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# Editorial Statement

GILL, Christopher, in *2. Plato 2 (2002)*,  
[En ligne], January 2002

Issue Two of this journal, like Issue One, consists of commissioned articles. A common theme in several articles in this issue is that of development. Can we see in Plato's dialogues a clear development from one phase to another, for instance, from 'Socratic' to 'middle' dialogues or from 'middle' to 'late' dialogues. If there is a clear line of development, how important is this for our interpretation of the philosophical content of the dialogues? It has been a longstanding assumption, especially in English-language scholarship, that there is clear line of development; but this assumption has not been shared by all Platonic scholars. Recently, this assumption has been challenged from within English-language scholarship, notably by Charles Kahn.

In this issue, Christopher Rowe discusses Charles Kahn's book, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue* (Cambridge University Press, 1996). He acknowledges the force of some of Kahn's criticisms of the account of Platonic development (from 'Socratic' to 'Platonic' dialogues) offered by scholars such as Gregory Vlastos. But he maintains that, in moral psychology, there is still a fundamental difference between the 'Socratic' theory of the *Protagoras* and the 'Platonic' theory of the *Republic*. He suggests that Kahn does not recognise the extent of this difference, in part because Kahn does not acknowledge that the 'Socratic' model represents a credible and powerful account of human psychology. In his reply, Kahn restates the interpretative assumptions underlying his book, focusing more on the 'unitarian' approach than on the idea of 'proleptic' anticipation of later ideas. On moral psychology, he maintains that a single theory runs through the dialogues (the 'classical theory of action', centred on the desire for the good). He suggests that the *Protagoras* should be seen as responding to a specific issue, that of *akrasia*, rather than as offering a major statement of a substantive theory of moral psychology, that of Socrates.

M.M. McCabe also starts from Charles Kahn's book and from the question of development. She considers and criticises Kahn's 'proleptic' reading of the dialogues and proposes, as an alternative, a 'metaleptic' reading, showing how later dialogues question and criticise earlier ones. She examines, especially, the relationship between the *Euthydemus* (288-92) and the *Republic* (Books 6-7), on knowledge and the good, suggesting that it is more plausible to see the *Euthydemus* as a critique of the *Republic* than the other way round. Enrico Berti asks whether we can speak about an evolution in Platonic dialectic. He examines three main patterns of dialectical enquiry in the dialogues of different periods. He suggests that, in spite of some changes in formulation, there is a significant degree of continuity in Plato's aims and methods in using dialectic.

There are two other contributions, not linked with the theme of development. Luc Brisson continues from Issue One his review of Mario Vegetti's (collaborative) commentary on the *Republic*, and discusses volume 4 of the commentary, on Book V of the *Republic*. Lloyd Gerson offers a survey of recent work on Neoplatonism, showing the growth and vigour of this branch of Platonic scholarship.

Electronic methods of publishing make it possible to add to Issue 2 three items which were originally intended to form part of this issue and which have now become available. One is a summary by Holger Thesleff of his 1999 book, *Studies in Plato's Two-level Method*. The intention is to make the ideas and approach of this important book (published in a specialist series) better known. The second is a discussion by Thomas Szlezák of the role and significance of Schleiermacher for the history of Platonic scholarship in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century. Originally given as a lecture in the University of München, this will remain in this journal until it is published in hard copy by De Gruyter later in 2002. The third item is a notice of the first ever translation of Plato's works into Romanian.

Readers who wish to contribute comments on any of the papers in the journal are invited to do so by sending them, to C.J.Gill@ex.ac.uk. Comments can be in English, French, German, Italian or Spanish and may be subject to editorial revision or reduction.

In Issues One and Two of this journal, there have been articles in English, French, German and Italian, with contributions from scholars in Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and USA. It is hoped that Issue Three will contain a contribution in Spanish, and from other countries in addition to those mentioned, to develop further the aim of the journal to be a vehicle of international debate on Plato.