of Erechtheus, perhaps deemed to be buried below the *cella*); and belongs to a near-maniacal ethos of submission of self to the collective good drummed up by Pericles to match and oppose that of Sparta. Since it is part of Connelly's argument that the imagery of the Parthenon best makes sense when considered as a whole (as it does), she is obliged to add a chapter on the desirability of 'reunifying' the Parthenon sculptures, and in the vicinity of the building for which they were intended. So staff at the British Museum will not easily love her message: but as a concession to its cogency they might at least consider altering their labels for the frieze.

Caption changes are not entailed by a British Museum-produced book, *The Greek Vase. Art of the Storyteller*.[4] The title suggests that it will be concerned with visual narrative; actually, however, problems of 'reading' images on vases are here treated only in outline – just a paragraph, for example, on the well-known Late Geometric *louterion* apparently showing a couple about to embark on a sea voyage. Rather, this is an album based upon the collections of the British Museum and the Getty Museum, with outstandingly clear photographs of whole pieces and magnified details. John Oakley adds a commentary flavoured with good sense: pointing out, for example, that since the number of Athenian black-figure vases depicting sexual acts total less than a hundred, out of a surviving quantity exceeding twenty thousand, these few erotic scenes can hardly be taken as revelations of 'true Athenian sexual mores, but rather…were meant to amuse' (144). So, even when Greek artists were manifestly in Lessing's 'descriptive' mode, their capacity to 'deceive' the modern viewer is potent.

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Philosophy

The stream of publications on Socrates and his legacy – including, of course, the nature and extent of Plato's 'Socraticism' – continues to flow copiously. This review will consider a sample of titles which have appeared in the last four or five years (several of which have also been released in paperback form more recently). They embody a variety of research aims and approaches, and reflect some of the methodological issues involved in the enterprise of Socratic studies.

George Rudebusch's *Socrates*[1] has a rather idiosyncratic approach to the study of Socrates. The author offers a spirited, almost 'militant', reconstruction and defence of what he takes to be the essential philosophical conclusions of Socrates' life-long practice of conversation: in a nutshell, 'no human being knows how to live'; all virtues are 'one and the same thing: expertise at human well-being'; 'such expertise by itself would…ensure happiness and freedom'; for those who lack that expertise, it is 'better

[4] *The Greek Vase. Art of the Storyteller*. By John H. Oakley. London, British Museum Press, 2013. Pp. 156. 130 colour plates. Hardback £25, ISBN: 978-0-7141-2277-9.

[1] *Socrates*. By George Rudebusch. Malden, MA, and Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. Pp. xv + 221. Hardback £72.50, ISBN: 978-1-4051-5085-9; paperback £19.99, ISBN: 978-1-4051-5086-6.

not to live at all' (xii). According to Rudebusch, these results of Socrates' philosophical inquiry have too often been misinterpreted, unjustly criticized, or simply disregarded in the later philosophical tradition – I am sure many readers will take issue with at least the third contention. His interpretation and defence of Socrates is aimed at the 'existential reader, whose overriding concern with Socrates is as a guide to life and who wonders whether Socrates might be a wise guide' (12), just as other religious leaders whom Rudebusch compares with Socrates throughout the book, such as Confucius, Krishna, Buddha, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. The book is articulated in sixteen chapters, each exploring a key Socratic theme (such as philosophy as a divine mission, bravery, love, desire, happiness, 'world religion') on the basis of the analysis of relevant passages from Platonic texts (respectively, *Apology*, *Protagoras*, *Lysis*, *Meno*, *Republic*, *Crito*) – the Socrates we encounter in the book is almost exclusively *Plato*'s Socrates. Rudebusch presents and examines with some refreshing flair the Socratic ideas, volunteering arguments on behalf of Socrates, on the basis of the 'principle of charity', whenever such arguments appear to be missing or defective. His proposals are typically imaginative and thought-provoking, and the enthusiasm with which he pursues his 'missionary' Socratic call is endearing (at least until it degenerates into quasi-mystic zeal: see, for instance, the suggestion made on p. ii that a statue from 3,500 BC representing a figure in the position of a dead body in burial, with feminine traits, 'gives us a picture of his [Socrates'] very soul'). There is a constant and unresolved tension in the book, however, between this form of essentially philosophical exploration of ideas and arguments, and their intrinsic philosophical merits, and the attribution of the results to Socrates as a historical figure. For example, in Chapter 3 Rudebusch gets overly exercised with the question of when and why Chaerephon went to the oracle at Delphi to inquire whether anyone was wiser than Socrates; he ends up conjecturing that this must have occurred after Socrates' encounter with Protagoras in 432 BC, described in Plato's *Protagoras*, in which Socrates had the upper hand in his dialectical exchange with the sophist, who was at the time considered 'the wisest man in the world' (42). This quasi-journalistic reconstruction of the connection between Socratic biography and Chaerephon's behaviour goes far beyond the traditional assumption, which Rudebusch seems to endorse, despite some qualification in the epilogue of the book, that the 'Socratic dialogues of Plato' offer portraits of the *philosophy* of the historical Socrates. All in all, Rudebusch's *Socrates* might serve as a refreshing introductory and protreptic read for students, but only if handled with caution and supplemented by other material clarifying the complexity of the Socratic problem and the richness of the Socratic legacy which the book fails to highlight. I am not sure what readership could find the frequent but rather superficial comparisons between the views and attitudes of Socrates and those of the other great 'religious leaders' of the past useful to illuminate either side of the comparison.

Sara Ahbel-Rappe's *Socrates. A Guide for the Perplexed*[2] adopts a completely different strategy when faced with the task of writing a short introduction to the philosopher. The reader is presented with Socrates, his life, philosophical ideas, and methods from a variety

[2] *Socrates. A Guide for the Perplexed*. By Sara Ahbel-Rappe. Guides for the Perplexed. London and New York, Continuum, 2009. Pp. viii + 187. Hardback £55, ISBN: 978-0-8264-6377-7; paperback £13.99, ISBN: 978-0-8264-3325-1.

of perspectives which aim to convey the historical and exegetical complexity of the phenomenon of Socrates. This approach includes introduction to, and judicious use of, all our several ancient sources for Socrates (Aristophanes, Plato, Xenophon, and other Socratics such as Antisthenes, Aeschines, and Phaedo), some methodological discussion of the Socratic problem (Chapter 3), and a marked emphasis on Socrates' long-lasting legacy and tradition, which occupies almost half of the book. Chapter 7, entitled 'The Socratic Schools', is actually a survey of the influence of the figure of Socrates on the main Hellenistic schools (Stoa, Academy, and Garden); Chapter 8 introduces three key moments of the reception of 'Socrates in the Modern World' (Hegel, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche), while Chapter 9 explores how certain interpretations of Socratic 'civil disobedience' have influenced, and have in turn been influenced by, modern political philosophy (Arendt, Strauss, and Popper). The central chapters are devoted to the key aspects of Socrates' philosophy: 'Socratic Method and Epistemology' (Chapter 5) and 'Happiness and Virtue' (Chapter 6). The discussion is competent throughout, but the purported breadth of the coverage in a short volume such as this unavoidably leads to some lack of analysis (for example, Socratic irony is dispatched in one single page), and Ahbel-Rappe's Socrates ends up looking philosophically far less engaging than Rudebusch's. The author's own voice is rarely heard, with a certain tendency to over-rely on certain well-established scholarly viewpoints which are somewhat lacking in nuance (for example, Vlastos' version of developmentalism and conception of the functioning of the *elenchus*). Each chapter ends with a short list of suggestions for further (Anglophone) reading; a bit more could have been done to give a sense of the variety of approaches to Socrates in the current scholarly discourse. The book is serviceable as a basic introduction to Socrates for students, but I would not recommend it as a must-have in reading lists.

