

## BOOK REVIEW

*The Platonic Art of Philosophy*. Edited by GEORGE BOYS-STONES, DIMITRI EL MURR, and CHRISTOPHER GILL. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. x + 341. Hardcover, \$120.00. ISBN 978-1-107-03898-1.

This book is an edited volume in honor of Christopher Rowe; the book title itself alludes to his “Plato and the Art of Philosophical Writing.” The introduction highlights the ways in which individual contributions engage with Rowe’s work and his main interpretative approaches.

In Chapter 1, Monique Dixsaut argues that the problem of macrology in Plato’s dialogues is ultimately a problem of digression: Socrates complains that his interlocutors’ responses are too long only when they are in fact off the mark. The second part of Dixsaut’s discussion is itself somewhat digressive, but the main view is that digression brings about change, often elevating the tone of the conversation.

In Chapter 2, María Angélica Fierro suggests that, while in Plato’s “middle” dialogues the body is viewed as an obstacle for the acquisition of knowledge, but plays a more positive role in the “late” ones, the *Phaedrus* combines both approaches. Here the body is both the soul’s tomb and also a vehicle for its ascension to the realm of the Forms.

Noburu Notomi turns to the *Phaedo* in Chapter 3. Following a line of thought similar to Rowe’s, he challenges the idea of a strict dichotomy between Socratic and Platonic views. He argues instead that both the *Phaedo* and the *Apology* engage in a continuous project, advancing the same Socratic goals.

In Chapter 4, David Sedley explores the reasons why references to the tripartite soul are completely missing from Books 5–8 of the *Republic*. He argues for two separate psychological models in the *Republic*, intellectualism and tripartition, which are ultimately compatible with one another. Intellectualism simply provides a more fitting description of the philosopher’s intellectualized virtue, when all other desires have become largely irrelevant.

Thomas Johansen’s “Timaeus in the Cave” takes up Chapter 5. Johansen argues lucidly and convincingly that Timaeus’ cosmology is relevant for the ethi-

cal and political project of the *Republic*, because the heavenly motions serve as a paradigm of order for human interaction.

Christopher Gill questions Sedley's intellectualist psychological model in Chapter 6. In his view, which finds me in agreement, the *Republic* lays out a single psychological model in two stages: habituation is followed by an intellectual understanding of ethical norms.

In Chapter 7, Dimitri El Murr raises the question whether the Good described as analogous to the Sun in Plato's *Republic* is the same as the good Socrates in *Rep.* 6 says all humans desire. He argues that our desire for what is really good for us suggests our acknowledgment of a distinction between the real and the apparent good, and so each soul divines that the Good must exist as an eternal reality. But the latter does not follow from the former; El Murr would need to provide a separate argument for it.

In Chapter 8, M. M. McCabe juxtaposes Socratic and sophistic epistemology in the *Euthydemus*. The sophists push for an extreme principle of non-contradiction and an externalist account of knowledge, i.e. one in which the possession of knowledge is not determined by its possessor but someone else. Socrates, on the other hand, argues for an internalist account, and wishes to qualify the principle of non-contradiction.

In Chapter 9, Michel Narcy argues that the dividing line between eristic and philosophy is blurred in both the *Euthydemus* and the *Sophist*. This is intensified in the *Theaetetus*, where Socrates is shown to endorse eristic: the choice of Euclides, whose Megarian school practiced eristic, as narrator, suggests that Plato wished to defend his practices.

In Chapter 10 Ugo Zilioli continues the discussion of the *Theaetetus*: he argues convincingly that the views of the 'subtler thinkers' (*Theaetetus* 156a3) may be attributed to the early Cyrenaics on the evidence of Sextus and Plutarch.

In Chapter 11 Terry Penner provides a highly technical discussion of the problem of false identity beliefs (FIB) laid out in the *Theaetetus*. The Wax Tablet argument purports to solve FIB; but Penner suggests that Plato ultimately rejects it because the visual perception, which one mismatches with the wrong memory imprint, is a Protagorean appearance. Protagorean appearances are incorrigibly true, and so the Wax Tablet argument fails.

In Chapter 12, O'Brien argues for an existential use of the verb "to be" in certain passages in Plato's *Sophist* and in my view settles a hotly debated issue. He outlines Plato's response to Parmenides: non-being is indeed unspeakable if we

are talking about what is in no way at all, but this is no longer the case if we are talking about what is simply different from something else.

In Chapter 13, Sarah Broadie asks why Plato should interweave a cosmology we take him to have meant seriously with an altogether fictional account about Atlantis in the *Timaeus-Critias*. She notes that the transmission of the story raises suspicions about its truth value and concludes that Plato wished to foreground questions about the significance of the truth of an account. An explanation of the reasons why raising such questions is deemed appropriate *here*, specifically in connection with the cosmology, would, I think, strengthen her argument.

In Chapter 14, Mauro Tulli argues that the Atlantis story in the *Timaeus-Critias* is indicative of Plato's interest in reconstructing the past, and the reference to a poem by Solon on this topic serves to provide a foundation for Plato's own mythical account.

Malcolm Schofield closes off the volume with a discussion of friendship in Plato's *Laws*, which takes up Chapter 15. The dialogue is shown to emphasize the need for friendship in the city, which is to be promoted by the ruler, so that the political community may cooperate effectively under his guidance.

One might have wished for a thematically more unified volume. But a good number of these chapters engage explicitly with Rowe's work, and several of them are well-written and thought-provoking.

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