

Unity And Development In Platos Metaphysics

Unity and Development in Plato's Metaphysics (RLE: Plato)Routledge

The consensus, that Plato's Symposium is only loosely unified, with the early speeches of little interest and the speech of Alcibiades an appendix, is to be rejected. Instead, the dialogue forms a complex, unified reflection on what it is for a human being to progress and on the kind of completion to be found in human life. -- The call to praise er?s unifies the first six speeches: in the context of contemporary attacks, er?s stands in need of defence. These speeches demonstrate the availability of defences, individually coherent, but mutually inconsistent, each expressing a view of the human condition. Each speech also reflects on methodology, progressively modifying encomiastic convention. Phaedrus commits to showing eros causes virtue, but a further principle is found necessary by each symposiast: specificity, completeness, understanding power, and praising characteristics directly, respectively. -- Socrates finds truth also necessary, but lacking in that apparently progressive sequence of defences. He follows the others' principles but in reverse order, turning things literally back to front. Socrates shows how er?s leads to acts which yield a reputation for virtue in the eyes of others, and so immortality. But he then says that such virtue is a false semblance, unless someone experiences a progressive development in her own life, forming a conception of absolute beauty. How such a person looks in the eyes of others is not said. -- Alcibiades' praise of Socrates is no less a defence, since Socrates was no less under attack. Alcibiades unwittingly answers the question how Socrates looked in the eyes of others. His method, images for the sake of truth, creates a partial defence of Socrates. Alcibiades competes with Plato's whole creation, revealed as a competing set of images for the sake of a different tmth, about Socrates and about er?s.

The "theory of forms" usually attributed to Plato is one of the most famous of philosophical theories, yet it has engendered such controversy in the literature on Plato that scholars even debate whether or not such a theory exists in his texts. Plato's Forms: Varieties of Interpretation is an ambitious work that brings together, in a single volume, widely divergent approaches to the topic of the forms in Plato's dialogues. With contributions rooted in both Anglo-American and Continental philosophy, the book illustrates the contentious role the forms have played in Platonic scholarship and suggests new approaches to a central problem of Plato studies.

Pioneering collection of essays contributing to the history of philosophy and also to the contemporary debate about what philosophy is.

Plato (c.428-347 BCE) stands at the beginning of many debates that have continued throughout the history of philosophy. His literary career spanned fifty years and the influence of his ideas and those of his followers pervaded

philosophy throughout antiquity. Andrew Mason's lucid and engaging introduction, draws on recent scholarship to offer a fresh general survey of Plato's philosophy. Aware of the methodological challenges that confront any writer on Plato, Mason handles the issue of Plato's intellectual development and relationship with Socrates with an assured grasp. Thematically structured, the book begins with Plato's principal contribution to metaphysics, the 'Theory of Forms', which forms a necessary background to his thought in many areas. His theory of knowledge, which is intimately linked with the Forms is explored in detail along with Plato's views of the soul, an important theme in itself and an entry point to discussion of his ethics, one of Plato's major concerns. Finally, the book deals with two areas of Plato's thought which have had an especially important historical impact, not confined to academic philosophy: his theory of God and nature, and his aesthetics. Throughout, Mason highlights the continuing themes in Plato's work and how they develop from one dialogue to another.

"Scolnicov's aim is to provide a new translation of Plato's Parmenides, with a commentary designed to show that the arguments of the second half of the dialogue, the purpose of which has long been a matter of scholarly dispute, make sense as an attempt to establish the necessary logical and epistemological conditions for Plato's own theory of forms and participation. In particular, Scolnicov attempts to show that the otherwise bewildering concatenation of arguments and hypotheses answers to a style of argument paralleled in other dialogues. Scolnicov also argues that the dialogue is intended as a serious rebuttal of Parmenides' monist philosophy. Scolnicov's thesis is thus diametrically opposed to those who think that the dialogue is intended as a successful critique of Plato's own theory in the light of arguments adapted from Parmenides."—Denis O'Brien, author of *Etudes sur Parménide; Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle: A Reconstruction from the Fragments and Secondary Sources* "Scolnicov's introduction presents a very clear account of Parmenides' method and the contrast that Plato's use of hypothesis presents to it as early as the Meno. Scolnicov then offers a clear account of Plato's method and the way it establishes an idea of philosophical method in general: not a reasoning from first principles but a disclosing of the principles at the foundation of one's prior convictions in order to test those principles. He subsequently takes up the principle of noncontradiction in particular before tackling the questions Parmenidean philosophy might raise about the doctrine of participation. An immensely clear and interesting introduction and way into the Parmenides."—Georgia Warnke, author of *Justice and Interpretation: Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought*

