

This book makes a valuable contribution by clearly exhibiting Socrates' rhetorical aspect. However, because of what might be seen as over-devotion to this aspect, it is dismissive of the content of Socratic conversation. While such conversation is supposed to inspire love of forms, McCoy's approach shows little interest in the epistemological and metaphysical issues that Socrates' talk of forms raises throughout the dialogues. Of course, only so much ground can be covered in a thematic study like this one. However, since we are also told that philosophy is open-ended and self-critical, not bound by specific doctrine, one is left with the impression that love of forms really amounts to love for a certain kind of abstract thinking that characterizes philosophical investigation in general. We can highlight the issue by asking whether the account of forms should be taken seriously as the basis of philosophical thinking. If it is, it is something like substantive philosophical doctrine. If not, then philosophy for Plato is always private process and never public product. Such a result, of course, is substantive philosophical doctrine—about philosophy. Finally, in order to present philosophy as a quest unburdened by substantive doctrine, McCoy frequently conflates Socrates and philosophy. She talks as though, because Socrates has no clear grasp of the forms, philosophy itself will forever be an erotically driven search, destined never to be satisfied. However, it is hardly clear that Plato meant Socrates' fate to be that of philosophy.

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Naomi Reshotko. *Socratic Virtue: Making the Best of the Neither-Good-Nor-Bad*. Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. xiv + 204. Cloth, \$68.00.

In this engaging and provocative book, Naomi Reshotko advances a naturalistic interpretation of Socratic philosophy, i.e., of those views expressed by Plato's Socrates that best comport with Aristotle's descriptions of Socrates. She contrasts her reading with those that project foreign commitments onto the text, including: (i) moralism, or the separation of ethics from empirical science; (ii) two-dimensional semantics, or theories of meaning that distinguish the semantic contribution to a psychological state made by its subject's conception of its objects from that made by its actual objects; and (iii) privileged access, or psychological theories that grant human beings incorrigibility concerning some aspect of their own psyches.

Part I reviews and synthesizes views that the author shares with Terry Penner: that all desire is for one's own real (not apparent) good, so that an agent's belief about what is overall best for her invariably guides her actions; that all human virtue is identical to wisdom; and that virtue, so understood, guarantees the greatest possible satisfaction of the desire for one's own real good, and so makes one live as well as possible.

Part II places the distinction among the good, the bad, and the neither-good-nor-bad (NGNB) at the center of Socratic ethics. On Reshotko's reading, the only goods are virtue and happiness, and the only bads vice and misery. She does not adequately explain why all actions are NGNB (16, 173), even though actions are individuated by their actual consequences (34–36), so that every action is either good or bad (98). Virtue's goodness is due to its stable nomological (not conceptual or logical) connection to happiness. This makes virtue the only unconditional, other-generated good, while happiness is the only unconditional, self-generated good—its goodness does not depend on any nomological relation it enters into.

Part III provides more detail about virtue and happiness. First, Reshotko explains that virtue is wisdom because it is the science of human happiness, and that this science is identical to every other science. Strictly speaking, nobody knows anything without knowing everything, although some people do grasp "some parts of knowledge" (160). Reshotko advocates this view as a solution to the closing puzzles of the *Charmides*. Socrates and Critias cannot figure out how temperance benefits, first because they assume that it is knowledge

of all things except good and bad, and then because they assume that it is knowledge of good and bad in isolation from other sciences (173a–175a). But if Socratic wisdom is the structured grasp of everything, then their puzzle is resolved. Second, Reshotko claims that happiness is a life maximally composed of pleasures. While she is sympathetic with the view that happiness is composed of modal pleasures (see G. Rudebusch, *Socrates, Pleasure, and Value*, Oxford 1999), she concludes that sensate pleasures can also be parts of happiness (185n7).

The book's major flaw is its limited engagement with textual evidence that seems to tell against the author's readings and its limited coverage of alternative interpretations from the secondary literature. I mention three striking examples here.

First, Reshotko argues that harming others is inconsistent with self-benefit because of the likelihood of reciprocal harm (65–71). She then notes passages where Socrates speaks as though harming others harms one's soul simply by making it more unjust, which makes vice sound like a self-generated bad. *Gorgias* 472c–481b is particularly problematic in this respect, since Socrates claims there that doing injustice is less painful (but worse) than suffering it. Reshotko tries to make such passages conform with her initial explanation: harming others tends to entrench false beliefs that harming others is consistent with self-benefit, which leads to more harm of others and so more reciprocal harm (71–72, 174). This may be workable, but absent more extensive argument, it seems like an *ad hoc* maneuver.

Second, Reshotko wants to avoid giving ethical knowledge special objects, but fails to address the fact that Plato elsewhere does just that by introducing separate Forms. The *aporia* about the identity of knowledge and the good at *Republic* 505b–c seems continuous with those in the *Charmides* and at *Euthydemus* 291d–292e. In the *Republic*, Socrates introduces the form of the Good (cf. *Euthydemus* 301a) to serve as the object of the wisdom that is the good for a human being. Reshotko would do well to explain why her reading is superior to Charles Kahn's (*Plato and the Socratic Dialogue*, Cambridge 1996), which takes the earlier puzzles to be proleptic anticipations of the *Republic's* solution.

Finally, Reshotko does not do enough to defend her hedonist interpretation of Socrates. She does not engage substantively with alternative readings of the hedonism in the *Protagoras*. Additionally, making virtue valuable solely for its production of pleasure raises more interpretive puzzles than she seems to appreciate. For example, why cannot Socrates be harmed by his accusers (*Apology* 30c–d), given that they can surely cause him sensate pain (a fact that Rudebusch's hedonist reading accommodates more easily)?

Despite these flaws, *Socratic Virtue* is a solid contribution to the literature. Part I is a helpful synthesis of an important line of thinking in Socratic scholarship, and much of the remainder develops that line in clever ways. Even when Reshotko's arguments are not persuasive, most of her major interpretive claims are well worth thinking through, at least to identify why one disagrees.

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James Wilberding. *Plotinus' Cosmology: A Study of Ennead II.1* (40). *Text, Translation, and Commentary*. Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. xii + 269. Cloth, \$125.00.

That the analysis of a complex object into its elements yields knowledge of it is a fundamental article of philosophical faith, which motivates the "analytic" dimension of the philosophical enterprise (passed on to modern science). On par with it, however, there is also the belief that knowledge of a complex object involves grasping it as a totality, over and beyond its constituent parts (an approach admittedly less popular in modern science). The paradigmatic object of philosophical speculation inviting both these approaches is, of course, the universe itself. Already in Plato's *Timaeus*, we encounter a fully elaborated philosophical exercise of this kind—the world is simultaneously dissected into its elements (for example,