assumptions of modern liberal societies, but one that S. brings to life as a vital and attractive alternative, at least on an individual level. One might, however, question whether he does full justice to the most radical demands of the philosophic life. S. ends his book by invoking a *zetetic* Aristotle—a 'true skeptic' who understands the 'socially dangerous' character of an activity that reveals the human situation with 'terrifying clarity', while at the same time resolutely resisting the temptation to ease the anxiety it provokes (pp. 282–3). But this final note seems oddly discordant with a more pervasive assurance about the ultimate harmony of the good, the true, and the beautiful (esp. p. 229) that permeates the book as a whole, an assurance that issues in characteristic counsels to 'wonder and thanksgiving'. S.'s Aristotle exudes at times an almost religious serenity, something that contributes to S.'s willingness to collapse the distinction between theoretical and practical virtue and renders him virtually tone deaf to the tension between them. Notwithstanding this serious limitation, S.'s attentiveness to the pedagogical architecture of the *NE*, careful analyses, and consistently thoughtful reflections make dialectical engagement with this book a fruitful and philosophically provocative experience.

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ARISTOTLE ON THE LIFE CYCLE

R. A. H. KING: *Aristotle on Life and Death*. Pp. ix + 214. London: Duckworth, 2001. Paper, £14.99. ISBN: 0-7156-2982-4.

The book, the revised version of a Cambridge doctoral thesis, presents itself as a study of Aristotle's concept of nutrition and life-cycle. Yet the author's actual, and quite laudable, task is to make more intelligible Aristotle's view of the soul and living body, according to which soul is the form and living body is the matter (*De anima* 412a20–1) and that the soul is the actuality of the natural body (ibid. 412a28–9). K. is right to believe that Aristotle's view can be elucidated through the study of his physiological writings, that is, the so-called *Parva naturalia*, especially the treatises *On the Length and Shortness of Life* and *On Young and Old Age, Life and Death*. The author tries to show how the theoretical investigation in the *De anima* is continued in the *Parva naturalia* from a physiological or biological point of view. These writings are rich in material concerning questions such as what a living body is according to Aristotle, how a body operates as a living body (e.g. how it grows and maintains itself), and what happens when it dies. It is these questions that the book addresses.

The book is divided into five chapters. The first and final chapter examine Aristotle's conception of life-cycle, while the three central ones discuss nature (Chapter 2), the soul (Chapter 3), and the body (Chapter 4). In the first chapter, K. argues that his approach is innovative in that it examines Aristotle's view of life not in terms of substance, matter, and form, but in terms of life-processes, among which nutrition is fundamental. This approach would be welcome, but despite the assumed continuity between Aristotle's philosophical and biological works, K. makes little effort to relate the physiological processes with Aristotle's philosophical theory, and often makes statements that inspire little confidence. He says, for instance, that the soul as actuality

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amounts to nutrition (p. 8), a claim he repeats in Chapter 3 (p. 48). Yet, according to Aristotle, nutrition is one of the activities that the soul enables, but the soul, as the *logos* of the living body (*De anima* 412b10–13), consists in a cluster of activities. However fundamental nutrition is, it is so only within the structure of a living organism. As K. himself admits later on (p. 16), it is the structure of a living thing that determines the way it is, operates, and decays, and this structure is due to the presence of the soul, which cannot be identified with any of its activities, however fundamental they may be for maintaining a living thing. K. relies much on *De anima* 413a28–31, where Aristotle, according to K., claims that nutrition is 'constantly actual'. Yet the sense of 'actual' needs to be specified here, given that the terms 'actual', 'actuality' are used to translate both Aristotle's *entelecheia* and *energeia* and given the various senses of actuality (i.e. *entelecheia*; *De anima* 2.5). To say the least, Aristotle does not speak of nutrition as actuality in the sense he employs when describing the soul as *entelecheia*.

In the second chapter, K. discusses Aristotle's conception of nature given in the *De anima* and in *Metaphysics* 4. K. focuses on the rôle of the form and, following Aristotle, asserts that the form is the *ousia* in living things. Yet one has difficulties understanding in what sense nature, as the form, can be *in* the thing, as K. claims (p. 28). Given that the form is *ousia*, it is *the* thing rather than *in* the thing. If this is so, there is a difficulty as regards the process of decay. K. does examine in Chapter 3 the question of what happens when someone dies, and concludes that it is the body that decays, not the soul (p. 64). Yet we still wonder what happens to the body, such that it loses its structure that makes it living, especially since different animals appear to decay in different ways. And while K. does affirm correctly that Aristotle fails to offer a systematic account here, his treatment of *On Youth* 5 could benefit from a more searching analysis. For example, how should we understand Aristotle's claim that natural decay, monitored by the soul, has the same cause as unnatural decay such as a fatal accident (*On Youth* 469b21–4; cf. pp. 132–3)? The chapter concludes by stating that the nutritive soul presents a functional model of teleology for Aristotle, and that the end of the model is the form (p. 33). This is an obscure conclusion, especially considering that precious little argument has prepared us for it. What is argued regarding teleology does not stand up to scrutiny; we read that Aristotle's teleology is located on a reflective level, removed from reality (p. 31). In what sense can this be so, however, when nature appears to strive towards a certain form—the human one, for instance?

