In both the classical and the modern image, the Law, according to de Sutter who, in this, follows Deleuze, is conceived and subsequently criticized in the spirit of the comic. The disciples of Socrates, for example, laugh when the verdict of his trial is read (22–23); de Sade opts for the principle of Evil and restores the throne of the higher principle that Kant had brought down; Sacher-Masoch, with his demand for strictly enforceable contracts, rehabilitates the Best in the face of the consequences of our obedience to the Law; Kafka refutes the claim that it is transcendence that renders the Law unknowable, attributes instead the unknowability of the Law to its being always already *elsewhere*, and reestablishes the Law's innocence in opposition to the guilt that had functioned as the horizon of the Kantian imperative. The tragic (according to the reading of Massimo Cacciari's *Icônes de la loi*) Kafkaesque realization that the law necessarily involves a decision and that no decision can ever be grounded makes Kafka laugh; and, finally, Bartleby, with his negativism and slapstick humor (according to Zourabichvili's reading in "Deleuze et l' impossible," *Gilles Deleuze, une vie philosophique*), makes the law collapse on its own accord and transforms its critique into positive indifference. In all these cases, de Sutter concludes, the Law—whether grounded or ungrounded—is being exposed to irony and humor, that is, to the twin figures of the comic. Nor does the author let us forget Proust's *jeunes filles* that no longer criticize, but help and save instead, earning as a result a *place d'honneur* that could perhaps sustain itself beyond the realm of critique.

The reader will find in the first part of de Sutter's book some very helpful hints as to what Deleuze means to say in the scant passages of his work where he speaks of irony and humor. That he speaks of irony in terms of an ascent to principles and of humor in terms of an art of surfaces and as a descent to consequences we have known from his books on masochism and from *The Logic of Sense*. But it is in de Sutter's book and in his discussion of all those who contributed to the deconstruction of the traditional images of the Law that the reader has the opportunity to learn how the two tropes—irony and humor—can be transformed into sharp tools of an effective critique. Irony, whether Socratic or modern and romantic "is the expression of a desire of *rectification* of what, in the case of the individual, looks like a deficit. But this deficit is bound to be for ever active because only the individual's disappearance inside the Idea would be capable of ever healing it." (35) Humor, on the other hand, is "the descent along the length of a surface…with no other signification than the ever more rapid multiplication of the consequences to which it leads…. Humor is another way of referring to the attitude of the one ready to welcome an event in all the arbitrariness of its sense." (37)

There must be a counterpoint to criticism if the latter is not to become total and therefore pointless. For Deleuze, this counterpoint is jurisprudence. The second half of de Sutter's book, therefore, moves from the critique of Law to the clinic of Right. Instead of focusing on the application of Law or on legal judgments in the making, it shows Deleuze's interest in the creation of Law. In opposition to the old image of Law, which presumes that legislation regulates cases subsumed under it and that its *raison d'être* is the institution of a generalized pastoral care, de Sutter, following a Humean line of argumentation, claims that legislation consists in the constant invention of relations between individuals, societies and institutions. Laws and institutions are positive tools; rather than being limiting or organizing, they spread like rhizomes. The method of the lawmaker is association; nothing else matters to her except association, because her objective is the creation and proliferation of relations and connections between things and beings. A legal precept is assessed on the basis of its ability to stand alongside other existing relations and to produce something new. Jurisprudence then is the taxonomy of cases and grows through the extension of singularities. Being indifferent to laws, principles of justice and institutions, jurisprudence, writes de Sutter, "gives account only to life—whose juridical expression it is." (101)

Were we to search for principles, the principles of jurisprudence that we would find would be plastic and mobile—no broader than what they condition. In the case of jurisprudence, principles, if they ever exist, come always at the end of the associative inventions. They are transformed according to what they condition and they are determined by what they determine.

It is at this point that de Sutter formulates the *mot d'ordre* which, according to him, expresses the reason behind Deleuze's elevation of jurisprudence to the place of the savior of the honor of thought. *Il faut libérer le droit de la loi, c'est-à-dire de la philosophie! We must free the Right from the law, that is, from philosophy!* (68) The formulation of the *mot d'ordre* comes in three steps: the Kantian emancipation of Right from the Good facilitates the axiomatisation of Law, preventing the coding of the custom and the overcoding of the Despot from functioning as the grounds of our obedience and respect for the Law. In the sequence, the transition of our societies from discipline to control secretes a Kafkaesque image of Law and Right that results in a crisis of axiomatisation: the table of axioms can no longer be completed and, as we know, an incomplete table offers no guarantees that the set will stay consistent whenever new axioms are being added to it. Finally, and as the outcome of steps one and two, four challenges begin to erode the axiomatised set of laws from the inside. *Legalism* focuses on the creation and differentiation of illegalisms (not everyone's acts are legal or illegal in the same way) and the ensuing proliferation of exceptions. *Naturalism*, after Hobbes, conceives society as a defence against a war-ravaged state of nature and multiplies rights rather than duties. *Consensualism* introduces a long series of subjectivations/subjections that culminates in the subjection of the subject itself to itself. *Institutionalism* starts from a position where institutions are above the law because they are the ones that determine what is right and end up functioning as the police of the law because organization is law's own exigency.

We must then free Right from philosophy! We must abandon the axiomatic practice (the responsibility for which goes to philosophy) for the sake of a "topical" one: Instead of the axiomatic practice where the conjunction of laws is worked out for the sake of political or economic considerations and motives, the associations of the "topical" practice are pursued for the sake of a "robust technique" that succeeds in producing new juridical relations and "revolutionary connections"—nothing more.

(106) Deleuze, de Sutter writes, has no intention of praising or blaming courts and tribunals: sanctions and norms are alien to jurisprudence**.** Far from being a mere practice of "application," "interpretation," or even "creation" of rules and norms, "the practice of law…is a practice of imputation. There is no ontology in those statements of imputation. There is no content. There is only the effect of words that allow things and people to stick together." (97) Instead of giving us a humanist philosophy of Right, Deleuze offers a nihilist one, in the sense that Nietzsche understood nihilism. (114–15) Nevertheless, if it is not of any use to the jurist, this nihilist philosophy of Right is meant to be of use to the philosopher. In *The Fold*, Deleuze, following in the steps of Leibniz, assigns to jurisprudence (universal jurisprudence) the role of becoming philosophy's model and philosophy's future by realizing the program of philosophy—the replacement, that is, of laws by mobile and flexible principles and singular cases. (102–103) This was the program of casuistry before philosophy tilted jurisprudence in the direction of axiomatisation. "*Libérer le droit de la loi, c'est-à-dire de la philosophie*" invites us, therefore, to re-establish the innocence of the Law.

Now, all these claims are embedded in a broader research project and a political agenda that de Sutter develops and defends elsewhere. For a more complete understanding of this research project and political agenda, the reader may consult de Sutter's essay "How to Get Rid of Legal Theory," which appeared in the proceedings of the *Lund 2003 Symposium, Epistemology and Ontology*. All that I can do here is to signal de Sutter's indebtedness to Bruno Latour's impressive work, *The Making of the Law,* whose ethnographic study of the French *Conseil d'État* has inspired the construction of jurisprudence as it should be—de Sutter calls it "speculative jurisprudence." (De Sutter's indebtedness to Isabelle Stengers' work, "Une pratique cosmopolitique du droit est-elle possible?" should not go unnoticed either). Latour writes "Wanting to define law by means of rules" writes Latour, "is like reducing science to concepts." (*The Making of the Law*, 269). And further: "Let us begin law at the beginning, that is to say, at the stamps, elastic bands, paperclips and other office paraphernalia which are the indispensable tools of cases. Jurists always speak of texts, but rarely of their materiality. It is to this materiality that we must apply ourselves." (71) By all means! Let's apply ourselves to materiality. But let us not jump to de Sutter's conclusion that "there is nothing to know about law. There are only things to do…. As a

word, 'law' is without any content; without any 'knowable' content…. What is important with the word…is the effect of it…. The legal effect is not a mere effect of language. It is not a type of effect among others…. The word 'law' designates the moment when a word has an effect…." ("How to get rid of Legal Theory")

De Sutter's book mobilizes a critique and a clinic, which, in their eagerness to emancipate law from philosophy, do not allow jurisprudence to go as far as it can. As an invitation to explore the neglected topic of the relationship between Deleuze, law and jurisprudence, it breaks new ground and must be read by all those interested in Deleuze's political philosophy. But to the extent that it represents a reading of Deleuze that celebrates without hesitation Godard's invitation, "*pas des idées justes, juste des idées,"* it forecloses all discussion of confirmation, and must be read with critical lenses well focused. By "confirmation" I mean a process by means of which epistemic and in some cases ethical constraints placed upon the concepts we construct match the constraints inscribed in the rhythms and the articulations of the real. It is true that a true constructivist agenda, like Deleuze's, cannot tolerate tribunals of reason. I subscribe to Shaviro's reminder that "Deleuze's criterion is constructivist rather than juridical, concerned with pushing forces to the limits of what they can do, rather than with evaluating their legitimacy." (Steven Shaviro, *Without Criteria*, 34) But I do not think that abandoning the juridical model means giving up on all quest for confirmation. It is not to create tribunals of reason to suggest that concepts and the real have rhythms of their own that must be respected, nor is it falling back onto a logic of representation to ask that our mapping of the real take into consideration epistemic and ethical norms. After all, creativity and the quest for the new have consequences, and not all of them are worth shouldering. My claim is that were it the case that law and jurisprudence have nothing to do with concepts and norms, any search for confirmation would be dead before it got off the ground.

Demoralizing the law *pour en finir avec le jugement* sounds like a good idea as long as what we want is to avoid the sterile dialectics of good and bad conscience. But this does not require the purification of the law of all norms and standards. The demoralized law, which, supposedly, can do without norms of justice and fairness (111) is still subject to standards and norms, every bit as rigorous as the ones we tried to leave behind—except that these standards are now, in terms of their content,

epistemic. A moderate attention to the sense of "law"—as in "the rule of law"—suffices to restore the law's content and knowability. Michael Neumann, in his book *The Rule of Law*, chooses to expend this moderate attention and comes with the following conclusions. A precept cannot be a law unless the constraints it imposes can be avoided when the law is followed—let this be called "*avoidability*." A law is subject to the *feasibility* of the "ought implies can." No law can escape the obligation to show that its requirements have or have not been met—*provability*. Everyone should be able to understand what the law means—public *observability*. Or again, the *effectiveness* of a law depends on the apprehension and punishment of a sufficient number of violators (and sometimes innocent ones). These are epistemic norms—with moral effects—and their absence would invalidate the law and would render jurisprudence monstrous. "To insist," Neumann writes, "that I be treated according to instructions addressed to me rather than simply be pushed around is to require a certain structure of understanding and expectation wherein all laws are, so to speak, in common language and, therefore, knowable." (Neumann, *The Rule of Law*, 51)

Jurisprudence is neither innocent nor guilty, but this does not prevent it from having everything to do with norms and constraints, even in a Humean context that situates the Law's primary task in the extension of relations and associations. (For a demonstration of this point, the reader should refer to Alexandre Lefebvre's recent publication, *The Image of Law: Deleuze, Bergson, Spinoza*.) In fact, jurisprudence has a lot to teach us, philosophers, not because it shows us how to get rid of judgment—it does not—and not because its mobile concepts are best suited to the irreducible singularity of all legal cases (they are not), but rather because it foregrounds the question of confirmation and strengthens our resolve to get it right, because judicial errors, unlike questions of taste, cost lives and ruin reputations.

David Pettigrew and François Raffoul (eds), *French Interpretations of Heidegger: An Exceptional Reception*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2008; 300 pages. ISBN: 978-0791475591.

Review by David Tkach, University of Ottawa.

It is problematic to understand Heidegger's thought in its North American context without taking into account the transmission of that thought through its antecedent French reception. In the middle of the last century, Heidegger's ideas made their way across the Atlantic in the French idiom of existentialism. However, scholars in North America eventually came to realize that Heidegger's thought did not sit comfortably being merely the intellectual progenitor of this movement, but that it had shaped the direction of so-called 'Continental' philosophy as a whole. If we also acknowledge the decades-long dissemination of French thought in a large number of academic departments throughout the North American university system, we are seemingly compelled to attempt to come to terms with the French interpretation of Heidegger.

To this end, the editors of this book have made a commendable effort in compiling thought-provoking essays on the responses to Heidegger's ideas of some of the most important figures in late-modern French thought. They take as their inspiration the prior efforts of the late Dominic Janicaud, author of many works on Heidegger including the two-volume *Heidegger en France* (the English translation by Pettigrew and Raffoul is forthcoming), and whose essay included here serves as an orientation for many of the general themes of the book. For Janicaud, "the French reception of Heidegger's thought has been continuously so outstanding, so bright, and so dramatic that it really constitutes an exceptional phenomenon." (24, quoted by Pettigrew and Raffoul on 3) A large number of the names under scrutiny here will be familiar to North American readers of Continental philosophy. Others may not be so familiar, for example, Beaufret, Zarader, and Janicaud himself. Some important French philosophers somewhat conspicuous by their absence include Lyotard, Kojève, Badiou, and Ricoeur (only mentioned briefly), not to mention the extremely critical responses to Heidegger from thinkers such as Ferry, Renaut, and, most recently, Faye. The relative lack of treatment of Heidegger's politics may reflect these editorial choices.

Following Janicaud, the editors wish to emphasize the distinctive character of the French reception of Heidegger's thought, which for them is chiefly constituted by "the paradox of an encounter between the French Cartesian tradition of consciousness and reason and a thought marked by the German phenomenological tradition." (1–2) For Françoise Dastur, Heidegger permitted French philosophers to "free themselves from the context of Cartesian philosophy" (267, quoted by Pettigrew and Raffoul on 2), i.e., to use Heidegger's insights concerning the ultimate instability and historical dependency of the concepts of "consciousness" and "reason" traditionally understood. Pettigrew and Raffoul stress that "the key representatives of contemporary French philosophy are, to a large extent, critical or 'inventive' recreations—as opposed to mere reflections—of Heidegger." (3) The most important of these philosophers would end up transforming the intellectual culture of North America, and the book provides the background which "would thus allow American philosophers to undertake a critical archeology with respect to the sources of their *own* development." (3, emphasis in original)

The method and style of the chapters vary considerably, but it is possible to determine four main types of investigation here, with of course some overlap: 1) a principally historical discussion of Heidegger's reception by a French thinker or thinkers; 2) a rehabilitation of Heidegger against a particular French critique; 3) a combining or entwining of Heidegger with a particular French thinker to address a specific philosophical problem; and 4) an analysis of a particular French philosophical response to Heidegger. It is also interesting that three of the chapters deal specifically with the relation between Heidegger and questions of theology. I limit myself to examining one example of each type identified above, in order hopefully to show some of the philosophical breadth and depth of the book as a whole.

Janicaud's essay opens the volume proper and chiefly consists of a précis of the argument of his *Heidegger en France*, tracing the overall arc of influence Heidegger has drawn across France. Janicaud treats the story of Heidegger's reception in France as a "saga," in the sense that "[i]nstead of an ongoing, consistent reading of Heidegger's texts, instead of serious, rigourous, academic studies devoted to them, a series of dramatic, passionate, polemical attitudes or interpretations took place" (24), giving as examples brief readings of the Heidegger interpretations of Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, Derrida, and Ricoeur. Janicaud also notes

that he takes "an external, critical stand" toward Heidegger, albeit making sure not to allow "the essential Heideggerian questions to be forgotten in the process." (31) This essay's interpretive stance, as well as its clarity and passion of expression, naturally whets the philosophical appetite for Janicaud's own work.

