

5. The essential quality of ideals is found in this functional relation to the individuality of experience. By means of the ideal, experience is transmuted into knowledge.

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## REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS OF LITERATURE

*The Myths of Plato.* J. A. STEWART. London: The Macmillan Co. 1905. Pp. vi + 532.

Professor J. A. Stewart has made a useful book by collecting, translating, and illustrating with copious extracts from the literature of mysticism and folk-lore the 'myths of Plato.' His somewhat desultory and rhapsodical Introduction may be read with interest by everybody, and with sympathy by those who experience the special quality of 'transcendental feeling' which Plato's poetry and eloquence awaken in a scholarly and cultured but not wholly critical mind. More austere and hard-headed (or hearted) censors will have their reserves. We may cheerfully concede that Plato's myths are 'poetry' without feeling that our sense of their beauty is quickened by Professor Stewart's random quotation of poems whose only associating link is the quoter's enthusiasm. The 'Tale of Er' thrills Mr. Stewart, and so, he tells us, does the twenty-fifth sonnet of the 'Vita Nuova,' or Wordsworth's 'Duddon,' or Tennyson's 'Row us out from Desenzano,' or Shelley's 'Adonais,' or Whitman's 'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd.' I share all these thrills save the last, but except as thrills they do not resemble one another or my feeling for Plato's myths.

If we abandon ourselves to feeling, all feelings are in a sense the same. But such emotional expansion is not necessarily 'transcendental' in any but a Pickwickian or ecstatic sense, nor is it genetically or actually always a persistence of the 'dream consciousness.' Still less can these vague terms be applied to such conscious and clearly defined workmanship as the Platonic myths.

Plato stirs emotion, but he never abandons himself to it or wishes us to do so; and nothing can be less Platonic than the proclamation of the hegemony of sentiment and intuition over clear-eyed reason. It may be 'good that man should thus be made to feel in his heart how small a part of him his head is,' but this was not Plato's purpose. The Tennysonian heart that stands up in wrath and answers 'I have felt' would be bidden by Plato to know its place midway between the head and the liver. It is the second, not the first. Plato uses the rhetoric of mysticism and Orphism to commend convictions which he cherishes or believes salutary for mankind. But the pretensions of the individual mystic he always treats with irony and contempt. The inspiration of the poet or the seer, even when conceded for the argument's sake, is always subject

to the interpretations of the reason. The lower soul does not, as Plotinus says and Mr. Stewart seems to say, 'comprehend in silence the secret plan of the universe as it is and convey it in vision to the reason.' The relation is precisely the reverse. Reason, the 'Timaeus' humorously tells us, guides the unreasoning appetitive soul by picture language of phantasms painted on the polished mirror of the liver.

The Platonic myths, then, are not 'survivals of the dream consciousness,' nor 'revelations of something new and strange,' nor the 'inrush of a vast experience.' They are conscious artistic allegories partly symbolizing truths elsewhere established by dialectic, partly depicting probabilities which reason can not verify in their picturesque detail.

The distinction between myth and allegory so much labored by Professor Stewart resembles that which some writers attempt to establish between fancy and imagination, or between genius and talent. Such terms are convenient rhetorical synonyms for 'higher' and 'lower,' but they do not admit of definition except by a skillful dialectician in a particular context. A spontaneous outgrowth of the popular, an organic creation of the artistic imagination, we may dignify as a myth. If the didacticism is over explicit, the 'lesson' too trivial, the detail imperfectly fused or shaped in the forge of imagination, we degrade it to the rank of allegory.

Plato's tales are myths in that they deal with the supreme interests of the soul and their artistic form and unity is the creation of 'genius.' They are allegories in that their intentions are minutely predetermined by conscious thought, and the detail of the symbolism is as clean-cut and precise as that of Dante.

No sharp distinction can be drawn between prolonged metaphors that pass into allegories as the divided line, the mutinous crew, the cave in the 'Republic,' the myth of the 'Politicus' devised to illustrate a point in the argument and relieve the strain of continuous dialectic, the myth of the 'Phædrus' embodying the Platonic psychology, and the eschatological myths of the 'Phædo,' the 'Gorgias' and the 'Republic' which confirm the faith in or proof of immortality, paint to the imagination details 'something like which must be true,' and allegorize sometimes humorously many characteristic minor Platonic ethical judgments.

Mr. Stewart is aware of all this, but still pursues the will-o'-the-wisp of an absolute distinction: "The myth is distinguished once for all by weight and ring from allegory" (p. 15). "The mark of a true myth is that it sets forth the *a priori* elements in man's experience" (p. 221). The Platonic myth 'awakens and regulates transcendental feeling' (p. 45). The separate figures of the Spanish Chapel frescoes he tells us are allegorical, 'but the whole picture is a myth.' In the 'Phædrus' the chariot itself is allegorical, its 'Path through the Heavens is mythic.'

As Thackeray's 'Bulwig' would put it, 'respect everything that begins with a capital letter.'

The upshot of it all is that Mr. Stewart prefers the word 'myth' when his own feelings are deeply stirred or when the embodied doctrine is not

a special dogma of the writer but one of the Kantian 'Ideas of Reason.'

