

INTRODUCTION

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This volume of Proceedings reflects the special program planned to mark the 25th anniversary of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy, whose activities began some years before we started to publish annual proceedings. In order to celebrate our quarter century in existence, we invited some contemporary scholars within the field of ancient philosophy to deliver a public lecture on their current research interests. Since this was an exceptional year, we also departed from our standard practice of inviting commentators to respond to these public lectures. As a result, the BACAP Proceedings this year contains eight invited lectures which span a wide range of topics. As one might expect, of course, Plato and Aristotle are heavily represented in these pages but Seneca and Proclus are also included, along with other less mentioned names like that of Xenocrates. Following our standard practice from previous years, this comprehensive introduction is intended to serve our readers as a poor substitute for an index of names or of contents.

I.

With his characteristic aplomb, John Dillon swims against the tide of conventional wisdom while trying to recover the strands of atomism within the old Academy, following Aristotle's broad hints about such a tradition in his critique of Plato in *De Caelo* III. There the connection is made through the Pythagoreans, whose belief that everything is number suggests to Aristotle that the natural world is constituted from mathematical monads, which are analogous to Democritean atoms in being indivisible entities. In the same way, he reports Democritus and Plato to be adopting atomistic approaches to natural bodies. Dillon notes that there are parallels in other works of Aristotle for this controversial strategy of linking the Platonists with the Atomists.

The explicit purpose of Dillon's lecture, however, is not so much to illustrate Aristotle's polemical method but rather to ask how justified was his critique of the early Academy as a whole. With regard to Plato, for instance, Dillon claims that Aristotle is not being unreasonable when he identifies the basic triangles of the *Timaeus* as atomic, though he is being

But this thesis raises a conundrum for Dillon; namely, how could Plato and other Platonists have disregarded the problem of irrational numbers and incommensurable lines. By way of answer, Dillon suggests that Plato refused to analyze the line into points because the point is simply a geometrical postulate, and so he posits indivisible minimal lines. Similarly, Dillon considers it possible that Plato may have taken incommensurables as necessary postulates of geometry, while denying that such entities are represented in the physical world where bodies are constructed from combinations of minimal triangles. This implies, for instance, that the diagonal of any physical square will be commensurable with its sides, even though a purely geometrical square would not. However, my difficulty with Dillon's conjectural solution to the conundrum is that it fails to explain why Plato should have made such a fuss in *Laws* VII about the discovery of incommensurability and its importance for the education of the citizens of Magnesia, if it were merely a geometrical fiction like the point.

II.

In her thought-provoking lecture on "Mind, Soul and Movement in Plato and Aristotle," Sarah Broadie sets out to consider two issues concerning the links between the psychology of Plato and Aristotle with reference, first, to the inanimate motions of the natural elements and, secondly, to what counts as Reason. Broadie begins with a question about the rationale for Plato's second beginning in the *Timaeus* where he introduces the Receptacle with some fanfare to supplement the previous division between the works of Reason and the products of Necessity. Roughly formulated, her answer is that the four elements, which were previously taken for granted as being available to the rational Craftsman, are subsequently treated as being problematic with the study of Necessity, which in the topic of the second beginning. According to Broadie's analysis, the Receptacle is posited to solve a pair of problems about the materials; namely, their ontological status and their motion in the universe.

With regard to the ontological status of the four elements, Broadie raises a question as to whether they belong to the realm of becoming like the formed cosmos itself, which is perceptible to the senses. If so, however, the difficulty is that Plato's model for becoming is that of being constructed by a craftsman out of pre-existing materials, yet this does not seem to apply to the natural elements themselves. Thus she finds a tension between Plato's two claims about becoming; namely, (1) something counts as becoming if it is an object of sense perception, and (2) for some-

polemical in claiming that these triangles can be broken down into lines and points. According to Dillon, Aristotle is refusing to acknowledge that Plato's atomistic triangles may be simply a scientific postulate designed to explain how the physical world can be treated as a projection of immaterial Forms onto a three-dimensional receptive field. But the basic disagreement between Aristotle and Plato concerns the infinite divisibility of the continuum, which is contradicted by atomism.