J. Angelo Corlett's new book, *Interpreting Plato Socratically* continues the critical discussion of the Platonic Question where Corlett's book, *Interpreting Plato's Dialogues* concluded. New arguments in favor of the Mouthpiece Interpretation of Plato's works are considered and shown to be fallacious, as are new objections to some competing

approaches to Plato's works. The Platonic Question is the problem of how to approach and interpret Plato's writings most of which are dialogues. How, if at all, can Plato's beliefs, doctrines, theories and such be extracted from dialogues where there is no direct indication from Plato that his own views are even to be found therein? Most philosophers of Plato attempt to decipher from Plato's texts seemingly all manner of ideas expressed by Socrates which they then attribute to Plato. They seek to ascribe to Plato particular views about justice, art, love, virtue, knowledge, and the like because, they believe, Socrates is Plato's mouthpiece through the dialogues. But is such an approach justified? What are the arguments in favor of such an approach? Is there a viable alternative approach to Plato's dialogues? In this rigorous account of the dominant approach to Plato's dialogues, there is no room left for reasonable doubt about the problematic reasons given for the notion that Plato's dialogues reveal either Plato's or Socrates' beliefs, doctrines or theories about substantive philosophical matters. Corlett's approach to Plato's dialogues is applied to a variety of passages throughout Plato's works on a wide range of topics concerning justice. In-depth discussions of themes such as legal obligation, punishment and compensatory justice are clarified and with some surprising results. Plato's works serve as a rich source of philosophical thinking about such matters. A central question in today's Platonic studies is whether Socrates, or any other protagonist in the dialogues, presents views that the author wanted to assert or defend. Professor Corlett offers a detailed defense of his view that the role of Socrates is to raise questions rather than to provide the author's answers to them. This defense is timely as intellectual historians consider the part played by Academic scholars centuries after Plato in systematizing Platonism. J. J. Mulhern, University of Pennsylvania

Plato's Euthyphro is important because it gives an excellent example of Socratic dialogue in operation and of the connection of that dialectic with Plato's earlier theory of Forms. Professor Allen's edition of the dialogue provides a translation with interspersed commentary, aimed both at helping the reader who does not have Greek and also elucidating the discussion of the earlier Theory of Forms which follows. The author argues that there is a theory of Forms in the Euthyphro and in other early Platonic dialogues and that this theory is the foundation of Socratic dialogue. However, he maintains that the theory in the early dialogues is a realist theory of universals and this theory is not to be identified with the theory of Forms found in the Phaedo, Republic, and other middle dialogues, since it differs on the issues of ontological status.

Plato is perhaps the best known and most widely studied of all the ancient Greek philosophers. A pupil of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle, his ideas have inspired and influenced scholars of nearly every era. His famous series of dialogues have become a standard part of the western philosophical canon – from the Euthyphro and Gorgias of his early period, the Republic, Phaedrus and Symposium of his middle period, to the Theaetetus and Laws of his late period. The

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Routledge Library Edition makes available in a single set an outstanding range of scholarship devoted to Plato's philosophical work. Routledge Library Editions: Plato makes available in a single set an outstanding range of scholarship devoted to Plato's philosophical work. The 21 volumes provide detailed analysis of his writings and philosophical ideas. From the classic works of Francis Cornford, G. C. Field and A.E. Taylor to more recent approaches and interpretations, this set provides libraries and scholars with a century of outstanding scholarship on this key philosopher.

Prior to the publication of Plato's Later Ontology in 1983, there was general agreement among Plato scholars that the theses attributed to Plato in Book A of Aristotle's Metaphysics can not be found in the dialogues. Plato's Late Ontology presented a textually based argument that in fact these theses appear both in the Philebus and in the second part of the Parmenides. The pivotal point of the argument is a number of synonyms for the expressions used by Aristotle in reporting Plato's views, found in the Greek commentators on Aristotle writing during the 3rd to the 5th Century A.D. These synonyms are also used by Plato himself in discussing the theses in question. The present book is a reprint of Plato's Late Ontology along with a recent article showing that a subset of these theses can also be found in the section of measurement appearing in the middle of the Statesman. The argument to this effect is an extension of that in Plato's Late Ontology, but is supported by a much expanded list of synonyms from the Greek Commentators. The appearance of the theses in question in the Statesman augments the original argument for their presence in the Parmenides and the Philebus.

