

**Gianni Vattimo, *The Responsibility of the Philosopher***, ed. Franca D'Agostini (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

*The Responsibility of the Philosopher* is an intriguing piece of scholarship by Gianni Vattimo, a powerful voice in contemporary philosophical hermeneutics (he is emeritus professor of philosophy at the University of Turin). His output encompasses a wide range of problems present in today's philosophical, theological, and political debates.

Considering Vattimo's notable engagement with issues pertaining to ethics, the Christian faith, and Truth, and his prominently active participation in contemporary political life (he is a member of the European Parliament), the book on the vocation to philosophy and the responsibility of philosophy comes as a potent response to the pressing question of the place of philosophy in the humanities, and the task (*Aufgabe*) of a philosopher in a world fraught up with the polyvalent and divergent political and ethical standpoints.

The question of the philosopher's role in a society, which for centuries has been considered as that of a sage, comes as especially timely in a world that eagerly follows the pathway of calculative thinking – Heidegger's salient distinction of calculative and meditative thinking (*berechnendes* and *besinnliches Denken*) – and which is somewhat hidden behind the façade of the exigency of pragmatic solutions, but overwhelmingly resurfacing in the continuous abiding to the policy of measurable ends, also, or perhaps, most acutely felt in the academic environment.

The synthesis of Vattimo's distinguished academic research and his influential political activism results in a book that amply enters the discussion of the possible ways to untangle the knots of the multitudinous problems we face today. In the five neatly constructed chapters, Vattimo cogently explores the intersections of philosophy, science, and literature but also offers his state-of-the-art reflection on the philosophy of logic and logic in philosophy, and the fidelity to Truth, only to end up with his seminal deliberation of the vocation to philosophy and the responsibility of philosophy.

Navigating his unique intellectual path through the meanders of the highly complex socio-political problematic, Vattimo creates a vision of philosophy whose power rests on the hermeneutic, attentive listening to the problem at hand and on participation through a dialogic responsibility (*re-spondeo*).