DONATION ET CONSENTEMENT: UNE INTRODUCTION MÉTHODOLOGIQUE À LA MÉTAPHYSIQUE. By Emmanuel Tourpe. Brussels: Lessius, 2000. Pp. 182. Paper €18.15, ISBN: 287299100X.

Metaphysics is alive and well in this dense little book that appears in a collection appropriately named for it, *Donner raison*, or letting reason have its say. This is not Pure Reason reaching for some supposedly noumenal object hidden behind phenomenal objects, but reason inquiring into being as given concretely in experience. The book appears as a first installment in what promises to be a three-part offering, one part that will advance more deeply into the specific content of metaphysical discourse and invite the reader to enter more systematically into the rhythms of first philosophy and then another part that will examine more critically three metaphysical views that hover in the background of any attempt to pursue a first philosophy of the kind ancients had in mind: Kantian criticism, Hegelian logic, and Heideggerian poematics. What is before us here is the methodological introduction to this systematic enterprise, as its subtitle suggests.

But it is perhaps the most important part of this work in metaphysics, at least for beginners, inasmuch as metaphysics cannot get started as a form of rational inquiry except through a proper vindication of a method of its own that distinguishes it from any other kind of rational inquiry. Aristotle was well aware of this as he approached the science that remained to be considered "after the physics," devoting all of six books out of fourteen to the question of method, as is this author in calling special attention to the necessity of raising metaphysical questions and pursuing them systematically as well as critically. Metaphysics is the only science that has to demonstrate the necessity of its own beginning.

It does this, however, not by separating itself from the other sciences, as if it were dealing with another kind of object than they deal with, as it has come to be thought in modern ontology, but by showing that there remain questions to be asked about being as given in experience that cannot be asked, let alone answered, in the other sciences. Tourpe debunks the modern legend about the origin of the word "metaphysics" to the effect that it was invented by Andronicus of Rhodes supposedly to label a set of books that did not fit into framework of "the physical works," a legend that dates from the time of Wolff, when modern dogmatic ontology was at its height and had no way of relating its putative object to anything in experience, as Kant was soon to point out. Along with many others, Tourpe recognizes that the term dates back to the very first generation of the Peripatetic School, if not to Aristotle himself, even though it is not used in the texts attributed to him. More importantly, it had a more intelligible meaning, not only in that metaphysics was supposed to come only after the other sciences, rather than before—as modern ontology had come to think beginning with Descartes and his methodical doubt—but also in that it had an intelligible link to those sciences. In other words, in accordance with the more ancient tradition metaphysical questions come into view only after some progress has been achieved in the

other sciences, and the meaning of these questions cannot be determined independently of how the other sciences have already accounted for being as given in experience.

In a chapter that shows a certain linguistic prowess in spelling out different ways of conceiving this intelligible link, some as hyper-physical, others as hypo-physical, Tourpe comes down on the side of Aristotle as interpreted by his first commentators and later writers such as Avicenna, Albert the Great, and Aquinas, with an idea of metaphysics as epi-physical or transphysical, as a going beyond that remains in a similar line of reasoning or inquiry starting from the same given in experience. Then he goes into the more difficult task of defining how the transition must take place from the first kind of sciences, based more directly on observation, into the more critical science of establishing a first philosophy.

In trying to effect the transition from what we can call physics in a very broad sense that would include phenomenology as well as the empirical sciences to metaphysics, Tourpe reaches all the way back to Aristotle and the way he comes to define metaphysics as the science of being *as* being, with the radical reversal of perspective that this formulation implies. Tourpe alludes to different ways this has already been shown in modern times as well as in ancient and argues for the different kind of method that this implies for the new science in question. Part of his argument includes an attempt to state the difference in terms of objects each science is thought to be aiming at, but this turns out to be more confusing than illuminating with regard to the transition in question, much as the Suarezian redefinition of metaphysics does in turning the subject of consideration in metaphysics into an object. The argument is more successful when it sticks closer to the kind of reflective mode required for understanding the idea of being simply *as* being as the ultimate subject of investigation or, to put in more complete terms, being *as* being in its universal concretion, *l'universel-concret*.

Besides reaching back into the metaphysical tradition, which focuses more on the aspect of being and all its different degrees in the universal order, Tourpe also reaches forward in his attempt to effect the transition into metaphysics; namely, to the kind of insistence one finds in post-modern philosophers like Blondel who want to study human subjectivity as well as being in its integrity and who see metaphysics as the integral science of a being still in the making. This brings in metaphysics not only as a recognition of all that is given in being, *donation*, but also as an active response to what is given, *consentement*. The idea of consent has a peculiarly post-modern ring to it here, but it picks up from a very ancient view of metaphysics as a properly human activity in response to the call of being as good. Later on in the book Tourpe speaks of the question about being and the response of spirit. In the final chapter he tries to pull the two perspectives together in terms of judgment and love as a single spiritual activity in the context of ethical historical commitments. It takes a spiritually active being to respond to the question or the call of being.

Before coming to all that, however, Tourpe tries to determine more precisely what is the *ens commune*, the being in its commonality, aimed at in metaphysics.