Studies of Plato's metaphysics have tended to emphasise either the radical change between the early Theory of Forms and the late doctrines of the Timaeus and the Sophist, or to insist on a unity of approach that is unchanged throughout Plato's career. The author lays out an alternative approach. Focussing on two metaphysical doctrines of central importance to Plato's thought – the Theory of Forms and the doctrine of Being and Becoming – he suggests a continuous progress can be traced through Plato's works. He presents his argument through an examination of the metaphysical sections of six of the dialogues: the Euthyphro, Phaedo, Republic, Parmenides, Timaeus, and Sophist. J.N. Findlay, distinguished scholar and acknowledged expert on Plato, argues persuasively for a new interpretation of the Platonic writings. He believes that Plato's Unwritten Doctrines were present in the background of all the great philosopher's mature written work. With the use of Aristotelian and other writings on these reported doctrines he demonstrates that they admit of an intelligible elucidation and they direct indispensable light upon the full meaning of the written Dialogues. The author emphasizes the valuable use of Platonic notions and methods by the Neoplatonists and the Schoolmen as well as by such modern thinkers as Husserl and Russell. He also censures, as a great misinterpretation, the widespread Aristotelian view of Platonism as a two-world theory, and argues that, for Plato, the

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Ideas and their Principles alone have full reality, everything else being logically parasitic upon them. The work also includes two important Appendices, the first providing translations of the Aristotelian and other ancient material regarding Plato's oral teaching, the second criticizing and refuting the views of Harold F. Cherniss on the same material. Was Plato a Platonist? While ancient disciples of Plato would have answered this question in the affirmative, modern scholars have generally denied that Plato's own philosophy was in substantial agreement with that of the Platonists of succeeding centuries. In *From Plato to Platonism*, Lloyd P. Gerson argues that the ancients are correct in their assessment. He arrives at this conclusion in an especially ingenious manner, challenging fundamental assumptions about how Plato's teachings have come to be understood. Through deft readings of the philosophical principles found in Plato's dialogues and in the Platonic tradition beginning with Aristotle, he shows that Platonism, broadly conceived, is the polar opposite of naturalism and that the history of philosophy from Plato until the seventeenth century was the history of various efforts to find the most consistent and complete version of "anti-naturalism." Gerson contends that the philosophical position of Plato—Plato's own Platonism, so to speak—was produced out of a matrix he calls "Ur-Platonism." According to Gerson, Ur-Platonism is the conjunction of five "antis" that in total arrive at anti-naturalism: anti-nominalism, anti-mechanism, anti-materialism, anti-relativism, and anti-skepticism. Plato's Platonism is an attempt to construct the most consistent and defensible positive system uniting the five "antis." It is also the system that all later Platonists throughout Antiquity attributed to Plato when countering attacks from critics including Peripatetics, Stoics, and Sceptics. In conclusion, Gerson shows that Late Antique philosophers such as Proclus were right in regarding Plotinus as "the great exegete of the Platonic revelation."

A step by step, passage by passage analysis of the complete *Republic*. White shows how the argument of the book is articulated, the important interconnections among its elements, and the coherent and carefully developed train of thought which motivates its complex philosophical reasoning. In his extensive introduction, White describes Plato's aims, introduces the argument, and discusses the major philosophical and ethical theories embodied in the *Republic*. He then summarizes each of its ten books and provides substantial explanatory and interpretive notes.

Plato often rejects hedonism, but in the *Protagoras*, Plato's Socrates seems to endorse hedonism. In this book, J. Clerk Shaw removes this apparent tension by arguing that the *Protagoras* as a whole actually reflects Plato's anti-hedonism. He shows that Plato places hedonism at the core of a complex of popular mistakes about value and especially about virtue: that injustice can be prudent, that wisdom is weak, that courage is the capacity to persevere through fear, and that virtue cannot be taught. The masses reproduce this system of values through shame and fear of punishment. The *Protagoras* and other dialogues depict sophists and orators who have internalized popular morality through shame, but who are also ashamed to state their views openly. Shaw's

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reading not only reconciles the Protagoras with Plato's other dialogues, but harmonizes it with them and even illuminates Plato's wider anti-hedonism.

The culmination of a lifetime's scholarly work, this study by Sister Prudence Allen traces the concept of woman in relation to man in Western thought from ancient times to the present. This volume is the second in her study, in which she explores claims about sex and gender identity in the works of over fifty philosophers (both men and women) in the late medieval and early Renaissance periods.

