

STUDI E SAGGI

DENIS O'BRIEN

EMPEDOCLES ON THE IDENTITY OF THE ELEMENTS

Abstract

Empedocles' repeated description of his four "roots" or elements by the repetition of three seemingly simple words (αὐτά + ἐστίν + ταῦτα) has constantly defied explanation. If the verb is given a copulative function, the result appears to be a pointless tautology ("these things are themselves"). If it is given an existential value, the result is puzzlingly abstruse ("these things themselves are"). Translators therefore commonly opt for a loose paraphrase, where one word out of three is not translated at all (αὐτά) and an adverb ("only") is added, seemingly from nowhere ("only these things are"). The solution to the puzzle is to be found in Empedocles' reaction to his older contemporary, Anaxagoras. Empedocles' repeated description is a covert criticism of Anaxagoras' curious claim that "in everything there is a part of everything".

Keywords

Anaxagoras, Aristotle, homoiomerics, tautology, anachronism, causality

MARCEL MEULDER

LE VERS 4 DU FRAGMENT 115 D'EMPÉDOCLE (FVS 31 D.-K.): PROPOSITION D'UNE CORRECTION

Abstract

By establishing a link between Homer's, Hesiod's and Empedocles' similar textual expressions, we are allotted to assert that the fourth line of Empedocles' fragment 115 (FVS 31) is authentic. We must read the first words of this line so: ὃς κεν ἐκὼν ἐπίορκον... This emendation of Empedocles' text implies that the guilty god (or man or Blessed) whom Empedocles' fragment mentions, is not urged by an (positive or negative) outside element, nor is deceived by a god or a man, acts quite willingly and like the Hatred to which he adheres, and behaves like an human being. However he differs from the disloyal man; for, once punished and cleansed, he is allotted to go back to the society of the Gods or the Blessed, whereas the disloyal man becomes blind or dies, as the myth of the Sicilian Palici testifies. Empedocles refers to this myth when he is speaking over the goddess Nestis.

Keywords

Empedocles, Homer, Hesiod, philology, philosophy

MARIANA GARDELLA

ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΟΣ ΠΕΡΙΠΑΤΕΙ. LOS ARGUMENTOS DEL TERCER HOMBRE MEGÁRICOS

Abstract

The Platonic Theory of Forms has received many critiques from many critics, among which stands out the well-known "Third man argument". Although traditionally the studies about this subject only have considered the versions of the argument introduced by Plato and Aristotle, the Megarian philosophers also developed other versions of the same reasoning. In this paper I would like to analyze the argument which is attributed by Alexander of Aphrodisias to "the sophists" and to Polyxenus in his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. I will try to show that the main point of these objections is to criticize the homonymy of the universal terms, a problem that Plato evokes in his *Parmenides*, where he also points out some difficulties in relation to the semantics of his own theory.

Keywords

Third man argument, Megarian philosophers, Polyxenus, eponymy, homonymy

ANDRÉS FEDERICO RACKET

THE TRAGIC CONDITION OF PHILOSOPHY: PLATO'S *APOLOGY* AS TRAGEDY

Abstract

This paper argues that Plato's *Apology* can be read as a tragedy analogous to *Oedipus Tyrannus*. Jacob Howland has argued that the elements of tragedy laid out Aristotle's *Poetics* are present, but the relation of the *Apology* to *Oedipus Tyrannus* and other aspects of Sophocles' tragedy have not been noted. With this procedure, Plato means to argue that a philosopher should hide his refutations more than Socrates did.