Dillon approaches this disagreement indirectly by first considering some of Plato's successors who adopted mathematical atomism, most notably Xenocrates who is criticized by Aristotle for positing indivisible lines. For instance, in *Metaphysics* XIV.3 Aristotle attacks the Xenocratean view that the numbers Two, Three and Four, combined with matter, can somehow be regarded as the first principles of lines, planes and solids respectively; and so are indivisible minima in each of the categories of entity. However, Dillon suggests that Xenocrates was addressing a problem inherited from Plato; namely, how geometrical figures, as well as numbers, can possibly be derived from the same first principles, such as the Monad and the Dyad. Apparently, Speusippus tried to solve the problem by postulating distinct yet analogous first principles for each level of reality; whereas Xenocrates posited Two as the Form of Line, Three as the Form of Plane, and Four as the Form of Solid. Thus the Xenocratean view involves indivisible minima at each level of geometrical reality, such as the Form of Line which implies that any given line is constructed from minimal lines and not points. But Aristotle objects that any notion of minimal lines, planes or solids, conflicts with the principles of mathematics, and specifically with the infinite divisibility of the continuum.

Finally, Dillon considers Heraclides of Pontus as a rather unorthodox exponent of atomism within the Academy, who propounded a theory of "unarticulated particles" as the basis for all sense-perceptible entities. He suggests that Heraclides may also be seen as continuing the Platonic critique of Democritus for the lack of purposefulness in his construction of the universe. In addition, by making his particles smooth and free from joints on the outside, Heraclides seems to be avoiding a potential objection to the hooked atoms of Democritus. Unlike these atoms, which never change configuration, the Heraclidean *ongkoi* can change into each other like the molecular bodies of the *Timaeus*. In general, therefore, Dillon claims that Heraclides' theory can be taken within its historical context as a plausible development of the Platonic tradition. This tends to support his general thesis that a certain kind of "atomism" was not incompatible with the spirit of Platonism, given that indivisible magnitudes were postulated to avoid difficulties associated with the infinite divisibility of continuous magnitudes.

thing to become is for it to be made like a craft object. In fact, Broadie argues, it is not even clear that the material elements are themselves objects of sense perception, though Plato cites them as causes for the sense perceptibility of objects that are composed out of them; e.g., earth and fire are responsible for tangibility and visibility. Hence Broadie concludes that there is no place for the four material elements within the initial dichotomy between the intelligible model of the cosmos and the sensible copy of it. The most plausible way to think of them is as principles of the copy, since they are sources of its sense perceptibility and so ensure its metaphysical difference from the model.

Broadie's general diagnosis of the apparent incoherence in the notion of the Receptacle is that Plato was forced to postulate it as support for the being and motion of the four materials, so as to avoid endowing them with soul. Yet she acknowledges that such a rationale is not supported by the fact that Aristotle simply posits the four elements as inanimate, while still having their own internal principles of motion and rest, without needing any metaphysically prior "space" to ensure their existence or motion. The traditional metaphysical explanation is that Aristotle dispenses with the Receptacle because he rejects the complementary notion of transcendent Forms, so that the simple bodies cannot depend on such an entity. However, Broadie does not find this explanation satisfactory because she thinks that some cosmological anxiety drove Plato to postulate Receptacle-cum-Forms for the four materials; and so she explores some reasons why Aristotle may not have shared that anxiety. She thinks the clue lies in Aristotle's more advanced notion of the soul, by contrast with Plato who thinks that the power of autonomous locomotion entails a soul with reason. For Aristotle, however, the nutritive soul is a necessary condition for anything to be ensouled, so that the apparently autonomous motion of fire does not lead him to infer that it is alive because its 'growth' is indefinite and shapeless.

Prompted by a remark of Aristotle's, Broadie concludes her lecture with some speculations about the similarity between the properties of *Nous* and those of the Receptacle; e.g., that both must be "unmixed" or lacking in definite quality, so as to perform their functions as receivers of forms. Furthermore, the *Nous* of Anaxagoras is akin to the Receptacle as being a separative principle, which sorts things into definite kinds. But Plato often describes the work of the intellect in terms of distinguishing and discriminating. On the basis of these similarities, Broadie suggests that the Receptacle in the *Timaeus* is an aspect of cosmogonic Reason, or a kind of Aristotelian *nous pathetikos*. Since its cosmogonic role is that of a mother, she finds it plausible to think of the Receptacle as a complementary rational principle to the Demiurge, as father of becoming. Thus she wonders why

Plato did not explicitly treat the Receptacle as an aspect of divine Reason, though she refuses to speculate further on his reasons. However one might object that Plato cannot treat the Receptacle in this way if he wants it to explain the refractory character of the material world, which is never completely mastered by cosmic Reason.

III.

