contre que Stivale situe cette possibilité, celle qui pave la voie à la résistance et à la ligne de fuite.

Stivale a réussi à faire de Deleuze’s ABCs un livre qui est à la fois accessible pour les non initiés, en présentant certaines des notions-clés de la pensée deleuzienne de façon originale, et excitante pour les autres, en produisant des connections nouvelles et créatrices. Il ne s’agit pas d’une lecture de L’abécédaire, mais d’une production utilisant ce document audiovisuel comme point de départ pour saisir certains concepts et les transformer quelque peu, sous la bannière de l’amitié. Faisant sienne la stratégie du zigzag, Stivale connecte différents écrits de Deleuze et d’autres penseurs qui lui sont associés par le biais de la question « What can friendship do? » (xiii), tout en la mettant en pratique : créer des rencontres, ouvrir des possibilités pour la pensée, s’attarder aux multiples singularités qui se regroupent sous l’appellation « Deleuze ».

Martin Lussier, Memorial University of Newfoundland


Plato’s dialogues have not only provided the necessary dosage of sunlight required to help cultivate the various subfields of the discipline but they have also given neophytes their first opportunity to study philosophy. Typically, upon commencing their post-secondary career in the academy, the average student will likely not have been exposed to any philosophical ideas, doctrines or concepts, let alone the primary works contained in the *Corpus Platonicum*. However, after reading a Platonic dialogue for the first time, the archetypal student seems to be struck by its suspicious simplicity. Gerald Press reports that it is within this perceived approachability that novice readers experience the most confusion: “An overall cause of reader perplexity about Plato is the contrast between what appears on the surface and what seems to exist, but obscurely, beneath the surface.” (1) It is from this observation that Press begins his discussion on the causes of confusion in the Platonic dialogues.
Press has divided his work into four distinct parts, each consisting of a series of chapters, which together provide an exceptional scholarly and philosophically nuanced guide for reading the Platonic dialogues. In the first part, Press supplies a written account of Plato’s long life with meticulous references to the political, social and intellectual conditions that permeated his time. In addition to the biographical details that must preface any work on a philosopher, Press also provides a requisite explanation on the function of Plato’s works. According to Press, Plato’s works were not meant to be read by the general public due to their esoteric and obscure nature. Due to this inscrutability, it is likely that Plato’s writings were “philosophic protreptics” (17) which sought to attract potential students toward both the Academy and the philosophical sciences in general. However, Press recognises that there are other possibilities, such as the prospect that Plato’s dialogues originally served as “exercise books” (17) for his students and/or as “advertisements” (18) for the Academy and the specialised knowledge one would acquire in such an intellectually charged environment. Initially, the prospect of advertising his works seems perplexing; however, one must remember that during Plato’s lifetime the Greek world was somewhat unexposed to written philosophy, as it still embraced an oral culture that placed more value upon ornate speeches about politics rather than philosophical writings. (17–18, 25)

The collection of chapters in the second part focusses on the role change plays in producing perplexity among Plato’s readers. Press begins this large part with a survey of the evolution of Platonic thought through the ages from its founder to the New Academy to Middle Platonism to Neo-Platonism to Renaissance Platonism to the Early and Contemporary Modernists. (39–52) Press also provides a brief account of the Anti-Platonists who attack(ed) Plato both philosophically and personally throughout the ages. Press populates this group with thinkers such as Epicurus, Lucian, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Great, Friedrich Nietzsche and Karl Popper. (52) However, throughout this entire chronology of Plato’s philosophical thought, Press emphasises that despite the myriad of Platonic schools and approaches to the dialogues that produced many tensions and heated debates, the mere proliferation of meaning seems to be a mark of excellence in writing. (39) The presence of various interpretations coupled with Plato’s unorthodox way of presenting his philosophical ideas—through dialogue versus the
standard treatise—presents, however, serious points of confusion for the reader who attempts to tackle Plato’s works for the first time.

Press contends that “the dialogue form itself is the most important cause of perplexity to those readers who are looking for Plato’s doctrines.” (55) Unlike the traditional philosophical treatise, the dialogue, along with its close relatives the poem and the meditation, tend to contain more esoteric ideas and, thus, “communicate more implicitly and indirectly.” (55) In other words, the dialogue inhibits those who seek to capture the kernel of Plato’s message. Unfortunately, the dialogues are an unchangeable reality that must be properly handled by the aspiring student of philosophy. Therefore, according to Press, it is necessary to better understand the underlying subtleties of the dialogic structure by recognising the “linguistic characteristics, literary structures and the thoroughgoing interpretation of the dramatic and the philosophic.” (55) This uneasy relationship brings about a host of obstacles that the reader must overcome should he/she wish to successfully grasp the nuances of Platonic thought. With the dialogic approach come questions of argumentation and doctrine, stories and mythology, irony and humour, and play (immorality) and seriousness (morality). These features should be viewed under lenses that can account for the presence of paradox, which seems to be both a recurring theme and a binding force that unites the aforementioned questions. (130–31) Press cautions the reader to be aware of such paradoxical “inversions of reader expectation” (131) in their quest to uncover some sort of underlying themes that run throughout Plato’s works.