A much more in-depth examination of most of the main aspects of Socrates' life, thought, and legacy is provided by the fifteen chapters of *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates*, edited by Donald Morrison.[3] As we have come to expect of the volumes in this series, the contributors offer state-of-the art overviews of their topics which will serve well as thematic introductions to Socrates for undergraduate students, but in several cases also push for novel approaches and answers to familiar themes and questions. The opening chapter by Dorion, for example, not only offers a useful reconstruction of the key moments in the history of the 'Socratic problem' over the last two centuries, and a catalogue of some of the competing stances, but also lucidly sketches the reasonable suggestion that, precisely because of the difficulties involved in these debates, the Socratic problem should perhaps finally become 'a part of history' (1): 'recognizing the unsolvable nature of the Socratic problem. . .is an opportunity, an exceptional occasion for enriching our understanding of Socratism' (18–19) by (re-)analysing each extant *logos sokratikos*, both independently and comparatively. This openness will deepen our understanding of the complex dialectical reception and influence of Socrates in the fourth century BC and beyond. Dorion's chapter sets the tone for the following contributions in the measure in which the identification of the 'real Socrates' is not, as sometimes it has been, an obsession dominating the rest of the volume, not even in Chapters 2–4, which discuss the multifaceted portraits of Socrates

[3] *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates*. Edited by Donald Morrison. Cambridge Companions to Philosophy. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xviii + 413. Hardback £66, ISBN: 978-0-521-83342-4; paperback £20.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-54103-9.

emerging, respectively, from the 'minor Socratics', Xenophon, and Aristophanes. In Chapter 5 Woodruff offers an extremely useful reflection on how Plato's Socrates was not only a critic of, but also an heir to, the 'new learning', namely the variety of ways in which sophists, natural philosophers, medical writers, historians, and tragedians in the fifth century BC had started to shape new approaches to the divine, custom, law, human wisdom, and 'the art of words'. Chapters 6–14 focus on key themes emerging from our portrayals of Socrates: Socrates' religion and complex relationship with democratic Athens, Socratic method, Socratic self-examination, Socratic ignorance, Socratic irony, and Socrates' ethics and psychology of action, eudaimonism, and political philosophy. Here, again, Plato turns out to be by far the most frequently used source. Lane's systematic and deflationary treatment of Socratic irony is another especially good example of that fusion of a clear *status quaestionis* with an original contribution. The final chapter, by Anthony Long, provides a broad-brush but fascinating sketch of the ancient reception of Socrates' figure and method, from the Socratics to Epictetus, organized around pivotal themes such as Socrates' ethics, ignorance, irony, elenchus, and divine sign. Long explains the historical process of the construction and positioning of Socrates in the later doxographical tradition, and emphasizes how Socrates

owes his philosophical significance to the diverse ways he was interpreted, lauded, and sometimes even criticised by authors who, thanks to their *own* intellectual and educational creativity, made Greek philosophy the major cultural presence it had not yet become during his own lifetime. (355)

In this way he provides an excellent complement to Dorion's opening methodological remarks on the Socratic problem, and the chapter is thus an effective conclusion for the whole volume. This resonance is especially welcome since the explicit intertextuality between the chapters is almost non-existent, and the editor's perfunctory two-page preface does nothing to place the contributions in conversation. One omission of the Companion is the exploration of the legacy of Socrates in the history of Western philosophy beyond antiquity, but one might wonder whether such an enormous legacy could have been distilled in any meaningful way in two or three chapters appended at the end of the volume. Some readers might also object that the variety of exegetical traditions represented here is too limited – most of the contributions, and the vast majority of the scholarly discourse with which they engage, belong to the Anglo-American analytic tradition, while 'Continental' and other alternative approaches are noticeably absent.

One such approach underlies Mary Nichols' *Socrates on Friendship and Community*,[4] a piece of scholarship clearly indebted to Straussian hermeneutical tools and views. The book's objective is to fill a lacuna in the literature on Plato's Socrates, which contains 'relatively little discussion of friendship as compared with love' (3). Reacting to Kierkegaard's and Nietzsche's criticisms of Socrates as an 'alienated and alienating figure' (1), outlined with a rather broad brush in Chapter 1, Nichols aims to 'recover the place of friendship and community in Socratic philosophizing as an antidote to the alienating aspects of the

[4] *Socrates on Friendship and Community. Reflections on Plato's Symposium, Phaedrus and Lysis*. By Mary P. Nichols. Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2009. Pp. viii + 229. Hardback £55, ISBN: 978-0-521-89973-4; paperback £20.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-14883-2.

modern world' (2), through the systematic analysis of three Platonic dialogues: the *Symposium*, the *Phaedrus*, and the *Lysis* (the final chapter includes a more limited discussion of the *Phaedo*). In Chapter 2 she emphasizes that, although it is non-reciprocal and is not consistently connected with *philia* (friendship), the *erōs* of Diotima's speech can only exist, like *philia*, within the framework of interpersonal relationships: the generation, nurturing, and preservation of the offspring of love – which includes children, education in virtue, arts and crafts, legislation, and virtue itself – are dependent upon the existence of political communities. But, according to Nichols, it is the *Phaedrus* (Chapter 3) that 'deepens the understanding of Love and philosophy that we find in the *Symposium*' (88). A key element of this deepening, if I understand her analysis correctly, is the correct inclusion of reciprocity as a necessary element of *erōs*, and the suggestion that *perfect* love becomes a form a *philia*. The most unorthodox and controversial claim of the book is, however, that the examination of *philia* in the *Lysis* represents the real climax of the development of Plato's conception of 'friendship'; with a controversial move, she reads into the dramatic chronology of the three dialogues the sequence of development of Plato's ideas. Nichols even suggests, on the basis of a strained interpretation of the meaning and value of two cursory mentions of *philia* at the end of the *Phaedrus*, that Plato is in fact signalling to his readers the necessity of the transition to the more mature conception of the *Lysis*, in which the nature of *philia*, and how this differs from *erōs*, are finally explored (149–50). It is in the discussion of the *Lysis* in Chapter 4 that Nichols' Straussian leanings become especially evident. She suggests that the two fundamental, albeit implicit, positive lessons of the dialogue (which is at face value aporetic) are: first, that friendship, unlike love, is an essentially 'reciprocal human relationship, rooted in need' (187), despite the fact that reciprocity seems to be rejected by Socrates as a necessary condition for *philia* at 212b–213c; and, second, that we love our friends exclusively for their own sake, despite the 'first friend' argument at 219c–d, which appears to conclude exactly the opposite. It is a question whether such suggestions could be made to fit Plato's text, but trying to account for the surface meaning of Plato's words is not, of course, an exegetical principle guiding Straussian interpretations. Surprisingly, the most recent and sustained reconstruction of the arguments of the *Lysis* – Penner's and Rowe's monograph – does not feature in Nichols' bibliography. But what I find even more problematic is the connection which Nichols draws between her understanding of Platonic friendship, political community, and the nature of philosophy. Why should friendship be assumed as 'a model for a political community in which some things are held in common' (192)? And why should we imagine that 'philosophy maintains itself by taking friendship as its standard' (191)? While some of Nichols' analyses of specific sections of the dialogues, especially the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, and of their dialectical interactions, are ingenious and worth pondering, the big picture – as far as I was able to see what it was – left me unconvinced.