In his therapeutic lecture on "The Efficacy of Myth in Plato's *Republic*," Jonathan Lear identifies Plato as the first person in the Western tradition to think seriously about the education of the young as the key to the future well-being of a whole society. The problem of education is dramatically illustrated through the breakdown in the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus, who has already adopted an outlook on the world that cannot be shaken by elenctic argument. In this sense, rational argument already comes too late for him. Consequently, the dominant question which emerges from this breakdown is how to shape outlooks and for that purpose Socrates engages Glaucon and Adeimantus in a friendly discussion. They want Socrates to show them that justice is a good for itself, rather than the sort of instrumental good that is praised for its social advantages within popular morality. Lear suggests that Plato sees this as challenging the Socratic idea of reflective equilibrium, since this test for one's ethical beliefs may not escape from the closed circle of the accumulated prejudices of our age. The difficulty is that, once an ethical outlook has been instilled (largely by non-rational social conditioning), philosophical debate may not help to induce reflective discomfort.

Lear claims that Plato responds to this difficulty by examining how cultural messages penetrate and mold the psyche of young children. This is the point of critically examining the stories about the gods told by the poets, but Lear focuses primarily on the process by means of which the objectionable contents take hold of the mind of the young because they cannot recognize an allegory as such. For this reason they cannot grasp the deeper meaning of the story or subject it to critical scrutiny. This inability of the young to locate allegory within the larger structure of things is what Lear calls their "lack of orientation." What the young lack is the ability to distinguish surface from depth by means of which we can recognize allegory as such, with the result that they experience allegories as if they were true. Lear thinks that Plato is here drawing attention to an important characteristic of childhood experience; namely, the power which stories have

over children derives from the fact that they cannot quite locate the story as such. He suggests that, in *Republic* I, Plato is drawing attention to the continuing influence throughout adulthood of the power of childhood stories, even though they are now recognized as allegories. For example, Cephalus is influenced by childhood stories about Hades to spend his money on sacrifices to appease the gods.

In general, Lear suggests that the *Republic* can be read as Plato's attempt to explore the power of myth and allegory. For instance, the myths that Cephalus heard in childhood disturbed him as an old man, and this fact should disturb us. Lear reads the Grand Lie as a prophylactic for children against all other misleading myths because it claims that all their experience up to now has been a dream. By contrast, the myth of the Cave is an allegory for adults with the same basic structure. But what performs the therapeutic work for adult readers of the *Republic* is the movement from the Grand Lie to the Cave, both of which are essentially reactive allegories about the epistemic condition of such readers. Lear suggests that Plato meant this to work as an antidote; namely, the outcome of the movement of allegory is to put these readers in the best attainable position, given the realities of their early life in a flawed culture. Consequently, Lear argues, the myth of Er at the end of the *Republic* is both therapeutic and argumentative, since it exercises both conscious and unconscious influences on the audience in their search for the good life.

IV.

In his comprehensive lecture on "Moral Theory and Moral Improvement" John Cooper considers Seneca as a somewhat atypical Stoic moral thinker. While displaying a clear grasp of Stoic theory in all its ramifications, Seneca writes primarily as a spiritual guide to readers who are trying to heal their disorders or to reform their lives by understanding the truths of Stoicism. Thus he does not write as an expert but rather as a seeker after truth who is attempting to grasp the Stoic way of life, so as to shape his own life in accordance with it. Cooper points out, however, that Seneca is typical of Stoicism in the Roman Imperial period when thinkers like Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius showed a deep interest in curing spiritual ills, as well as in moral self-improvement, which are both taken to depend on a better understanding of Stoic philosophical truths. In fact, according to the Stoics, accepting these truths for the right philosophical reasons is the only secure basis for a proper way of life. By contrast, for instance, the Epicurean philosopher does not aim at improving his understanding but rather at maintaining a constant pleasurable state of feeling.

