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Luca Pitteloud • Evan Keeling
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Psychology and Ontology in Plato

 Springer

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Introduction

This volume consists of a selection of papers presented at an international conference on Plato, which occurred at the Federal University of ABC, Brazil, in 2016. Present at the event were a number of scholars of international repute, along with a number of younger scholars, from Brazil and the rest of the world. The aim of the conference was to increase international dialogue and to discuss new approaches to Plato's philosophy, especially in the burgeoning fields of Platonic ontology and psychology. The selections in this volume include only works which discuss Plato's middle and late periods, periods which are increasingly studied both as precursors to Aristotelian philosophy and as having philosophical interest in their own right. Despite this cohesion of period, the papers themselves come from a wide variety of approaches and provide a good sense of the current state of Platonic scholarship worldwide.

The papers published in this volume focus on Plato's *Republic* (Notomi, Renault), *Symposium* (Santoro), *Phaedo* (Cornelli), *Theaetetus* (Keeling, Gacea), *Sophist* (Gacea), *Timaeus* (Brisson, Renault, Pitteloud), and *Laws* (Caram). Some are concerned more with psychology than with ontology or vice versa, but all of them deal in some way with both areas.

1. We begin with the *Republic*. In "Imagination for Philosophical Exercise in Plato's *Republic*: The Story of Gyges' Ring and the Simile of the Sun," Noburu Notomi discusses two of the *Republic's* most famous images. In *Republic X*, Plato notoriously casts a harsh light upon the practice of image-making, placing it in the third place in the ontological and epistemological hierarchies, with the Forms at the highest rung. Many commentators thereby conclude that his attitude toward images and image-making is unremittingly negative. Yet, Plato himself frequently uses images to convey his views, including (quite famously) in the *Republic*. Notomi attempts to resuscitate the tarnished image of images. He argues that images can represent reality in special ways for Plato and that imagination is an effective method of inquiry to reveal a reality heretofore unknown to us. To illustrate the epistemic utility of imagination, he first re-examines Plato's famous image of Gyges' Ring in *Republic II*, so as to demonstrate that Plato

ascribes to images a special role of transforming our souls. He then turns to analyze the role of imagination in the Simile of the Sun in Book VI.

2. We will return later to the *Republic*. But first, Fernando Santoro (“Dionysian Plato in the *Symposium*”) puts us in a Bacchaean mood while leading us through the *Symposium*. The personalities in this dialogue are, he argues, representations of literary types. The *Symposium*’s characters wear different masks, each representing a different wisdom tradition. The dialogue celebrates not just Eros and Aphrodite but also Dionysus (177e), who (argues Santoro) can be found lurking beneath three masks worn in the *Symposium*. First, Aristophanes’ speech portrays a cosmogony based on a theogony with an Orphic inspiration. Second, Diotima’s speech, under the dialectic and ascetic mask of philosophy, intends to initiate us into the mysteries. The rite’s second step makes the jump from the particular to the universal. Finally, the confessional discourse of Alcibiades, in which he un.masks both himself and Socrates, is an epoptic revelation for initiates or else the desecration of a mystery. The third stage reveals a deep truth that is only revealed when one is taken by the madness or drunkenness of love.
3. We turn next to the *Phaedo*, in Gabriele Cornelli’s “Separation of Body and Soul in Plato’s *Phaedo*: An Unprecedented Ontological Operation in the Affinity Argument.” The topic here is the distinction between body and soul. Cornelli argues that in fact two different construals of this separation are at work in the dialogue. There is, first, a moral separation, regarding what a philosopher should take care of: philosophers ought to mind the soul and not the body. A second separation is more ontological: the soul is so independent from the body that is declared to survive after its death. Although both concepts of this separation are familiar, due to the success they had throughout the history of Platonism until today, the duplicity of meanings expressed in the *Phaedo* leads to an irrevocable ambiguity. This ambiguity has usually been resolved by admitting that the moral dualism would be just a kind of anticipated death of the body, as *conditio sine qua non* for the full and successful practice of philosophy. What Cornelli suggests, however, is a quite different solution to the ambiguity. Contrary to the Forms, the soul can take on sensible features, and for this reason one must care for one’s soul above the body. This gives rise to the dialogue’s ethical aspects. Here it is the moral separation of body and soul, rather than any ontological assumption, that ends up guiding the moral and epistemological consequences of the dialogue. These consequences require a continual epistemological and moral effort of the soul.
4. For the second part of the volume, we turn to Plato’s late period. Alexandru Ovidiu Gacea, in “Plato and the ‘Internal Dialogue,’” discusses that famous Platonic idea, found both in the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*, that thinking is a dialogue one has with oneself. Against some trends in the understanding of this idea, Gacea suggests that its “internal” aspect is best construed in physical terms. The idea that thinking is a dialogue is understood in terms of a number of distinguishable “voices” which form a microcommunity. We thereby learn that thinking is a physical process associated with breathing and that it consists of a “coming together” of multiple “voices.” “Inner dialogue,” he argues, is