In this bold new study, Andrew J. Mason seeks both to shed light on the key issue of flux in Plato's work, and to show that there is also in Plato a notion of flow that needs to be distinguished from flux. Mason brings out the importance of this hitherto neglected distinction, and proposes on its basis a new way of understanding the development of Plato's thought. The opposition between the 'being' of Forms and the 'becoming' or 'flux' of sensibles has been fundamental to the understanding of Plato from Aristotle to the present day. One key concern of this volume is to clarify which kinds or levels of flux Plato accepts in sensibles. In addition, Mason argues that this traditional approach is unsatisfactory, as it leaves out the important notion of flow. Unlike flux, flow is a kind of motion that does not entail intrinsic change. It is also not restricted to the sensible, but covers motions of soul as well, including the circular motion of nous (intelligence) that is crucial in Plato's later thought, particularly his cosmology. In short, flow is not incompatible with 'being', and in this study Plato's development is presented, largely, as his arrival at this view, in correction of his earlier conflation of flux and flow in establishing the dichotomy between being and becoming. Mason's study offers fresh insights into many dialogues and difficult passages in Plato's oeuvre, and situates Plato's conception and usage of 'flow' and 'flux' in relation to earlier usage in the Greek poetic tradition and the Presocratic thinkers, particularly Heraclitus. The first study of its kind, *Flow and Flux* uncovers dimensions of Plato's thinking that may reshape the way his philosophy is understood.

Originally published in 1955, this book presents a detailed discussion regarding aspects of Plato's ethics. The text is divided into three main parts, covering 'The Personal Ideal', 'The Ethical Society' and 'The Growth of a Reality Principle'. It was based upon the author's Fellowship Dissertation for a position at Christ Church College, Oxford. A bibliography is also included and detailed notes are incorporated throughout. This book will be of value to anyone with an interest in Plato and his ethical standpoint.

Hugh H. Benson explores Plato's answer to Clitophon's challenge, the question of how one can acquire the knowledge Socrates argues is essential to human flourishing-knowledge we all seem to lack. Plato suggests two methods by which this knowledge may be gained: the first is learning from those who already have the knowledge one seeks, and the second is discovering the knowledge one seeks on one's own. The book begins with a brief look at some of the Socratic dialogues where Plato appears to recommend the former approach while simultaneously indicating various difficulties in pursuing it. The remainder of the book focuses on Plato's recommendation in some of his most important and central dialogues-the Meno, Phaedo, and Republic-for carrying out the second approach: de novo inquiry. The book turns first to the famous paradox concerning the possibility of such an inquiry and explores Plato's apparent solution. Having defended the possibility of de novo inquiry as a response to Clitophon's

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challenge, Plato explains the method or procedure by which such inquiry is to be carried out. The book defends the controversial thesis that the method of hypothesis, as described and practiced in the *Meno*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic*, is, when practiced correctly, Plato's recommended method of acquiring on one's own the essential knowledge we lack. The method of hypothesis when practiced correctly is, then, Platonic dialectic, and this is Plato's response to Clitophon's challenge. "This is a new book on a critically important topic, methodology, as it is explored in three of the most important works by one of the most important philosophers in the very long history of philosophy, written by a scholar of international stature who is working from many years of experience and currently at the top of his game. It promises to be one of the most important books ever written on this subject."-Nicholas Smith, James F. Miller Professor of Humanities, Lewis and Clark College "The thesis is bold and the results are important for our understanding of some of the most studied and controversial dialogues by and philosophical theses in Plato. In my view, Hugh Benson's examination of the method of hypothesis in the *Meno* and the *Phaedo* is a tour de force of subtle and careful scholarship: I think that this part of the book will be adopted as the standard interpretation of this basic notion in Plato. An excellent and important book."-Charles Brittain, Susan Linn Sage Professor of Philosophy and Humane Letters, Cornell University Hampton illuminates the overall structure of the *Philebus*. Taking the interrelations of pleasure, knowledge, and being as the keys to understanding the unity of the dialogue, she focuses on the central point. The analysis of both pleasure and knowledge can be understood fully only if placed within the context of the more general and fundamental question of how human life fits into the overall structure of reality. What guides the discussion of the good life throughout the dialogue is the conviction that we can only realize our human good by shaping our lives so that they are true to the universal Good which unites all things. It is around this crucial point that the dialogue is structured. Thus, according to Hampton's interpretation, the *Philebus* shows what it says: that if we delve deeply enough, we shall discover that behind the appearance of disorder lies beauty, proportion, and truth.