Reginald Lilly's chapter is an investigation of what he considers Levinas's misreading of Heidegger: "Levinas renders Heidegger fantasmic…[and], to speak psychoanalytically, this fantasized image of the real state of being has the salutary and compensatory effect of transforming the Real into something tolerable for Levinas." (35) Lilly thus considers Levinas to have actively "suppressed" elements of Heidegger's thought which did not cohere with Levinas's reading of Heidegger, for example, Heidegger's critique of the theory/practice distinction, his constant suggestion not to read *Sein und Zeit* as a philosophical anthropology, and, perhaps most importantly, his critique of a specifically Cartesian dualist ontology/epistemology. Ultimately, Lilly wishes to suggest that Levinas does not confront the real and "horrific" import of Heidegger's thought due to his substituting an ethics of the Other for what can be considered the ultimate ground of Dasein, "a being-in-the-world evacuated of every being-with" (50) as revealed through *Angst*.

Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg take up the theme of ethics in their chapter, using Heidegger and Foucault in a complementary fashion. As (critical) followers of Heidegger and Foucault, Milchman and Rosenberg stress that they are "seeking no transcendental ground for knowledge as [they] confront what [they] see as a crisis of 'ethics.'" (106) They argue that both Heidegger and Foucault saw the origin of the contemporary crisis of ethics in Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God, i.e., the death of the possibility of a stable conception of metaphysical and ethical order in which human beings find themselves. Both Heidegger and Foucault address themselves to providing a new conception of human existence after "the death of…the historical form of the subject that had shaped the modern West." (109) Milchman and Rosenberg finally understand Heideggerian "questioning" and Foucauldian "reconstitution" to be "two facets of the same process" (122), namely, "an overcoming of dispersion and the fashioning of a self as a unified whole" (123) in light of the lack, and perhaps the impossibility, of discovering a permanent metaphysical and ethical order.

The majority of the chapters of this book attempt to provide a more bipartisan or objective analysis of the relation between a particular French thinker and Heidegger. I take as one exemplar of this approach Allen Scult's chapter in response to Marlène Zarader's excellent study, *La dette impensée*, which argues that many of Heidegger's concepts have direct parallels in Jewish theology. Zarader argues that Heidegger holds an unexpressed and, more importantly, unthought dependence on biblical thought. Scult addresses both Zarader and the important American philosopher of religion, John D. Caputo, and claims that one can find in both thinkers the suggestion to Heidegger "to build his ontology upon two pillars" (236), the Presocratics and Judaism. Scult also concludes, I believe rightly, that "the basis of Heidegger's ontology, that is, the way he is given to 'speak' it is, in fact, 'fundamentally religious,' but it is not religion identified, or identifiable, as such." (242) It is to this book's great credit that one of the most important issues in Heidegger's thought for North America, that is, its religious connotations, is addressed while taking into account the French perspective on the issue.

It is unfortunate that we do not find a uniform method of citation throughout the book, although this is understandable considering that these chapters were drawn principally from a conference in 2002 (in addition to certain invited chapters). Additionally, as is the case with any edited volume, the quality of the chapters is not entirely consistent. In the end, however, this book is extremely useful and important both for scholars of Heidegger and specialists of French thought. One final thought, though: at no point do the writers in this book approach what some call the inherent "linguistic chauvinism" of Heidegger's thought, that particular languages express relations to *Sein* better than others, pithily expressed by his statement in his posthumous *Der Spiegel* interview, conducted in 1966, that "[w]hen [the French] begin to think, they speak German." It is arguable that Heidegger himself finally believed his French reception to be, in a sense, a diminishing of his most profound—as most profoundly German—insights. In order to approach the French reception of Heidegger properly, this belief must at least be considered, especially with regard to its ramifications for the predominantly English North American audience to which this book is directed.

Drew Hyland, *Plato and the Question of Beauty*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008; 150 pages. ISBN: 978-0253219770.

Review by Aaron James Landry, York University.

There is a strain of thought, both among Plato scholars and in the general analytic tradition, which maintains a strong intellectualist view about the aims of philosophy. In *Plato and the Question of Beauty*, Drew Hyland makes the case that beauty, as it arises in the *Hippias Major*, *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, as well as the Second and Seventh Letters, functions as a category of transgression for Plato. In other words, a close analysis of beauty reveals the two-fold "*limits of logos*." (111) Hyland is up front about his intentions: his aims are selective, not exhaustive. Despite this admission however, one is still left with the sense that his general thesis ought to be buttressed by further evidence, both textual and scholarly.

The *Hippias Major* is the focus of the first chapter. Hippias' repeated use of *kalon* at 286a-c triggers the search for a definition of beauty. All three proposals fall to the same general criticism—that an adequate definition cannot merely cite examples. For instance, a beautiful maiden is not a definition of beauty as such. (287e) Such definitions are a distinguishing characteristic of many Socratic interlocutors. Nevertheless, the lesson Hyland draws from this is that a genuine definition cannot be wholly discursive.

Despite Hyland's rehearsal of the entire *Symposium* in the second chapter, the last three speeches are most relevant to his overarching thesis. Aristophanes focuses on the incompleteness of eros, thereby reinforcing a certain tragic view. Agathon, in direct contrast and in want of emphasising eros' comedy, is the first one in the dialogue to explicitly connect eros and beauty. Eros is completely beautiful and young. It is left to Socrates to synthesise these two positions and to draw whatever was true from the initial speeches. Subsequently, Hyland gives appropriate attention to Diotima in Socrates' speech, especially her occupation as a seer and her gender. The well-known ascent sections—206c and later at 210a—figure prominently in Hyland's analysis. In both ascents, "the body must be transcended philosophically, but just as surely, philosophy begins with the body—and 'transcendence' of the body does not necessarily mean a 'leaving-behind.'" (53) This coalesces well with Plato's love for the whole. Another crucial feature of the ascent is the form of

beauty, which constitutes its apex and is *oude tis logos, oude tis episteme*. (211a) Hyland translates this as "neither some discursive account nor some demonstrable knowledge." (57) That experiencing beauty itself would make us live virtuously (211e–212a) implies that the apex of the ascent is merely penultimate. For Hyland, it is unclear to us modern observers how the experience of beauty itself can generate virtue in us. He leaves it to the *Phaedrus* to offer a response.

Accordingly, the third chapter's analysis of the *Phaedrus* expands on beauty, eros, and philosophy as they developed in the first two chapters. The figure of Phaedrus himself is central; Hyland argues that Phaedrus has an unrefined love of speeches (or *logos*). The admiration for *logos* makes him an attractive interlocutor to Socrates, but his love needs to be tempered. The sudden arrival of Socrates' divine sign triggers the palinode and there follows a list of four kinds of divine madness—prophetic, religious, poetic, and erotic. That "eros is a form of *divine* madness" (71) implies that genuine philosophy contains an ineliminable non-logical component. This is so in two senses. First, there is an initial non-discursive (or noetic) experience that produces in us the desire for *logos*. Second, with sufficient devotion to *logos*, some enjoy a culminating noetic experience such as the form of beauty as expressed by Diotima in the *Symposium*. Hyland does however note a difference between these two dialogues. In the *Symposium*, the form of beauty would enable us to understand all manifestations of beauty but in the *Phaedrus*, experiencing individual instances of beauty prompts us to recall beauty itself. They are compatible insofar as we situate them amidst the two sorts of non-discursive experiences that encompass *logos*. Both are, as well, in agreement about the paradigmatic experience of beauty, namely the beauty of the human body.

The Second and Seventh letters are the subject of the fourth chapter. Hyland chooses to bracket off the question of their authenticity. Instead, he aims to pursue the ways in which both letters deal with the non-discursivity of philosophy. This is by no means a straightforward goal, especially given that there are obvious dissimilarities between the two. In the Second letter, for instance, Plato clearly wants to impart some sort of wisdom, but nevertheless expresses a deep need for secrecy. (312d–313a) The justification for secrecy is that the wisdom is deceptively simple so as to be "easily misunderstood." (93) There follows the paradoxical assertion that Plato himself has never committed his views to

writing. (314c) Rather, the dialogues are works of Socrates become "beautiful and young" (*kalou kai neou*). For Hyland, this is a puzzling ascription because not only is Socrates usually presented as an elderly man, but he is also characteristically ugly. Thus, Hyland favors an alternate translation of both terms: *neos* ought to be interpreted as "new" and *kalos* as "noble." In the former, Hyland argues that Plato has created a new, tendentious "Socrates" in his dialogues and that this creation disagrees with historical reality. Furthermore, in becoming noble, the Platonic Socrates has a strong moral character not necessarily shared by the historical figure. For Hyland, Plato aspires to make philosophy a credible pursuit and attempts to achieve this by idealising the historical Socrates. Rather than emphasising secrecy, the Seventh letter makes a stronger claim, namely that the very nature of philosophy prevents it from being written. Hyland identifies two reasons. First, philosophy is an experience and cannot be fully captured as an experience by *logos*. Such an experience is lived and requires a great deal of dedication and time. Second, the culmination of this experience is a noetic happening wherein philosophy itself is born. Against this backdrop stands the puzzle of the Platonic dialogues. Hyland argues that Plato writes in order to encourage us to adopt a philosophical way of life.

In the final chapter, Hyland returns to the *Phaedrus* in order to engage with its critique of writing. There has always been a scholarly debate about the bipartite nature of the *Phaedrus*; Hyland surmises that the transition from eros/beauty to writing/rhetoric is to be situated again in the figure of Phaedrus. His response to Socrates' palinode reveals that he is only moved by rhetoric, thereby making the content derivative. Socrates employs a strategy that blurs the lines between rhetoric and philosophy such that genuine rhetoric will be philosophy proper. At 274b-c, Socrates shifts from discussing speeches to writing and its association with memory. Whereas in the palinode Socrates connected reminding (*hypomnesis*), memory (*mnesis*), and recollection (*anamnesis*) as enabling us to achieve knowledge of beauty itself, the story of Theuth and Thamus suggests that "reminding"—the function of writing—is of lesser value than memory and recollection, and so ought to be rejected. This is, no doubt, a puzzling claim, and similar in form to the cleavage between Books III and X of the *Republic*. Hyland does note a general softening of this rebuke later on; the caveat that expresses the limits of writing does not necessarily condemn its use in a more purified sense. (275c-d) Hy-

land proceeds to rehearse the five objections to writing—two from Thamus and three from Socrates—and evaluates Plato's own writing in light of them, ultimately concluding that in the dialogues, Plato found a discursive form that allowed him to "take the risk" (132) of writing.

There are worthwhile sections in the book—analyses of the final speech in the *Symposium* and Socrates' palinode in the *Phaedrus* come to mind. Nevertheless, one is left with the distinct impression that Hyland has cherry-picked certain dialogues rather than confronting all the relevant material. Given the trajectory of the final four chapters, the *Hippias Major* seems expendable. Moreover, consider the *Republic*. Even though Hyland casually alludes to its denunciation of beauty, he fails to engage with it. This is especially peculiar given that both the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus* tend to extol beauty. The result, in my view, is a disappointing effort.

Yves Mayzaud, *Personne, communauté et monade chez Husserl. Contribution à l'étude des fondements de la phénoménologie politique*. Paris, L'Harmattan, 2010; 219 pages. ISBN : 978-2296123670.

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Edmund Husserl a rarement abordé la politique dans son œuvre. Son ambition était d'offrir une nouvelle fondation aux sciences, ou du moins de leur donner un nouveau sens, si bien que la crise politique allemande des années 1930 se retrouve dans son œuvre sous la seule forme d'une *crise des sciences européennes*. Toute étude de la relation de sa pensée à la politique doit ainsi faire face au problème d'une philosophie qui ne vise pas à fonder l'action politique mais plutôt l'attitude scientifique, mais aussi à celui de l'éparpillement dans les textes publiés et posthumes des remarques sur la société et la politique.

Yves Mayzaud entreprend dans cet ouvrage d'ouvrir le champ d'une phénoménologie politique husserlienne à partir de la notion de personne. Cette entreprise diffère de celle d'Yves Thierry (*Conscience et humanité selon Husserl. Essai sur le sujet politique*, PUF, 1995) : bien que les deux études portent sur le sujet politique, Mayzaud en reste à l'étude des textes de Husserl et du développement de sa pensée, en

s'arrêtant aux fondements et sans encore se lancer dans une description de la vie politique. Il s'agit en effet de penser à partir de certaines orientations de la pensée de Husserl, contre certaines autres orientations, et surtout contre celles d'une personnalité d'ordre supérieur développées dans *Philosophie première* et d'une auto-réalisation de l'humanité par la philosophie présentée dans les textes contemporains de cet ouvrage ainsi que de la *Crise des sciences européennes et la phénoménologie transcendantale*. Par conséquent, Mayzaud suit l'évolution de la pensée de Husserl, relève ses contradictions et la manière dont Husserl les dépasse, traque les réponses qu'il donne ailleurs ou plus tard, et radicalise ses propos pour plus de cohérence, le tout à partir d'une phénoménologie de la personne. L'auteur retrace en effet les trois réductions qu'Husserl a opérées sur la personne.

D'abord, le premier chapitre, concentré sur les *Ideen I*, retrace la réduction eidétique de la personne dans l'attitude naturaliste, qui se limite à comprendre la personne en son corps comme chose et comme causalité. Le second chapitre, se fondant surtout sur les *Ideen II*, va au-delà de cette première réduction pour en effectuer une seconde sur l'attitude personnaliste qui prend son contrepied pour se limiter à comprendre la personne comme esprit.

La conception de la personne que retiendra l'auteur commence à se préciser dans le troisième chapitre, où s'opère une réduction transcendantale pour dépasser les apories des compréhensions matérialiste et spiritualiste de la personne, suivant une relecture avant tout de *Philosophie première* et tournant autour des notions de noèse et de noème. Ici, le Je se révèle comme subjectivité transcendantale, condition de toute transcendance, située hors du temps et s'objectivant dans le monde. Le Je se saisit dans le monde en tant que personne, mais jamais dans sa pureté. La subjectivité se fait ainsi personne pour pouvoir se penser : « sans cela, elle ne peut pas avoir de personnalité, de pouvoir sur les choses et sur les autres, des préférences culturelles, religieuses, naturelles ou pathologiques. Tous ses traits renvoient à des relations de sens que la personne doit par principe entretenir » (101). Mayzaud s'appuie ici sur la dynamique entre intériorisation et extériorisation, entre expression et ré-expression de la subjectivité transcendantale : les expériences sont autant d'expressions de la subjectivité (l'exprimant) qui se fait ainsi personne (l'exprimé). La subjectivité ré-exprime en même temps la source de ces

expériences—« l'environnement des objets et la présence des autres » (105).

Cette dynamique, retracée au quatrième chapitre des *Méditations cartésiennes*, mène Mayzaud à reprendre la notion de monade pour remplacer les descriptions précédentes de la personne. Ainsi pensées, les monades ne sont pas des atomes et la subjectivité transcendantale ne peut donc plus être pensée dans sa solitude. Bien au contraire, une monade est la personne en ce qu'elle vit pour elle seule; mais ce qu'elle vit et vise, elle le fait à partir d'une situation formée par les objets qui l'entourent et d'une pluralité des perspectives. Les expressions sont la doublure intentionnelle des sensations, de ce qui est perçu, et définissent l'espace d'une ré-expression, d'un mouvement d'une personne à une autre.

