

entities but as the contemporary metaphor in which claims of moral value are couched. Since, according to O., rights claims express the moral values of the onlooker on behalf of an oppressed and crucially voiceless victim, animals should be prime candidates for such interventions (195).

In the final chapter, O. argues that Porphyry's critique of meat eating in terms of luxury cannot be marshalled to support "modern vegetarian propaganda" (238). But, according to O., Porphyry's project does illuminate something about vegetarianism in the modern world, namely that it is a 'phenomenon peculiar to affluent societies' (231). According to her reasoning, there is a link between a surplus of food and having the ability to choose what to eat. Further, she argues that our surplus is made possible by the exploitation of other parts of the world, and hence stems from 'injustice toward members of our own kind' (237). It simply isn't the case, however, that vegetarianism is peculiar to affluent societies. And while one can certainly grant O.'s point that the Western food supply (like so much else) comes at the expense of people in other parts of the world, it is not clear how this should weigh with those who seek to reform and protest against the exploitation of non-human animals in their own locales. Unfortunately, O. does not clear up the waters she so adroitly muddies in the final chapter.

SUSAN LAPE

*University of Southern California*  
lape@usc.edu

RESHOTKO (N.) **Socratic Virtue: Making the Best of the Neither-Good-Nor-Bad.** Cambridge UP, 2006. Pp. xiv + 204. £48. 9780521846189.

In this valuable book, Reshotko provides an interpretation and philosophical defence of Socrates' ethics as presented in the early dialogues, especially *Euthydemus*, *Apology*, *Charmides*, *Lysis*, *Protagoras*, *Meno* and *Gorgias*.

Part I of the book (chs 2-5) is devoted to Socrates' theory of motivation. R. begins by tackling the scholarly debate over whether Socrates thinks that all desire is aimed at what is actually good or at what appears good to the subject of the desire. Following Terry Penner, R. uses both textual evidence and philosophical considerations from the philosophy of language to argue that Socrates holds that all desire is aimed at what is actually good, though our false beliefs often cause us to pursue objects that are not in fact good. R. proceeds to argue that Socrates is a psychological egoist: the good that we always pursue is our own benefit. Moreover, pursuing our own benefit is never inconsistent with doing what is beneficial to others. Thus, Socrates is also an ethical egoist: it is always right to pursue our own benefit. The phenomenon of weakness of the will poses a challenge for this account of Socrates' theory of motivation. Accordingly, R. concludes the first section by

arguing that Socrates' denial of weakness of the will and his alternative analysis of the purported phenomenon is psychologically plausible. As R. acknowledges, Terry Penner defends many of the arguments presented here in his numerous articles on Socratic moral psychology. Nonetheless, it is extremely helpful to have this complex and influential line of thought distilled and further defended in one place.

Part II of the book (chs 5-6) is dedicated to Socrates' theory of value. According to Socrates, everything is either good, bad, or neither-good-nor-bad. R. contends that happiness is the only good, misery the only bad, and everything else, such as wealth or health, is neither-good-nor-bad, since such things only lead to happiness in some contexts or conditions. But where does that leave virtue? R. argues that virtue has a unique value because of its special relationship to happiness, namely, it is always conducive to happiness. R. holds that while only happiness has self-generated value (i.e. its value derives from its own inherent properties), only virtue has other-generated unconditional value. R.'s distinctive interpretation of Socrates' value scheme allows us to reconcile the passages where he seems to say that virtue is both a means to happiness and unconditionally good. On this scheme, even though virtue derives its value from its relationship to happiness, the fact that it always leads to happiness endows it with a value that is different in kind than the value of neither-good-nor-bad things.

In the third and final part of the book (chs 7-10), R. further discusses the relationship between virtue and happiness. R. begins by arguing that the relationship between virtue and happiness is not a matter of definition or conceptual connection. Thus, questions about whether Socrates thinks that virtue is necessary or sufficient for happiness are irrelevant. Rather, Socrates thinks that the relationship between virtue and happiness is nomological and contingent: given the way the world is, pursuing virtue is the best strategy for achieving happiness. This is because virtue is knowledge, or, more specifically, the science of how to use the knowledge yielded by all of the other sciences to bring about happiness. R. then argues that happiness consists in modal pleasure: an activity that fulfils a natural human capacity. Accordingly, virtue can also be described as the science of measurement of present and future modal pleasures and pains.