The third part of the book is centred on the ideas of permanence and stability in Plato’s dialogues. In contrast to the topics of change presented in the second part, the third part explores Plato’s overarching and repeated themes that often appear in the collective corpus of his works. Press contends that Plato’s dialogues depart from the traditional discursive “propositional knowledge,” whereby “knowledge is linked to a doctrinal conception of philosophy” and “embodied in statements telling us that something is true.” (159) In its place, Plato makes use of a vague panoramic and systematic “intellectual vision,” which is composed of “many elements grasped in their mutual relationships.” (160) This “pictorial quality” (160) spills into Plato’s “vision of reality,” which is comprised of “two asymmetrical levels.” (162) The first or “lower level” is home to the impermanent and sensational material world that is a mere
“shadow of reality” that is cast by the “higher level” of permanence and intellectual thought. (162)

Press, however, instructs the reader to view these two levels as inseparable planes of existence that are not mutually exclusive, but rather conjoined. (163) Press argues that in order to realise and accept this “two level model of reality” (174), it is necessary to travel upon the “path or way to wisdom” (173), which culminates in the realisation of the two levels. Press describes this path as one that is provocative as it encourages travellers to become “more thoughtful, critical, rational, and moral.” (173) However, Press remarks that this path is also “social” in the sense that it requires “dialogical interactions with others.” (173) In addition to these social interactions, there is also an element of empathy, where travellers are required “to aid others in finding the path.” (173) In order to assist the readership in better understanding this concept, Press remarks that the path of wisdom is, in fact, a “dramatic story” that is “intrinsically exciting, involves striking, emotionally charged problems, confrontations, changes, successes and failures of the kind that characterise drama.” (175) Also, like the dramatic arc, there are a series of “general stages” (179) that one must pass through in order to achieve a higher level of thought, including pre-philosophic ignorance to dialectical cross-examination to spiritual ascent. This ascent can only be reached after one has undergone a “spiritual crisis or aporia” (178) that is evoked after “a series of recurring dialectical encounters” (179) with various interlocutors, who force the traveller to question his/her core beliefs and notions.

The fourth and final part of Press’s work acts as a springboard that effectively prepares the reader for the subsequent task of actually reading a Platonic dialogue. Press recommends that the aspiring student undertake three different types of reading in order to appreciate fully and understand the dialogues: the logical, dramatic and integrative readings. (186–92) During the “logical reading,” one should seek to identify the “main lines of argument” (186) discussed by Plato through his characters. In the second reading, the “dramatic reading” (188), one should approach the dialogue just as one would approach a play by Shakespeare, a poem by Milton or a novel by Hemingway, in the sense that they should seek out literary information, such as plot, setting, character, development, allusions, irony and the employment of paradox. (189–91) In the “integrative reading” (191), it is necessary to juxtapose the information
gathered in the previous two forms of reading in order to achieve a deep or thick understanding of the dialogue under review. At the end of the work, Press provides brief summaries of nineteen Platonic dialogues from the common to the obscure, including the *Parmenides*, *Symposium*, *Republic*, *Phaedrus*, *Gorgias*, *Ion*, *Timaeus* and others. (209–20)

In composing any academic work, one has two audiences in mind: the student and the expert. It is often difficult to accommodate both audiences, who often seek dissimilar forms of information and specified approaches to the work under scrutiny. The student requires a transpiscuous and structured account that discusses the author’s background, the political and social climate of ancient Athens, the purpose and function of the dialogue, and standard methods of interpretation. Conversely, the expert requires immense philosophical erudition and scholarly rigour that not only demonstrates an intimate understanding of the ancient, medieval and contemporary debates on the subject but also presents unique interpretations and original approaches to the dialogues. In my opinion, Press not only has impressively accommodated his two diverse audiences but, more importantly, has successfully contributed to their individual philosophical development.

*John Cappucci, Carleton University*

*Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825–26, Volume I: Introduction and Oriental Philosophy, Together with Introductions from the Other Series of These Lectures*, by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

The present volume is a slightly abridged translation of Jaeschke’s critical edition of Hegel’s *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie: Teil I*. It includes a complete translation of transcripts of Hegel’s lectures on the introduction to the history of philosophy of 1819, 1825–26 and 1829–30, the manuscript fragment of 1823–24, and the transcript of Hegel’s 1825–26 account of the literature and Oriental philosophy. It also includes substantial selections from the 1820–21, 1823–24, 1827–28