Certains passages des *Ideen II* et de *Philosophie première*, que Mayzaud reprend dans son cinquième chapitre, poussent encore plus loin l'idée que l'autre personne est présente dans la monade en développant la notion d'*Ineinandersein*, l'être-un-en-l'autre. Les subjectivités transcendantales sont l'une dans l'autre, se mondanéisent l'une l'autre, se donnent un monde commun où elles agissent et qu'elles cherchent à comprendre. C'est le processus de compréhension commun du monde qui permet au moi de devenir une personne—une personne n'étant possible que dans une communauté de personnes, parce qu'elle ne peut se comprendre que si son expression et sa ré-expression ont un sens et pour elle et pour les autres, en ce qu'elles prennent leur origine dans un monde commun. La personne apparaît dès lors comme une possibilité de la communauté, plutôt que comme celle de la conscience transcendantale.

Mayzaud cherche toutefois à faire ce que Husserl n'a pas réussi : être fidèle à la notion d'*Ineinandersein*. Il s'arrête ainsi sur le chemin d'une intentionnalité sociale ou communautaire et refuse toute idée d'une classe ou d'une nation pour revenir à la personne. Pour ce faire, il retrace trois sortes d'intentionnalité chez Husserl : la visée d'un objet, intentionnalité primaire; la visée du vécu et du courant de conscience même, menant à l'auto-constitution, intentionnalité secondaire; et une intentionnalité tertiaire, où à la formule célèbre « toute conscience est conscience de quelque chose » nous devrions ajouter « avec quelqu'un ». Husserl présuppose, erronément selon Mayzaud, qu'une harmonie serait déjà en train de s'établir entre les consciences et qu'ainsi les expressions de la subjectivité, qui se développent ainsi, seraient bonnes ou mauvaises selon qu'elles viseront cette harmonie ou non. Cette harmonie se trouve-

rait dans sa forme la plus développée dans la communauté des philosophes qui font face à la tâche infinie de l'humanité de se connaître elle-même. Sur ce modèle, la collectivité se trouverait alors être la ré-expression de la monade divine. Cependant, pour Mayzaud, l'intentionnalité communautaire demeure celle de la subjectivité et n'est pas celle d'une personne communautaire, d'une classe ou d'une nation, ou encore de la monade divine.

Le sixième et dernier chapitre de l'ouvrage vise à commencer la description de la vie sociale et politique amorcée dans le cinquième chapitre. Mayzaud pourra ainsi parler d'une communauté des monades comme ce qui se joue dans la passivité primordiale, dans l'affectivité qui nous permet de reconnaître la singularité de l'autre personne en entrant en relation avec elle. Il écrira ainsi que « l'*Ineinandersein* entre deux personnes singulières qui s'aiment suppose un phénomène de monde, où les Soi se trouvent pris dans une forme situationnelle qui n'est pas un Soi. Et il n'y a pas de personne ou de ré-expression sans au moins ce phénomène de situation partagée. Ce phénomène est ce qui est appelé ici la communauté en opposition à la société » (191). Mayzaud retrace ainsi les formes de la communauté à partir de la famille, jusqu'à la société, la distinction ayant trait à ce que la communauté permet potentiellement l'*Ineinandersein* de tous avec tous, contrairement à la société qui ne nous permet d'être les uns dans les autres qu'avec un nombre limité de ses membres.

Le lecteur doit deviner que c'est une fois qu'il y a société et une fois qu'une communication n'est plus possible entre tous qu'il peut y avoir une vie politique. Nous devons toutefois attendre la suite annoncée de l'ouvrage pour apprendre ce que serait une phénoménologie politique fondée sur la personne, à moins d'effectuer un travail sur le livre de Mayzaud semblable à celui qu'il opère sur Husserl. En effet, un passage central de ce livre, sur lequel l'auteur ne revient toutefois pas, se retrouve au quatrième chapitre : Mayzaud trouve chez Husserl un processus d'expression et de ré-expression où l'habitus de la personne—à savoir la subjectivité transcendantale même—se transforme au contact du monde et des autres personnes. Une telle compréhension de la personne nous invite à aller au bout de l'*Ineinandersein*. Bien que l'une des leçons les plus importantes de la phénoménologie politique soit que nous devons de refuser de penser la politique en termes de personnalités d'ordre supérieur, nous ne devons pas pour autant abandonner la dépendance de la

subjectivité à ses relations intersubjectives. Comprendre la subjectivité transcendantale comme le pré-donné, comme le pré-réflexif, c'est la comprendre au sein d'une collectivité qui forme la personne et ne cesse jamais de la transformer. Une compréhension de la politique deviendrait dès lors possible en tant qu'action sur ces structures collectives.

Cet ouvrage se trouve limité de ce que l'auteur y reprend le préjugé central de la phénoménologie husserlienne : la politique, comme tout autre domaine de la vie et de ce qui appartient à l'attitude naturelle, doit être fondée, et doit l'être sur la subjectivité transcendantale. La politique n'est pas autonome, elle n'appartient pas à la sphère du primordial, elle est secondaire à la subjectivité plutôt que de contribuer à la former. Par ailleurs, Mayzaud ne sort de la lecture de Husserl que pour se lancer vers d'autres auteurs, plutôt que vers les phénomènes politiques. Il trouve de la sorte des descriptions d'autres phénomènes et relations chez Sartre, Levinas, Hegel, Heidegger, ou Mauss, mais avant tout chez Tönnies, dont il reprend le schéma société/communauté qui sous-tend tout l'ouvrage, mais y apparaît finalement présupposé. De plus, en privilégiant les thèmes classiques de la phénoménologie de l'intersubjectivité (le regard, l'amour) et les contemporains de Husserl, il ignore la phénoménologie de la politique qui s'est développée en réaction à la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Il manque ainsi notamment les développements qu'apporta Merleau-Ponty à la notion d'*Ineinandersein* dans ses derniers écrits, aussi à partir d'un travail critique sur Husserl, et il demeure silencieux sur les écrits des phénoménologues qui traitèrent de politique, comme Arendt ou Patočka.

Le livre *Personne, communauté et monade chez Husserl* est surtout intéressant par la lecture minutieuse et rigoureuse qu'il offre de Husserl, une lecture qui montre aussi bien les défis et les limites de sa pensée de la socialité que les développements qu'elle permet. Il a aussi l'avantage de contraster les différentes périodes de la réflexion de Husserl et de souligner les contradictions qui le poussèrent à transformer sa pensée, à la différence d'autres commentaires qui, comme Mayzaud le note, ont tendance à privilégier l'une ou l'autre de ces périodes au détriment des autres et d'une compréhension de la politique. Mais si c'est d'une telle compréhension qu'il s'agit, nous pouvons à notre tour nous interroger sur la démarche même : étant donné les libertés que l'auteur dit prendre en corrigeant certaines tendances chez Husserl, en quoi est-il

plus intéressant de se pencher sur Husserl que sur la personne ou la vie politique elles-mêmes?

Jill Stauffer and Bettina Bergo (eds), ***Nietzsche and Levinas: "After the Death of a Certain God."*** **New York: Columbia University Press, 2009; 272 pages.** **ISBN: 978-0231144049.**

Review by Jordan Glass, University of Alberta.

Jill Stauffer and Bettina Bergo's *Nietzsche and Levinas* is a collection of essays on the thought of two of the most radical and important writers on morality and ethics in a little more than a century. The two philosophers are, on the surface of it, disparate and seemingly beyond dialogue. Famously, for Nietzsche, traditional ethics and morality are supplanted by an egoistic will to power. Conversely, for Levinas ethics is an infinite responsibility to the Other prior to any possible choice. The collection is divided into three broad sections: "Revaluing Ethics: Time, Teaching, and the Ambiguity of Forces," "The Subject: Sensing, Suffering, and Responding," and "Heteronomy and Ubiquity: God in Philosophy." The essays within the respective sections are only loosely connected. I will not discuss each essay individually but offer a general synopsis of what the book has to offer with reference to some of the more prominent works included. The nineteen-page introduction provides a short summation of every essay and should be consulted for an inventoried list and descriptions.

Nietzsche and Levinas serves, first and foremost, to open a dialogue between the two authors. Any comparison—even if this is really to amount to only a contrast—first demands enough common ground such that the respective authors can be seen as engaging with the same topics and similar terms. Two common lines are drawn between Nietzsche and Levinas and are referred to in many of the essays. The first is that, in some way, both authors are concerned with the death of God and the prospect of nihilism. For both the death of God represents a withdrawal of any determinate sense of ground or foundation for ethics and philosophy. (Schroeder, 233) Drabinski takes this death of idols—perhaps more with Levinas and his contemporary experience in mind—to be the erasure of tradition. It is the demand for a new way of thinking following

widespread trauma such as war, natural disaster, and other events that severely disrupt and undermine a group's traditional way of life. Nietzsche and Levinas meet in the "nothingness" shared in common by those experiencing such a loss. (144) Similarly, Boothroyd comments on the decisive importance for the two philosophers of our "passage of thought 'beyond suffering'" (150), our need to attribute a meaning to suffering that saves us from nihilistic despair.

Second is the two philosophers' emphasis on the body and embodiment, or what Diprose calls "somatic reflexivity." The significance of this is approached in many different ways by the contributors. Boothroyd claims that the determined meanings of suffering have their root in the bodily pain of material life; that is, for both Nietzsche and Levinas, a moral explanation of suffering depends on the self as embodiment. (155) Diprose claims that Levinas's notion of ethical responsibility is made possible by Nietzsche's notion of the subject as corporeal subjectivity. Responsibility is first made possible by a bodily responsiveness. (118) This responsive, affective self, Diprose claims, is the basis of will to power. It is the self that is able to adapt and respond to unpredictable circumstances since it is not a static, abstract, idealized self, but an embodied one. It is also the self that is able to will "in reverse" by taking responsibility for things beyond its control (Stauffer, 45); and Diprose claims that this, too, is similar to the responsible subject that Levinas has in mind (though in this case, of course, it is responsibility for others). Finally, Cohen discusses Levinas's attempt to overcome Spinozism—essentially, ontology and the assumption of a totality—exhibited in different ways by Hegel, Marx, Freud and Heidegger. (165) What makes Nietzsche's Spinozism a more potent contestation of Levinas is that it is not "an abstract or intellectualist rationalism," but a contrary view of embodiment. (167). Levinas's metaphysics is pitted against a Nietzschean ontology of the living body.

These two points—the death of God and idols, and embodiment—serve as the basis of comparative evaluation for many of the contributors to the collection. Another point, discussed alone in Katz's intriguing essay, concerns the similarity of their pedagogical (and broadly epistemological) views. Levinas, Katz says, subscribes to a Talmudic approach instead of a traditional pedagogical model. Truth is viewed as polyphonic and multifaceted—never a discrete, knowable thing. Truth is indefinable, and there is always something more to be learned. (88) This

is exhibited by Nietzsche in Zarathustra's failure to teach according to the traditional pedagogical model, and also in his praise of the fortitude required to unceasingly search and not be complacent in one's truths. Though perhaps a seemingly peripheral point, the resistance to absolute truths does seem to lurk in the background of both philosophers' works, which never seem to give themselves up to finalized acceptance or denial on epistemological grounds. (Bergo, 112)

As one would likely suspect, having established some common ground, many essays in the collection conclude by emphasizing the differences between Nietzsche and Levinas, and attempt to find a way to adjudicate between egoistic will to power and infinite ethical responsibility. The conclusions in this regard are far more interesting and diverse than the presentation of the bare commonalities shared by the two philosophers.

Benso defends Levinas against the charge of being an 'ascetic priest' and fostering ressentiment—the most likely objection to come to Levinas from Nietzsche. (Longneaux, 56) Through a discussion of the nature of negation (the structure characterizing resentment), Benso shows that negation presupposes a totality absent in Levinas's philosophy. (223) For Levinas, power must be interpreted as the ability to be the overflowing gift-giver (as described in Nietzsche's Zarathustra). The role of the other is to make this infinity possible rather than to be him whom my will is exercised over. (226) The autonomy of Levinas's self is not at odds with Nietzsche's demands for a "master morality," but rather redefines what this autonomy amounts. (230).

Longneaux begins with Nietzsche's and Levinas's shared conception of originary subjectivity as enjoyment (48); but he quickly points out that the two accounts radically diverge on the relation to the other. Longneaux denies that Nietzsche has any conception of the metaphysical separation and disquietude of the isolated self necessary for the recognition of an other (65), and Boothroyd makes analogous claims. (159) Longneaux suggests a possible compromise whereby, in Levinasian spirit, desire for the other is a site of Nietzschean enjoyment; but this requires a compromise in the transcendent nature of the other: we must abandon angelic notions in favour of fraternal notions. (67)

Diprose does something similar. She claims that responsibility (regarded in Nietzsche as responsibility to the self and affirmation of life) actually derives, originally, from the relation with others and from

promise-making. A Levinasian sense of responsibility (to the other) is needed to maintain the independence and value of the unique other; and this is needed to condition the sort of responsibility Nietzsche speaks of. One exhibits Levinasian responsibility to the other to preserve the possibility of Nietzschean responsibility to oneself.

A different reconciliation in a similar spirit is proposed by Messina. She proposes a "gay science" embodied by the creative, innocent child of "The Three Metamorphoses" but freed from the dialectical negativity of the lion. (206) The child is not power-seeking, something Messina claims always involves negation and is therefore allotted to the lion. The other, for Levinas, is the one over whom I have no power, but who as such always pulls me out of myself and opens up for me the possibility of infinity. (207) The other represents departure. The child of the "Metamorphoses" can be the welcoming of such joyful possibilities of the future, the other. Messina concludes, "'innocent' in Nietzsche does not mean 'uncommitted' but rather 'disinterested,' out of the erasure of the footprints or the self. 'Responsible' in Levinas does not mean 'moral' but welcoming, in the summons that brings about a departure." (208) Responsibility to the other can be made a kind of gay science or joyful wisdom.

Cohen suggests that Desire can only be satisfied by alterity. He accuses Nietzsche—with perhaps a little haste—of importing conceptions like "will to power" into his philosophy whereas Levinas purportedly stays true to phenomenological investigation. (180) In the other direction, Butler questions whether Levinas's ethics does not commit an injustice to the self equivalent to submission to authoritarian rule (72), and thereby threaten the conditions of biological life. (79) Finally, Bergo suggests that, insofar as Nietzsche and Levinas delve into the conditions of sensibility and subjectivity, the truth of the matter is, by that fact, undecidable. (112)

Overall the collection of essays has a lot to offer by way of mutual critique and synthesis of Nietzsche and Levinas. The similarity between the two authors opens up many avenues of investigation that would be impossible—or at least far more difficult—were either assessed independently. One minor criticism of the collection is that some articles—inevitably—are far stronger than others. However, the large majority of the articles are highly insightful and worthwhile reads, and a few exceptional gems (Benso, Diprose, and Messina among others) more

than compensate for one or two weaker papers. Finally, the only substantial fault of the book is its organization. The division of the anthology into three parts might have been arranged, less in terms of broad themes, which were conflated and abandoned within the articles anyway, but according to the very specific content of the contributions. Many of the essays agree in overt ways, and many of the authors' conclusions pose serious challenges to one another via their respective interpretations of Nietzsche and Levinas. A reader might have benefited from reading a rejoinder to a given contribution in the subsequent essay in the collection. Despite this minor flaw, this collection is highly recommended to anyone interested in the approaches to ethics and morality of Nietzsche and Levinas and the relation between the two.

Angela Ales Bello, *Edith Stein o dell'armonia. Esistenza, Pensiero, Fede*. Rome: Studium, 2009; 250 pages. ISBN: 978-8838240621.

Review by Patrizia Manganaro, Pontifical Lateran University. Translated by Antonio Calcagno.

