consult (p. 9). Environmental ethics must construct itself anew. And yet she relates a new rule that emerges with the need for new moral virtues relating us to the environment, "Thou shalt not erode, pollute, poison, irradiate or make ugly. . ." (p. 8). This seems to me to be inconsistent with her claim that the new ethic pushes us beyond a Kantian-style ethic based on rules in favor of a consequentialist ethic. While Shirk overstates the novelty of the moral situation presented by the environmental crisis, I believe she is on the right track in suggesting that the moral challenge posed by our current situation is to decide who and what is included in the moral community. In this regard, Shirk's depiction of the natural environment as a quasi-moral being is highly suggestive of a new way of conceiving the moral situation presented by the environmental crisis.

The next section of the work is entitled, *Key Themes and Concepts*. This part is comprised of four essays that explore several important philosophical, economic, and political concepts in environmental ethics. These include the concepts of property rights, intrinsic and instrumental value, community vs. organism models of nature, and social costs and strategies. The essays are arranged as position papers and replies. The strength of the section seems to me to lie in the critical insights of the replies of the conference participants to the position papers. David A. Sprintzen's essay, "Ethical Theory and Social Strategy" (pp. 51–54), points out the overly vague and abstract character of Christopher P. Mooney's treatment of the concept of property rights in "Property Rights and the Environment" (pp. 29–49). Sprintzen drives home the importance of maintaining a close relation between theory and practice. Eric Walther's critical remarks in his essay — "Environmentalist Values," concerned with the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value made by Eric Katz in "Organism, Community and the 'Substitution Problem' " — reveal the anthropocentric assumptions about nature at work in our ethical reflections about the environment.

The volume ends with a paper on the political and legislative dimensions of the environmental crisis and case analyses bearing on nuclear energy and safe water supply. These latter take up the environmental problems associated with Long Island. The reader is required, therefore, to apply the Long Island experience to other local environmental conditions. The last essay by Julian Kane is a mere listing of environmental problems that have developed concerning Long Island water issues. I found this to be anti-climactic. The volume would have been improved, in my view, by the addition of an afterword by the editor, bringing the discussion to an end.

Despite this, this text might well be used as an introductory survey of the area of environmental ethics. It shows the members of a philosophical community grappling with difficult conceptual issues with the aim of applying philosophical insights to the concrete environmental problems we all face.

[Daryl J. Wennemann]

Plato's Individuals. By Mary Margaret McCabe. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994. Pp. xiii + 339.

McCabe argues that Plato's metaphysical concern moves from a focus on the existence of non-spatiotemporal things, i.e., "Platonic Forms," in the middle-period

dialogues (*Phaedo, Symposium,* and *Republic*) to one on "the problem of individuation," in the late-period dialogues (*Parmenides, Theaetetus, Timaeus, Cratylus, Euthydemus, Phaedrus, Sophist, Philebus,* and *Politicus*). She argues on the basis of thematic considerations that these dialogues were written in this order (pp. 309–10). And as for the *Laws*, she agrees that it is a late work, but that it is "possibly a compilation" and so, she does not discuss it. She also promises to advance an argument for the theoretical plausibility of Plato's solution to this problem (pp. 3–4); but, unfortunately, I can find no such argument in the book. The book is divided into three parts. In the first, she explains Plato's theory of Forms and particulars in his middle-period dialogues. In the second, she discusses at length how "the problem of individuation" emerges in the *Parmenides*, the *Theaetetus*, the *Timaeus*, and the first half of the *Sophist*. And lastly, she explains how Plato solves the problem of individuation in the second half of the *Sophist* and in several late-period dialogues bearing on the theory of personal identity.

The exegetical hypothesis which McCabe tests throughout Plato's middle and late dialogues is that Plato is contrasting individuals of two sorts: austere and generous. *Austere individuals* are perfectly simple; they have no properties at all, including relational ones. *Generous individuals* are complex; they do have properties and are involved in relations with other generous individuals.

The body of the book is devoted to explaining Plato's texts. Discussion of secondary sources is usefully placed into the footnotes. There are two very short Appendices. The first offers an argument for the order of the dialogues. The second defends the thesis that in the dialogues Plato *argues* for his metaphysical position and does not merely presuppose it.

Plato's argument for the existence of non-spatiotemporal things (= Forms) in his middle-period dialogues, according to McCabe, turns on the fact that spatiotemporal particulars are generous individuals, and so, are problematic for two reasons: (1) they are cognitively unreliable, e.g., the ring finger is both tall and short: tall compared to the pinky finger and short compared to the middle finger, and (2) they have no principle of unity and so are mutable and perishable. If we are to have knowledge at all, there must be things which are (1*) cognitively reliable, e.g., just tall and in no way short, and (2*) unified. "Austerity" is the remedy for both problems. That is, if we are to have knowledge of this finger being tall, then, in addition to this finger being taller than that finger, there must also exist what it is to be tall, which is *just* tall, and in no way short or anything else. Forms cannot have anything at all predicated of them, including relational properties. Therefore, McCabe presents Plato not as denying that spatiotemporal particulars exist but rather as asserting that such things wouldn't make knowledge possible, if knowledge is thought of as being something reliable. The other consequence of being generous, namely, being perishable, would not be true of the Forms if they are austere, since there will be no parts to come apart. Such is Plato's middle-period theory of Forms and particulars. As far as I can tell, McCabe's explanation is fairly standard and has the virtue of being a clear presentation. However, when she gets into the details of Plato's theory of spatiotemporal particulars, she slides too easily between something's *appearing F* and something's *being F*, without noticing the subtlety of Plato's argument.