mirrored in the overall structure of Plato's works, and it represents the very way philosophical debate ought to be conducted, i.e., as an open-ended search for knowledge, one that never concludes with a definite, unified perspective on reality but that searches into to bring the plurality of "voices" into a responsive relationship.

5. Staying in the *Theaetetus* and continuing on a similar theme, Evan Keeling, in "Pathos in the *Theaetetus*," raises a challenge to the widely accepted view that subjective knowledge did not make its appearance until Augustine and that idealism was only made possible by Descartes. The theory of perception associated with Protagoras in the *Theaetetus* includes the view that one's *pathē* constitute truth and knowledge. As *pathos* usually means "experience," as it does in later Greek epistemology and psychology, this would seem to indicate that Protagoras or someone in his circle held that there is subjective knowledge: knowledge of our own experiences. Keeling argues that this is an illusion: in these passages, *pathos* denotes the quality of an external physical object, not an internal experience.
6. In "The Analogy Between Vice and Disease from the *Republic* to the *Timaeus*," Olivier Renaut analyzes Plato's famous analogy between health and virtue and vice and disease, with this paper focusing on the latter pair. He begins with the *Republic* before exploring this issue in the *Timaeus* as well. What is a strict analogy in the *Republic* seems to refer to a causal interaction between body and soul in the *Timaeus*: vice can emerge from a malign disposition of the body, and conversely, vice can cause or feed new bodily diseases in a disharmonious and neglected body. Renaut argues that, even so, there is a consistent use of the analogy between vice and disease in the *Republic* and the *Timaeus*. The fact that we tend not to blame people for their bodily diseases plus the claim that psychic diseases are involuntary in the *Timaeus* might seem to undermine the idea that we are morally responsible for them. Renaut argues, however, that the *Republic* and *Timaeus* account is compatible with the agent's responsibility regarding his ethical and physical good condition, within a strong normative approach of diseases, both from the body and the soul.
7. Next, Luca Pitteloud turns us full force to the *Timaeus* in his "Why is the World Soul composed by Being, Sameness and Difference?" Pitteloud discusses a number of vexed issues involving the Demiurge, the Receptacle, and especially the World Soul, trying to determine the relationship between the nature of the World Soul in the *Timaeus* and its functionality. The paper discusses the following dimensions of the World Soul: (a) its composition, (b) its mathematical structure, (c) its moving function, and (d) its cognitive function. Pitteloud reads the World Soul's ontological constitution as articulated within the framework of the teleological dimension of the discourse, showing that it is the two functions of the World Soul (moving and cognitive) that justify why it possesses the structure of an intermediate mixture constituted from being, sameness, and difference. As such, it is the proper causality (*aitia*), which is exemplified by the Demiurge's teleological deduction in *Timaeus*' discourse, that determines the auxiliary causality (*sunaitia*), namely, the structure of the World Soul.

8. With Luc Brisson's "Can One Speak of Teleology in Plato?," we continue our exploration of the *Timaeus*. Apropos of Pitteloud's discussion of teleology, Brisson asks if we ought to take there to be teleology in the *Timaeus* and how it should be understood. To answer this question, the Demiurge's reasoning (the way he wishes to fashion the best possible world) must be related to the way the universe is ordered. As we find also in Aristotle, there is a psychological description of the function of the first Unmoved Mover (object of desire) in order to explain, the world, in Plato, the teleology appears within the Demiurge's *nous*.
9. We conclude with the *Laws* and the end of Plato's own philosophical career. In "Nomos: *logismós ton epithymion*. *Laws* VI and VII and the (de)formation of Desires," Juliano Paccos Caram investigates how a city's laws and educational structure influence the desires and the virtue of its citizens. The focus will be on how correct education and laws influence the desires of the citizenry, with an eye toward the role of the formation and distortion of desires in the moral education of young politicians.

We hope this volume will be helpful both to new and advanced scholars of Plato's philosophy, those who wish to examine Plato's psychology and ontology and all their richness and complexity. These are fruitful areas to explore, and any insights Plato had to share with us deserve to reach a wider audience.

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