"Harmony" means the impossibility of keeping separate that which is distinct; it is concerned with the important sense of the unity of distinct parts, namely, ontological unity. On one hand, we find ourselves reflecting on the question of difference or, following a more traditional way of speaking, of the relation between the one and the many: What does it mean to say that difference is *constitutive* of reality? On the other hand, we turn to "doing philosophy" and methodological criteria: Is it the subject that brings about harmony by carrying out some kind of balancing between conflicting poles that are distinct and distant from one another or is harmony individuated, already found and understood to be in reality? Is it possible, in some way, to hold the various perspectives firmly together?

I maintain that one of the great merits of Husserl's phenomenology is that of liberating us from the traps of many rigid and abstract dualisms: I/world, subject/object, representation/reality, spirit/matter, body/soul. He individuated an area of investigation that banked, perhaps in a way not yet seen for that epoch but also incredibly effective then as today, on the originary sense of the experiential relation and correlation

in the wide-ranging philosophical programme of an *Erkenntnistheorie*. The influence of Husserl on Stein is widely acknowledged and I do not think that Husserl's philosophy can be interpreted through the lens of harmony. Harmony, however, is a pertinent and fitting descriptor for his most faithful student, Edith Stein, as noted by Angela Ales Bello in her most recent book, which we are discussing here. This claim is neither a juxtaposition nor a simplification; neither is it naïve. Rather, Ales Bello's book argues this position with the rigour of Husserlian phenomenology, which she has taught us over the past years.

Proceeding, first, with the interpretative criteria for harmony, I think that we must keep in mind the relation between Edmund Husserl and Edith Stein in terms of the possible foundations of a philosophical school. In particular, I would like to look at the dependence and/or filiation of Husserl and the original position of phenomenological thought. This has to do with the reflection on the meaning of a "community of researchers," understood as "spiritual body"—a decisive theme in the then contemporary history of philosophy that, among other things, demonstrates in Edith Stein's work a possible and concrete consonance between "thinking" and "living." In an important paragraph from *Finite and Eternal Being* titled "The inner soul," Stein writes that the intellectual search for sense or meaning is a free act. The personal and spiritual life is inserted in a great signifying togetherness, which is, in its own turn, also a cohesion of action: every sense, once understood, requires a comportment that corresponds to it. In order to indicate the "putting into movement" toward a corresponding comportment the phenomenological school uses the term "motivation." To do philosophy is, in fact, a making: thinking is acting, an intellectual acting that is free, responsible and motivated. Here, "theory" and "practice," coherently harmonised, find their equilibrium.

Ales Bello's beautiful essay unfolds in three chapters whose titles are problematic not only for contemporary philosophy but also for Western thought in general: (1) Judaism and Christianity; (2) The Unity and Complexity of the Human Being; (3) Philosophy and Religion. If we were to condense the content of the book, we could say that harmony revolves around the unique connection between *anthropology and religion*, which is the salient moment that emerges in the intersection of the human and the divine. This is confirmed by the title of the first part of the third chapter, "The Human Being and Her Other."

We find ourselves, then, with one big title: phenomenological anthropology and religion. This is not reductive because it does signify that there is no account of the breadth that lies between the questions, the analysis of which pushes, first, to the moment of the social and political as well as to the moment of the sacred, mystical and the Christological-Trinitarian. Second, it pushes us to important considerations on the social, political, theological, historical and philosophical planes (for example, the encounter of the Middle Ages with the present day, between the thought of Thomas Aquinas and Husserl, a theme to which Stein intensely devoted herself and which produced original results—all of which Ales Bello underlines in her work.)

Given all the questions raised, an important theoretical difficulty arises; it is constituted by the *tertium* or third, namely, religious indifference and political neutrality. The former is located between the acceptance and the refusal of God (87), whereas the latter is somewhere between peace and war, good and evil. (95) Here, harmony appears to be interrupted. How ought we resolve this point? What is the speculative value of the *tertium*?

I believe that an accurate philosophical-phenomenological analysis of difference can confirm this, as mentioned at the opening of my reflection. And this is why to "place in harmony" does not only occur between two antinomous or conflicting poles, but precisely between many and ***the many.*** Existentially, we encounter difference, plurality, determination and, therefore, the non-I. It is surprising how a philosophy that has assumed the centrality of consciousness and/or the subject—an egological philosophy, undoubtedly—could reveal a sense of difference and its internal articulation in alterity, diversity, foreignness, thereby throwing light on the value for human beings of hetero-centric experience.

"Harmony" means being in agreement with, proportion, consonance (of voices, instruments, sounds and tones): I am not sure how much Ales Bello had music in mind when she chose this register of harmony to explain the work of Edith Stein, but one can certainly claim that it is possible to uncover here a "technical" sense insofar as there, like in both the theory and practice that go into one's musical formation, there is a concatenation of agreements in the organisation of range of sounds as well as the function of the unified order of tonality. If one considers that in order to explain the way phenomenology proceeds, one often uses the

pertinent image of concentric circles that expand and contract; one has to conclude, then, that harmony is traceable even between the spaces and times. But what does this mean?

In philosophical terms, this means bringing sense into relief. "Bringing harmony" means both individuating harmony theoretically as well as understanding it in reality, and this is obtained through the critical exercise of reason through the discipline of philosophy as explained by Husserl. Harmony is not attributable to an impulse or a subjective psychic instant, but to an exigency that founds itself in reality. This establishes an equilibrium between "clarifying" and "grounding," between "comprehending" and "explaining," which constitute the conflicting dualisms that have marked, even wounded, the philosophy of the 20th century. Phenomenology, through its *analytical analysis* of lived experience resolves these dualisms—an exercise that neither ends with itself nor is a self-indulgent intellectual achievement. It is, rather, a foundational, originary and clarifying exercise. There is no doubt that this very egological philosophy is also at the same time a philosophical analytic.

When in the concluding *Paths of Research* (*Linee di ricerche*) Ales Bello underscores that harmony is not merely an accord, but "is made possible because it founds itself in an authentic unity of an ontological type that is the basis of diversity and plurality" (234), she understands with great clarity that the question of harmony coincides with the phenomenological question of sense. And this is proven by the fact that there are continuous references and that signifying connections are traceable, impeding, in fact, the possibility of *keeping separate that which is distinct*.

I would like to make explicit reference here to a document that is paradigmatic of what has been said above, namely, Edith Stein's handwritten letter sent to Pope Pius XI a few months after the Nazis assumed power in Germany, which contains many of the binomials mentioned above. Some of the dualisms include: Judaism and Christianity, divine and human, body and soul, philosophy and mysticism. In her essay, Ales Bello has inserted a narrative where one hears the words of Stein: "Holy Father! As a daughter of the Jewish people, who through the grace of God has now been a daughter of the Catholic Church, I would like to ardently express to the Father of Christianity that which preoccupies millions of Germans. For years, the leaders of National Socialism have preached hate against Jews. Now that they have obtained power and

have armed their followers, among which there are many criminals, they are harvesting the fruit of the seeds of hate. All that has occurred and occurs daily comes from a government that defines itself as ‘Christian.’ Not only the Jews but also thousands of faithful Catholics of Germany, and around the world, have been waiting for weeks hoping that the Church of Christ will make its voice heard against such abuse of the name of Christ. The idolatry of race and the power of the state that the radio hammers away at the masses every day, are these not an open heresy? This war of extermination against Jewish blood, is this not an outrage against the most holy humanity of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles? Does this not lie in absolute opposition to the comportment of our Lord and Saviour, who prayed for his persecutors while on the cross?” (128–29)

These words attest to a sort of short circuit. They are biting, cutting like sharp blades. In this concerted denunciation, that which hits and surprises us, leading to an overturning of perspectives, is the explicit reference to the Jewish blood of Christ. This blood is of a “most holy” humanity, says Stein; it is a blood that is sacrificial, the blood of the *Agnus Dei*. It is also the blood of the unstained victim, of the suffering servant, of the unjustly persecuted, of the pure and of the innocent. It is the blood of the Son of God and the Son of Man: *et-et*. The wound of the Jewish people is the wound of God, the Word of God made flesh, both in a most disconcerting and illuminating way. Here, even the distance between temporal and eternal is annihilated because the being of God is understood as *pathos*.

A last consideration, even a distraction: In this essay, Angela Ales Bello maintains that harmony is an interpretative key for understanding the thought of Edith Stein. This hermeneutic proposition seems fitting with regard to the relation of *phenomenological anthropology* and *religion*, as I tried to demonstrate by the expanding and contracting of the concentric circles of the phenomenological method, between *fides* and *ratio*, reason and revelation, philosophy and mysticism. But that which seems to flee from harmony is the relation between the exact sciences and phenomenology, quantity and quality, between the empirical and the logical, the factual and transcendental. Is this a question of method, of the gradations of knowing? How can one think here the inseparability of the distinctions?

Traditionally, there is bad blood between phenomenology and the empirical sciences. Most notably, there is Husserl's critique of the attempt to "naturalise" consciousness. The 19th- and early 20th-century debate over the *Geisteswissenschaften* and the *Naturwissenschaften*, fueled by German historicism's criteria of unity of method, left behind certain conceptual dichotimies, including *Verstehen* ("understanding") versus *Erklären* ("to explain" or "clarify"), "rigorous" science versus "exact" sciences and, more recently, "continental" versus "analytic" philosophy. Are these either merely academic distinctions or do they indicate, respectively, a *forma mentis* that is irreconcilable with its counterpart?

The point of interest is the philosophical program of a theory of knowledge (*Erkenntnistheorie*) based on phenomenology that aims at the unity of knowing. But what kind of unity, especially if each discipline is seen as hegemonic and absolute? Let us take as an example the lived body or *Leib*, which originated in the Husserlian school and was later taken up by French phenomenology and given a more teleological or Christologico-Trinitarian sense. Certainly, lived corporeity may be investigated from a biological and physical aspect as well as a medical and physiological one; it may also be examined from psychological or psychoanalytical perspectives as well as social and political ones. There are also communitarian and religious, sacred and mystical, perspectives. What, then, is the relationship between "nature" and "spirit"?

Here it is necessary to turn to the Father of Phenomenology and his influence on the thought of Edith Stein. In the lectures *Nature and Spirit*, Husserl maintains that we have an experience of the objective world as relational subjects; we have relations of reciprocal understanding or empathy (*Einfühlung*). He deepened his analyses by following this direction of research, affirming that prior to empathy a subject is not a person. The experience of individual others is presupposed by consciousness of the natural world; it is the inseparable preliminary moment. This determines the program of a sharp network of philosophical investigations within the school of phenomenology, which were developed later by Husserl's most intimate and talented collaborators, all with an eye to the precision of the method and the content. Here, we are dealing with an epistemological investigation of the configuration of knowing in Western culture. In this regard, Ales Bello writes, "The difference proposed by the phenomenologists between *Körper* and *Leib* is well known;

there is the body understood in a material sense and that understood as the living body. The description of both moments begins not from the bottom, that is, from an empirical standpoint that is immediately given as corporeity; rather, one examines the constitution of the lived body from the transcendental viewpoint in order to delineate the complexity of the human being. It is useful here to recall that we are not dealing here with a deduction but a demonstration through essences." (21–29)

Through an investigation of the lived body is it possible, therefore, to reconstruct the thread that links the sciences of nature with the sciences of spirit? It was said that this is more of a Husserlian question than a Steinian one, but I maintain that it is important in order to understand the role of the phenomenological school in the culture of 20th-century Europe and its importance today. Philosophy is not an empirical knowing, and it is capable of acquiring and elaborating knowledge beyond the "exact" or "positive" boundaries of the empirical, cognitive or neurological sciences. The contemporary interrogation, philosophical or not, of the nature of the human and interhuman demands a profound rethinking of the equilibrium and/or the harmony of the intra- and intersubjective as well as the subjective and/or egological demands and those of the other proposed by phenomenology. There is a necessity to think personal identity in relation to *otherness*. A significant treatment of the theme of difference can be found in Edith Stein's work on empathy. It is not without accident that her work, dating from 1916, is often referred to in contemporary neuroscience. "Nature" and "Spirit" are heavy terms and they require further research and analysis. Ales Bello contributes to this reflection, concluding that the "message of Edith Stein can also be useful for understanding in cultural terms the fragmentation of knowledge that characterises our Western culture, inviting us to not stop at the absolutisation of a particular discipline, but to broaden the horizon of research. This is the case so that we do not only draw only certain droplets of knowledge; rather, we must dig deeply into the profound unity of objects traceable in the objects themselves of the disciplines. A unitary element is the anthropological around which turn the so-called human sciences. Another is nature around which turn physics, chemistry and biology. Unity can be truly reached and not only presupposed through a reflection that maintains the trajectory of philosophy…. This philosophy must be open to examining the contribution of various visions of the

world and other cultures, always not forgetting the role played by religions." (240)

Richard Kearney, *Anatheism: Returning to God after God*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010; 247 pages. ISBN: 978-0231147880.

Review by Robert W.M. Kennedy, University of Ottawa.

Dominant in continental philosophy's return to religion is the conceptual distinction between the idolatrous God of ontotheology and the iconic God with/out being that reportedly comes after metaphysics. While akin to negative theology, this return to God after God is theorized in cognizance of current philosophical considerations and confrontations with the religious, which were originally emergent in the influential work of such continental thinkers as Derrida, Marion, Levinas and Ricoeur. Richard Kearney's latest book *Anatheism: Returning to God after God* is one of the most recent additions to this conversation about the (post)metaphysical.

In his new book, Kearney revisits old thematic ground in greater depth, utilizing original and established source material, while ushering in his neologism "anatheism," or "*ana-theos*," which he translates as "God after God." (3) The book therefore presents Kearney's attempt to synthesize the greater current of thought/response reverberating in the dialogue between continental philosophy and the religious, while also pointing to various antecedents of the contemporary conversation. In development of these antecedents, Kearney proffers anatheism as a third alternative to the "polar opposites" of "dogmatic theism and militant atheism," describing it as the "wager of faith beyond faith." (3) Kearney further explains that anatheism is "what emerges out of that night of not-knowing," the moment of "abandoning abandonment," as well as "another way of seeking and sounding the things we consider sacred but can never fully fathom or prove." (3) In keeping with Ricoeur, Kearney's faith beyond faith aspires to liberate its audience from the ideologies and mythologies of "first belief," advancing a "second naiveté." (10, 130) Thus, liberation is hypothetically accomplishable via the reassessment and reconstitution of religious "truth claims," which are now put into "brackets." (11) Through this bracketing, Kearney's hermeneutic ap-

proach presages the recognition of an aesthetically prior optics, a type of matured and quasi-detached "poetics," which attempts to bring us home to sacramental living through the sober recognition of our "homelessness." (13) Such prerequisite homelessness, he believes, makes us ultimately "strangers to the earth" and, if properly observed, can advance the extrication of our religious traditions towards a more thoughtful reinterpretation than previously accommodated by modern models of violent overcoming. (13)

Kearney's text is divided into ten clearly delineated sections with seven central chapters: 1) In the Moment: The Uninvited Guest; 2) In the Wager: The Fivefold Motion; 3) In the Name: After Auschwitz Who Can Say God? 4) In the Flesh: Sacramental Imagination; 5) In the Text: Joyce, Proust, Woolf; 6) In the World: Between Secular and Sacred; 7) In the Act: Between Word and Flesh. It also includes an Introduction: God after God and a conclusion: Welcoming Strange Gods, followed by an epilogue. On a methodological note, the structure of the text remains largely consistent with Ricoeur's temporal-affective naratology. This consistency is apparent in Kearney's relaxed implementation of the threefold mimesis, the layout of the existential context of $mimesis_1$ (Chapters 1 and 2), the textual encounter of $mimesis_2$ (Chapters 3 to 5), and the return to temporality of $mimesis_3$ (Chapters 6 and 7). Thus, the basic structural form of the text also enacts the primal encounter and response of hospitality advocated by Kearney's philosophical position as it is explicitly outlined in the book's poetic argument for the God after God.