More recently, Elizabeth Belfiore has provided her own reading of the same triad of dialogues which are the focus of Nichols' monograph, with the addition of the *Alcibiades* I, which she takes to be authentically Platonic without offering independent support for her assumption. *Socrates' Daimonic Art*[5] examines what the author takes to

[5] *Socrates' Daimonic Art. Love for Wisdom in Four Platonic Dialogues*. By Elizabeth S. Belfiore. Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xvii + 304. Hardback £62, ISBN: 978-1-107-00758-1.

be Plato's coherent characterization of Socrates and his 'erotic art' in the four 'erotic dialogues', focusing in particular 'on the specific ways in which the philosopher is represented as searching for wisdom together with his young interlocutors' (xi); the term 'daimonic' in the title refers, of course, to the depiction of Eros, and thus indirectly of Socrates, as a *daimōn* in the *Symposium*. The book does not hazard the kind of 'grand' thesis or revisionary interpretation that Nichols attempts, and its results, as Belfiore summarizes them in the conclusion, might sound hardly original or controversial. Responding to the theme, common in Socratic writings, of Socrates' concern with *erōs*, and subtly adapting the Greek convention of erotic–educational relationships between older and young males, Plato represents a Socrates who is 'an erotic figure not because he has ordinary *erōs*, but because he has marvellous skill in searching for the objects of Socratic *erōs*: wisdom, beauty and the other good things' (272). The emphasis on the intrinsically interpersonal nature of his art, whose effect is influenced by the characters of the interlocutors and contingent external circumstances, also has the apologetic function of explaining 'why Socrates did not achieve great success' (272). Chapter 1 offers an introductory overview of what the author understands to be the key components of the 'art' – and a welcome qualification of the way in which this differs from standard *technē*, 'craft-knowledge' (13–17): devotion to Eros and *ta erōtika* (namely wisdom, beauty, and the good); awareness of one's lack of such things; passionate desire for such things; skill in the search for such things; skill in helping *others* in the same search. Some of the conceptual coordinates involved are not sufficiently clarified in the chapter, or indeed in the rest of the book. For example, what exactly is that 'wisdom' that constitutes the ultimate object of *erōs*? And what is its relation to beauty? Nonetheless, Belfiore's analyses of how Socrates' 'daimonic art' is characterized and portrayed 'in action' through his interactions with his interlocutors in the four dialogues (Chapters 2–5) are extremely instructive and nuanced, and are coloured by a striking and sometimes illuminating grasp of the literary and cultural context of the dialogues. I was impressed, for example, by Belfiore's balanced account of Diotima's speech, which is sensitive towards its subtle ironic and literary aspects and pedagogical manoeuvres, without being dismissive of its philosophical core. The book certainly deserves to be studied with attention by all specialists working on the subject. One way in which, according to Belfiore, the characterization of Socrates' daimonic art in the 'quartet' of erotic dialogues differs from other non-erotic depictions of philosophy in the Platonic corpus is in its higher success in 'producing, at least temporarily, positive changes' in the interlocutors (19–20). I find this claim puzzling: in what sense can a merely temporary change be welcomed as 'positive'? Just think of Plato's two portrayals of Alcibiades in the *Alcibiades* I and the *Symposium*, which Belfiore herself examines in admirable detail in her book.

The examination of the role of *erōs* in Socratic education through the lenses of the problematic relationship between Socrates and Alcibiades is the focus of *Alcibiades and the Socratic Lover-Educator*, a collection of essays edited by Marguerite Johnson and Harold Tarrant.[6] The fourteen contributions focus for the most part on Plato's

[6] *Alcibiades and the Socratic Lover-Educator*. Edited by Marguerite Johnson and Harold Tarrant. Bristol, Bristol Classical Press, 2012. Pp. x + 254. Hardback £70, ISBN: 978-0-7156-4086-9; paperback £22.99, ISBN: 978-1-4725-0446-3.

Alcibiades I, on the question of its authenticity, on its relation with (other?) Platonic dialogues in which Alcibiades appears or is mentioned, and on its later reception (for example, in Proclus and Olympiodorus). The only exceptions are the first two chapters, on Sappho's influence on Socrates' erotic pedagogy (Johnson) and on Socrates as a 'lover of boys' in the *Lysis*, *Symposium*, and *Phaedrus* (Blyth), and Chapter 11, on Philo of Alexandria on the 'divine lover' (King). Blyth's suggestion that Socrates adopted the 'pose' of the lover only 'ironically in order to avail himself of an acceptable social model of interaction as a cover for his protreptic and pedagogical interest in aristocratic young men of philosophical potential' (41) is founded on imprecise readings of the relevant texts, and should be tested against the richer and more sophisticated understanding of the educational and philosophical function of *erōs* proposed by Belfiore. An admittedly cursory perusal of the volume conveys the impression that the quality of the essays is rather uneven, and I suspect that the book as a whole will serve as a useful stimulus to further study of the *Alcibiades* more by offering raw material for reflection than by providing new substantial and distinctive contributions to scholarship. The volume includes two appendices, which offer some interesting but inconclusive historical and stylometric data for the assessment of the authenticity of the *Alcibiades* I. No clear position on the question of authenticity emerges collectively from the essays, or is taken by the editors in their short introduction.

Some of Terry Penner's well-known views on Socratic psychology of action and intellectualism (which are distilled in Chapter 12 of *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates*) feature among the main critical targets of Thomas Brickhouse's and Nicholas Smith's *Socratic Moral Psychology*.[7] The book is the culmination of almost twenty years of work on the subject, originally inspired by Devereux's 1995 article on 'Socrates' Kantian Conception of Virtue',[8] and revises and integrates into a unified narrative material which had previously appeared in no fewer than eleven publications. The authors' aim is 'to articulate and defend a more or less new conception of Socratic motivational intellectualism' (2). The book kicks off, in Chapter 1, with an 'apology of Socratic studies' against the charges that any attempt to reconstruct 'the philosophy of Socrates' on the basis of a subset of Platonic dialogues is methodologically misguided. Whatever one decides about the success of this spirited defence, the authors' engagement with the critics of the very viability of a programme of Socratic studies is helpful in clarifying the coordinates of the debate, and which version of the assumption that we can investigate the 'philosophy of Socrates' is relevant to the project of the book. Brickhouse and Smith claim not to aim to reach conclusions about the views of the *historical* Socrates, but to try to reconstruct a coherent picture of the philosophy of 'Socrates' as it is presented in the early Platonic dialogues (although they remain generally sympathetic to attempts to make cautious inferences from the latter Socrates to the historical Socrates). The central chapters of the book (2–5) develop the authors' interpretation of Socratic moral psychology in the context of some key relevant areas: the 'prudential paradox', the harm of wrongdoing, the role of punishment, Socratic education. The interpretation is systematically tested against a large selection of

[7] *Socratic Moral Psychology*. By Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. vii + 276. Hardback £58, ISBN: 978-0-521-19843-1; paperback £30.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-40392-5.

