BOOK REVIEW

Plato and the Power of Images. Edited by PIERRE DESTRÉE and RADCLIFFE G. EDMONDS III. Leiden, NL and Boston, MA: Brill, 2017. Pp. viii + 243. Hardback, $133.00. ISBN 978-90-04-34501-0.

Plato is the great philosopher of ideal forms who stoutly asserts that they are the eternal and absolute reality of which the phenomena of the visible world are imperfect transitory reflections. Yet no one has rendered those mere reflections with greater skill and minute perception, or marshalled images with greater rhetorical power, than Plato. *Plato and the Power of Images* offers a diverse set of illuminating and provocative essays on this fundamental Platonic paradox: it aims to explain, among other things, how Plato can at once harshly condemn images and image-making poets and yet still make use of vivid and intense imagery in his own writing. The volume contains an introduction by the editors, twelve chapters, each with footnotes and a bibliography, and indices of passages and of subjects (the latter very brief). The first six chapters explore images as used in various dialogues; the last six are devoted to the *Republic*.

The collection begins with two essays on the image of Socrates in Alcibiades' speech in the *Symposium*. Andrew Ford argues that Alcibiades' comparison of Socrates to Sileni figurines and Marsyas is really an allegory for the Platonic text itself, "a cunning kind of verbal icon that, like Sileni, has a precious hidden meaning for those able to penetrate its surface sense" (15–16). Elizabeth Belfiore, working from the same speech, undertakes a study of Socrates and Achilles as mirror-images, of Socrates as a kind of Achilles in reverse.

Francisco Gonzalez and Radcliffe Edmonds III offer perceptive essays that distinguish, on the one hand, between poetic and philosophical *erôs*, and, on the other, between the right and wrong use of images. Just as the poet, or the lover of sights and sounds, sees and is attracted to only what the beautiful image contains, so Phaedrus gets stuck upon the bare words of Lysias' speech, whereas the philosophical lover, who uses beautiful images correctly, allows them to lead him to something further, a recollection of his pre-incarnate vision of beauty.

Christopher Moore investigates Plato's use of various images as they relate to the theme of self-knowledge, giving special attention to the figure of Prometheus in the *Protagoras* and Typhon in the *Phaedrus*. Gerd van Riel considers images through the lens of Plato's theology, detailing Plato's preference, stated in the *Sophist*, for *eikastikê technê*, which accurately reproduces the proportions of the model, over *phantastikê technê*, which adapts the original proportions to a particular perspective.

Grace Ledbetter's "The Power of Plato's Cave"—the first of the six essays on the *Republic*—argues that Plato structures the cave narrative in such a way that Socrates and Glaucon themselves enact the very ascent described therein. Olivier Renaut examines the city-soul relationship as a metaphor which achieves the task of transferring the power of reason to the power of law for an audience of citizens who are not philosophers.

Penelope Murray convincingly details the "psychological parallelism" (200) between poetry and tyranny, showing how the critique of poetry in Book 10 recalls the earlier portrayal of the tyrant: the image of the tyrant demonstrates the state of soul which poetry threatens to produce. Douglas Cairns discusses Plato's tripartite soul as a metaphor intended to elucidate the behavior of persons and considers how Plato's fundamental concern with the agency of persons "intrudes" upon the metaphor in various ways.

A. G. Long's and Kathryn Morgan's complementary essays, each one dealing with Plato's Ship of State metaphor, are the strongest in the collection. Long considers how Socrates' use of this metaphor's images differs from the use of images made by geometers. Socrates, unlike geometers, is not concerned with unchanging, intelligible objects, but with a particular contingent reality: the perception of philosophers as useless in a democratic society. Socrates, in other words, resorts to an image to explain something that does not admit of dialectic proof. And his image is, more than anything, an instrument of persuasion: "teach the image to the man who is surprised that philosophers are not respected in cities, and try to persuade him that it would be more surprising if they were respected" (489a8–b1).

Morgan's essay poses the question, why does Plato have Socrates use the image of the "goat-stag" (*tragelaphos*) to introduce the Ship of State image when he could have had Socrates proceed directly to the Ship of State? The answer is that the goat-stag provides a fitting representation of the curious hybrid nature of the philosopher king. Beyond that, Morgan also elucidates the character of Plato's images more generally: "It is not just that images are intended to capture the

imagination of the non-philosophical multitude, but that imagery used correctly can point beyond itself to something deeper (or higher)" (196–197).

Morgan quotes a statement from Richard Patterson's "*Philosophos Agonistes*" (*Journal of the History of Philosophy* 35, 327–354) that could serve as a fitting last word on the subject of the entire volume: "[Plato's] imagery is at once a reflection of, and an entirely fitting and proper stimulus and encouragement to, the intellectual desire, discipline, and stout-heartedness essential to the life of philosophy as Plato sees it. The chief function of his metaphors of athletic competition in Bk. X, for example, is not simply or even primarily to embellish or enliven the discussion ('gild the philosophic pill,' as Gilbert and Sullivan have it), but to display and also to evoke the necessary spiritedness of the philosopher as seeker of a difficult truth and champion of justice against the marshaled *logoi* of injustice" (347).

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