As with the Biblical tradition and Levinas before him, the ethical encounter has for Kearney the foremost ontological priority. He adds that this encounter is actualized/interpreted via the imagination, making the imaginative faculty inherently moral and dependent upon the primary moment of wager. Through a hermeneutic framework of progressive repetition, Kearney proceeds by examining correspondingly motivated Jewish, Christian, and Muslim wagers that also chose, in the face of pervasive heterogeneity, hospitality over hostility. In contrast to his precursors in poststructuralism/deconstruction, Kearney is additionally concerned with implementing a critical hermeneutic in the movement of this wager of hospitality. Specifically, he identifies five major components that prescribe the primary process recommended in the event/wager for

anatheism. These are: "imagination, humour, commitment, discernment, and hospitality." (4)

After delineating the existential parameters of his anatheistic framework, Kearney engages three different textual manifestations: the larger religious tradition, the phenomenology of incarnation, and the modern novel. First, in approaching tradition as text, Kearney examines how theologies of divine providence are problematic after the historical nightmare of Auschwitz, which he claims reduces the concept of "divine plan" into merely a "cruel sham." (58) In place of a God of infinite power, Kearney advocates a God of "radical powerlessness," citing several precursors and contemporary consorts such as Etty Hillesum, Hanna Arendt, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Gianni Vattimo, John D. Caputo, and Catherine Keller. (58) Second, Kearney interprets our generalized earthly incarnation likewise as a text, looking at the mundane through the reinterpreted perspective of anatheism. Kearney here examines the tradition of mysticism/pantheism alongside various contemporary theoretical ideas of embodiment. In specific, he examines here the ideas of such historical personages as Teresa of Avila, Francis of Assisi, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Julia Kristeva. Third, Kearny expands upon his encounter with the sacramental mundane by looking at three modern novelists: James Joyce, Marcel Proust, and Virginia Woolf. The "sacramental imagination" exhibited in these three authors likewise epitomizes for Kearney the celebration of what he calls "the bread and wine of everyday existence," where the poetic is transmigrated from the sole possession of "High Church liturgies," and "extended to acts of quotidian experience where the infinite traverses the infinitesimal." (102)

Following his exploration of the anatheistic repetition in tradition, the body, and the novel, Kearney leaves the hermeneutic space of the text in order to return to the pressing matters of temporal existence, undoubtedly hoping that we have been altered by our encounter with the literary/poetic. In this return from the text, Kearney's primary question becomes "what is to be done?" (133) Kearney's proffered solution gestures towards an "ethics of kenosis," or "self-emptying," which he moreover indicates points towards "emancipatory action." (134–35) To promote this end, Kearney provides models for mimetic cooption. (165) Devoting the larger part of his seventh chapter to demonstrating how the lives of Doris Day, Jean Vanier, and Mohandas Gandhi exemplify the sacramental, Kearney continues to delineate how each of these exemplars

embodies the anatheistic ethos through "challenging the tendency to oppose inner and outer…" (165) Here, Day is specially recognized for welcoming the oppressed urban poor, Vanier the disabled and wounded, and Gandhi the colonized and oppressed of India. (165) Furthermore, Kearney expounds that these exemplars "refigure our understanding of faith by encountering the sacred at the heart of the secular world of action and suffering…" (5) In sum, Kearney calls for recognition of the "embodiment of infinity in the finite, of transcendence in immanence, and of eschatology in the now." (166) These appeals, it is important to note, all promote a reduction of strong oppositions by welcoming contradiction.

Not unlike his previous books, Kearney's new book provides a thought-provoking exchange between the religious and contemporary continental philosophy. The general disposition and groundwork from *The God Who May Be* (2001) are still evident in the anatheistic project, but here Kearney has taken a greater focus upon the lived experience of sacramental being. Additionally, there is a larger poetically prescriptive mood emanating from the text, which seems more concerned with enacting cathartic writing and offering exemplars than his past, somewhat more theoretically charged, books. As such, this book is Kearney's most intimate to date, and we seem to get a sense of what he is ultimately demanding from religion and humanity. While the book is most inevitably going to fail to gain approval from strong theology and from strong atheistic philosophers, Kearney nevertheless continues herein to contribute thought-provoking questions about the role of narrative in cultural formation.

Rosalyn Diprose and Jack Reynolds (eds), *Merleau-Ponty: Key Concepts*. Stocksfield, UK: Acumen, 2008; 255 pages. ISBN: 978-1844651160.

Review by Martin Goldstein, St-Paul University.

This volume in Acumen's *Key Concepts* series makes a significant contribution to the growing appreciation of Merleau-Ponty's body of work. The editors, Rosalyn Diprose and Jack Reynolds, have assembled a remarkably concise volume that is of interest to both those seeking an

introduction to Merleau-Ponty's thought, as well as those whose understanding is more advanced. This book can appeal to both kinds of reader because it presents the key aspects of Merleau-Ponty's thought in a straightforward and succinct manner, without sacrificing any of its characteristic novelty, nuance, and rigour.

Merleau-Ponty: Key Concepts is divided into four parts. The first consists of a general discussion by Reynolds of Merleau-Ponty's life and work, as well as Diprose's introduction to the themes and essays that comprise this volume. The second part, "Interventions," situates Merleau-Ponty's thought in relation to the philosophical concerns and currents of his time and connects his work to the disciplines other than philosophy from which he drew inspiration. Ted Toadvine's essay carefully examines Merleau-Ponty's relationship to, and revision of, Husserl's phenomenology and clarifies Merleau-Ponty's recognition of the limits of phenomenology through a consideration of his late understanding of "hyper-reflection." Thomas Busch reflects upon Merleau-Ponty's debt to existentialism and clarifies his major contributions to an existential understanding of embodied subjectivity, meaning, intersubjectivity, and freedom. Taylor Carmen explicates Merleau-Ponty's critique of empiricism and intellectualism and points to the way in which Merleau-Ponty's original contribution to our understanding of the body and perception follows largely from this critique. Beata Stawarska investigates Merleau-Ponty's complex relationship with psychoanalysis, concluding that Merleau-Ponty's thought takes up both "philosophical reflection and psychoanalytic theory in a critical as well as illuminating reciprocal relation" which, she posits, leads to the possible transformation of both. (69)

Sonia Kruks considers Merleau-Ponty's reflections upon the philosophy of history (specifically his engagements with G.W.F. Hegel and Karl Marx) and meticulously clarifies the way in which his thought avoids both relativism and determinism. Furthermore, she highlights the political relevance of his philosophy of history through a careful explication of his belief that there are "justifiable choices to be made in any situation" and that we, therefore, can never completely avoid our political responsibilities. (78) Kruks' discussion of political responsibility is complemented by Diana Coole's extraordinary discussion of Merleau-Ponty's engagement with politics and the political. Coole highlights his recognition that the task of the political

actor is "to seek signs of potentially transgressive and transformative capacities within the ambiguities and complexities of [the force field of collective life]." (91) Coole's essay contributes immensely to our understanding of Merleau-Ponty's political ontology and phenomenology of political practice and makes sense of his novel relationship with the thought of Marx and Machiavelli. Coole's discussion is additionally noteworthy for her convincing argument against Barry F. Cooper's contention that Merleau-Ponty's politics "became more conservative over time" (86), demonstrating instead that he consistently "wrote as a man of the left." (82) Closing this section, Hugh J. Silverman eruditely discusses the importance of art to Merleau-Ponty's reflections, and elucidates the fundamental characteristics of his aesthetics.

Part three, titled "Inventions," considers the key concepts that form the core of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. David Morris' exceptional essay, "Body," is laudable for its thorough captures of the essential aspects of Merleau-Ponty's reflections on this topic. For Morris, understanding the role of the body in Merleau-Ponty's thought requires understanding his "distinctive philosophical gesture," which he identifies as the "effort to locate the openness and source of being's meaning in something precedent to and exceeding the philosopher in the body, nature, flesh...and to do so via a radical reflection that begins with this openness." (119) Morris' essay could easily stand on its own as an introduction to Merleau-Ponty's reflections on embodiment and corporeality, specifically as it is discussed in *Phenomenology of Perception*. David R. Cerbone explicates Merleau-Ponty's unique contributions to the philosophical understanding of perception, particularly as it follows from his critique of empiricism and intellectualism. Gail Weiss successfully undertakes the daunting task of explicating the multiple meanings of the term "ambiguity" in Merleau-Ponty's thought.

Michael Sanders' essay takes up Merleau-Ponty's significant contribution to the understanding of intersubjectivity and alterity. Sanders considers Merleau-Ponty's position in light of Husserl's influence, as well as Levinas' criticisms. It is with regard to the latter that Sanders' essay really stands out. Levinas claims that Merleau-Ponty's understanding of intersubjectivity is "determined by a relationship of knowledge between self and other." (147) On this basis,

he argues that Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology fails to account for the absolute otherness of human beings, which is essential to Levinas' own understanding of intersubjectivity. Responding to Levinas' criticisms, Sanders shows that Merleau-Ponty's understanding of intersubjectivity evolved significantly from his early engagement with Husserl. He accepts Levinas' understanding of intersubjectivity as involving a dimension that is absolutely other and epistemically inaccessible, but rejects the claim that such an understanding is lacking in Merleau-Ponty's work. To support his contention, Sanders points to Merleau-Ponty's acknowledgement, in *The Visible and the Invisible*, that, just as there can only ever be a partial coincidence between two hands touching, there can be only a partial coincidence between two or more subjects. In Sanders' estimation, Merleau-Ponty's recognition that one's knowledge of another is at best only partial calls into question the extent to which the relationship between self and other is founded upon adequate knowledge. (147)

Harry Adams carefully outlines Merleau-Ponty's understanding of expression as creative, fundamentally dependent upon corporeality, and enacted between "decentred subjects who call and respond to messages whose origins and meanings are never altogether clear and whose truth is never absolute." (160) Adams makes clear that the task of expression, for Merleau-Ponty, is not to impose meaning on the world but instead to "let the world and its 'wild meaning' speak through us." (160) Susan L. Cataldi's essay is devoted to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of affect and sensibility. Her essay is an original contribution to the understanding of Merleau-Ponty's thought in that it provides important insight into a dimension, which is not often explicitly discussed, but which in her view is "interfused with sense perception in the living experience Merleau-Ponty tries philosophically to capture." (163) In light of the fairly recent English translation of Merleau-Ponty's course notes, titled *Nature*, Scott Churchill thoughtfully outlines the direction of Merleau-Ponty's thought regarding nature and animality. Churchill's essay will be of particular interest to anyone interested in Merleau-Ponty's engagement with the thought of Jakob von Uexküll and his belief that it could serve as the basis of a phenomenology of nature. (182) Fred Evans closes section three with an instructive discussion of Merleau-Ponty's notions of chiasm and flesh. He concludes that Merleau-Ponty's sense of the latter preserves the difference between the

sentient and the sensible in order to draw our attention to the "unity we share with other beings" with whom we share this planet.

The essays of the fourth part, "Extensions," survey some of the ways in which Merleau-Ponty's thought has been used in other disciplines. Ann Murphy discusses Merleau-Ponty's work in relation to feminism and race theory. She demonstrates that, while Merleau-Ponty's work is open to some criticism from feminists, it has informed feminist ideas such as "gender performativity." (200) In addition, she indicates how it can contribute to race theory insofar as it can help to "account for the ways in which racism does much of its damage at the pre-reflective, unconscious level, thus undermining the naive belief that all racism is explicit and easily recognized." (206) Shaun Gallagher explores the resonance Merleau-Ponty's thought continues to have for cognitive science. Specifically, he considers the ways in which Merleau-Ponty's work figures in the debate surrounding the possibility of "naturalizing phenomenology" (212), as well as his influence on what Gallagher calls "cognitive social neuroscience." (214) Philipa Rothfield's essay takes stock of Merleau-Ponty's contribution to health studies and our understanding of living well. She focuses on the surprising ways in which his thought "paves the way for an understanding of medical ethics that is sensitive to the perceptual and situational specificities intrinsic to healthcare practice." (227) In the final essay, Nick Crossley surveys Merleau-Ponty's considerable influence upon sociology, particularly the work of Pierre Bourdieu. In doing so, he brings to the fore Merleau-Ponty's indebtedness to Max Weber, as well as his belief that "sociology should become more phenomenological" and that phenomenology should engage with sociology. (235)

Merleau-Ponty: Key Concepts is an invaluable volume because of the highly rigorous and informative nature of the essays it comprises. While concise, the volume provides a nuanced survey of the important elements in Merleau-Ponty's thought. The goal of this volume is to encourage others to read the *oeuvre* of Merleau-Ponty; hopefully, with its clear and innovative contributions, it will fulfill its task.

Anne O'Byrne, *Natality and Finitude*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010; 218 pages. ISBN: 978-0253222411.

Review by David Appelbaum, SUNY New Paltz.

Socrates taught the *melete tou thanatou*, a vigil on one's own death, as the essential practice for understanding finitude. The lesson has been transmitted to us through the Stoic *memento mori* down to Heidegger's anticipatory resoluteness. Of the several motifs of Anne O'Byrne's intricate study, perhaps the most persuasive is that this line of thought is insufficient. We must look not only west, toward the sunset of life, but also east, to the arising of life, to our birth. While the rearward glance may not evoke the angst of death's future-ward imminence, solitude and, inevitability, ontological considerations are vastly enriched by an investigation of the question "Why was I born?" and its relational implications. *Natality and Finitude* follows such a trajectory, from Heidegger to Dilthey, Arendt and Jean-Luc Nancy, to produce an analysis of the ontological pre-eminence of birth that is striking in sophistication and complexity.

Heidegger apparently misses the clue buried in thrownness (*Geworfenheit*)—and how the call brings "Dasein *back* to its thrownness"—to this eastward glance of ontology, but Dilthey picks it up in the concept of generation ("procreation, birth, development and death"). With it, the notoriously weak sections of *Being and Time* that deal with the *Mitsein* can be repaired by adding a relational dimension. "Generation" is a generous term, denoting a process, an activity and a unit of cultural legacy; for O'Byrne it designates "the emergence of meaning in a life that is essentially generational and generative." (61) Because human generativity involves—for the most part—a union between heterogeneous sex partners, the singularity of *Dasein* is necessarily qualified by standing in relation with others. Each of us is singular by virtue of the coupling of two other singularities. Combining Dilthey's thoughts on the *Umwelt* with the historical phenomenology of Arendt serves to portray the specificity of that bond. The remaining question regarding the differentiation of a novel singular from plural being is resolved by reference to Nancy's work.

Although there may be an asymmetry between the two endpoints of finitude, birth is the underemphasized pole of ontology. The

child's importunity "Why was I born?" succeeds in framing the investigation while the background question "What is birth?" drones on. (44) O'Byrne opens with Sophoclean wisdom on the misfortune of being born but speaks more consistently of the obstetrical event, of the "blood and mucous." This line of thinking would seem to lend itself to an ontic analysis (though she acknowledges that there are troubles with the "ontological difference"). It involves a distinction between "first" and "second" birth, between the actuarial and the existential fact that exposes a radical ambiguity in the idea, or as O'Byrne puts it, a "syncopated temporality": "we come to be and later turn out to have once not yet been. We are before we can grasp that at one point we were not yet, and this is the beginning of our understanding ourselves as finite beings." (103–104) The interval between "births" is thick with experience that is not yet existentiell, not yet appropriated as "one's own." The *Augenblick* of birth nonetheless opens us to an absolute newness—creativity *ex nihilo*—that pervades existence. In this way, our human birth is an exclusive event that informs each and every creative act of our lives; it leaves a signature like a remainder.