[8] D. Devereux, 'Socrates' Kantian Conception of Virtue', *JHPh*, 33 (1995), 381–408.

well-known texts from dialogues such as the *Apology*, *Crito*, *Protagoras*, *Meno*, and *Gorgias* (the use of the second part of the *Gorgias* will strike some readers as especially problematic in the framework of an inquiry into *Socratic* psychology). It turns out that the 'more or less novel' interpretation proposed by the authors still attributes to Socrates a form of 'motivational intellectualism', according to which we always and exclusively act from our beliefs (or knowledge) about what is good for us (105–6). It differs, however, from the interpretation of other scholars since it emphasizes that 'Socrates often recognizes not only the existence of appetites and passions, but. . .what he says about them requires. . .that they play a causal, and not merely informational, role in how people behave' (53). In other words, although my present appetite for something sweet, or anger against my colleague, could never motivate me to act against my present belief about what it would be good for me to do in the present circumstances (not to eat the cake, or not to punch my colleague) – synchronic belief-*akrasia* is impossible for Socrates – they can still influence my behaviour through their own motivational force, and not simply by providing relevant 'information' to be incorporated into my judgement of whether it would be good for me to eat the cake, or to punch my colleague, as allowed within the framework of 'standard' intellectualist interpretations. The two main issues for this kind of proposal are whether the textual evidence warrants it, and how *exactly* this causal role should be construed. On several occasions Brickhouse and Smith build their case on supposedly supporting evidence which appears to be, *at best*, compatible with their proposal, but which does not suggest, support, or require it (for example, several passages from the *Apology* discussed in Chapter 2). As for the second issue, the closest that the authors come to offering an analysis of the causal force of appetites and passions is when they explain that

> these potentials function by representing their aims to the soul as benefits to be pursued and acquired, and if [they] are not kept in check, they can begin to erode the cognitive functioning of the soul in ways that make correct evaluation of actual benefit increasingly difficult to perform. (108)

It is not clear to me, on the one hand, how exactly the 'representational' power differs from the 'informational' role of appetites and passions allowed by standard interpretations of Socratic intellectualism, and, on the other, how the attribution of 'aims' to appetites and passions is compatible with intellectualism at all, and does not make Smith's and Brickhouse's Socratic moral psychology collapse into something dangerously close to Platonic tripartition. After exploring in Chapter 6 how the picture of motivational intellectualism drawn in the previous chapters bears dividends for our understanding of Socratic 'virtue intellectualism', the book ends with a long chapter investigating 'the ancient intellectual heirs' of Socrates' moral psychology: Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. This chapter brings into sharper relief Socrates' moral psychology through the comparison with that of his 'heirs'. It includes a (partially successful) clarification of how, on the authors' interpretation, Socratic and Platonic moral psychology differ (while acknowledging more continuity than usually admitted) and the interesting suggestion that Aristotle's views are 'far more indebted to than at odds with Socrates' (231), whereas the Stoic brand of intellectualism leads to a 'view of the best life for human beings' that is 'importantly un-Socratic' (246). Despite some of the reservations I have expressed above, *Socratic Moral Psychology* is a worthwhile

addition to the rich literature on the topic. Whether or not one is convinced by the evidence brought in support of the attribution to Socrates of Brickhouse's and Smith's intellectualism, the book's extremely systematic and for the most part clearly presented argument will push readers to reconsider the multiple ways in which 'intellectualism' can be construed and identified as a philosophical position, which need not exclude consideration and understanding of the role that non-rational forces play in human life.

Platonic moral psychology is one of the central themes investigated in the volume *Plato and the Divided Self*, edited by Rachel Barney, Tad Brennan, and Charles Brittain.[9] The fifteen essays, written by leading scholars in the field, are organized into four parts: the moral psychology of the *Republic* is investigated by five contributors in the pivotal Part II, while Part I includes three essays on 'transitions to tripartition' in the *Phaedo*, *Gorgias*, and – with a puzzling collocation– the *Republic* itself, and Part III comprises four essays on post-*Republic* discussions of *erōs*, appetites, passions, and the soul within the framework of tripartition, in the *Phaedrus*, *Timaeus*, *Philebus*, and *Laws*. The volume ends, in Part IV, with three forays into the question of the parts of the soul in the Platonic tradition (Plutarch, Galen, and Plotinus). As the editors notice, the essays collectively convey a clear sense of how 'Plato's tripartite theory, like his "theory of Forms", is an ever-evolving construction, engineered to serve an impressive range of different purposes' (2). Most of the essays treat, explicitly or implicitly, the parts of the soul as 'robustly agent-like individuals' (3) with their own separate, albeit interdependent, cognitive capacities, volitions, and agency. Only some contributors, especially Kamtekar in Chapter 4 and Whiting in Chapter 8, resist or qualify this realist literal interpretation, emphasizing that the metaphor and language of tripartition can be understood as compatible with the essential unity of the soul, or at least the unity of the soul in certain conditions. Whiting's suggestion that the *Republic* allows for 'radical psychic contingency' (175), and the subtle textual analyses and methodological reflections underlying this suggestion, are especially impressive and stimulating: how many genuine parts actually belong to any given individual soul, and what sort of internal structure each part has, are facts contingent upon the state of that soul, so that, while 'the souls of *most* folk have the three parts involved in the so-called state–soul analogy', and possibly even *more* than three, 'it is in principle possible for a *philosophically cultivated* soul. . .to lack the lower parts and to consist simply in the so-called rational part' (176, emphasis in original). For example, it is only 'when the appetites get *organized* into something like political factions' (the original locus of the *merē* language), 'making *collective* demands' (196, emphasis in original), that an appetitive *part* of the soul comes into being. But how does this occur, exactly? In her short postscript on the relation between the moral psychology of the *Republic* and that of the *Phaedo*, Whiting suggests that motivations and beliefs introduced by the appetites of the body that 'are incompatible with those already settled in one's *logistikon* must either displace those already settled', thus corrupting the soul, or 'settle elsewhere', thus making it 'crack' into factions (207–8). But, if this disjunction were correct, the totally corrupt individual should enjoy the same perfect unity and harmony of the soul as the

[9] *Plato and the Divided Self*. Edited by Rachel Barney, Tad Brennan, and Charles Brittain. Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. ix + 396. Hardback £62, ISBN: 978-0-521-89966-6; paperback £25.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-65427-3.

philosopher. It is interesting to notice how relatively marginal is the investigation of the philosophical (and possibly historical) connections between Platonic tripartition and moral psychology and Socratic intellectualism in the volume. Overall, this is an important collection of essays (some of which, however, contain previously published material in revised form), which will serve as a fundamental point of reference for students and scholars interested in the subject. The editors' short introduction reads like a rather haphazard and unstructured collection of short comments and undeveloped suggestions (for example, on the resonances of Platonic tripartition in contemporary neuroscience). I suspect that many readers, like me, would have welcomed a more systematic presentation of the intellectual coordinates and aims of the project, and an explanation of how the results of the various essays, and their different approaches, can be put in conversation, and of whether they deliver a coherent picture of Platonic tripartition.