In the guise of a spiritual director, Seneca writes in an inspirational style that uses many rhetorical devices to win his audience over to the Stoic way of life. But Cooper argues that Seneca, in his zeal for spiritual reform or conversion, sometimes forgets that the ultimate goal of Stoic philosophy is to improve one's own philosophical understanding of the reasons why the truths of Stoicism really are true. Indeed, he often adopts a rather dismissive attitude to the knowledge of these matters as part of the good life. Consequently, his Stoicism is different in practice from Greek Stoicism, even if it retains the same philosophical doctrines. By way of evidence, Cooper notes Seneca's frequent disparagement of Stoic philosophical argumentation in his *Letters to Lucilius*, where he dismisses the syllogisms of the dialecticians as being worse than useless in the face of real life problems such as fear of death. Seneca is particularly opposed to the Greek obsession with logical paradoxes and fallacies as reflected in Chrysippus and other Stoics. But Cooper notes that such a polemic leads Seneca to cast doubt on the value of knowing anything at all about these arguments, and even to go so far as to claim that they are harmful. In general, Cooper thinks that Seneca's disparagement of the Zenonian syllogisms betrays a serious undervaluation not only of the study of logic but also of philosophical reasoning itself. Cooper claims to have shown in the case of some of Zeno's syllogisms that they contain relevant pointers for leading the Stoic way of life, provided one attends to them in the right philosophical way. By contrast, Seneca prefers rhetorical appeals to a person's feelings over solid philosophical arguments with even true conclusions. He then dismisses Zenonian syllogisms as useless for moral improvement. In this respect, he deviates from the original Stoics who were very firm about the greater value of sound reasoning for establishing such conclusions.

In conclusion, Cooper recognizes that Seneca is writing his *Letters* for non-philosophers, so it would be unreasonable to criticize him for not telling his readers that they cannot hope to live a happy life without becoming complete Stoic philosophers. Instead, Cooper criticizes him for divorcing his advice to live the Stoic life from the reasons provided by Stoic philosophical theory for living that way; with the result that it becomes doubtful whether his addressees can be making real progress towards the virtuous and happy life if they follow his advice. Since virtue, according to the Stoics, is a matter of rational and intellectual understanding of a whole system of reasons that support acting and living a certain way, then anyone who wants to make progress towards that goal must never forget that the only way to do so is to increase his understanding of just why

those ways of living and acting are the right ones. However, as Cooper points out in conclusion, Seneca seems to rely on rhetorical rather than philosophical aspects of his presentations to non-philosophers in his *Lettters* and *Moral Essays*. As a result, his brand of Stoicism plays down the philosophical argumentation that supports his ethical conclusions, which are promoted through rhetorically induced feelings in favor of them.

V.

In his memorable lecture on "Memory and Human Time" Stanley Rosen begins by asking how we experience the present in human time. In addressing that question, Rosen takes Plato's mythical account of human time to indicate the technical impossibility of giving a logos of the lived present. He considers a paradigmatic passage from the *Philebus* in which Socrates discusses the role of memory and anticipation in our knowledge that we are undergoing pleasure. Rosen formulates the problem as follows: If the present lacks an integrity or independence that distinguishes it from the past and the future, it is unclear how a human life is possible. We live only derivatively in the past and the future, since life unfolds within the present; yet the present seems to be either an amalgam of the past and future or an atemporal point, like the moment in Aristotle.

In the *Philebus* Socrates discusses whether the most choice-worthy life is that of pure thought or that of continuous pleasure. But the life of pleasure seems impossible without (personal) knowledge which transcends the present moment. Wisdom and pleasure are both conditions of the soul, though it is not obvious that discursive knowledge is necessary for knowing that one is now experiencing pleasure. Yet what is necessary for pleasure or for any other feeling like fear or love is an awareness that this is mine. If it were possible to separate pleasure from all forms of awareness, this would not be a livable human life, any more than the life of pure thought would be. For any livable human life, it is necessary to be aware that it is I who am living this life before I can choose it for myself, and this awareness is closely linked to the temporal present. In Rosen's metaphorical terms, awareness is the human face of the 'now' that is able to turn backwards and forwards, precisely because its primary residence is the present.

Rosen thinks that one of the questions raised indirectly by Plato's *Philebus* is how a life of pure thinking could be anything but anonymous. He argues that if we are entirely occupied by the contemplation of Platonic Ideas or the eternal order, there can be no reference in our thoughts to our temporal self, which becomes oblivious to itself. Rosen suggests that the

happiness that comes from the mixed life is due to the pleasure we feel in thinking, rather than to the thinking itself. Furthermore, he claims that thinking is pleasant because we humans are incomplete. In effect, he suggests that human time arises with the mixed life, where self-awareness or a sense of inwardness is to be found. It is through such self-awareness that I possess my life as mine, not in the exercise of pure thought. From this standpoint, Rosen claims (perhaps going beyond Plato) that the activity of investigating the best life is itself superior to living the life of pure thought, since we could not know that we were living it. In other words, the life of pure thought is not a possible (human) life. Thus Rosen seems to be rejecting the Platonic ideal of imitating the divine as a possible goal for the best human life.

