R. M. Dancy
Plato's Introduction of Forms.
New York: Cambridge University Press 2004.
Pp. 360.
US$85.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-83801-6);
US$39.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-521-03718-1).

In his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle suggests that Plato's theory of Forms was motivated by Socrates' quest for definitions: 'Plato accepted [Socrates'] teaching [about definitions], but held that the problem applied not to any sensible thing but to entities of a different kind . . . . Things of this other sort, then, he called Ideas, and sensible things, he said, were apart from these, and were all called after these; for the multitude of things which have the same name as the Form exist by participation in it' (*Metaph* 987b4-10). Correspondingly, Dancy begins his investigation into Plato's theory of Forms by examining those Platonic dialogues that are commonly, though not universally, regarded as Plato's early dialogues, in which the character Socrates is represented as seeking definitions of properties such as courage and beauty. With great attention to often unnoticed detail, Dancy examines scores of Socrates' refutations of his interlocutors' efforts to define these properties, in order to discover implicit assumptions that Socrates is making about the objects of these definitions.

Dancy's methodology is exceedingly careful. He first rehearses in detail the moves that Socrates makes in a particular refutation, next notices a puzzling gap in the reasoning, and then attempts to discover the weakest implicit assumption about the conditions on adequate definitions that would fill this gap. Dancy's hypothesis about the unstated assumption is then further confirmed by the discovery that this same assumption closes gaps in several other texts. In this way, Dancy reveals Socrates' commitment to the following three assumptions about adequate definitions: 1) the *substitutivity requirement* that the definition of F-ness specify necessary and sufficient conditions for something's being F (81-2); 2) the *paradigm requirement* that the definition provide a model by which the applicability of 'F' can be determined (115), and 3) the *explanatory requirement* that the definition explain why F things count as F (135). When these assumptions are combined with further assumptions about causality and about the 'relativity' of the attribution of at least certain predicates to ordinary physical objects, we get the distinctively Platonic forms of the *Phaedo* and *Symposium*, which, on Dancy's view, are imperceptible (245-8), other-worldly (283, 305) objects that are 'related to the things we see, hear, etc., by having in a superlative degree the same features that these things have' (282), and by being causally responsible for the features that these things have (291-313). Though his arguments do not presuppose the truth of Aristotle's thesis that Plato's Theory of the Forms developed out of Socrates' quest for adequate definitions, Dancy is quite right to suggest that his conclusions about the ontological commitments implicit in these dialogues lend additional support to it (2).

In this short review, I cannot possibly do justice to Dancy's intricate and painstaking arguments for his conclusions. Each of his detailed textual analyses contains often surprising insights into texts that have already been subject to thorough interpretive scouring. Whether one is primarily interested in the ethics or the metaphysics of the early dialogues, no one should ignore Dancy's examination of these texts. And to anyone who has been tempted, as I have been, to 'rewrite Socrates' arguments for him so that he is only committed to what we all know and love as 'platonism'' (282), I strongly recommend Dancy's study as a helpful antidote.

In the preface, Dancy thanks the referees at Cambridge University Press for recommending two ways of shortening his manuscript that was 'far too long' (xi). 'Far too long' for whom? For serious scholars of Plato — surely Dancy's most likely audience — this book is far too short to be fully satisfying.

First, the referees at Cambridge recommended that Dancy drop his discussion of the *Republic* (xi). I am astounded by this advice. Even a superficial treatment of Plato's theory of Forms must include some discussion of the passages about the Forms in the *Republic*. In such a thorough treatment of every other relevant text of Plato's early and middle period, the omission is all the more glaring. I doubt that this evidence would significantly threaten Dancy's conclusions, but other scholars will certainly disagree. For all of us, it would have been nice to see how such a competent scholar would have handled it. Hopefully, a book, or at least a very long article, on the *Republic* is forthcoming.

Second, they advised Dancy to 'curtail references to the secondary literature' (xi). Again, for Dancy's likely audience, a more thorough discussion of the secondary literature would have been most valuable. From his ample list of citations, it is obvious that Dancy has mastered the extensive secondary literature on this topic. Such a scholar is in a particularly privileged position to explain where his views fit in the interpretative debate and why we should prefer his views to those of others.

The third omission was apparently Dancy's own choice. Even though he is unusually generous in his examination of nearly every refutation of almost every definition in the early dialogues (and, for this reason alone Dancy's book is an essential reference), his conclusions are remarkably restrained. As he understands his project, he seeks only to determine the minimal assumptions about definitions and the Forms that are presupposed by the arguments that we find in Plato's texts. So, for example, Dancy recognizes that his discussion of the language of participation in the *Protagoras* will raise questions about Plato's ontological commitments when he wrote the dialogue. Yet Dancy adamantly resists such questions: 'Was Plato thinking about the question of what transmitting participation consists in when he wrote this? Did he have a theory of causality in mind? I haven't the faintest idea. Nothing in the dialogue requires it' (188). It is hard enough, Dancy often explains, to understand the logic of the arguments and the theories required by them, much more to attempt to reconstruct Plato's own philosophical reasoning

(11, 247). It *is* hard, and the value of Dancy's meticulous and sober (but often quite witty) treatment of these arguments should not be underestimated. Perhaps it would have been reckless for Dancy to have speculated further about Plato's reasoning or out of place for him to have shared his own philosophical insights into these matters, but I suspect that many readers who have a genuine philosophical interest in the nature of moral properties will be frustrated by his remarkable self-control. Having been exposed to Dancy's many insights, one imagines, as Socrates' interlocutors often did, that he knows much more than he is telling us, and that we would have benefited a great deal from his having shared just a bit more.

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Robert A. Delfino, ed.
What are We to Understand Gracia to Mean? Realist Challenges to Metaphysical Neutralism.
Kenilworth, NJ: Rodopi 2006.
Pp. 261.
US$72.00 (paper: ISBN-13: 978-90-420-2030-6).

When offering a critical assessment of an uncommonly original philosophy, method is often as important as content. This collection of eight critical essays concerning Jorge J. E. Gracia's approach to metaphysics is methodologically arranged so as to allow Gracia himself to respond in turn to each of his interlocutors. The first ten chapters are comprised of five exchanges concerning the nature of metaphysics. Gracia, professor of philosophy at State University of New York at Buffalo and a prolific author, has argued at length that metaphysics is ultimately a categorical inquiry into the foundations of all knowledge. In his seminal work *Metaphysics and its Task: The Search for Categorical Foundations of Knowledge* (1999), around which this collection of essays revolves, Gracia makes it clear that he does not presume to propose an entirely novel definition of metaphysics. Rather, his primary interest is in arranging into a single conceptual framework the plethora of attempts to identify the fundamental task of metaphysics. The keystone is an accurate analysis of the ways in which various types of predication permit us to classify and organize our collective experience into a meaningful whole. In short, metaphysics cannot be a particular science, for a particular science focuses on one or another type of predication. But neither can metaphysics be,