K.'s chapters on the soul and the body constitute the main part of the book, in which he carries out his project of illustrating Aristotle's view on soul and living body in biological terms. K. focuses justifiably on the rôle of organs, but subordinates this discussion to the question of the possible seat of the soul, an issue which he pursues systematically on the basis of Aristotle's argument in *On Youth and Old Age* (pp. 64–73). K. does not examine how this view is squared with the definition of the soul in the *De anima*, and speaks as if the soul can exist separately from the body (p. 40). K. sets out to specify a certain central organ, which in animals at least is the seat of the soul, and discusses in detail the heart's rôle as central organ of sanguineous animals in regard to nutrition and sensation (pp. 69–73). K. is right to ask how the heart relates to the soul as actuality, given Aristotle's claim that the heart is the principle (*arche*) in sanguineous animals (*On Youth* 469b6–7, 11–12). Yet he fails to pursue this question, although some light on the heart's rôle is shed in Chapter 4. Also, his attempts to illustrate Aristotle's concept of the soul as actuality end up in circular

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definitions or truisms, such as the claim that 'the first actuality is that which marks the first emergence of an independent actuality in the generation of a living thing' (p. 42).

K.'s chapter on the body is the most detailed and the main merit of the book. In this, K. examines Aristotle's view of the composition of living things as balanced mixture of elements, the relation of living things to their surroundings, the rôle of the hot and the wet in lifespan, and the organs involved in preserving these qualities, how heat is balanced in the body, the rôle of breathing, and finally that of the heart in general and in absorbing food most especially. K. manages to make quite some sense of how, according to Aristotle, the functions of various organs support the nutritive process. K. concludes the book by underlying the rôle of heat and nutrition as fundamental for the maintenance of life. Still, this does not completely explain how the soul is to be understood as the form of the living body, because the question remains as to how life occurs in the first place. However, criticisms aside, K.'s study does much to illustrate Aristotle's conception of life, soul, and body in the *De anima*, and reaffirms the continuity between Aristotle's philosophical and biological works. The translations of some terms are questionable (e.g. the affections [*pathe*] being '*enuloi logoi*', *De anima* 403a25 as 'enmattered definitions'; p. 34, '*endeleche*' coming to be as 'uninterrupted'; *De generatione* 336b28–30; p. 84). The book is well indexed and proofread.

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ALCIDAMAS ON THE SOPHISTS

R. MARISS: *Alkidamas:* Über diejenigen, die schriftliche Reden schreiben*, oder* Über die Sophisten. *Eine Sophistenrede aus dem 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr. eingeleitet und kommentiert*. (Orbis antiquus 36.) Pp. viii + 356. Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2002. Paper, €47. ISBN: 3-402-05415-9.

For Anglo-American students of Alcidamas, the first question to arise regarding this book is whether it is worthwhile to consult such a compendious, German text inasmuch as J. V. Muir has so recently produced such a successful short edition, with English translation, that includes not only *On Those who Write Written Speeches* (henceforth *OWS*), but also *Odysseus on the Treachery of Palamedes* and fragments (see *Alcidamas: The Works and Fragments* [Bristol, 2001]; Mariss also offers discussions of the *Odysseus* and fragments, pp. 18–26). In fact, the two editions complement each other nicely, Muir's allowing easy accessibility and M.'s a more than comprehensive treatment. Not all will want to read every page of this, only slightly revised, 1998 Münster dissertation, but M. offers thorough, sensible discussions, and literature, on almost every conceivable question deriving from this work. She locates the work and scholarship about it in the context of the Greek transition from orality to literacy. Although *OWS* was largely ignored in the twentieth century, perhaps on the ground of its apparently superficial argumentation, the goal of M.'s commentary is to show that the text ought to be read in its own right, and not just as a source for typically polemical positions regarding writing (p. 9). In this, and much else, she is very successful.

Much of M.'s sixty-eight page introductory essay is devoted to a lengthy discussion

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