In the second part of his lecture, Rosen analyses in some detail the discussion of memory and anticipation in the *Philebus*, where it is embedded in a complex analysis of pleasure and sense-perception. As a result, Rosen concludes that in both memory and recollection there is a preliminary step initiated within the present in the form of "taking note of." When we recollect we 'take note of' in the sense of relocating a memory that has been lost—thus both memory and recollection take place in the present. It is a striking fact that Socrates does not emphasize the present in his discussion of memory and recollection, presumably since these are of the past. Rosen suggests that it is very tempting to dwell on the past and the future because the temporal present is so hard to locate and define. The "lived present" is not the same as the "now" that we attach to each passing moment, since the present is not composed of a definite number of "nows." Instead, the present is made up of remembering (the past) and anticipating (the future). Taking note or being aware is necessarily an act that takes place in the present. But there is no formal or conceptual analysis of the exact structure of the present moment within human or lived time. Human existence includes both the original experience or imprinting, and the memory of that imprint as well as some anticipation of the future which is irreducible to physical imprints in the brain.

VI.

In his far-reaching lecture on "Definitions and Ideas: Aristotle, Proclus and the Socrates of the *Parmenides*," Carlos Steel begins by drawing attention to Aristotle's distinction between the historical Socrates and the Socrates whom Plato used as a mouthpiece for an ontological theory of

Forms. He notes that Proclus rejected this distinction as a false opposition because he thinks that the Pythagoreans had already advocated such a theory, as evidenced by Plato's reference in the *Sophist* to the "friends of the Forms." Proclus also cites the *Parmenides* as evidence that Socrates was a defender of the Theory of Forms, so that Aristotle's contrast between him and Plato is misleading on this point. For many modern scholars, however, the *Parmenides* represents a Platonic self-criticism rather than evidence about the views of the historical Socrates.

But in this lecture Steel is more interested in a second issue raised by Aristotle's testimony about Socrates; namely, the connection between definition and universals, which Plato called Ideas. On this issue Proclus rejects any simple correspondence between universals and Ideas on the grounds that many universal concepts are formed by abstraction and have no corresponding Ideas existing separately by themselves; e.g., there are no transcendent Ideas of artificial objects. More controversially, Proclus also claims that Ideas themselves cannot be defined by discursive dialectic and can be grasped only through intuitive thought. But this seems to fly in the face of clear textual evidence in the *Parmenides* where Plato talks of defining with reference to Ideas.

In his second section, Steel explores some ways in which Proclus reconciles his own interpretation of the historical Socrates with the Platonic texts. According to Proclus, Aristotle was partially right about Socrates seeking to define ethical terms but insists that the latter used the resulting universals as images so as to move on to the hypothesis of Ideas. The reason Proclus gives is that definitions only capture the common character which is the lowest level of universal, so that it is necessary to ascend to the Intelligible Ideas as the true cause of what is universal. The Platonists explain what is common to particulars of the same type as the effect of participation in the intelligible Form, which is separated from sensible particulars. By contrast, Peripatetics reject transcendent Forms in favor of immanent forms, to explain why particulars within any class have the same characteristics. But Proclus, in turn, rejects any such explanation as insufficient because one cannot explain what is common and identical in many particulars by the mere presence of the form in the material substrate. The common character found in similar individuals and expressed in a definition is merely an abstract universal that cannot have any efficacy, according to Proclus, since it is secondary and derivative. Therefore, he thinks, we must search for ultimate paradigmatic causes which explain the presence of what is common and universal in different individuals, and this was the path followed by the historical Socrates. On this point, Proclus sides with his teacher Syrianus who accepts the testimony of Plato rather than that of Aristotle about Socrates.

Furthermore, Proclus makes the controversial claim that Ideas cannot be defined because they lie outside the scope of discursive dialectic, due to their simplicity and identity. But that would appear to conflict with Plato's *Parmenides* which seems to envisage the definition of Ideas as the goal of dialectic. In his commentary on that dialogue, however, Proclus considers arguments for and against the possibility of defining Ideas. For instance, he argues that a definition is a composite of genus and differentiae, so that it cannot be of utterly simple and partless Ideas, but rather is of composite things. Hence Proclus accepts Aristotle's objection to defining separate Platonic Ideas but for very different reasons. Instead of denying their very existence, like Aristotle, he infers that they exist on a level higher than discursive reasoning and that they are grasped only by intellectual intuition, which is superior to discursive knowledge. On this point Proclus is following the Neoplatonic tradition which expanded Aristotle's notion of the simple apprehension of simple substances into a full-blown theory of intellectual intuition as the highest cognitive faculty.