In *Socrates and Philosophy in the Dialogues of Plato*,[10] Sandra Peterson proposes a novel and provocative answer to the *vexata quaestio* of how to interpret the relationship between the aporetic Socrates of the *Apology* and other (mainly, but not exclusively, early) Platonic dialogues, who professes ignorance and simply examines his interlocutors' views, and the apparently doctrinal Socrates of many other Platonic dialogues, who makes positive proposals to which he seems to be by and large committed, such as the theory of Forms, the immortality of the soul, the conception of philosophy as a grasp of intelligible realities and assimilation to the divine, and the utopia of an ideal state ruled by philosophers. Against 'Plato-centred' approaches which explain the inconsistency along proleptic unitarian (for example, Kahn) or developmental (for example, Vlastos) lines, Peterson proposes her 'interlocutor-centered hypothesis' (xv): Plato's Socrates remains convinced throughout that he has no knowledge – or at least no knowledge of anything 'great' – but always and consistently limits himself to conducting examinations of his interlocutors. But in some cases the examination requires, as its starting point, not questioning his interlocutors (as in the elenctic dialogues) but 'revealing' them via their reactions to views and arguments which he expounds but to which he himself is not committed. According to Peterson, these cases have been misinterpreted as positive expositions of Platonic views and arguments because of our failure to realize that the apparent exposition is actually a way of 'extracting' the interlocutors' own beliefs 'by declaration', 'speaking their inclinations for them' (16), and because the following stage, namely the critical examination and rejection of those doctrinal views and arguments, does not occur in the dialogue, but is left by Plato for us to perform. For example, we should realize that Socrates' several arguments for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo* are simply a response to the request of certain Pythagorean-minded interlocutors to persuade them, and therefore only meant to appeal to those interlocutors, and we should see by ourselves the glaring flaws of all those arguments, thus ending up in a state of Socratic agnosticism (Chapter 6). Since Peterson takes the character Socrates to convey, by and large, Plato's own outlook (Chapter 8), she espouses a form of unitarianism which makes Plato radically Socratic through and through. While at times ingeniously defended, her overall thesis and

[10] *Socrates and Philosophy in the Dialogues of Plato*. By Sandra Peterson. Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xvi + 293. Hardback £60, ISBN: 978-0-521-19061-9; paperback £23.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-66799-0.

general approach are unconvincing. The most problematic aspect of her methodology is her extensive use of the 'principle of charity': since it is clear, 'based on the evidence of certain dialogues', 'that Plato can employ the shared human capacity for commonsense examination' (10), whenever the views and arguments discussed by Socrates in the dialogues appear 'unsustainable' and 'flimsy', this should be taken as an indication that Plato was not committed to those views or arguments. Rather, he was revealing the problematic tacit commitments of Socrates' interlocutors' intellectual outlook. We, as readers, are thus supposed to see their untenability and stay away from, or abandon, that outlook. But, according to Peterson, *most* of the views and arguments advanced by Socrates in the dialogues clash with the intuitions of our 'simple reflective common sense' and are therefore 'unsustainable' (9). For example, one of her main reasons for interpreting the striking picture of the philosophical life in the 'digression' of the *Theaetetus* as an 'extraction by declaration' of Theodorus' own incorrect view of philosophy, and not as a Platonic ideal (Chapter 3), is that that picture is 'repellent' (60), 'grotesque' (72), 'tasteless', 'verging on pernicious', and 'the worst idea I have ever heard in philosophy' (82). One could object that Peterson's supposedly 'commonsense' standards of judgement too often sound subjective and anachronistic, and certainly have not been shared by most readers of Plato since antiquity. As she admits, many in the Platonic tradition took the digression very seriously as 'a straightforward statement of Plato's mature ethical theory' (75), and many modern interpreters still do not find it so outrageous to conclude that it could not possibly be a genuine statement of a reasonable mind. Another difficulty with Peterson's approach is that, in the context of her laudable and often instructive focus on the life, character, and outlook of Socrates' interlocutors, she sometimes over-interprets textual details of the Platonic dialogues. For example, her claim that Theodorus 'would call himself a philosopher' (66) is not supported by any of the passages she references: the fact that *Socrates*, while talking to the geometer Theodorus, uses the phrase 'geometry or any other *philosophia*', and that Theodorus does not protest that geometry is not (a kind or type of) 'philosophy', does not imply that Theodorus sees himself as a philosopher, let alone that he has a distinctive conception of what philosophy is; the inference is much flimsier than many Platonic arguments for which Peterson feels obliged to invoke charity. This is not to deny that there is something to be learned from at least some of Peterson's subtle analyses of Plato's texts. Her emphasis on the importance of context and characterization in the examination of Platonic arguments is welcome, just as is her reminder that in the dialectic with his readers Plato might well have thrown them argumentative curveballs, or left several gaps for them to fill. But these sound methodological points can be, and have been, accommodated within interpretations of Platonic thought which do not make it 'Socratic' in the monolithic and very narrow way construed here. Nonetheless, Peterson's book, written with flair and clarity, has the beneficial effect of challenging readers to clarify exactly why existing approaches to Plato's dialogues are more fruitful.

Danielle Allen's *Why Plato Wrote*[11] rehearses the vexed question of why Plato, unlike Socrates, decided to use writing as a means of philosophical communication. The

[11] *Why Plato Wrote*. By Danielle S. Allen. Malden, MA, and Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. Pp. xii + 232. Hardback £50, ISBN: 978-1-4443-3448-7; paperback £19.99, ISBN: 978-1-118-45439-8.

