METAPH. 9

C. WITT: *Ways of Being. Potentiality and Actuality in Aristotle's* Metaphysics. Pp. xii + 161. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003. Cased, US$35, £21.95. ISBN: 0-8014-4032-7.

Ways of Being deals with Book 9 of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, a book that has received relatively little scholarly attention compared with *Metaph.* 7 and 8. W. seeks to show that *Metaph.* 9 contains an extended line of argument and that *Metaph.* 9 is about ways of being rather than kinds of being.

The two main theses of the book unfold in Chapters 2 and 4. In Chapter 2, W. argues that the new sense of *dunamis*, promised in 9.1, is a way of being. She claims that there are two ways of being X: potentially (an incomplete, less than fully manifest X) and actually (a complete, fully manifest X). Chapter 1, which deals with Aristotle's rejection of Megarian actualism, lays the groundwork for her first major thesis. Aristotle's defense of inactive powers, according to W., introduces the notion that X can exist in two ways: potentially (inactive powers) and actually (active powers). The existence of inactive powers is important, according to W., for two reasons. First, inactive powers provide a clear example of the new sense of *dunamis* as a way of being. Secondly, since causal powers exist potentially, Aristotle's discussion of causal powers in *Metaph.* 9 is not a digression from the main argument of the book. In Chapter 4, W. argues that Aristotle's conception of being is thoroughly hierarchical and normative. This normative hierarchy is based on the priority of being X actually over being X potentially and applies to active and inactive powers, complete and incomplete substances, form and matter, and eternal and perishable beings. The discussion of the different sorts of powers in chapter three contributes to the second main thesis by introducing different ways an actuality can be prior to a potentiality. In Chapter 5, W. considers and rejects the claim that Aristotle's hierarchical and normative conception of being is intrinsically gendered. Three of the five chapters, Chapters 1, 4 and 5, are versions of previously published articles.

W.'s treatment of *Metaph.* 9 takes seriously Aristotle's claims about the internal coherence of the book and engages with Aristotle's somewhat puzzling examples in interesting ways. Some aspects of her account, however, are less compelling than others. Two issues are particularly troubling.

first, in order to anchor her account of the new sense of *dunamis* as a way of being and in order to establish the unity of *Metaph.* 9, W. relies on the claim that the same power exists in two ways: potentially when inactive and actually when active. While Aristotle is committed to the existence of inactive and active powers (9.3), W. does not adequately support the further claim that active powers exist actually and inactive powers exist potentially. W.'s case depends on *Metaph.* 5.7 and on *Metaph.* 9.6. In *Metaph.* 5.7, Aristotle distinguishes divisions of being, one of which is being potentially and actually. W. takes this division of being to express a concern about different ways of being and she anchors her interpretation in the claim that powers exemplify this distinction. For instance, in *Metaph.* 5.7, Aristotle contrasts that which can use knowledge and that which is using knowledge (1017b3–4), and in *Metaph.* 9.6, Aristotle contrasts that which can build and that which is building (1048b1). While the exact contrast in 9.6 is obscure, the *Metaph.* 5.7 example clearly contrasts senses of being a knower. W. takes senses of being a knower as equivalent to ways of being a power (p. 44), but this is problematic. W. needs us to agree that in these examples the X that is now potentially and now actually is the power, but she does not

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compel our agreement. The text seems more clearly to support the claim that powers provide the metaphysical basis for the distinction, not that they exemplify the distinction.

Secondly, there are some troubling issues about the consistency of what being potentially and being actually mean. In her discussion of ways of being powers (inactive or active) and ways of being substances (incomplete or complete), the distinction between being X potentially and being X actually implies that a single X is now potentially X and may, at another time, be actually X, and that what is X potentially is for the sake of being X actually. In *Metaph*. 9.8, however, Aristotle claims that perishable things are potentially and eternal things are actually and, according to W., this is another instance of the relationship between being X potentially and being X actually (p. 92). Again, in the discussion of gender in Chapter 5, W. takes the different values associated with men and with women to be best understood in terms of the potentially/actually distinction. In these two instances, unlike in the case of powers and substances, there is no one X that is now potentially but may be actually, and W. downplays the teleological relationship between perishable and eternal things. What it means to be potentially and actually differs depending on the objects under consideration. W. needs to convince us that this difference does not compromise the coherence of her interpretation or the coherence of *Metaph.* 9.

University of Toronto REBEKAH JOHNSTON
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DE PARTIBUS ANIMALIUM

J. G. LENNOX: *Aristotle:* On the Parts of Animals *I –IV.* Translated with an Introduction and Commentary. (Clarendon Aristotle Series.) Pp. xv + 404. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001. Cased, £52.50 (Paper, £25). ISBN: 0-19-875109-5 (0-19-875110-9 pbk).

Lennox's 'On the Parts of Animals' (*Part. An.*) represents the culmination of more than a quarter-century's work on Aristotle's 'biology', as well as being the longest Aristotelian text translated and commented on in the Clarendon Series. He presents a readable translation of Bekker's text, with neither the barbarity of the word-for-word fanatics nor the vague prolixity of the older translations. Here he follows Balme's aim (in the volume which is to some extent replaced by this one) to be 'semantically faithful' to Aristotle. Thus he avoids Latinate terms ('oviparous') for the extensive groups, and hence the impression that Aristotle had a fixed taxonomic vocabulary.

The generous commentary is largely taken up with four areas, concentrated on by recent research: (i) the relation between Book 1 and the rest. Here L.'s 'default hypothesis' is that the norms of Book 1 are reflected in the rest, while admitting that he does not know how they came to be joined together. (ii) The relation between the *Posterior Analytics* (*An. Post.*) and *Part. An.* Here scholars will be familiar with the line presented, namely that *Part. An.* 1 has the function of 'enriching and supplementing' *An. Post.*, especially with the conception of conditional necessity. (iii) The account of uniform bodies from *Meteorologica* 4 is shown to mesh closely with that in *Part. An.* (iv) The 'Balme hypothesis', namely that *Historia animalium* (*Hist. An.*) 'knows more than' *Part. An.*, but that, conversely, much in *Hist. An.* 1–4 is borrowed from *Part. An.*

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