R. introduces and concludes the book with a discussion of the advantages of Socratic over Christian and Kantian ethics. Indeed, the overarching aim of R.'s book is to show that Socrates' naturalistic approach demystifies ethics by providing reasons grounded in natural facts (e.g. pleasure) for choosing certain actions. But has R. succeeded in showing that Socrates' ethics provides a non-mysterious justification for other-regarding actions? R. provides a justification that is grounded in empirical evidence: it is not in our interest to harm others, since this makes them into worse people who are likely to harm us or those we care about (65-

71). R. notes that a justification of this type allows us to conclude that it will *rarely* be in our interest to harm another, but she admits that Socrates seems to think that it is *never* in our interest to harm another (71). How does Socrates justify this stronger claim? R. argues that any time we act on the belief that we benefit from harming another, we act on and reinforce this false belief, which decreases our knowledge and so our chances for happiness (71-2). But – as R. herself admits – there may be cases where we do benefit from harming others. If, in those cases, we act on the belief that in *this* instance it is beneficial to harm another, then we would not be acting on and reinforcing a false belief. It seems, then, that some mystery remains with respect to Socrates' justification for other-regarding actions. This is a significant objection with regard to R's overall aims, but it does little to lessen the book's contribution to Socratic studies, since the problem may not lie in R's interpretation of Socrates, but in the difficulty of showing that we always have reason to consider the good of others in our deliberations.

RACHEL SINGPURWALLA  
University of Maryland, College Park  
rgks@umd.edu

**WEISS (R.) The Socratic Paradox and its Enemies.**

Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 2006. Pp. xii + 235. £22.50. 9780226891729.

In this book Weiss argues for a new interpretation of the Socratic paradox that 'nobody does wrong willingly' and for a new understanding of the sort of philosopher that Plato's Socrates is. On her account, Socrates has no unusual theory of human psychology and action; Socrates is set apart instead by his commitment to and bellicose defence of the life of virtue, and in particular the life of justice. Dismayed by the moral malaise of his day, Socrates resolves to counter the influence of sophists and their pupils, the 'enemies' of the book's title. In response to various opponents, W. argues, Socrates deploys the paradox, which is in essence a bold claim about human welfare masquerading as a bold claim about human psychology. According to W., like most of us Socrates believes that people deliberately do wrong, but he also holds that in doing wrong people deny themselves happiness and so deny themselves something that they must deeply want; only in this sense is wrong done 'unwillingly'. W. examines passages where the paradox is apparently asserted (*Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, *Meno*, *Laws* 9) and passages where Plato has been thought to refer to the paradox as if it were Socratic property (*Hippias Minor*) or at least previous Socratic property (*Republic* 4). She concedes that in the *Protagoras* Socrates does indeed say that people never knowingly act against their interests, but she claims that he does this only so that he can reduce to absurdity Protagoras' claim to teach virtue; in the other passages, she then argues, Socrates is making weaker and less

eccentric claims about psychology and action than scholars have tended to assume.

Some of this we have heard before; plenty of scholars have suggested that the arguments in the *Protagoras* are shaped more by the polemical setting than by Socrates' own doctrines. But the book breaks new ground in arguing that in all its guises the paradox really reflects an unconventional view of people's best interests and not an unconventional view of people's desires and actions. It also poses a challenge to a developmental reading of the dialogues, and does so from a fresh standpoint: on W's thesis, as she herself notes (2 n.5), there is no distinctly 'Socratic' psychology that can be contrasted with the theory of the *Republic*.

The book consists largely of detailed studies of the key passages. W. defends her thesis resolutely, even in the teeth of apparently formidable opposition from the text. But only a reader who accepts her brief characterization of the 'combat mode' (4) in which Socrates operates should be persuaded by her case. For example, when in *Meno* 77-8 Socrates argues that everybody wishes to get good things, he speaks first of 'desiring' (ἐπιθυμεῖν) and then of 'wanting' (βούλεσθαι) these things. We might naturally assume that within this argument no distinction is intended between the two verbs. Not so for W., who suggests (159-62) that Socrates is really arguing only that everybody *wants* good things, and that he allows that people can *desire* bad things. If so, then Socrates thoroughly misleads Meno, not least because he introduces the argument by asking whether Meno really doubts that everybody *desires* good things (77c 1-2), but also because, as W. notes (161), Meno lets Socrates substitute one verb for the other (77b 4-5, 78b 3-4).

W. also owes her reader a more satisfying explanation of why it is that Socrates so often claims (or at least strongly seems to claim) that wrong-doing is involuntary, if he is meant to have no genuine interest in the claim as a straight piece of psychology. Sometimes, as in the *Protagoras*, Socrates' interlocutor is confident that virtue can be taught, and such an interlocutor might easily be convinced that only a sort of ignorance prevents us from being good. But elsewhere, most obviously in the *Meno*, Socrates talks with someone who does not share Protagoras' confidence, and yet here too there is a place for the claim (or at least for what Meno takes to be the claim) that everybody desires the good. So Plato shows the paradox serving Socrates well in surprisingly different dialectical contexts. Could this be because it is meant to be true?

ALEX LONG  
University of St Andrews  
ag110@st-andrews.ac.uk