answer is unorthodox: Plato was not only 'the world's first systematic political philosopher', but also 'the western world's first think-tank activist and its first message man', a 'master of the sound-bite' (147), and, as such, he 'wrote, among other purposes, to effect political change' (4) and to 'refashion Athenian political language' (19). As a 'pragmatist philosopher' (22), he thought that writing would be the most effective way to reach 'the general readers' (5) and determine political change by changing people's beliefs. Allen's strategy is thus to try to demonstrate how what she calls 'Plato's philosophy of language' was related to his political theory and purposes, and how Platonic vocabulary did influence Athenian political vocabulary and institutions later in the fourth century BC. The twofold strategy is pursued in Parts I ('Why Plato Wrote') and II ('What Plato Did') respectively. It could be objected, however, that, whatever we make of Allen's controversial historical case for the *influence* of Plato's dialogues on Athenian politics, any such alleged influence falls short of corroborating the contention that Plato in fact primarily wrote *in order to* effect political change. But it is on Part I that I would like to focus here. Allen traces two sets of Platonic arguments, *contra* and *pro* philosophical writing, respectively in the *Phaedrus* and the *Republic*. The identification of the first set is not surprising, but Allen's discussion of the *Phaedrus* is quick and not especially lucid. For example, her criticism of Plato on page 26 seems to conflate 'memory' (*mnēmē*) as 'recollection' (*anamnesis*), which generates knowledge, with the mere 'reminding' (*hypomnesis*) that written words can prompt in someone who already knows. Consequently, she fails to focus on the key point that the access to writing is in fact criticized primarily for its poisonous effects on memory/recollection. She also misleadingly suggests that, according to the *Phaedrus*, 'language takes its power exclusively from the truth' (61), clearly conflating persuasion and opinion with learning and knowledge: Plato was only too aware of the persuasive power of language even in the absence of truth. Much more space is devoted to the original contention that the *Republic* contains a strong defence of philosophical writing, since in the dialogue Socrates argues 'only against the symbols made by conventional poets', and 'lays out a positive argument for a type of symbol-making that should be embraced in the ideal city' (29). I am not persuaded, however, that Plato's nuanced epistemological and metaphysical discussion of images, models, shadows, and imitations is best captured through Allen's terminology of 'symbols', and her rather rigid distinction between deceitful 'symbol-making' and non-imitative and metaphysically sound 'model-making'. Reflections on a mirror are not symbols of what is reflected; a painting of Socrates is not a symbol of Socrates; the Homeric tales about the gods are not symbols of the gods (although they may, of course, be interpreted symbolically); trees are not symbols of the Form of the Tree. But the more problematic part of Allen's argument is her suggestion that Plato's deep awareness of the pragmatic power of the use of images and models can explain his choice *to write*:

> he sought to be a 'craftsman of the fine', producing metaphysically accurate and pragmatically efficacious images and models, among which the masses of democratic citizens, whether intelligent or not, might graze and thereby assimilate new rules for action in line with the principles of justice.... As these citizens would internalize new principles and rules of action, a new constitution would also come into being. (68)

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This presupposes that Plato aimed to effect political change by educating the masses directly; that in classical Athens written dialogues could have been reasonably expected to reach 'the masses'; that they would have done so more easily and effectively than, say, oral poems, rhetorical displays, or speeches delivered in front of the assembly. All of these presuppositions are extremely controversial; and, even if we granted them all, Allen would have explained Plato's choice of writing only for a section of the corpus – why did he decide to write dialogues such as the *Meno*, the *Theaetetus*, the *Parmenides*, or the *Timaeus*, for example? While refreshingly imaginative and bold in some of its argumentative moves, Allen's explanation of Platonic writing from a political perspective fails to convince.

Alex Long's compact monograph *Conversation and Self-sufficiency in Plato*[12] does not approach Plato's writing and method along the well-trodden path of examining the reasons for his choice of the dialogue form, but from the perspective of the different (albeit related) question of whether, in what sense, and why Plato thought that philosophy is 'essentially dialogical' (3). From the very beginning, Long lucidly points out that we should distinguish various senses in which philosophy can be said to be dialogical: philosophical inquiry or discovery, philosophical teaching, philosophical protreptic or conversion might not all require *dialogos* equally, or might require dialogue in different ways, or for different reasons. Long also distinguishes, crucially, between the ordinary sense of *dialogos* as 'interpersonal conversation', that is, a 'question-and-answer exchange, or some other exchange of words. . .undertaken orally by two or more people' (5), and the model of 'internal dialogue' as silent 'intrapersonal exchange' with oneself which Plato first developed as the result of his reflection on the historical Socrates' reliance on conversation: 'the emergence of internal dialogue marks an important shift on the question of whether an individual person can be intellectually or dialectically self-sufficient' (5). The book examines Plato's views on the importance of conversation for philosophy in the *Phaedrus* and the *Protagoras* (Chapters 1–2); his introduction of Socratic internal dialogue in the *Hippias Major* (Chapter 3); the development of the broader idea of thought as silent dialogue in the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* (Chapter 6); and the relation between conversation and internal dialogue, including the question why the latter never completely supersedes the former as a component of philosophical practice, and why conversation still plays a key role in the *Phaedo* (Chapter 4), the *Republic* (Chapter 5), and the *Laws* (Chapter 7). Long assumes, correctly, that 'to understand what Plato wishes to tell us about conversation we have. . .to study what he shows us about conversation' (25) 'in action', through the interplay of the characters in his dialogues. This assumption results not only in nuanced and sophisticated close readings of specific passages, but also in the reconstruction of the argumentative architecture of the dialogues as wholes, and of the pragmatic function of some of their parts. Although the chapters can be read as self-contained case studies on Plato on the philosophical importance of *dialogos*, a unifying developmentalist narrative runs through them: it is his sensitivity to the functions and values of Socrates' conversations that prompted Plato both to introduce the model of philosophical thought as internalized dialectic and to reflect on the sufficiency and necessity of such a model in different

[12] *Conversation and Self-sufficiency in Plato*. By Alex G. Long. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. 184. Hardback £32, ISBN: 978-0-19-969535-5.

contexts. There is much to be learned from each of the chapters of this excellent book, and although one could inevitably complain that some key texts and issues have not been included (for example, the relation between conversation and self-knowledge, or the epistemological question of how dialogical agreement could ever have been considered by Plato as a sufficient basis for discovery and knowledge), the book's coverage is more than adequate. Long's developmentalist presupposition probably will not be to everyone's taste, but as far as I can judge the credibility and value of his main points and distinctions do not depend on it. Although one of the lessons of his insightful analyses is that we should not make generic claims about *the* function of *dialogos* in Plato's 'philosophy', one conclusion bringing together the several threads of his focused discussions, and summarizing their exegetical and philosophical dividends, would have been welcome.