That interval, moreover, constitutes the immemorial, Levinas' and Nancy's notion, that shares a family resemblance with O'Byrne's concept of natality: "the non-experience that is the ground—or non-ground—of experience." (109) It is the invisible underlining of the sentence of our life—that which singularizes it—and its invisibility (impalpability) is aporetic and perhaps key to the tragic loss that Sophocles' Silenus tried to articulate to King Midas. It is always anterior to any point we can arrive at through the *vécu* and begins to look a lot like that through which Derrida's *différance* operates, generating singular newness as it proceeds in the manner of a Whiteheadean creative advance of novelty. One's natality is thus a bottomless font from which the endless waters of both creativity and our responsibility to create and to creation emerge. As O'Byrne puts it, "Birth does not stand for or stand in for the creation; birth *is* the creation of the world." (146)

This ground-breaking nature of the analysis of natal relation leaves questions unanswered. An intriguing one concerns the advent of new life itself. Is birth the point when there is immunological differentiation of self from (m)other? It would seem closest to what O'Byrne has in mind when being boils forth *ex nihilo*, producing an (auto-immunological) identity. If this is the case, does biology, a science

based on ontic presuppositions, sabotage the ontological investigation? At any rate, the reliance on the facts of immunology in matters of personal identity leaves her (provisional) neutrality with respect to cloning surprising. There, individuality means "the manifestation in the world of an inner essence, whether that springs from the uniqueness of my genome or from a specific act of creativity by God." (163)

If birthing is the action of *différance* on the human condition, can one take a wider view of the meaning of "birth"? Could we speak not of generation but of *re*generation, starting once again? Is there or is there not an "earliest" advent of difference, an origin, that which Heidegger seemed to seek in the "Anaximander Fragment"? Is it logocentric to take the child's question "Where did I come from?" as referring to the blood and mucous that occasioned its arrival on the planet, or can there be multiple births of a self—the question of iteration and rebirth?

The relevance of this book—to crucial debates in continental thought, feminism, and political philosophy—cannot be overemphasized. O'Byrne is particularly generous to her colleagues: the text so brims with references to secondary literature that outline the major sources of input to the discussion. The endnotes point to lines of further research. The prose is generally clear, engaging, and insightful. This work should not be overlooked.

Kelly Oliver, *Animal Lessons: How They Teach Us to Be Human*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009; 364 pages. ISBN: 978-023147262.

Review by Bronwyn Singleton, University of Toronto.

Animal Lessons is a rigorous, engaging and thought-provoking account of our relationships with animals and how we learn from them what it means to be human. A well-known feminist philosopher, Kelly Oliver traces how this "animal pedagogy" functions, often in covert ways, across a number of discourses from the Continental canon. Her study culminates in an original and compelling account of what it could mean to evolve a sustainable, "free-range ethics." Oliver demonstrates how even philosophers of alterity are surprisingly guilty of selling animals short, while simultaneously illustrating how animals often "bite back" in

ways that undermine and upset attempts at their conceptual, intellectual and philosophical domestication and training.

The book is divided into six sections. The first section outlines how and why rights discourse and concerns with animal suffering are insufficient for building truly ethical philosophical accounts of our relationship with animals. Oliver's Introduction and first chapter clearly establish that *Animal Lessons* goes beyond traditional arguments that leverage either biological continuism and/or metaphysical separation to justify animal abuse or to promote animal welfare. Her work digs deeper to understand what motivates stories of sameness or difference between humans and animals, searching for a path that eschews the limits of either way of thinking. In the five sections that follow Oliver reads ten philosophers to show how their respective work engages animal pedagogy, critiquing how these thinkers often disavow the role that animals play in their own teachings and lessons. Her studies take up the treatment of "the animal, animality and animals" in Rousseau, Herder, Derrida, Beauvoir, Lacan, Heidegger, Agamben, Merleau-Ponty, Freud and Kristeva.

Several themes emerge as Oliver builds her argument. One of the strengths of Oliver's text is its illustration of the complicity between animal oppression and the domination of women and other marginalized persons and groups (there might be more focus on race, but such want is perhaps supererogatory). Second, Oliver challenges our thinking on taste and eating, questioning what it would mean to eat ethically and examining the taste for purity that is integral to our philosophical inheritance. Finally, the third major theme is one of responsivity and responsibility. Man and animal are often distinguished based on man's allegedly unique capacity to speak, a "response" that is cast in sharp relief to the instinctual reaction of animals. It doesn't take Oliver long to blur these lines and to tie response-ivity to themes of ethical responsibility. These threads work to challenge our ideas about kinship relations, gradually building a case for a new ethics and politics that look to an ecological and sustainable model founded on the "strange kinship" with our animal others that comes from shared embodiment.

Section Two reaches back to address Rousseau and Herder, challenging the romantic myths that have been used to differentiate man and animals. Contra the received dogma, Oliver demonstrates how we cannot distinguish man from the animals based on the assimilation of food, language or *logos* so that we never really leave our animal ancestors behind.

Being human becomes a form of response to the animals, but one that we must take up more ethically if we are to move forward. Section Three offers a prolonged analysis of Derrida's work on animality in keeping with his hyperbolic ethics. These twin essays engage two themes that will be integral to the evolution of Oliver's overall argument: good taste or "eating well," and the intersectionality of animal oppression and the oppression of women. This section also establishes the key role that Derrida's hyperbolic ethics play in Oliver's ecological ethics. Derrida's taste for purity is revealed as a promise that offers an antidote to an absolutist ethics or to the quietism of an ethics that recognizes the impossibility of ever achieving a static good. Section Four's essays on Beauvoir and Lacan are a somewhat awkward pairing; they seem to be joined as leftovers rather than because of some natural thematic continuity. Oliver reveals Beauvoir's animal ambivalence by juxtaposing her attempt to highlight the challenges of the female animal while ostensibly arguing that women must disavow their animal nature in order to transcend their reproductive burden and truly exist in existentialist terms and on par with men. The Lacan essay, perhaps the least robust of Oliver's studies, plays on the themes of language, duplicity and the trace, building to an interesting but ultimately unrealized conclusion about how we must learn to be more cautious of our tracks, treading more lightly on the earth. Part Five's three essays on Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Agamben intertwine to end on a surprisingly sweet and optimistic note. Oliver challenges Heidegger's claim that his thinking about animality is non-hierarchical, pointing to the violence of the ontological distinction he uses to keep man and animal separated by an "abyss." Her Agamben essay examines how the anthropological machine legitimates violence against animals and women, arguing that we must stop the machine for the sake of the planet and not just to save "man." Finally, the essay on Merleau-Ponty leverages his idea of strange kinship to discuss the possibility of finding an opening or opportunity to put us in communion with our animal ancestors based on shared embodiment. This idea of shared embodiment becomes an important touchstone for Oliver's emergent ethics. Section Six takes on psychoanalysis through two essays on Freud and Kristeva. Heavy on content, the Freud essay addresses how animal kinship works in Freud and how it ultimately serves to disrupt his tales of family romance. Her analysis unpacks a panoply of themes including animal phobias, dream interpretation, Freudian anthropology, the role of

mothers and sisters in psychoanalysis and the challenge animal relations pose to the Oedipal family. In her final essay Oliver describes how Kristeva's attempt to move psychoanalysis beyond its phallocentrist roots is ultimately won at the expense of the animals that often come to function as Other in lieu of woman.

Oliver is clearly dealing with a surfeit of material, inspiration and ideas, so that the essays can sometimes seem a bit busy and overflowing. They are immensely rich, but they have a tendency to raise rolling bars of questions that could be essays in and of themselves (such as Oliver's parenthetical remarks on Merleau-Ponty's substitution of the machine for the animal other, opening important questions of the post-human or her speculations about how animals might become friends or family at the end of the Heidegger essay). I frequently found myself pausing and wishing that Oliver could flesh out and respond to such remarks, while yet realizing that to do so would invite her to write entirely new essays. In some ways this is a luxurious difficulty, but occasionally the feeling that Oliver was piling it on became overwhelming.

The real brilliance and potential in *Animal Lessons* comes with the much too short conclusion, wherein Oliver begins to sketch the alternate ethics that evolve from her animal studies and as a result of her own animal pedagogy. The sustainable ethics she innovates is based on "ecological subjectivity," Derrida's hyperbolic ethics, Merleau-Ponty's ideas of strange kinship and shared embodiment and the fundamental but often forgotten childhood virtue of sharing. This ethics recognizes that it must be more than an ethics of sameness or difference and explores how these things are always intertwined. Taking on critics who argue that animal studies are indulgent distractions to more pressing ethical concerns about human violence against one another, Oliver challenges that we can ever separate these two streams of abuse. Arguing that man/animal is *the* original binary structuring Western intellectual thought, she proceeds to say that its dismantling could yet offer the hope for a new and renewed ethics and a path to planetary healing. We are at a juncture in history where a sustainable ethics is an exigency. As Oliver argues: "We need an ethics born from, and nurturing, a transformation from the traditional image of man as conquering nature to one of human beings nourishing it." (305) Cultivating our "ecological conscience" means sacrificing human greed for the sake of those others with whom we share the planet. Oliver argues that all living things are responsive and in this sense we all have a

responsibility to one another. “Sustainable ethics is an ethics of the responsibility to enable response, not as it has been defined as the exclusive property of man (man responds, animals react), but as it exists all around us.” (306) Such responsibility is a hyperbolic demand, but one that nonetheless cannot be shirked. Oliver is on the cusp of some fascinating and original thought and research and I hope that this hasty conclusion is also a promise for the future since it opened many lines that had me writing “say more!” in my margins.

Animal Lessons is part of the “Critical Perspectives on Animal Studies” series from Columbia, which explores this nascent field from a cross-disciplinary perspective. The study of animality has become a cottage industry among continental philosophers in recent years and is becoming a popular course subject. Oliver engages not just the canonical texts, but also addresses key voices contributing to the ongoing conversation, including Lawlor, Calarco, Diamond and Toadvine. Her text is suitable for scholars reasonably familiar with continental philosophy who want to brush up on its treatment of the animal, but it is also sufficiently erudite to challenge those already engaged in such debates. *Animal Lessons* would be a great companion piece to more advanced undergraduate or graduate studies on animality.

Finally, Oliver casts *Animal Lessons* as a work of mourning dedicated to her cat, Kaos, but ultimately it proves a most worthy labor of love.

Ullrich Haase, *Starting with Nietzsche*. New York: Continuum, 2008; 178 pages. ISBN: 978-1847061638.

Review by Jordan Glass, University of Alberta.

Ullrich Haase’s *Starting with Nietzsche* is one of a series of introductory books purported to provide “clear, concise and accessible introductions” to influential philosophers. The book is divided into four chapters which collectively are intended to span the breadth of Nietzsche’s philosophy. The first chapter in itself covers a wide range of topics: Western metaphysics and the Platonic paradigm, the claim that history is the sole subject of philosophical inquiry, the philosopher as legislator, and the genealogy of Nietzsche’s solution to the problem of freedom and necessity—

his conception of love of fate—out of Leibniz's metaphysics. The second chapter discusses the nature and goal of philosophy given Nietzsche's turn away from Platonism, the historical-subjective nature of truth that follows from Hegel's influence on Nietzsche, and history and philosophy as self-creation. Chapter three discusses the relation of science to religion and art; Haase offers an account of science as a nihilistic descendent of religion and discusses the significance of science as an art which no longer recognizes that it is one. Finally the fourth chapter discusses the Eternal Return of the Same and attempts to reconcile and explain the ontological and ethical interpretations of that thought; it also deals with the Higher Men, the Last Men and the Overhuman and discusses the way in which the thought of Eternal Return is intended to transform us and bring about the end of the Platonic paradigm.

Haase's book attempts a virtually impossible goal: to sum up the philosophy of Nietzsche in all its breadth in a short, accessible, less-than-two-hundred-page book. The book as a whole is a partial success in this regard. It exhibits most of Nietzsche's primary ideas and successfully integrates them into a cohesive account of the philosopher's thought. The book is particularly insightful on a few subjects. One is Haase's portrayal of the freedom-necessity problem and its solution in Nietzsche's *amor fati* (love of fate), and his accompanying discussion of determinism versus fatalism. As well, Haase's portrayal of the development of Nietzsche's thought out of Leibnizian and Hegelian thought is especially interesting and helps the reader grasp the historical significance of Nietzsche's contributions to philosophy. The latter is especially helpful and Haase's aptitude for the history of philosophy comes through. Haase also connects discussions to earlier themes in the book, often in subtle and insightful ways. For example, he takes the "Three Metamorphoses" in Zarathustra to characterize the progression of Nietzsche's thought within Nietzsche's life, as well as the history of thought in the West—though not in quite the way that Nietzsche usually does. In the same vein, Haase's discussion of the significance of history in Nietzsche's philosophy is compelling and well presented. (Haase reiterates throughout that for Nietzsche history becomes the "sole" content of philosophy, beginning with the claim made on page 26.) These few highlights will prove the book to be a worthwhile read, even for those with substantial prior exposure to Nietzsche's philosophy.

More debatable is how the book would fare with the uninitiated. Contrary to the claims and aspirations of the "Starting with—" series, the reader would strongly benefit from a previous introduction to the history of philosophy before reading Haase's book. A student without a vague understanding of the Platonic origins of Western philosophy and some basic overview of several of its more prominent philosophers would likely have a difficult time penetrating the thought in this book—which attempts to compress much of this history into a short introduction to Nietzsche's thought. Even the portions of the book focusing exclusively on Nietzsche's thought (without particular reference to the historical context) often demand some acquaintance with Nietzsche's writings. Many of his terms are taken up by Haase as though they were conceptually familiar. The terms "being" and "becoming," for example, appear throughout the book, yet their distinction is never discussed as such. As another example, the only section devoted explicitly to will to power is a five-page conclusion at the end of the book—the implicit assumption being that the reader has a more-or-less basic idea of its general significance such that the rest of the book has served to do the legwork for its explication. Haase's assumption of at least a basic familiarity with many of the terms in Nietzsche is unproblematic for an experienced reader, but likely problematic for the student approaching these topics for the first time.

Another difficulty with the book is the slightly deceptive portrayal of Nietzsche's thought as more systematic than it really is. True, Haase briefly alludes both to the seeming presence of contradictions in Nietzsche's thought (129) and to the significance of contradiction to Nietzsche's thought (e.g. Haase's claim that wisdom is for Nietzsche the ability to entertain many contradictory modes of thought (66)), but as a whole it is depicted as a philosophy easily yielding to cohesive, coherent, systematization. This is confirmed by the publisher's information on the back of the book which claims that, "the book shows that, despite Nietzsche's notoriously anti-systematic approach, his philosophy in fact constitutes a coherent and unified body of thought." Were it obvious that Haase is offering a personal, particular reading of Nietzsche, his confident depiction of Nietzsche's thought as if it harboured no rampant ambiguity would be justified. However, being that *Starting with Nietzsche* is recommended for those without prior exposure to Nietzsche's writings, Haase's depiction of Nietzsche's thought as something easily summed up in a cohesive system is extremely misleading. Haase rarely mentions any

of the controversy surrounding interpretations of Nietzsche's thought. (To my recollection, he only refers explicitly to another commentator of Nietzsche once (on page 19)—Walter Kaufmann—only to dismiss him in a few sentences; he mentions "commentators" in general on page 129.) Ignoring the ambiguity in Nietzsche and almost all the contentions surrounding his philosophy both misleads uninitiated readers and misrepresents the material in a genuine way.