Keywords

Plato, Apology of Socrates, philosophy, tragedy, J. Howland

TIMOTHY J. FURLAN
HAPPINESS AND DEATH IN ARISTOTLE'S ETHICS

Abstract

Solon's extraordinary claim, that we should call "no one happy who is still living" (τέλος ὄρᾶν), presents a fascinating and distinctive argument about happiness and the length of a human life. The issues Solon raises are important, and even if we think his pessimistic conclusion is an exaggeration we can still appreciate his central concern how conceptions of happiness and the length of a human life are connected. The purpose of this paper is to explore a few of these problems, in particular the reason why Aristotle's reply to Solon in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is somewhat ambiguous. We find Aristotle addressing Solon's claim at the outset of *Eth. Nic.* A 10, troubled in one sense by its conclusion, yet struck by its partial truth. On the one hand, he thinks that εὐδαιμονία requires a "complete life" (βίος τέλειος), or at the very least, a sufficient and "complete span of time" (τέλειος χρόνος), both of which are compatible with Solon's advice that we should postpone calling someone happy until a later point in life. But on the other hand Aristotle defines εὐδαιμονία in such a way that raises the question whether he needs to accept Solon's claim in any form. In particular, if happiness is defined in terms of excellent activity (ἐνέργεια κατ' ἀρετήν), as Aristotle repeatedly claims, why should we wait until a person dies to call him or her happy? Why shouldn't excellent actions, at the very time they are performed, count someone as happy? The puzzle, in short, is the fact that Aristotle defines happiness in terms of ἐνέργεια, activities that are complete without developing over time, and yet also claims that happiness requires a "complete lifetime", a βίος τέλειος.

Keywords

Aristotle, Solon, happiness, death, *eudaimonia*

ENRICO PIERGIACOMI
CONFLICTS OF ATOMISMS. SOME MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DEMOCRITUS AND COLOTES

Abstract

The paper compares the thought of Democritus and that of Colotes. It is argued that the two thinkers diverge at least in three noteworthy respects: 1) they disagree about the nature of knowledge, for Democritus identifies it with a process which goes from raw (and untrustworthy) sensation to intellectual understanding, whereas Colotes affirms the truth of every sensation and its fundamental role in the use of reason; 2) they have contrary opinions on the practice of "pleasing", since the former totally rejects this as a damaging form of obsequiousness, while the latter allows a form of pleasing which is good, *i.e.* which can lead to pleasure and security; 3) they describe death differently, for Democritus affirms that it consists in the loss of *most* of the soul atoms (which also allows, to a certain degree, the phenomenon of the "return to life"), whereas Colotes may have followed Epicurus in depicting death as the *complete* loss of soul particles. Such an investigation suggests, on both historical and philosophical grounds, that Democritus and Colotes did not embrace the same kind of atomism, but two *atomisms*, which start from different premises and pursue different goals.

Keywords

Atomism, Democritus, Colotes, Epicurean tradition, epistemology, forms of pleasing

ELAD FILLER
PLATONIC AND STOIC DIALECTIC IN PHILO

Abstract

In this paper, dealing with Platonic and Stoic dialectic in Philo, I wish to make a proposal that may offer some solution to the problem of the surprising absence of a proper use of the dialectic of the late Platonic dialogues in Philo's works. Philonic scholars have not, to the best of my knowledge, raised this question; but Philo's very rare allusions to Plato's later dialogues were noted in David T. Runia's comprehensive study on Philo and Plato's *Timaeus*.

Keywords

Plato, later dialogues, Philo of Alexandria, dialectic, Sophists

DISCUSSIONI, NOTE E RASSEGNE

DIANA QUARANTOTTO
ARISTOTLE'S WAY AWAY FROM PARMENIDES' WAY. A CASE OF SCIENTIFIC CONTROVERSY AND ANCIENT HUMOUR

Abstract

In *Physics* A, Aristotle introduces his science of nature and devotes a substantial part of the investigation to refuting the Eleatics' theses, and to resolving their arguments, against plurality and change. In so doing, Aristotle also dusts off

Parmenides' metaphor of the routes of inquiry and uses it as one of the main schemes of his book. Aristotle's goal, I argue, is to present his own physical investigation as the only correct route, and to show that Parmenides' "way of truth" is instead both wrong and a sidetrack. By revisiting Parmenides' metaphor of the route, Aristotle twists it against him, distorts it and uses this distortion as a source of fun and of some mockery of Parmenides himself. Thereby, *Physics A* gives us a taste of Aristotle's biting humour and of his practice of the "virtue" of wit (*eutrapelia*).

Keywords

Aristotle, *Physics A*, Parmenides, routes of inquiry, natural science, virtue of wit

WOLFGANG HÜBNER

UNTERWELT UND PURGATORIUM

Abstract

In this thesis the different notions of *Hades* that appear in the heterogeneous works of greco-roman literature are inquired and interpreted with enormous scrutiny. The philosophical texts are written mostly by Plato and the Platonists (in particular Heraclides Ponticus, Plutarchus, and Proclus). They have to be compared with Christian ideas of purgatory originating in the early Middle Ages. Eschatology must be explained not only with regard to the cosmologies, that change during the centuries, but also on a solid base of astronomical and astrological knowledge.

Keywords

Air, cosmology, eschatology, Heraclides Ponticus, purgatory, underworld