The widespread understanding of language in the West is that it represents the world. This view, however, has not always been commonplace. In fact, it is a theory of language conceived by Plato, culminating in *The Sophist*. In that dialogue Plato introduced the idea of statements as being either true or false, where the distinction between falsity and truth rests on a deeper discrepancy between appearance and reality, or seeming and being. Robin Reames's *Seeming & Being in Plato's Rhetorical Theory* marks a shift in Plato scholarship. Reames argues that an appropriate understanding of rhetorical theory in Plato's dialogues illuminates how he developed the technical vocabulary needed to construct the very distinctions between seeming and being that separate true from false speech. By engaging with three key movements of twentieth- and twenty-first-century Plato scholarship—the rise and subsequent marginalization of “orality and literacy theory,” Heidegger's controversial critique of Platonist metaphysics, and the influence of literary or dramatic readings of the dialogues—Reames demonstrates how the development of Plato's rhetorical theory across several of his dialogues (*Gorgias*, *Phaedrus*, *Protagoras*, *Theaetetus*, *Cratylus*, *Republic*, and *Sophist*) has been both neglected and misunderstood.

Scholars of Plato are divided between those who emphasize the literature of the dialogues and those who emphasize the

argument of the dialogues, and between those who see a development in the thought of the dialogues and those who do not. In this important book Russell Dancy focuses on the arguments and defends a developmental picture. He explains the Theory of Forms of the *Phaedo* and *Symposium* as an outgrowth of the quest for definitions canvassed in the Socratic dialogues, by constructing a Theory of Definition for the Socratic dialogues based on the refutations of definitions in those dialogues, and showing how that theory is mirrored in the Theory of Forms. His discussion, notable for both its clarity and its meticulous scholarship, ranges in detail over a number of Plato's early and middle dialogues, and will be of interest to readers in Plato studies and in ancient philosophy more generally.

Interpreting Plato's Dialogues introduces readers to some key problems in understanding Plato's writings, and explores in-depth and critically the various ways of approaching Plato. The problem of how to interpret Plato's dialogues dates back to Plato's Academy, and Plato's interpreters ought not to forego this important discussion. For how one approaches texts will inevitably influence how one interprets their contents. This is especially true of Plato's writings, as they are, with few exceptions, dialogues. For the sake of historical accuracy, then, it is crucial that the most plausible interpretation of Plato's works is articulated and well defended. And this is precisely what this book provides: an articulation and critical evaluation of the various ways to approach Plato's dialogues, along with the articulation and defense of a plausible new way to interpret Plato. This new way of approaching Plato neither sees Plato's words as doctrines according to which the dialogues are to be interpreted, nor does it reduce Plato's dialogues to dramatic literature. primarily by Plato's respect for his teacher, Socrates, and the manner in which Socrates engaged others in philosophical discourse. It places the focus of philosophical investigation of Plato's dialogues on the content of the dialogues themselves, and on the Socratic way of doing philosophy. This book contains a comprehensive bibliography of philosophical sources on the interpretation of Plato's corpus of writings, as well as some important works in the field of classical studies and philology. *Interpreting Plato's Dialogues* provides both an analytical, scholarly, and thorough treatment of what is perhaps the most long-standing problem in Plato studies. The book will serve well as a companion text to Plato's dialogues and is of special interest to philosophers, classicists, and philologists.

This book presents a thorough study and an up to date anthology of Plato's *Protagoras*. International authors' papers contribute to the task of understanding how Plato introduced and negotiated a new type of intellectual practice – called philosophy – and the strategies that this involved. They explore Plato's dialogue, looking at questions of how philosophy and sophistry relate, both on a methodological and on a thematic level. While many of the contributing authors argue for a sharp distinction between sophistry and philosophy, this is contested by others. Readers may consider the distinctions between philosophy and traditional forms of poetry and sophistry through these papers. Questions for readers' attention

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include: To what extent is Socrates' preferred mode of discourse, and his short questions and answers, superior to Protagoras' method of sophistic teaching? And why does Plato make Socrates and Protagoras reverse positions as it comes to virtue and its teachability? This book will appeal to graduates and researchers with an interest in the origins of philosophy, classical philosophy and historical philosophy.