Related to these problems is Haase's sporadic use of quotations and citations. Nietzsche's writing—to a greater degree than that of most other philosophers—relies on the specific style of language in a crucial way (and this is indeed a point that Haase mentions). However, the beginning of the book exhibits a dearth of verbatim quotations—granted these do become much more frequent as the book progresses. Many of Nietzsche's thoughts are only summarized, seemingly with the aim of simplification (perhaps a forgivable shortcoming for a book intended as an introduction), but still with some loss of original content. Furthermore, even where quotations of Nietzsche's original works are used, Haase often cites only the volume and page number of the complete German edition, with no mention of the title of the work in question. This makes it difficult for the Anglophone student (and probably as well for the German-speaking student without the Montinari-Colli edition of the complete works of Nietzsche) to consult the original sources.

As a whole the book is well written and serves as a good summation—keeping in mind the great difficulty of this task—of the general significance of Nietzsche's thought to the history of philosophy. However this book is less than ideal as a first exposure to Nietzsche's thought.

Nicholas Davey, *Unquiet Understanding: Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2006; xi + 291 pages. ISBN: 978-0791468425.

Review by Santiago Zabala, ICREA/University of Barcelona.

There are two groups of hermeneutic philosophers in contemporary philosophy: those concerned with the legacy of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and the ones interested in the consequences of hermeneu-

tics. Both groups contain direct and indirect disciples of Gadamer, that is, some who studied in his seminars and some who never met the German master. Although Gadamer's preference for either group is irrelevant, it is certainly interesting to notice his admiration for those philosophers (Michael Theunissen, Richard Rorty, and Gianni Vattimo) who, at his one-hundredth birthday celebration on February 12, 2000, insisted on the consequences of hermeneutics rather than on his own indispensable contribution to the discipline. Although everyone in the hall captured his interest, his response to these philosophers' talks, as well as his own exchanges during the past fifty years with thinkers such as Jürgen Habermas, Ernst Tugendhat, and Jacques Derrida, indicate his curiosity toward hermeneutic encounters, debates, and dialogues with other philosophies. Despite endorsements from Richard Palmer and Jean Grondin (two fervent defenders of Gadamer), Nicholas Davey's book does not focus on Gadamer's legacy in order to recognize his contribution but rather brings to bear the conflictual and provocative stance that is inherent to hermeneutics. This must be why the author states in the first pages of the book that "this is not an essay on Gadamer per se. Though he may have coined the term *philosophical hermeneutics*, what is at play within the movement of thought it represents far exceeds his authorship." (xi)

Today, hermeneutic philosophy has moved not only beyond Gadamer's legacy but also against some of the cardinal elements that he defined and that until now were considered essential components of the discipline. Davey offers eleven theses that suggest how "philosophical hermeneutics has a provocative character more radical than is often supposed" (xiii), that is, where understanding instead of being a "quiet process" leads to an "unquiet event." These eleven theses assert that philosophical hermeneutics (1) requires difference, (2) promotes a philosophy of experience, (3) entails a commitment to hermeneutic realism, (4) seeks otherness within the historical, (5) reinterprets transcendence, (6) entails an ethical disposition, (7) redeems the negativity of its constituting differential, (8) affirms an ontology of the in-between, (9) is a philosophical practice rather than a philosophical method, (10) constitutes a negative hermeneutics, and (11) recognizes the *mysterium* of linguistic being. (xiii)

As we can grasp from theses 1, 8, and 11, the goal of Davey's book is to venture into "what the experience of understanding entails" (xiii), in other words, what happens to us when we understand some-

thing. If, as Gadamer taught us, we understand only when we understand differently, then there is a particular ontological dynamic within the process of understanding that also "deprive[s] hermeneutic consciousness of any certainty of interpretation." (xvi) However, such deprivation and the "weakness" of hermeneutics in the face of a final interpretation, explains Davey, are, in fact, "its strengths," (xv) given that these are what allow change into the world.

The more one reflects on this excellent book, the more it becomes evident that the intention behind Davey's project is to bring forward the subversive nature of hermeneutics by modifying Karl Marx's famous statement in his *Theses on Feuerbach*: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it." If Gadamer and his disciples have ignored this aspect of hermeneutics, it is because of not only the phenomenological roots of hermeneutics but also an exaggerated concern to present it as a philosophical "position." Although Marx is absent from Davey's text, such intention is also inherent to thesis 9 ("philosophical hermeneutics is a philosophical practice rather than a philosophical method"), where interpretation is considered a "philosophical dis-position" (xvi) instead of a "philosophical position." Davey insists that philosophical "hermeneutics is an antimetaphysical philosophy" where "Being only presents to us as *Ereignis* (event), as an appearing, relative to us, through time." (xiii) These problems are dealt with in chapter 2 ("Philosophical Hermeneutics and Bildung"), which strikes at the heart of one of Gadamer's cardinal concepts (*Bildung*), until now considered paradigmatic, in order to present hermeneutics as a conservative philosophical position.

As all readers of Gadamer know, the German master uses the *Bildung* argument primarily to demonstrate how, alongside the scientific body of knowledge (which still dominates our general metaphysical culture), there exists another knowledge that is not constituted by the "results" of scientific experiments, technological proofs, and objective truth, but rather by the "effect" of our traditions. *Bildung* implies the formation, cultivation, and education of the interpreter, that is, a process that allows "*Bildung haben*," that is, "becoming cultured." Nevertheless, unlike other hermeneutic philosophers, Davey does not analyze the *Bildung* in order to accuse or defend Gadamer once again for promoting bourgeois education or political conservatism through tradition, but rather to expose the ontology that shapes the possibility of understanding. Al-

though becoming cultured (*Bildung haben*) is always enabled by our rootedness in a given culture (*Bildung*), as Davey explains, there is "a complex ontological interdependence between *Bildung haben* and *Bildung*" (40), which are both also indispensable for our ability to understand scientific, technological, or objective results. However, what is this "ontological interdependence," hence, Being?

Bildung haben requires the prior existence of a specific *Bildung*. However, no *Bildung* or culture can sustain its being without being renewed by the various processes of *Bildung haben* which constitute it. *Bildung* is therefore also ontologically dependent on *Bildung haben*. The being that is *Bildung* is transformed by the understanding it facilitates. (40)

This significant passage of chapter 2 shows how hermeneutics is an "antimetaphysical philosophy" because it does "not posit an 'ideal' humanity that education should anticipate and be disciplined by," but rather implies "that humanity is a species whose very essence is always in question." (45) Such a species, instead of believing in a truth capable of withstanding all assaults, prefers to engage in dialogues, conversations, and fusions with different *Bildungen* in order to become transformed "by the understanding it facilitates." (40) This is why Davey admirably explains that what "is transmitted as tradition is not necessarily received as transmitted [because] reception is interpretative." (50) As we can see, the "ontological interdependence" I mention above is not what is transmitted or received (Being as presence), but rather the "transformative processes" (*Ereignis* of Being) that enable new understanding. However, this new understanding is not the outcome of a peaceful or quiet exchange between the Being of a hermeneutic subject and the being of a tradition's subject matter, but rather an engagement of "critical tensions" (53) that sustain it. This is why central to the "dialogical notion of tradition," explains Davey, "is the idea of a continuity of intellectual conflict." (xii) The inherent ontological conflict between the *Bildung* and *Bildung haben* that this book exposes indicates not only how understanding is constantly an "unquiet event" but also how it will always be a failure, that is, how it is hermeneutical. Knowledge (through Gadamer and other hermeneutical philosophers before and after him) has become the "dis-position" of thought, that is, the recognition that truth will always be an event of interpretations rather than the result of a process.

This brief review has not analyzed several other themes (e.g., ethics), concepts (e.g., transcendence), and authors (e.g., Wolfgang Iser)

that Davey confronts and that are essential to achieving a better understanding of his eleven theses. Nevertheless, considering the recent literature in continental philosophy, Davey's exposure of the subversive, provocative, and conflictive character of hermeneutics remains the most innovative aspect of his text.

Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Truth of Democracy*. Trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. New York: Fordham University Press, 2010; 55 pages. ISBN: 978-0823232451.

Review by Peter Gratton, University of San Diego.

Jean-Luc Nancy first came to prominence in the early 1980s through his depiction of the "inoperative community" (*la communauté désœuvrée*), which depicted a coming politics that addressed the loss of authority and classical political foundations in modernity. Nancy posited a thinking of politics that could, generally speaking, meet two demands: (1) turn from previous accounts of the political founded on some form of sameness (nationality, race, patriotic narratives), and (2) contest the banal forms of equivalence instituted through late capitalism. First published by Galilée in 2008, *The Truth of Democracy* is, like most of Nancy's works, deceptively short, under sixty pages in the English edition. Each chapter, some as short as two pages, offers a dense meditation on the meaning of democracy, and Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, the book's translators, have rendered quite a service with an elegant translation of his notoriously thorny prose.

Nancy begins by critiquing those who castigate "May 68"—readers on this side of the Atlantic recognise much of this rhetoric in conservative reactions to the "1960s" in general—as the origin of all that is wrong with contemporary society: a general irresponsibility, moral relativism, social cynicism, etc. These apologists for "managerial capitalism," he avers, are less interested in the truth of democracy than forestalling all popular threats to their view of politics "in the service of thrifty citizen-workers." (1) Meanwhile, there is no getting around two facts: that democracy is unrivalled as a name for political aspirations the world over, while it is also used as a cover for anti-democrats who don't speak their name: freedom, as the second President Bush argued, "is on

the march." In this way, "democracy" becomes a term for that which is not totalitarian, while "managerial democracy" produces a cynicism that any democracy worthy of the name is impossible.

For this reason, while many of those who remember May 68 fault its "surrealist" elements for its inefficacy ("Be realistic: Demand the Impossible!"), Nancy argues these elements instead represent a standing testament to the truth of democracy: this praxis was engaged not in bringing politics into a new model or "world picture," but instead left itself open to the come-what-may of democracy's open possibilities. (9) For Nancy, the truth of democracy means no longer "engendering [political] forms responsible for modeling some historical given that had itself been in some sense preformed…but the exposition of the objectives themselves" (man, community, etc.) "to a going beyond in principle: to that which no prediction or foresight [*prévision*] is able to exhaust insofar as it engages an infinity in actuality." (11) Thus, on the chaotic streets of Paris in May 1968 (and the texts of a generation of writers afterward), "presence was given to greeting the present of an irruption or disruption that introduced no new figure, agency, or authority." (13) This openness comes to name the unruly element of any community as it works to unwork the politics that grounds itself in hierarchical modes. For this reason, while politics offers both a risk for democracy, that is, for this "infinitely in actuality" as Nancy understands it, it is also the only chance for democracy, in a manner analogous to the relation between the conditioned and the unconditional in Derrida's works.

The truth of democracy, though, cannot be found in isolated, sovereign subjects, not simply because of Nancy's agreement with post-structuralist critiques of the masterful subject, but also because the subject as "self-producing, self-forming, autotelic being in itself" has "found itself to be already surpassed by events." (11) Part of what engendered the crisis of democracy, he argues, was that it remained attached to the "a subject that is master of its representations, volitions, and decisions." (11) Democratic openness, on the other hand, he argues, is an affirmation that wants to be freed of "every identification." (14) For this reason, Nancy argues that the "spirit of democracy" is to be found not only in Rousseau's thinking of an association or community, but first and foremost in Pascal's dictum that "man infinitely transcends man [*l'homme passe infiniment l'homme*]," which both historicises the human being and marks its infinite depths. Thus, "what we need" is "Pascal with Rous-

seau," which means thinking of a common Being-with that is "a share [*partage*] of the incalculable…resistant to appropriation by a culture of general calculation—the one named 'capital.'" (16) While Levinas before him considered "communism" to be but the most leveled-down apparatus for occluding the asymmetric relation to the Other, Nancy argues that the relation of each to the other is symmetric or horizontal, rather than vertical. For this reason, he argues, while also critiquing Badiou's *Communist Hypothesis*, that "communism" is not something that can only "be verified by a kind of political action," but instead is "our first given," since "before all else, we are in common." (54 n.6)

This brings Nancy to reformulating, in Chapter Seven, "The Sharing [Out] of the Incalculable," his ontology of "singular plural" existence. For Nancy, the truth of democracy is not something extrinsic to our being-in-the-world, but is "an unworking or an inoperativity"—note here the reference to his early work on community—that "is central to the work of existence." (17) This "sharing [out]," however, "exceeds politics," though he argues that politics "makes possible the existence of this share." (17) In this way, the democratic is not, in his use of the term, political through and through, even though this excess over the political cannot be given a chance without the right political conditions. Thus, Nancy avoids providing a political ontology in which "everything is political," which ultimately "leads to disappointment with democracy," since it is supposed that as a political regime it will provide for an "absolute sharing [out]" that would obviate what "goes by the names of art or love, friendship or thought, knowledge or emotion." (17)

What provides a way out of nihilism of the present is "the manifestation of all against a background where the 'nothing' signifies that all have value incommensurably, absolutely, and infinitely." (24) This, he argues, is a "reality principle," not an empty piety. It is at this point that, though he does not reference him, Nancy's thinking comes closest to Jacques Rancière's conception of the fact of equality: "strict equality," he argues, "is the regime where these incommensurables are shared (out)." (25) This means affirming both equality and nonequivalence, which itself is "not political," though politics "must prepare a space for it." (26)

For Nancy, political action is paralyzed today because "it can no longer be mobilized on the basis of some 'prime mover,'" and thus his democracy can appear definitely an-archic, that is, without a principle or

starting point (*archē*). As in Rancière, who argues that the democratic always works to disrupt any "police" or state order, Nancy argues that the *kratein* of demo-cracy is "first of all the power to foil the *archē* and then to take responsibility" for "the inevitable nullification of general equivalence." (31)

Nancy is right to argue that after the death of God and the loss of faith in various political theologies, a non-essentialist conception of the political is in order. But here, as elsewhere, he is keen to talk about a politics of sense that itself appears abstracted from the local and meaningful ways in which politics is enacted. It is revealing that he simply argues that capitalism arose from a "fundamental decision for equivalence," without discussing at all how such a "decision" was made, since this is Nancy's only stab at describing how an "infinity in actuality," that is, our ontological status as in-common, could fall into the indifferent world of the political he describes. (24) In this way, Nancy, like Giorgio Agamben and Heidegger before them both, accede to a view of history that mirrors the rise and fall of Western metaphysics: Heidegger's analysis of *das Man* is mistaken for a sociology, and the societal *ennui* of Western Europe, no doubt powerful, is said to be mirrored across the world.

Nancy will thus argue that Europe "might indeed be the place for putting to the test a truly new sense of 'democracy,'" the very locus of the end of Western thought. (41) But why must the trajectory of such an open concept have a *place*? And must this place find its centre in Europe? Nancy is often eloquent on the legacy of colonialism, but all the hesitations Derrida, for example, put around all his uses of "democracy" precisely because of its European legacy, are absent in Nancy. Finally, while Nancy is right to argue for a deconstruction of certain forms of identity, his affirmation of the "nothing" as the name for the excess of each singular being is removed from the fact that differences happen precisely as an affirmation of *something* or *some* sense: of history, of the local, of a tradition, etc. Whatever one thinks of such particulars, many do not want simply to "go beyond" them. Nancy chastises "multiculturalism" as well as a "cynicism" that would "use the idea of free expression to support 'superstitions.'" (12) Nancy's claim here is, of course, vague (he appears to be discussing the multicultural defense of the *hijab* in France), but one wonders what counts as "myth," a term of art for Nancy, as opposed to "superstition," except perhaps that the latter stands for

those not enlightened enough to understand the world as being without sense, as Nancy describes. It is puzzling that Nancy takes for granted that the impasses of democracy in Europe and the U.S. are a mark of the political the world over, which itself would be a direct result of impasses in Western metaphysics. But if the age of such world pictures is over, as Nancy himself argues here, what of this picture Nancy himself projects? The truth of democracy, if there is such a thing, should first take on this archaic European supposition, which is itself a haunting superstition, indeed a sovereign imposition, denegating the truth of democracy as such.