Here he reverts back to thinking about being as an object and proceeds all too quickly to combine metaphysics with theology as having to do with the same object. The precedent for this goes all the way back to the sixth book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, where we find the aporia of naming metaphysics theology, but Tourpe rushes too quickly to resolve the aporia in favor of a unification that is far from being established at the beginning of any metaphysics, whether of being or of spirit. The position that he takes with regard to this unification might be defensible metaphysically, but not without a long effort to prove the existence of God starting from being as given in its concrete universality and to prove the total otherness of God so that He can never be captured as just another subject, much less as an object in our initial understanding of being even as being. Now it may be that in his more systematic exposition of metaphysics he will be more careful to elaborate such proofs, but the summary indications that he gives here lend themselves too much to the misconceptions one finds in modern ontotheology that have been denounced even by those who harbor them, whether as atheists or theo-ontologists. Aquinas was not so hasty in announcing metaphysics as a theology, even when he was arguing for the necessity of a theology based on revelation. In fact his argument for the necessity of another teaching from God was based on the immense difficulty of coming to any sort of theology from what starts off as a metaphysics of being as being.

There is, however, something very positive for metaphysics that comes out of these discussions, that is, a very keen sense of the *analogy* of being. Without this sense of the analogy of being, there is no way of pursuing metaphysics as a unified science, but one does not have to go directly to God to establish it metaphysically. One has to establish the sense of analogy from the very differences that one experiences in the order of being, and from that sense of the different degrees of being or goodness or dignity one can then proceed to a highest degree of being beyond all degrees, as Aquinas suggests in his Fourth Way of opening up metaphysics to theology. What Tourpe has to say about the analogy of the subject of metaphysics is a key to understanding its progressive meaning or, as Tourpe likes to say, to the way it exceeds all the other sciences.

But Tourpe is not satisfied with just a metaphysics of being. As we have already suggested, he wants a metaphysics of spirit as well, a method of implication as understood by Blondel as well as a method of analogical determinations. Metaphysics within the horizon of *ens commune* has the hidden supposition that metaphysics is "a secretly spiritual science that surpasses its ontological concepts in the analogy of being; the latter, launched by Blondel, is an expressly spiritual 'nescience' that marks the insufficiency of all our ontological concepts" (103). Each one of these methods expresses the analogy of being, but in reverse directions, one as exceeding our concepts, the other as marking their insufficiency. They reinforce one another, without however starting from the absolute. Tourpe then suggests a third method to complement these first two, one that would start from the absolute in a line coming down from Plotinus, Boehme and Baader, reader of Boehme and Catholic interlocutor with Schelling. He does

not say much about this third method or this third side of his method here, but he sees it as directly opposed to the Hegelian method always looming in the shadows of this systematic enterprise.

In the second part of the book the author faces up to the standing objection to metaphysics that comes from what he calls phenomenism, or what we would call the collapse of modern ontology after Kant. Tourpe characterizes phenomenism in two ways: as a knowing that ends with a determination of abstract principles and causes, and as a refusal of the Other whereby being is reduced to the knowledge a subject has of it. It is interesting to see whom he includes under this characterization from his metaphysical standpoint: on one side, the different kinds of classical positivism from Comte, to empirical positivism à la Hume, rational positivism à la Voltaire, and finally logical positivism à la Vienna Circle, which has marked Anglo-Saxon philosophy so heavily; and on the other side, most of modern phenomenology, starting with the critique of Kant and going on to the practical phenomenism of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, American pragmatism and critical theory of the Frankfurt School and, last but not least, contemporary phenomenology, including Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger and Heideggerians of both "right" (like Siewerth, Metz, and Marion) and "left" (like Vattimo and Derrida).

The list is impressive, especially for a treatment that barely exceeds thirty pages, and Tourpe is more than willing to admit that, in treating these philosophies as anti-metaphysical, he is not giving them all their due. Nevertheless what he does with each one of them is insightful and incisive. It shows familiarity with a broad range of issues in philosophy and how they relate to metaphysics or, more exactly, how metaphysics relates to them. The remarks on the different positions are quite pointed and usually quite to the point. They deserve to be read not only by metaphysicians concerned with phenomenism or immanentism but also by "phenomenists" who might be led into better insights into their own positions. They would be especially instructive to beginners in metaphysics who have to face up to, or face down, the anti-metaphysical nay-sayers. But they need not detain us here. The most interesting part of the book is the positive construction of metaphysics as a science of being in its analogy from which this critique of the critique is launched.

Tourpe ends his book with a softening of his critique of phenomenism, which remains for him a rich and necessary way of philosophizing, and with intimations of how this spiritual inquiry into the total analogy of being is to be prolonged in what is to come as the second and more substantive volume of this inquiry. For his more nuanced view of the Kantian critique, the Hegelian logic or the Heideggerian poematics, we shall have to wait for the third volume. In the meantime, this first volume is well worth reading for what it says it is: a methodological introduction to metaphysics. There are not many of those around that are as good. It augurs well for what is to follow in the line of metaphysical inquiry it announces.

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