

verificationist account of the Wager argument with a discussion on the ordination of the philosophical enterprise *en bloc*.

“Reason, truth and sacred history” takes up a similar defense of the analytic approach to questions of religion, this time from the point of view of epistemological certainty. In doing so, Haldane examines the philosophical journey of Hilary Putnam, one leading in various manners away from metaphysical realism and toward relativism. For Putnam, as with many of his contemporaries, what counts as “real is only specifiable in terms of one or another ‘interpretation’, and there is no single privileged ontology” (114). However, by refusing to adopt the subsequent conclusion that reason is reduced to ideology, Putnam’s is painted as a virtuous model of neo-pragmatist anti-realism, namely one in which value is the “underpinning of all human activity” (114). In response to Putnam, Haldane engages the thought of Ernest Gellner, whose “rationalist fundamentalism” offers a strong counterpoint to anti-realism. Ultimately, Haldane concludes that “non-reductive pluralistic realism” is compatible with eternal truths, and thus that it can be reconciled with theistic realism, understood as a tradition of moral and intellectual investigation that points to a consistent, enduring standard of value (110).

On a more elementary level, the present volume also serves to contribute to

contemporary discussions of Thomism in general. Indeed, Haldane’s particular account of a Thomist metaphysics in chapter 2, as well as his treatment of Aquinas and the Magisterium on the notion of ensoulment (a chapter taken from a paper written with Patrick Lee), are fine starting points even for those approaching these topics for the very first time. Furthermore, his chapter on “Philosophy, death and immortality,” in addition to being appropriately philosophical—taking into consideration the work of Dewi Phillips and Ludwig Wittgenstein—weds reason with Christian hope in a way that is also especially sensitive to the mystical character of the Church.

While portions of *Reasonable Faith* will no doubt provide many challenges for some novice and even intermediate philosophers, the collection would make a fine handbook for those interested in mining the oft unexplored depths of the Thomist tradition, as well as those curious to find a well thought-out defense of pragmatic analysis. At the very least, the volume is an exceptional introduction to the very lucid thought of Professor Haldane, whose unique philosophical contributions are worth exploring on their own merit.

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ONE BOOK, THE WHOLE UNIVERSE: PLATO’S *TIMAEUS* TODAY. Edited by Richard D. Mohr and Barbara M. Sattler. Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2010. Pp. vii + 406. Trade Paper \$87.00, ISBN: 978-1-9-30972-32-2.

Although an impressive attempt has been made to impose determinate form upon the proceedings of Richard Mohr and Barbara Sattler’s 2007 conference,

“Life, the Universe, Everything—and More: Plato’s *Timaeus* Today,” *One Book, The Whole Universe* necessarily retains both the insights and the imperfections

latent in any inter-disciplinary conference proceedings. The majority of the articles in this collection are intended for specialists who are at least familiar with ancient Greek, and treat philological and philosophical problems in Plato's *Timaeus*, both historical and textual. The rest of the articles explore the *Timaeus*'s connection to such diverse topics as narrative, architecture, film, and modern physics.

The articles by Anthony Long, Alan Silverman, Charles H. Kahn, Matthias Vorwerk, and Thomas M. Robinson focus on Platonic and Neo-Platonic conceptions of the Demiurge and other related theological matters, while Donald Zeyl, Verity Harte, Stephen Menn, Ian Mueller, and Zina Giannopoulou attempt to interpret the physical and spatial status of the pre-existing material (*chôra*) from which Plato's Demiurge crafted the cosmos (although Giannopoulou is an exception, since she treats the *chôra* in reference to Derrida's deconstructive analysis). Gábor Betegh and Alexander P. D. Mourelatos provide articles examining the validity and importance of Myles Burnyeat's now famous article, "EIKÔS MYTHOS," and discuss what exactly Plato meant when he attempted to give a "likely" account or story, while Barbara Sattler and Kathryn A. Morgan discuss temporal and narrative aspects in the *Timaeus*. Thomas K. Johansen and Alan Code, respectively, discuss Aristotle's relation to the *Timaeus* in respect of his theory of final causes and Aristotle's criticism of Plato's theory of elemental weight. On the inter-disciplinary side, the little-known historical impact of the *Timaeus* and *Critias* on renaissance architecture is provided by Anthony Vidler, while Ann Bergren (though herself a classicist)

provides a profoundly interesting and illustrated article which examines whether or not Plato's formal aesthetics can be applied to "animate form" digital art objects.

Although all the articles in *One Book, The Whole Universe* are of high quality, their topical scope varies from extreme generality to extreme specificity. Kahn exemplifies the former extreme in his "The Place of Cosmology in Plato's Later Dialogues," wherein he provides the broad argument that Plato developed a positive philosophy of nature in his late dialogues which is not restricted to a pure noetic grasp of the Forms (69–77). Vorwerk represents the other extreme; he charts out the history of the Middle-Platonic and Neo-Platonic exegetical bi-partition of a single Timaeian quote which describes the Demiurge as the "Father and Maker of All," and shows how in certain post-Platonic authors this quote is taken as a reference to *two* Demiurges (79–100). Most often, *One Book, The Whole Universe* is focused on these latter microscopic parts of Plato's universe (both literally and metaphorically), and for this reason should not be confused with a general introductory text on the *Timaeus*.