Thomas G. Guarino, *Vattimo and Theology*. New York: Continuum, 2009; 200 pages. ISBN: 978-0567032331.

Review by Robert W.M. Kennedy, University of Ottawa.

In what has become a prolific dialogue, continental philosophy continues to actively reinvestigate and appropriate the elements of the religious. This encounter attempts to reconcile philosophy's inheritance of Nietzschean perspectivism and Heideggerian temporality with biblical themes of prophetic justice and kenotic love. Thomas G. Guarino's book introduces several of the major themes and implications of this return to the religious in continental philosophy through a conscientious examination of the later philosophy of Gianni Vattimo. Vattimo is one of the primary voices of the return to a conversation with religion, and an examination of his thought inevitably leads to a discussion of the theoretical commitments of this return as a whole. Rev. Thomas G. Guarino, a Catholic theologian at Seton Hall University in New Jersey, describes his work as focusing on a commitment to the Catholic intellectual tradition while graciously engaging in ecumenical dialogue with philosophy and other religious groups. Guarino's book on Vattimo is in keeping with his larger theoretical objectives. Thus, the book serves as a theological recognition and reply to Vattimo's position, which Guarino diagnoses, in principle, as inevitably nihilistic.

Guarino's text is broken into five chapters: 1) An overture of Vattimo's thought, 2) Interpretation, Being and truth, 3) Can a Nietzschean speak of theology? Some historical considerations, 4) Theological dialogue with Vattimo (I): Postmodernity and theology, and 5)

Theological dialogue with Vattimo (II): Truth and interpretation. The book can be otherwise argumentatively divided into two major yet permeable sections, with a third intermediating and axial section. The first section, which encompasses the first two chapters respectively, is concerned primarily with outlining the philosophical parameters. Here, the major points of Vattimo's thought are explained, yet the groundwork is simultaneously developed for Guarino's later response. The second section is the theological response itself, which consists of the fourth and fifth chapters. The third chapter focuses on the underlying primacy of the apparent antagonism, Nietzsche's influence on Vattimo.

Guarino lucidly explains that Vattimo's central methodological approach, titled *pensiero debole* or "weak thought," operates by employing a characteristically postmodern hermeneutic apprehension of "strong" metaphysical structures. (8) Guarino speaks of "weak thought" as "an attempt to reconstruct rationality in a postmodern, postmetaphysical way." (9) Weak thought, in opposition to strong structures, like orthodox theology, is (un)grounded in a non-totalizing nomadic detachment, which implicitly is a-structural. This (un)grounding then is the inherently committed Nietzschean element of Vattimo's thought that Guarino finds so unfriendly to Christian Orthodoxy.

Vattimo's aberrant *Verwindung*, despite its development from Nietzschean principles, attempts to return Christianity to the "public square" by reestablishing the theoretical necessity of recognizing philosophy's own inborn immersion within the parameters of received tradition. (16) Guarino explains that Vattimo is here motivated by the recognition that the modern attempt to overcome the prevailing system by implementing an entirely new foundation is now recognized by the postmodern as theoretically impossible. (8) At the same time, like Thomas J.J. Altizer's Christian atheism, Vattimo promotes a rereading of the Christian calling, in a quasi-Hegelian teleological program of revising Joachim of Fiore's age of the Spirit. In this framework, the ultimate destiny of Christianity is reinterpreted as kenotic self-emptying, which is now expressed, however, in secular terms. In response, Guarino asks, "Isn't weak thought simply the 'privatization' and 'marginalization' of religion by another means, the French Revolution absent the guillotine?" (67)

Guarino specifically questions the disadvantages of Vattimo's seemingly translucent, yet nevertheless denied preference for relativism.

Especially concerning for Guarino is Vattimo's insufficient resolve when deciding upon the parameters of a constructive hermeneutic method. While Guarino acknowledges that Vattimo wants to avoid mere "aestheticism" and the irrational immobilization it brings to thought, he is still troubled by Vattimo's inability to offer a criterion to navigate the disorienting conflict of interpretations. (46) How is one to distinguish between the rational and the irrational, according to the deconstructive method ultimately advanced by Vattimo? Guarino is uncertain.

Guarino is therefore troubled by the project of combining Nietzschean elements with theology, since he fears that such an encounter fundamentally compromises theology. Using Luther, Aquinas, and Jean-Paul II as exemplars, Guarino warns about the danger of "subordinating the Gospel to temporary philosophical fashions." (58) The issue for Guarino, as presented here, ultimately comes down to a matter of competing narratives: "Either theology is the founding discipline or it is, as Heidegger insisted, simply ontic, regional science…leaving the truly primordial issues of Being and truth to philosophy". (59) Vattimo, he argues, has chosen the later.

Guarino makes it clear that the Catholic Church's official position is problematic for Vattimo, due fundamentally to the primacy of faith demanded by orthodoxy. In support of the Church's continued stance of championing metaphysics and its union with Greek inquiry, Guarino references Pope Benedict XVI, who said, approximately, "that the encounter between the biblical message and Greek thought was providential." (89) Furthermore, Guarino believes that Vattimo's originary misguidance shares in what he calls Heidegger's clever yet unwarranted misappropriation of Luther. (95) Luther's concern with Scholasticism, Guarino argues, was guarding against the dangers of an *unrestrained* "pure metaphysical speculation," not against metaphysics proper. (95)

In a gesture of reconciled difference, Guarino's conclusion calls attention to "the desire for God that animates Vattimo's recent writing," and speaks positively of Vattimo's concern for Christian charity and caritas. (142) However, Guarino finally judges that Vattimo's "religious idenitity…is entirely reconceived according to his own philosophical faith, a faith that cannot see the 'unconditioned' revealed in historical conditionality." (144) While Guarino admits that Vattimo wishes to return Christianity back to the public sphere, he also warns that it is at the cost

of a betrayal of "its fundamental instincts." (144) By accepting the Nietzschean-Heideggerian paradigm, Guarino warns that he suspects Vattimo is "drinking poison from a golden cup". (144)

Guarino's book does a good job of clearly encapsulating Vattimo's engagement with Christianity, and it provides a strong argument for theology proper to ultimately reject Vattimo's project. This reply would probably not surprise Vattimo. Nonetheless, the function of the book is to provide a theological response, which it accomplishes, but the larger stalemates of the continental philosophy versus theology discussion not only remain unanswered, but are not seriously engaged in their larger context. In all fairness to Guarino, this was beyond the intentions of the book. Nevertheless, Guarino astutely shows that the unbridgeable gap separating faith and reason, to which all these debates between philosophy and theology boil down, persists even in reason's now weakened postmodern form. (156) One could probably argue that Guarino's purpose stops with the recognition of an irreconcilable difference. The essential debate continues, however, to emerge in various encounters between theology and continental philosophy of religion, for example in the Derrida/Levinas, the Derrida/Marion, and more recently the Caputo/Radical Orthodoxy encounters.

Unquestionably, Guarino has successfully identified that to accept the hermeneutic framework is potentially to open the door to nihilism. Nevertheless, he fails to engage continental responses to such an accusation, which refute the link between such a framework and nihilism and also show that theology does not guard us from the monstrous any more assuredly than deconstruction. There is no doubt in Guarino's mind that a possible nihilism is always inevitably slouching towards a complete nihilism, but this does not directly acknowledge continental philosophy's continued denial of this inevitability.

Rudi Visker, *The Inhuman Condition: Looking for Difference After Levinas and Heidegger*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2008; 299 pages. ISBN: 978-0820704173.

Review by Daniel Skibra, European Graduate School.

Rudi Visker's *The Inhuman Condition* is a collection of nine chapters flanked by introductory and concluding essays, arranged thematically in three sections. Their purported motivation is the current preoccupation with difference in European philosophy and social thought. While most appeared previously as stand-alone essays, they share certain tropes—most prominently the relation of facticity and difference to subjectivity, and the notions of responsibility, anxiety, and flight. Unfortunately, a number of the essays retread similar ground and succumb to excessive signposting and uneven tone, which suggests a lack of editorial vision. I am inclined to think that the book would have been stronger had the essays been comprehensively reworked into a monograph. This criticism aside, Visker nonetheless proves himself a noteworthy critic of Heidegger and Levinas through the provocative interpretations contained in the essays.

The book's first part sets the stage for Visker's interrogation of the metaphysical underpinnings of the present fascination with multiculturalism. Portraying a liberal conception of cosmopolitan society, he notes the significance of social institutions in maintaining individuals' autonomy. The expectation that arises from this conception, and which Visker criticises, is that anxieties about cultural differences can be dispensed with once the majority recognise their own reliance on cultural institutions themselves. Given this picture, the common move of enlisting the help of Levinas in admonishing cultural chauvinism may seem reasonable. However, Visker finds it over-optimistic to suppose that one's attachments (*qua* attachments) can co-exist with others' in this way. After all, for Levinas, one's *sole* attachment is to the Other. Visker sees a respite from this potential deadlock in Levinas' discussion of the way responsibility is mitigated by *other* Others. While this dynamic may make concern for the Other pragmatically possible, it also engenders the need to interrogate our own cultural attachments. Moreover, Visker warns of the tendency to obscure this need through the denial of the very notion of such attachments.

Next, by construing attachments as deeply held values, Visker hazards an analysis of disputes that seem to run so deep as to admit no possibility of resolution. He suggests that Dasein's tendency towards flight in the face of thrownness accounts for the *Stimmung* that accompanies such disputes. He notes the considerable ambivalence in the role of Dasein's facticity. On the one hand, Dasein will always misguidedly look to its concrete mode of being for guidance in that responsibility to be its being. But this "flight" will also never be more than the confirmation of this selfsame responsibility. Visker's contribution here is the suggestion that this ambivalence is a cause of the anxiety vis-à-vis the Other. It is not simply that Dasein covers its having-to-be, but it encounters a *trace* of this fact in the encounter with the Other, particularly when the Other is a fellow disputant.

Pursuing the theme further, Visker questions the sociological claim that today's society exhibits an upsurge in anxiety. Reformulating Heidegger's lightning rod pronouncement, he describes the mechanism of anxiety as "the nothing no longer nothings." (69) Since the nothing, so described, is not mere absence, but the background against which objects come into relief, this recapitulates Heidegger's claim that in anxiety the world of significance falls into indifference. It allows Visker to suggest that anxiety is perpetually lurking below quotidian life, because that which triggers it is the mechanism at work in allowing quotidian life to show itself as such. The "frantic behavior" often cited as the cause of widespread modern anxiety is then more accurately understood as the idle attempt to fill the world with activity to flee an ever-possible anxiety. Unfortunately, Visker's explanation for the origin of this anxiety is less compelling than his analysis of the sociological claim; anxiety, according to Visker, is triggered by the confrontation with the fact that there are values other than our own, and "because of this, our relation with our values has something arbitrary about it." (74) He advises against vainly attempting to banish anxiety outright, suggesting that we should instead adopt cultural forms that would structure it and "bring it into culture by imposing on it a rhythm…" (75)

In section two, Visker turns his attention towards similar themes in Levinas. First, he explains a duplicity in Levinas' later thought: the Other *injures* or unsettles me, yet in so doing, intrigues and commands me. To explain how the Other is able to open up responsibility despite the trauma of the encounter, Visker compares this injury to the trauma-

structure elicited by Lyotard in his analysis of a *shock without affect*. First, some event occurs which leaves no psychic mark (the shock without affect); it then only becomes legible as traumatic later on by virtue of a second, neutral event which gives impetus to the trauma (affect without shock). For Visker, the first scene corresponds to the initial "shock" of creation, which cannot affect us. The encounter with the Other is the second event and evinces the trace of the first scene. Rather than the paralytic effect this has in neurosis, the trauma of the Other has a positive role such that it singularises us in responsibility.

Next, Visker argues that Levinas cannot escape a privative conception of evil since he cannot conceptualise *ir*responsibility other than as ignoring the command of the Other, as "the refusal to accept a responsibility that *one nevertheless has*." (124, emphasis added) Attempts to define evil otherwise overlook that any such indifference is subsequent to the responsibility that has been established through the encounter. The command of the Other is like an invitation: one can ignore it, but doing so cannot erase it. Having received the command is to have such a responsibility, and any indifference becomes *non*-non-indifference because it is coloured by the encounter.

Visker's disputing of Levinas' privative conception of evil wherein every indifference is lacking in "non-indifference" makes for one of the most compelling sections of the book. Reintroducing facticity into the discussion, he questions the extent to which (*pace* Levinas) the Other *must* precede her form. Cautioning that it is not accurate to indicate that the other is a "fellow human" as some prominent Levinasians have done, he nevertheless suggests that facticity (referring to it here as a person's context) may play a role in motivating one's non-indifference towards the Other. If this is the case, there would be a kind of indifference that would precede my responsibility to the Other without being evil, since it would provide the occasion for this responsibility.

Visker follows this thread further, construing irresponsibility as the inability to be rid of our factical attachments. He emphasises that it is not appropriate to expect the Other to have to do this either, intimating that to deny one's attachments wholesale is to deny the Other her very facticity. On the one hand, my own attachments may motivate the manner in which the other can become Other, and on the other hand, the Other may refuse to give up her cultural attachments. There is considerable difficulty in elaborating these attachments and Visker

diagnoses the current vogue of deference to the Other as one particular response to the inability to elaborate them.

In the final section, Visker begins by arguing that Levinas and Heidegger are closer than they have been made to seem. For Heidegger, Dasein unsuccessfully flees from the fact that it has to be its being. Such flights are inauthentic because they allow Dasein to avoid facing up to itself. In *Existence and Existents*, Levinas describes the movement whereby a being comes into being out of anonymous, indistinct Being (the *il y a*), but the price to be paid for this is an inability to be rid of oneself. There is hardly anything cowardly about such flights for Levinas, who sees in the tendency to escape the *il y a* a liberation. Visker suggests that the emphasis on flight as a revealing structure in both is "formally analogous," but adds that Heidegger's insistence in seeing flight as a failure is uncharacteristically privative.

Chapter 8 reassesses anxiety in light of Visker's previous discussions of facticity and attachments. While Dasein always gets its answers to its demand to be its own being from its facticity, this facticity cannot determinately "root" its being and is itself a way of fleeing from the demand. Yet, even the flight from anxiety purportedly leaves a trace of Dasein's fundamental uprootedness. Visker wants us to see facticity as an *indeterminate* rootedness and suggests that this "non-ontological difference" has pushed itself to the fore as something we have to deal with. The final chapter engages Lyotard's notion of the *differend* to discuss the relation of politics to ethics.

At its best, *The Inhuman Condition* convincingly discusses some provocative issues in Heidegger and Levinas and challenges some orthodox positions reached in the scholarship of these philosophers. However, having been sufficiently convinced by Visker of the importance of facticity and difference to subjectivity and of their obstinacy in the face of rational explanation, I find the positive suggestions he makes, such as adopting cultural forms to impose a rhythm on anxiety, or interrogating one's attachments, disappointingly tentative and vague. The ably synoptic conclusion leaves no doubt that Visker is capable of a more focused treatment and provides evidence for my claim that a monograph addressing these issues would have been more satisfying.