Aviezer Tucker's *Plato for Everyone*[13] starts from the assumption that Plato's dialogues, and the 'provocative', 'intellectually stimulating', and philosophically 'relevant' figure of Socrates which they portray, are often 'lost in translation' to modern readerships: 'the modern reader and student who does not possess excellent knowledge of classical Greece and its history, culture, religion, art, and literature often misses. . .much of what the ancient readers would have found poignantly relevant' (5), and especially their deeply 'humorous' and 'subversive' character. While this diagnosis contains a grain of truth, Tucker's remedy appears too extreme. Instead of offering to the reader some tools to interpret the cultural context and literary nuances of Plato's dialogues, and to unlock their philosophical importance, he proposes to do something analogous to what is undertaken in contemporary adaptations of 'stage classics'. He recasts five Platonic dialogues (*Crito*, *Meno*, *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, and *Phaedo*) in the form of short stories set in the present United States, with the purpose of making them 'more accessible to a wider public' (in principle 'everyone', but especially college and high-school students), 'without compromising the philosophical essence of the dialogues, the drama, and the humor' (8). Thus the *Crito* becomes a short story depicting Socrates' conversation with his friend 'Chris' on whether Socrates should accept conscription, or escape to Canada to avoid risking his life in an unjust war; the *Meno* is turned into a conversation between Socrates and 'Miles' on the essence of being 'cool', and whether 'coolness' can be taught; Tucker's adaptation of the *Euthyphro* shows Socrates debating about religion with the televangelist 'Thrip', who wants to disown his son for having a girlfriend; the *Apology* is recast as Socrates' defence speech in front of the charges brought against him by some of his students' parents, according to which he corrupted their children and should thus be fired; finally, the *Phaedo* is still a report of Socrates' words and actions before his death, but is now set in a hospice, where Socrates, suffering from a form of sclerosis, has decided to die, and justifies his choice of euthanasia to his friends, including 'Fred'. One difficulty with Tucker's enterprise is that, for his recasting of the dramatic context of the dialogues in modern form to be worthwhile, the assumption must be that something important is missed by those readers who are unable to decrypt that context in its original Platonic garb. But Tucker suggests that 'the philosophical questions, contents and methods of the

[13] *Plato for Everyone*. By Aviezer Tucker. Amherst, NY, Prometheus Books, 2013. Pp. 256. Paperback £16.99, ISBN: 978-1-61614-654-2.

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dialogues' are their 'essential and important aspects', while 'the classical cultural context is inessential and can even be distracting' when readers try to come to grips with the philosophy of the Platonic dialogues (7). One might wonder, then, whether the modern dramatic settings that Tucker creates are just meant as sugar-coating to entice his readers to swallow the philosophical pill, and whether he thinks that the original Platonic settings had a similar instrumental function. What is certain is that several scene-setting details with which Tucker sprinkles his short stories have no relation to the Platonic original, and no detectable function in the development of the argument. Another question is whether Tucker's re-interpretations of the dialogues are faithful, as promised, to the essence of Plato's philosophy and method, and especially whether what 'everyone' will be able to find in the book is, ultimately, *Plato's problems* – after all, Tucker suggests that what is central is 'asking what the problem is that Plato attempts to answer as the central issue of each dialogue' (11). The answer is not straightforward. Tucker tends to remain reasonably faithful to the originals in his transpositions of the dialogical development and arguments of the dialogues. His version of the *Meno*, *On the Essence of Cool*, is the most precise from this point of view. One often wonders, however, whether more of Plato is distorted through the lens of Tucker's modern transpositions than would be lost to modern readers on account of their distance from the ancient context. For example, do questions about the nature and origin of 'being cool' really have the same kind of resonance, urgency, and implications today as questions about the nature and origin of *aretē* had in classical Athens? Do the mystic tales of mushroom-smoking great-aunts dabbling in the occult (66) carry the same kind of authority as the wisdom of priests and poets did at the dawn of the fourth century BC? Or is the question of whether one should accept risking one's life by participating in a 'senseless' (15) and '*unjust*' (43) war, or rather go AWOL, really comparable, from a Platonic perspective, with the question of whether one should abide by an unjust sentence rather than break the laws of the city? Although this is never spelled out in the argument, in Tucker's version of the *Crito* Socrates' choice to accept conscription would force him to commit injustice against *others* (the enemy), while in Plato's version the dilemma is between suffering injustice and disobeying the laws, thus committing injustice against *them*. Also as a result of this, one wonders whether the set of philosophical issues involving Socrates' approach towards his execution and death in prison are really overlapping, or at least consistent, with those relevant to current debates about euthanasia. Even when the structure of the argument in Tucker's short stories mirrors quite faithfully the Platonic original, several details are misrepresented, or added or transformed without any obvious reason. To focus on the *Meno* again, Tucker's Socrates connects his lack of knowledge of coolness with the fact that he is not cool (48), a move absent in Plato; Gorgias' point on the multiplicity and *relativity* of *aretē* is incorrectly conflated with a form of Protagorean *relativism* (50); the status of future reincarnations is connected by Tucker's Socrates to the quantity of beans we eat during our lives, with an absurd parody of a Pythagorean prescription that has nothing to do with Plato's apparently serious point on the importance of piety and morality for the future destiny of our souls (67); Miles's uneducated chauffeur answers confidently and correctly all the questions about logic which Socrates asks him (72), unlike Meno's slave-boy, who is, crucially, first led into *aporia*. Tucker's book aspires to provide a version of 'Plato for everyone', replacing the difficult original for some readers, and perhaps inspiring others to try it. In the end, it is not clear whether readers who, for

whatever reason, find Plato difficult to digest would find Tucker's retelling easier or more palatable. I believe that some students might read Tucker's short stories with some profit *after* having read Plato's dialogues. Identifying what is different in Tucker's versions, and whether and why the differences matter, could be a useful exercise for students of Plato at all levels.

Some of the 'minor Socratics' feature, but not prominently, in some of the accounts of Socrates and Plato's Socrates discussed above (Ahbel-Rappe's guide and the volumes edited by Morrison and by Johnson and Tarrant). *The Circle of Socrates*, edited by George Boys-Stones and Christopher Rowe,[14] introduces the readers to a selection 'of the more interesting and illuminating material by the first-generation followers of Socrates' (vii) – the 'circle' of the title – providing new (sometimes the first) English translations of a representative selection of evidence on twenty-seven 'Socratics', together with a judiciously small anthology from Plato and Xenophon (revised translations from Cooper's Hackett *Complete Works* of Plato and Sanders' forthcoming Hackett translation of Xenophon). The compact introduction clarifies the purpose of the volume: placing the first-generation Socratics in a fruitful conversation which will allow scholars interested in the historical Socrates to (try to) access him and his legacy in a more complete and nuanced way, and which will assist scholars working on Plato or Xenophon to appreciate better that the contributions of these two preeminent Socratics did not arise and develop in a vacuum, or in conversation with Socrates *alone*. The sense of this complex and polyphonic conversation is nicely emphasized throughout the volume, thanks to the arrangement of the texts within each of the eleven thematic chapters (these include key philosophical themes such as 'Argument and Truth', 'Happiness and the Good', 'Body and Soul', 'Education', and more specifically Socratic concerns, such as 'Alcibiades and Politics', 'Aspasia and the Role of Women', and 'Lesser Divinities and Socrates' Sign'). Each text is preceded by a short introductory sentence by the editors, which clarifies its thematic connection with the neighbouring texts, and often (re-)constructs a dialectical interaction between these texts. For example, consider the following sequence of introductory sentences for texts 20, 21, and 22 in Chapter 1 (all emphases added): 1.20 'Xenophon's Socrates is ridiculed by a sophist for his constancy' (*Memorabilia* 4.4.5–7); 1.21 '*But* if what you think ideally remains constant, Antisthenes *argues* that how you express it ought to change depending on the audience' (Porphyry, *Questions on Homer's Odyssey* 1.1–3.2); 1.22 'Plato's Socrates *agrees*' (*Phaedrus* 270c–272c). Even if this kind of interweaving of dialectical sequences might appear in some cases deeply conjectural, there is still much to be learned from the editors' acute suggestions, provided that we keep in mind their warning that the proposed signposting is meant to be 'supportive rather than directive' (xi). The subtle narrative created by the texts' introductory sentences and arrangement is supplemented by concise but informative introductions at the beginning of each chapter, providing helpful overviews of the topic and of the evidence included, and drawing broader interpretive connections. The volume is definitely a success in conveying to the reader a vivid sense of the philosophical richness of fragmentary material which is too