Even so, *One Book, The Whole Universe* is remarkably thorough in the treatment of its chosen text (a thesis that can be confirmed by the *index locorum*) and contains precisely the sort of articles that one would want and expect in a scholarly collection on the *Timaeus*. There is scarcely a Timaeian topic of traditional interest to scholars that is not mentioned or even given a detailed explanation—the only obvious exception being that there is no sustained discussion of the *Timaeus*'s account of the creation of living mortal

things (69b–89e). Even so, Anthony Long's article, "Cosmic Craftsmanship in Plato and Stoicism," partially makes up for this defect, insofar as it addresses the *telos* of humanity as consisting of a practical imperative to imitate demiurgic craftsmanship (37–53).

The inter-disciplinary articles, while not necessarily beneficial to ancient scholarship *per se*, round out the collection by showing that many issues in the *Timaeus*, quite surprisingly, can be thoughtfully discussed in relation to topics such as modern fashion design (364–72). Mohr and Sattler are to be commended for attempting to link ancient issues with contemporary developments, and the articles which focus on the latter, I suspect, will be refreshing to scholars who have developed the inevitable (but not incurable) myopia that comes with academic specialization.

The main weakness of the collection is that in answer to the question of how much relevance and continuing impact the *Timaeus* has today, one sometimes gets the feeling that some of the non-philosophical and non-classicist contributors would be tempted to answer, "not much." For instance, Anthony Vidler's essay, "*Timaeus* in Tinseltown: Atlantis in Film," while being of outstanding quality, does not discuss the *Timaeus* at all except as a brief historical reference point to his given subject matter (287–328). Similarly, the two physicists represented in the volume, Anthony Leggett and Sean Carroll (whose articles, respectively, begin and end the volume), while charitable to the book's project, seem for the most part underwhelmed by Plato's historically novel prefiguring of modern attempts at the mathematization of nature. One would have thought, for instance, that at least one of the two

would have mentioned the importance that Heisenberg attached to the *Timaeus*, if only to point out a partial continuity between Plato and their own contemporary cosmogonical accounts.

A final oddity is that while the jacket cover art—a hand pointing downwards to a swirling universe—intentionally portrays Plato's demiurgic creation of the world in a way that is reminiscent of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel iconography, in the introduction Mohr himself is keen to point out that Plato's account of creation is really disanalogous in important respects to the biblical account (7–8). Moreover, although some of the most interesting articles in the collection do concern various theological issues—such as the nature of the Demiurge, its reason for creating, and Plato's later theology in the *Laws*—Sean Carroll's article, "Ever After, Ever Before," ends *One Book, The Whole Universe* on a notably anti-theistic note. Carroll informally tells readers that the trajectory of science in the past five hundred years has gradually made it no longer necessary to posit any sort of teleological cause (Prime Mover, Demiurge, etc.) as a source of origin for the universe. However, giving Carroll the final word on such an over-arching Timaeian theme symbolically works as a retroactive solvent upon the work of the earlier contributions in the volume. Even more frustrating is that Carroll leaves readers with an equally non-empirical explanation of the universe—the "multiverse"—an eternal "background universe" that gives birth to "baby universes" and whose existence, Carroll postulates, might admit of no other explanation than it "just is" (381). Even so, Carroll's idea of an eternal, inexplicable *being* that produces the universe through a set of ontologically ambiguous "natural

laws,” proposed as a “scientific” answer to the origin of the universe, shows that what the sum total of *One Book, The Whole Universe* accomplishes best is that it unexpectedly brings into view the relationship that exists between the *Timaeus’s eikōs mythos* concept and our

own contemporary *logoi*. It is for this reason, rather than any particular article or group of articles, that this volume should be considered of primary importance.

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OBJECTIVITY AND THE PAROCHIAL. By Charles Travis. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. 361. Hard Cover \$85.00, ISBN: 978-0-19-959621-8.

When we think about the world around us, that which we think about does not depend on our thoughts for its existence or ways of being: this is a trivial consequence of that world’s being a world around us, rather than a world within. But what we *think* when we think things to be one way or another is not in this way independent of our intellects: it is, again trivially, because we are the kinds of thinkers we are that we think about things in the kinds of ways we do. The first of these features of thought makes it *objective*, in the minimal sense that the truth of a thought is not guaranteed by one’s taking it to be true. The second feature is thought’s *parochial* character, the fact that there is no such thing as thinking “just as such,” but only the thinking of this or that kind of thinking being. In *Objectivity and the Parochial* Charles Travis argues, first, that thinking is essentially and ineliminably parochial, and then that this does not entail that its content cannot be objective.

Travis’s insistence on the parochial character of thought is rooted in his denial of the Fregean account of concepts as functions from objects to truth-values. For Travis, thought is necessarily *occasion-sensitive* in a way that makes it impossible for the world itself to determine what

concepts are applicable to it. Consider, for example, the thought expressed by the sentence “This room is dark” (see 173–7). Whether on a given occasion a room can truly be said to be dark is not determined *just* by how the room is, but also by what one *means* on that occasion by calling the room dark: for example, whether one is concerned with the state of the ambient lighting, the color of the walls and draperies, or the suitability of the room for developing photographic film. Given that one has some such concern, the state of the room will determine whether it is dark or not, on the operative understanding of darkness. But the relevant conception of darkness is not supplied by the room itself: concepts cannot determine the conditions for their own application, and so there is no such thing as representations that “admit no understandings” (178). For this reason, “there is no access to the way our concepts in fact apply to things without a view informed by the parochial” (136)—that is, a view informed by the contingent facts of human nature and the ways we happen to think and live. What we mean when we say the room is dark can be understood only by those thinkers who are able to appreciate the kinds of concerns that undergird this form of thought.