These Kantian ideas play a large part in Mr. Stewart's interpretation of Plato. He admits, I am pleased to note, that the distinction between ideas of the reason and categories or concepts of the understanding is not explicit in Plato. But he believes that we shall do well to keep it in mind as we read. This simply means that Mr. Stewart himself enjoys Plato most through Kantian spectacles.

The actual justification of the comparison is slight. Plato never said with Kant that God and immortality can not be proved. But he was probably not quite satisfied with his demonstration of immortality, and he lets us see in the 'Laws' that he regards a plausible proof of God's existence as an indispensable support to legislation and public morality. He never distinguished ideas of reason from concepts of the understanding, and the distinction is incompatible with the theory of ideas rightly interpreted. Unlike Kant, he completed his demonstration of the moral government of the world before resorting to the supernatural 'sanction.' The third Kantian idea, that of 'freedom,' he never discussed at all in the modern sense of the problem. Our author's Kantian analogies, then, have little historical justification, and will probably tend to confuse rather than to help the student.

Mr. Stewart's extensive use of illustrations drawn from folk-lore and primitive literature is in harmony with the prevailing fashion, and his quotations from the 'Kalevala,' the nursery tales of the Zulus, the legends of the Maoris, the British Museum Bestiary, and the 'Orphic' writings undoubtedly add to the interest of his pages. I can only record my conviction that the student will derive from his book an exaggerated notion of the significance of these things for Plato. Some of the motives of Platonic myths are doubtless widely diffused in folk-lore, and their origin is a legitimate topic of anthropological conjecture. The imagery and sentiment of Orphism appealed strongly to Plato's imagination. But all this was merely the material which the artist and thinker employed with conscious literary skill for his own purposes and the exposition of his own meanings. To interpret these purposes and meanings from his own text is to understand Plato.

There is space for but a few words on some points of detail and on the translation. On page 348 Mr. Stewart quotes with approval Masson's suggestion that commentators have missed the humor of Milton's Latin poem on the Platonic idea (as conceived by Aristotle) and have wrongly supposed Milton himself to be censuring Plato. But the conceit that Plato, who banished poets, was logically bound to banish himself as the greatest inventor of them all was a commonplace in antiquity, and is repeated by Milton in his 'Areopagitica.'

On page 393 he seems to interpret the Aristotelian *καθάρισις* as a 'flash of transcendental feeling.' Mr. Stewart himself may take the 'purging' of the emotions by poetry in that sense, but he is, of course, aware that this is not Aristotle's meaning.

The statement on page 3, that the comparison of Socrates in the

'Meno' to the numbing torpedo may refer to mesmerism is utterly fantastic.

The comparison of the 'Phædo' myth with the topography of Dante is most interesting, but the suggestion, page 110, that the upper world of the 'Phædo' may have been localized at the Antipodes like Dante's Mount of Purgatory is plainly wrong. It was the entire outer surface of the atmosphere.

On page 267 the third substance of the soul in the 'psychogonia' is not the 'Unity of Apperception,' but the 'mixed being' of the 'Sophist.'

It is impossible to identify the pillar of light in the myth of Er with the spindle of necessity (p. 102). The statement that Plato makes freedom consist in *esse*, not in *operari*, attributes to him an idea of Spinoza, Kant and Schopenhauer wholly foreign to his thought.

The translation is excellently executed in the pseudoarchaic, Biblical, 'Morte d'Arthur' style, which is distasteful to many critics, but which on the whole is better suited to the myths than is the easy colloquialism of Jowett. It is substantially correct. A few errors may be noted. On page 215, 'Protag,' 320 D for 'compounding them of earth and of fire, and of whatsoever is made by the mingling of fire and earth' we should read 'and of whatsoever is mingled with fire and earth,' i. e., the other two elements, air and water. This is proved by *Timæus* 42 E, 74 C and 31-2. Page 78, *Phædo*, 108 B, ἐπτοημένῃ, etc., probably does not mean 'having fluttered about it, etc., for a long time,' but 'because it has long been agitated (with carnal appetites), etc.' On page 150, πνίγους means 'stifling heat' not 'frost.' On page 184, *Polit.*, 272 C, εἰ δὲ does not mean 'and even if,' the 'even' is not wanted. On page 312, *Phædr.*, 247 C, περὶ ἧν τὸ τῆς ἀληθοῦς ἐπιστήμης γένος does not mean 'round about this substance dwelleth true knowledge,' but 'with which true knowledge is concerned.' Cf. ἡ περὶ τὸ ἐν μάθῃσις *Rep.*, 525 A. On page 404, *Symp.*, 192 A, ἄνδρες should be taken predicatively and emphatically, not 'they alone of all men,' but 'they alone develop into men.'

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*Enigmas of Psychological Research.* JAMES H. HYSLOP. Boston: H. B. Turner. 1906. Pp. 427.

Objectively Dr. Hyslop's book is quite readily described. It gives an account in a series of evidential chapters of certain phenomena—partly experimental and partly narrative—that superficially suggest the intervention of supernormal agencies, presumably of a psychological character. Oracles, crystal-vision, telepathy, dreams that foreshadow reality, apparitions, clairvoyance, premonitions, the alleged reading by mediums of the future and the private affairs of their sitters: these are the data that make up the volume. Books of this character are no longer uncommon; among them Dr. Hyslop's writings hold a creditable place. They serve to acquaint the general reader with the views of those who, without any leaning towards extravagance, find themselves compelled, seemingly by