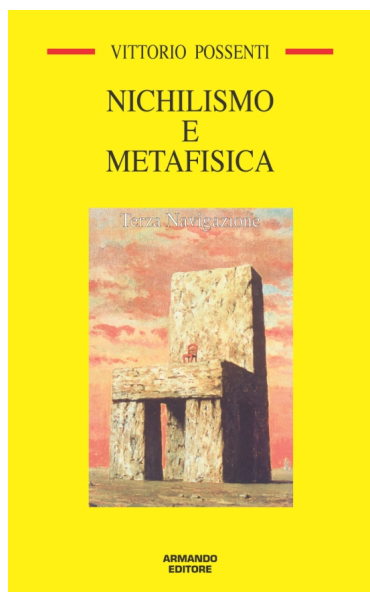


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Ripresa postmoderna della filosofia dell'essere versus nichilismo: è questo il filo conduttore del volume, secondo cui nella vicenda del pensiero occidentale si è verificata un'ulteriore navigazione - la terza - dopo la seconda della grecità (cfr. Platone e il Fedone). Essa, stabilendo un progresso di prim'ordine in filosofia, rende possibile rispondere adeguatamente alla questione: che cos'è il nichilismo? Fin cui la filosofia mondiale non sembra ancora riuscire ad assegnare esito persuasivo. Il testo offre un'appassionante indagine critica attraverso il pensiero degli ultimi 150 anni (Nietzsche, Gentile, Heidegger, Habermas, Husserl, Gadamer, Ricoeur, Vattimo, empirismo logico, filosofia analitica ecc.)



Nihilism and Metaphysics

THE THIRD VOYAGE

VITTORIO POSSENTI

Translated by
DANIEL B. GALLAGHER

Foreword by
BRIAN SCHWEDER



Foreword

In the current age of so-called postmodern reconfiguration, perhaps no issue has recurred so much in philosophical thinking as the question of nihilism. Whether or not one considers his philosophy an expression of nihilism (and this is a highly contested claim), Nietzsche is correct in identifying nihilism as the central problem of the modern era. On his account, nihilism is the unfolding of the internal logic of Greek metaphysics, which reaches its culmination in Christian onto-theology, which both discloses and conceals the most extreme (and yet for Nietzsche, the most liberating) event of nihilism—namely, the “death of God.” Twentieth-century philosophy identified itself, particularly in its continental expressions, by its response to this thesis, both in affirmation and rejection of it. Arguably the most significant consequence, however, of these variegated responses, whether from the continental or Anglo-American perspectives, is the general demise of metaphysics. “Nihilism has appeared among us,” Dostoevsky wrote in his diary, “because we are all nihilists.” If this controversial claim is indeed accurate, it is only because we cannot simply escape nihilism by refusing to acknowledge; much less engage it in our thinking. The attempt to overcome or move beyond the standpoint of nihilism has come from many different quarters, but in general, it is fair to say, it has entailed a movement that reduces or bypasses metaphysics precisely because metaphysics has been so thoroughly implicated in its alleged identity or at least complexity with nihilism. The work of Vittorio PosSENTI challenges this viewpoint and offers a position that is simultaneously original and yet grounded in the history

of philosophical and theological ideas. His *Nihilism and Metaphysics: The Third Voyage* takes the informed reader on a veritable odyssey, navigating the Sargasso Sea of the history of metaphysics, ably steering through much unrecognizable wreckage while securing in tow philosophical ideas that many have deemed lost and forgotten. Whether one follows admirably the course charted by PosSENTI, the journey is one that must be initially embarked on if one is to find the way past the Scylla and Charybdis of “theoretical nihilism.” In response to Heidegger’s argument that the meaning of Being has been forgotten, PosSENTI writes, “In principle, the third voyage never philosophy from the forgetting of being.” Unlike Heidegger though, who returns to the *Presencing* in an effort to recover the original meaning of being and determine an other beginning (being as Ereignis) PosSENTI looks to the openness of the ontology of Stoic philosophy to metaphysics by “a return to being and therefore a recovery of the philosophy of being within our historical, spiritual, and cultural contexts by means of an ongoing engagement with the other.” In this regard, PosSENTI embodies what is a strong and rather singular feature of contemporary Italian philosophy—namely, the advancement of current thinking via a full engagement with the history of ideas mediated by the world of theological reflection. Masterfully taking up Western philosophy from its ancient, medieval, modern through contemporary expressions, *Nihilism and Metaphysics* represents the culmination of years of sustained reflection on the question of theoretical nihilism, and by association other contingent forms of nihilism such as practical, ethical, and legal. Assisted by Daniel B. Gallagher’s excellent translation and equally fine introduction, this is a work that is sure to provoke much discussion and contribute to the critical concern of addressing and overcoming nihilism. Whether this overcoming can be divorced from the simultaneous overcoming of metaphysics is precisely the quest that Vittorio PosSENTI sets out upon—and the voyage that he invites us to take along with him.

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