[14] *The Circle of Socrates. Readings in the First-generation Socratics*. Edited and translated by George Boys-Stones and Christopher Rowe. Indianapolis, IN, Hackett, 2013. Pp. 336. Hardback £48, ISBN: 978-1-60384-937-1; paperback £19.95, ISBN: 978-1-60384-936-4.

often disregarded altogether, or approached only with the aim of identifying the original input of the founders of the 'Socratic schools' which developed and flourished later in the fourth century BC and at the beginning of the Hellenistic age (such as the Megarians, Cynics, and Cyrenaics). With their focus on the first-generation Socratics and their dialectical interactions, it is not surprising that Boys-Stones and Rowe are not interested in this diachronic development. What might appear more problematic is that the thematic arrangement of the material leaves the readers without any picture of what the overall philosophical outlook of each of the main Socratics was: for example, how Aristippus' views on argument, happiness, pleasure, the soul, education, love, and (of course) Socrates and his other associates were interconnected. But the volume provides the readers with the tools to begin exploring by themselves the question of what this overall philosophical outlook could have looked like, or whether any attempt to reconstruct a systematic philosophy of the first-generation Socratics would be misguided.

One of the main 'Socratic schools' is the subject of Ugo Zilioli's *The Cyrenaics*.[15] A question which captures his interest at the outset is whether Aristippus the Elder was the *founder* of the Cyrenaic school, that is, whether he was a 'real philosopher' (47) who propounded a doctrinal system that would remain the backbone of a unitary and systematic Cyrenaic philosophy throughout the fourth century BC. I am not sure that this way of framing the question of the existence of a Cyrenaic school, and Aristippus' role in it, leads us very far. Zilioli seems to be working with an excessively rigid scheme, according to which reacting to those scholarly views that make Aristippus' doctrinal contribution to Cyrenaic philosophy minimal must consist in identifying an Aristippean philosophy in our extant sources, including, crucially, Plato. In particular, Zilioli argues that the 'subtler' thinkers mentioned at *Theaetetus* 156a3 are in fact Aristippus and the early Cyrenaics, and, more generally, that the attack on the thesis that knowledge is perception in the first part of the *Theaetetus* is, at least in part, an attack on Cyrenaic epistemology (53–62). The suggestion (not a new one) is interesting, and there is no denying that there are analogies between the positions attacked in the *Theaetetus* and Cyrenaic epistemology as we can reconstruct it from some of our scant evidence. But Zilioli's case is ultimately weak, and his arguments are based on emphasizing broad elements of similarity while overlooking vital philosophical differences, sometimes because of superficial readings of important details in the sources. For example, according to the theory of perception of the 'subtler' thinkers, things are not, in and of themselves, any of the ways in which they variously appear to be to different perceivers and in different circumstances, because perceived qualities, just as perceptions, come into existence only relationally within private perceptual encounters. According to a key testimony on the Cyrenaic, which Zilioli mentions as a parallel (Sextus Empiricus, M 7.191–2), we infallibly know 'that we are being sweetened' (that is, that we experience a present sense-perception of sweetness), but we cannot know whether what caused the perception is or is not sweet, because we 'may be sweetened by something that is not sweet'. But according to the perceptual theory of the 'subtler' thinker we *know* that the external object is not, in itself, sweet, and that it is not, in itself, not-sweet; that my impression is not caused by any corresponding externally subsistent

[15] *The Cyrenaics.* By Ugo Zilioli. Durham, Acumen, 2012. Pp. xiii + 224. Hardback £40, ISBN: 978-1-84465-290-7; paperback £22.99, ISBN: 978-1-84465-763-6.

quality is not a possibility that prevents me from knowing the state of the external world, but a foundational principle of the theory. The identification of a criticism of Cyrenaic epistemology in the wooden horse analogy at *Theaetetus* 184d (63–70) is also unconvincing. That analogy stresses the insufficiency of any theory which identifies knowledge with individual sense-perceptions only, on the basis of the construal of the sense-organs as the agents of perceptions, and in the absence of any unifying and elaborating principle; but we have no reason to assume that the Cyrenaics were committed to either position (in fact, in the notorious Cyrenaic jargon, it is not my *tongue* that is 'sweetened' and my *eye* that is 'whitened', but '*I* am being sweetened' and '*I* am being whitened'). The thesis, defended in Chapter 4, that the Cyrenaics espoused a form of metaphysical indeterminacy, which underlies their 'subjective' epistemology, 'hedonistic' ethics, and 'behavioural' theory of meaning, is equally difficult to support on the basis of the evidence provided – and is, to begin with, theoretically underdeveloped. For example, the suggestion that, as perceiving subjects, 'we are effectively confronted with an undifferentiated *lump of matter*' (83, emphasis added) will not be easy to swallow even for those scholars who, like Zilioli, are ready to associate the term 'indeterminism' to figures such as Protagoras, Gorgias, Democritus, or Pyrrho. Some readers will also feel that Zilioli tends to be too cavalier with his conjectures. On the basis of the alleged philosophical affinity between Aristippus' and Protagoras' doctrines, for example, he suggests that 'there may be good reasons for thinking that they met' in Cyrene (20). But this conjecture is difficult to square with the dating of Aristippus' birth accepted by Zilioli (around 430 BC); Aristippus could not have been older than ten at this meeting, since Protagoras died around 420 BC. And why should the affinity require us to postulate an actual encounter anyway? True, as Zilioli reminds us, 'Aristippus and Protagoras did not live in the contemporary world, where mutual influence can be exercised by conversing over the telephone or over the internet' (20) – but the dead Protagoras' written work(s) might have been a sufficient source of inspiration for the young Aristippus. Zilioli acknowledges that the approach which he adopts in his monograph 'is thoroughly revisionary' in its attempt 'to modify fairly widespread assumptions about the Cyrenaics' (viii). Such an approach is to be welcomed whenever it is based on new evidence, novel lines of reasoning, and sound argument. Overall, however, this is not consistently the case with Zilioli's book, and Lenin's maxim according to which 'to get a bent iron straight, we have to bend it from the opposite side' (viii), cited with approval by the author against possible criticisms that his interpretation is 'excessively novel or radical', does not strike me as a healthy scholarly maxim, let alone for what is presented as an introduction to the subject which should serve as a tool for undergraduate students as well as for more advanced readers. Nevertheless, if used with generous pinches of critical circumspection, the book (which also includes a useful appendix containing 'Cyrenaic Testimonies in Translation') will have the merit of prompting students of ancient philosophy to (re-)consider the possible historical and philosophical relationships between Cyrenaic philosophy and earlier, contemporary, and later Hellenistic philosophies.

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