Die neuere Forschung zur modernen Philosophiegeschichte hat ihren Blick immer mehr auf die Wurzeln der klassischen deutschen Philosophie in der antiken und spätantiken Gedankenwelt gerichtet. Dieser Sammelband untersucht die Genese und Entwicklung des Deutschen Idealismus anhand der Rezeption und Transformation der Platonischen Tradition bei J. G. Fichte, F. Hölderlin, G.E. F. Hegel und F.W. J. Schelling. Gezeigt wird, inwiefern diese Denker die Leitmotive und die primären Bestimmungen ihres Problemhorizonts im Platonismus entdecken, ihn aber in ihrer eigenen philosophischen Situation grundlegend ändern.

The *Peri ideon* (On Ideas) is the only work in which Aristotle systematically sets out and criticizes arguments for the existence of Platonic forms. Gail Fine presents the first full-length treatment in English of this important but neglected work. She asks how, and how well, and why and with what justification he favours an alternative metaphysical scheme. She also examines the significance of the *Peri ideon* for some central questions about Plato's theory of forms - whether, for example, there are forms corresponding to every property or only to some, then to which ones; whether forms are universals, particulars, or both; and whether they are meanings, properties, or both. In addition to discussing the *Peri ideon* and its sources in Plato's dialogues, Fine also provides a general discussion of Plato's theory of forms, and of our evidence about the date, scope, and aims of the *Peri ideon*. While she pays careful attention to the details of the text, she also relates the issues to current philosophical concerns. The book will be valuable for anyone interested in metaphysics ancient or modern.

Among Plato's later dialogues, the *Parmenides* is one of the most significant. Not only a document of profound philosophical importance in its own right, it also contributes to the understanding of Platonic dialogues that followed it, and it exhibits the foundations of the physics and ontology that Aristotle offered in his *Physics* and *Metaphysics VII*. In this book, R. E. Allen provides a superb translation of the *Parmenides* along with a structural analysis that precedes on the assumption that formal elements, logical and dramatic, are important to its interpretation and that the argument of the *Parmenides* is aporetic, a statement of metaphysical perplexities. Allen has revised his original translation of and commentary on the *Parmenides*, which were published in 1983 to great acclaim.

This book argues that, rather than being conceived merely as a hindrance, the body contributes constructively in the fashioning of a Platonic unified self. The *Phaedo* shows awareness that the indeterminacy inherent in the body infects the

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validity of any scientific argument but also provides the subject of inquiry with the ability to actualize, to the extent possible, the ideal self. The Republic locates bodily desires and needs in the tripartite soul. Achievement of maximal unity is dependent upon successful training of the rational part of the soul, but the earlier curriculum of Books 2 and 3, which aims at instilling a pre-reflectively virtuous disposition in the lower parts of the soul, is a prerequisite for the advanced studies of Republic 7. In the Timaeus, the world soul is fashioned out of Being, Sameness, and Difference: an examination of the Sophist and the Parmenides reveals that Difference is to be identified with the Timaeus' Receptacle, the third ontological principle which emerges as the quasi-material component that provides each individual soul with the alloplastic capacity for psychological growth and alteration.

Publisher description: This book examines the role of the female and the feminine in Plato's philosophy, and suggests that Plato's views on women are central to his political philosophy. Morag Buchan explores Plato's writings to argue his notions of the inferior female and the superior male. While Plato appears to allow women equal opportunity and participation of political life in the Ideal State in The Republic, his motivation rests on masculine ideals. Women in Plato's Political Theory examines issues including women's relationship to men, to reproduction, to rational thought and politics in Plato's work, and addresses more generally the problem of sexual identity in philosophy. This book is an important contribution toward a wider interpretation of Platonic philosophy.

This book is not a study of Plato's philosophy, but a contribution to the literary interpretation of the dialogues, through analysis of their formal structure, characterisation, language and imagery. Among the dialogues considered in these interrelated essays are some of Plato's most admired and influential works, including the Gorgias, the Symposium, the Republic and the Phaedrus. Special attention is paid to the personality of Socrates, Plato's remarkable mentor, and to his interaction with the other characters in the dialogues. Rutherford also includes detailed discussion of particular problems such as the sources for our knowledge of Socrates, the origins of the dialogue form, Plato's use of myth, and the 'totalitarianism' of the Republic. The combination of sympathetic literary criticism with exact historical scholarship gives The Art of Plato its special qualities.

Plato, however, so prolific a writer, so profoundly original in his thought, and so colossal an influence on the later history of philosophy, that it has not been possible to confine him to one volume.

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