But this leads to another problem; namely, that if the Ideas are held to be beyond all definition then all dialectic seems to be impossible, since it operates by division and definition. The impasse is as follows: either one puts the Ideas beyond all definition, and thereby destroys all dialectic and science, or one makes the Ideas objects of definition, and thereby reduces them to being composite things. In order to escape the impasse, Proclus distinguishes many levels of universal forms; e.g., the common nature of beauty found in many particular things may correspond to a common notion of the beautiful in our soul, and expressed in a logos, though none of these is the transcendent Idea of Beauty Itself. According to Proclus, the immediate object of a scientific definition is the universal logos which the soul finds in its own essence. This is an innate idea in the soul, derived from the transcendent Idea in the intelligible world, but not the same as an abstract Aristotelian universal derived from many sensible particulars of the same kind.

But, if the transcendent Ideas cannot be objects of definition, according to Proclus, how can he explain away the *Parmenides* passages which declare that whoever refuses to define the Ideas will destroy all dialectic? He suggests that one should interpret the term "define" in the broader sense of delimiting or distinguishing, which also applies to the transcendent Ideas with their clear and distinct character. Thus Proclus differentiates between the highest type of dialectic, which transcends all discursive arguments and uses intuitive thinking to contemplate the Ideas, and discursive dialectic which uses division and definition to investigate innate ideas at the

lower level of soul. By way of conclusion, Carlos Steel draws our attention to the parallel distinction within the Neoplatonic tradition between maieutic and theological Platonic dialogues. In the first, aporetic kind of dialogue, Proclus claims that Socrates engages in discursive dialectic with his interlocutors, so as to clarify and test the common notions in their souls. But sometimes Socrates uses his divine inspiration to bring interlocutors to a higher level of speculation, so as to contemplate the Ideas themselves through divine intuition. Such an ascent is characteristic of 'theological' dialogues like the *Phaedrus*, according to Proclus. Of course, he considers Plato's *Parmenides* to be the paradigmatic theological dialogue in which the supreme kind of dialectic deals with the One and the divine classes that proceed from it.

VII.

In his superb lecture on "Eudaimonism, Divinity and Rationality in Greek Ethics," Anthony Long begins by reflecting on some hermeneutical difficulties facing modern scholars in their attempts to appropriate the works of ancient thinkers from our contemporary philosophical perspective without falling into anachronism. This task is particularly difficult for Greek philosophical ethics, according to Long, since the ancient eudaimonist tradition may be more alien to our modern theories of morality than someone like Julia Annas thinks. In order to illustrate the distance between ancient and modern ethical theories, Long considers the connotations of eudaimonia as a term denoting the goal of life, by connecting it with theological presuppositions that are quite foreign to our modes of thought about ethics. It is well known that the term "eudaimonia" does not mean happiness in any modern subjective sense and that it refers to a whole flourishing life, but yet Long does not agree with Annas that it is a weak and unspecific name for the final good. By citing as evidence the fundamental differences over eudaimonia among ancient philosophical schools, Annas claims that it is a thin and vague notion which the Stoics, for instance, can simply identify with virtue, even if that is divorced from worldly success or subjective enjoyment. By contrast, Long argues that the strangeness (for us) of the Stoic notion of happiness actually confirms their commitment to eudaimonia as ideal prosperity which is guaranteed only through virtue. Thus the Stoic view that the virtuous man being tortured on the rack is still happy seems paradoxical to us, not because their concept of eudaimonia is too loose but rather because they use the term to denote the ideally prosperous human condition, which is achieved by a

virtuous soul independent of all external circumstances. Long suggests that, in order to understand the ancient philosophical use of the term "eudaimonia," we must pay attention to its etymological connotations; i.e., the link with divinity (through daimon) suggests that eudaimonia is a god-like state which we can reach only by cultivating what is divine in us, namely, our rational faculty. Therefore, Long claims, we should take very seriously the Platonic and Aristotelian notion that imitation of the divine can be a human life goal.