The second part of McCabe's book develops the problem she recognizes to emerge in Plato's later dialogues. Plato comes to see, she argues, that the austerity of the Forms

undermines their explanatory power. For if Forms are austere, they cannot enter into relations with spatiotemporal particulars. And if that is the case, then the former cannot explain the latter. Moreover, the austerity of the Forms undermines their entering into relations with each other. Given these problems, McCabe claims that Plato abandons the question: "What is there?" for the question: "What makes something that exists a *something*?" In other words, granting the existence of something, whether spatiotemporal or not, what makes it *one*? Since McCabe thinks that being one is being an individual, she argues that in order to be an individual, the thing should be all of the following: basic, countable, unified, and have both diachronic and synchronic identity. The problem for Plato, then, is to explain, without running into the problems of austerity or generosity, how something that exists is one thing. These problems are repeatedly brought to light in Plato's later dialogues, as McCabe attempts to show. So, Plato needs to find a middle road, to find a theory of individuation that avoids the untenable extremities of individual austerity and generosity.

Her discussion of the *Parmenides* is especially well illuminated by her exegetical hypothesis: that Plato is contrasting individuals conceived of as austere and individuals conceived of as generous. However, she makes a stunning move that undercuts Plato's philosophy. She says:

> *Parmenides* II challenges us to explain 'what is an individual?' By this stage, I suggest, Plato has abandoned the hope that forms alone will explain the nature of the world before us; we need, in addition or instead, some formal metaphysical analysis of the individuals that compose this world — or any other. In particular — the focus of *Parmenides* II suggests — we need proper analysis of the terms of individuation and identity (p. 132).

The move McCabe makes is contending that in his later dialogues Plato's analysis becomes "formal." As we see in the next part of her book, it is this move which delivers Plato his solution. I am dubious, however, of the claim that *Plato* solves a problem by making a distinction between formal and substantive analyses. Kant, Kantians, and other anti-metaphysicians may make that move, but certainly not Plato. And further, though I found her discussion of the *Parmenides* enlightening, she states without sufficient argument that Plato's discussion is about all individuals, *whether spatiotemporal or not*. Rather, I think that Plato worries about the austerity of the Forms in the middle-period dialogues, but that these concerns have solely to do with the nature of the Forms, not the nature of spatiotemporal particulars. As Plato says after the theory of Forms has allegedly been refuted: despite the difficulties, if Forms do not exist, then we would not be able to think about anything or discourse with one another (135b5-c3). The interlocutors then go on to discuss problems with thinking of things as austere and as generous. But there is no justification for claiming that the discussion concerns all things, *whether spatiotemporal or not*. On the contrary, Plato's focus is on the nature of Forms, precisely because they are the only things, together with the Receptacle introduced in the *Timaeus*, that can explain the world. Or so I would argue.

The last part of McCabe's book offers a theory about Plato's solution to the problem of individuation. McCabe thinks that Plato's solution is found in the *Sophist*. In the second half of this dialogue, Plato argues that being an individual is determined by specific relations that are part of the context of the thing but not part of the thing itself In other words, anyone is an individual simply and absolutely in virtue of being the

same as oneself and being different from anyone else. But the key point is that being self-identical and being other-non-identical are not properties of anyone. These relations are *true*, given contextual features of the world; but they are not properties of anyone because these relations are "purely formal" and are not part of anyone's individual nature (p. 237). McCabe argues that Plato thinks that *only after* we've got hold of an individual can we attempt to get hold of an individual's nature. If McCabe is arguing that Plato thinks there is a distinction between purely formal properties and substantive properties, then I have my doubts. On such a view, identification of an individual comes before any inquiry into its nature. I suspect that for Plato one must do both *at the same time*. Failure to do so leaves us in Meno's paradox, a problem that in the later dialogues Plato avoided without having to bring in the Theory of Recollection.

McCabe ends part three with a very fine chapter on Plato's theory of personal identity. It should generate much further study on the topic. She argues that personal identity, for Plato, is something we continually strive towards insofar as we aim for a coherent and self-consistent soul. And her use of the texts to defend this claim is most impressive.

The strength of McCabe's work is its clarity; and this is no small achievement. McCabe presents a radical revision of our understanding of what Plato is up to. It takes Plato's main concern to be not the explanation of how the Forms explain spatiotemporal particulars, but the explanation through "purely formal" conditions of anything's being one, be that thing spatiotemporal or not. Those who hold the familiar view that Plato thinks spatiotemporal particulars do not have identities of their own independently of the Forms will not be persuaded by McCabe's account. Nevertheless, the importance of this book is to call into question a traditional reading.

[Scott Berman, *Saint Louis University*]