Long entertains the potential objection that such talk about the divine is little more than a rhetorical trope, which makes no significant difference to the content of ancient ethics, yet he strongly resists such an objection for two reasons. First, it is difficult to understand the ancient emphasis on tranquility and invulnerability, as dispositions associated with human virtue, without linking them with godlikeness and the traditional attributes of divinity. Secondly, Long claims that the reference to godlikeness helps to explain why ancient ethical theories espouse high ideals like complete virtue and wisdom, which seem to presuppose human perfectibility. Such an absolute telos is quite foreign to modern morality, and Long suggests that it should be understood in terms of godlikeness. This is confirmed by Aristotle in *EN* I when he links eudaimonia with divinity, and by the Stoics who claim that the eudaimon person can never become wretched, even if he meets with the greatest misfortunes. This is even quite different from the traditional picture of divine and human relations in which great misfortune is indicative of divine disfavor.

In the rest of his paper, Long's strategy for supporting his thesis is to outline the meaning and history of the term "daimon," and then to discuss how Plato and the Stoics exploit the etymology of eudaimonia in their conceptions of human prosperity as dependent on the guidance of human rationality. Such a strategy is guided by Long's hypothesis that these philosophers were attracted to the term "daimon" because of its traditional connotations of divinity, fate, and a protective or monitoring spirit. To these meanings they add a novel meaning, i.e., the proper functioning of reason or wisdom. For instance, Plato and the Stoics adopt Hesiod's notion of the daimon as a divine monitoring spirit and interpret it as the normative functioning of human reason, thereby making it the determining condition of eudaimonia. Long surveys the Platonic texts which reflect this idea of daimon as rational guardianship and which clearly influenced the Stoics. For instance, *Timaeus* 90a-d sums up the teleological, cosmological, and ethical implications of the human being's psychic constitution, which contains a divine element that is akin to the thoughts and revo-

lutions of the universe. The implication seems to be that the proper cultivation of our daimon involves looking outside ourselves to the motions of the heavens caused by the world-soul, so that we can recognize our affinity to divine rationality. Long also finds among both Greek and Roman Stoics some obvious influences of Plato's notion of daimon on their conception of the soul's divinity and its condition of eudaimonia. This influence is reflected in three points of agreement: (1) that our mind is a divine gift; (2) that our mind is a monitoring and guardian spirit, and (3) that our prosperity (eudaimonia) depends on our adherence to this spirit, which is the normative guidance of reason.

Finally, Long briefly discusses the contribution of Greek moral psychology to eudaimonism or the happiness of morality. For instance, Aristotle claims that to be eudaimon is to fulfill one's innate or normative function as a rational being, while the Stoics hold up the ideal of an infallible Sage who always gets his moral reasoning correct. Such absolutism in ethics stands in stark contrast to modern fallibilism, and marks the distance between ancient and modern conceptions of morality, according to Long.

VIII.

In his illuminating lecture entitled "Revisiting Plato's Cave," Jacques Brunschwig focuses on a small but significant detail in Plato's image of the Cave, which tends to be overlooked despite the enormous attention given over the centuries to this passage from the *Republic*. It has been generally recognized that the prisoners bound within the cave can see the shadows cast on the wall in front of them by the fire behind them. Most scholars have thought that these shadows are only of the various artificial objects, including figures of men and animals, which are carried by porters who themselves are hidden behind a parapet. Brunschwig calls these A-shadows because he suggests that the prisoners also see their own shadows, which he denotes as B-shadows.

He claims that these B-shadows have been largely ignored by Plato scholars, despite the clear evidence of the *Republic* passage. In order to substantiate his claim, Brunschwig reviews the comments of many scholars and a variety of representations of Plato's Cave over the ages. For instance, he considers a number of different paintings and illustrations of the Cave, all of which neglect the fact that Plato talks about the shadows of the prisoners themselves being reflected on the wall. By way of explanation for this widespread mistake in representing the Cave, Brunschwig suggests that it may be due to the influence of modern cinema, where B-

shadows are normally excluded by virtue of the fact that the light of the projector usually passes over the heads of the audience. However, Brunschwig also examines the work of a small number of authors who have not neglected the existence of B-shadows in Plato's account of the Cave, though they have not raised further questions about them. Finally, Brunschwig discusses an even smaller group of commentators who both notice the distinction between two kinds of shadows and who discuss the philosophical consequences of this distinction.

After completing a rather lengthy survey of the *status quaestionis*, Brunschwig addresses four questions in the following order: (A) Whether a literal reading of the Cave passage (*Rep.* 515a-b) is defensible; (B) Whether the paradoxical consequences drawn from the A/B distinction by Brunschwig's two French colleagues do actually follow from it; (C) Whether the 'insuperable difficulties' raised by Myles Burnyeat really are insuperable; (D) Why the B-shadows are so briefly mentioned by Plato.

In relation to the third question, Brunschwig considers in detail some of the putative 'insuperable difficulties' raised by Burnyeat against the distinction between A- and B-shadows. In response to one of these difficulties, for instance, Brunschwig suggests that the prisoners are familiar with each other from their shadows, not as individuals (tokens) but rather as types; e.g., as a resourceful leader to be voted for. He also claims that a prisoner will immediately get closer to the truth on being released from bonds by virtue of seeing himself and other prisoners as the originals for the B-shadows cast on the wall of the Cave. In general, therefore, Brunschwig argues that Burnyeat's difficulties are not insuperable.

With reference to the final question as to why Plato gives so little attention to B-shadows, Brunschwig addresses the related question as to why self-knowledge tends to be rather neglected in the *Republic*. In this regard, Brunschwig accepts the argument of Annas that self-knowledge for Plato does not depend on knowledge of particular facts about individuals, since the true self is divine and so is the object of impersonal knowledge. He also suggests that the ascent out of the Cave is exclusively concerned with tracing images back to their originals, which are illuminated by the light of the Sun; so that A-shadows are more appropriate than B-shadows for this purpose. Brunschwig concludes that Plato has given some indication of the minor role of B-shadows by means of the brevity of his references to them. But, in view of their minor role, one might be forgiven for wondering why Brunschwig thinks it is important to draw attention to them in Plato's *Republic*.

By way of general conclusion to my introduction, I want to remark briefly on the striking fact that more than half of our contributors to this volume have chosen to interpret Plato and his philosophical legacy. Perhaps this reflects some kind of consensus that Plato still engages us most profoundly in the activity of philosophy, while also posing the greatest hermeneutical challenge for modern readers of his dialogues. It is not simply the sophistication of his works but also the non-dogmatic character of his dialogical method that continues to draw us into the magnetic field of his intellect, even though he never appears in *propria persona*. Once again, such intellectual magnetism reminds us of Whitehead's adage about western philosophy being a series of footnotes to Plato.

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COLLOQUIUM I

ATOMISM IN THE OLD ACADEMY

JOHN DILLON

I. *Platonists and Atomists*

There is an air of conscious paradox about this title, which I do not by any means disavow. Nevertheless, I am hopeful that, as my exposition develops, the aura of paradox may to a large extent dissipate. Atoms and atomism are so intimately connected in the popular mind with the mechanistic, materialist, and atheistical world-view of Plato's great bugbear Democritus that it is well to remind ourselves, from time to time, that there is nothing inherently mechanistic, materialist, or atheistical about an atom—in the sense of a (logically or actually) minimum unit of matter. It is not the theory of atomism as such, but rather the denial of purposiveness or divine guidance in the universe that goes with it, that attracts the wrath of Plato.

Aristotle, indeed, in his critiques of the concept of an atom or minimum unit, takes a certain delight in lumping together Democritus, the Pythagoreans, and the Academics.¹ Throughout chapters 4 to 8 of Book III of the *De Caelo*, for instance, he directs criticisms at those who postulate minima as the building-blocks of the universe, while systematically obscuring differences between the Atomists on the one hand and the Pythagoreans and Platonists on the other.² At 303a3ff., for example, he starts in as follows:³

There is another view, championed by Leucippus and Democritus of Abdera, whose conclusions are no more acceptable to reason. According to this view, the primary magnitudes (τὰ πρῶτα μέγεθῆ) are infinite in number and not divisible in magnitude. Generation is neither of many out of one, nor of one out of many, but consists entirely in the combination and entanglement of these bodies. In a way these thinkers too are saying that everything that exists

¹ I must express my indebtedness, for much of the first part of the paper, to the lucid and comprehensive discussion of this topic by John Cleary, in ch. 2 of his mighty work, *Aristotle and Mathematics: Aporetic Method in Cosmology and Metaphysics*, Leiden: Brill, 1995.

² One might argue, indeed, that he has some justification for this, in that Democritus' atoms and the basic triangles of Plato in the *Timaeus* serve much the same function, and are open to many of the same criticisms, but it is hard to deny, nonetheless, that there is something of a polemical edge to the manner in which he juxtaposes them.

³ I borrow here the Loeb translation of W.K.C. Guthrie.