# The Philosopher Within: The *daimōn* in Plato

The concept of the *daimōn* recurs constantly in the work of ancient philosophers and especially in the dialogues of Plato.[1] The *daimōn* stands between the divine and the human, at the intersection of metaphysics and ethics, and it is central to the identity of Socrates as an educator and philosopher. Indeed, the *daimōn* is essential to understanding how Plato conceptualizes reason, the philosopher, and philosophy itself. In this essay, I argue that defining it well will help us understand Plato's views better, and will show us that modern virtue ethics, while sharing some of Plato's concerns, is not philosophy as Plato imagines it should be.

### I. What is a *Daimōn*?

The *daimōn* appears many times in Plato's dialogues, sometimes in passing reference to a divine sign, sometimes as a concept to explain supernatural phenomenon, and sometimes as a metaphysical principle.[2] The clearest description of the *daimōn* as *daimōn*, rather than as the expression of these manifestations, however, comes from the *Symposium*. It is this

[1] See especially Plut. *On the* Daimonion *of Socrates* and Plot. *Enn*. III.4, III.5. For the *daimon* in Middle Platonism, see John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Cornell University Press, 1996). For the *daimon* in Neo-Platonism, see Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus*. (Brooklyn: Angelico Press, 2014).

[2] The *daimōn* is referenced as the divine voice of Socrates in Plat. *Apol*. 40a-b and Plat. *Sym*. 175b. It explains supernatural phenomenon in Plat. *Sym*. 202e-203a and 203d and the powers of persuasion are called *daimonic* in Plat. *Gorg*. 456a. The *daimōn* as a metaphysical principle and divine entity is discussed below, and appears in Plat. *Phaedrus*, *Phaedo*, *Rep*., and *Sym*.

description that most succinctly describes what the *daimōn* does and what this means for Plato's metaphysics:

> τὸ δαιμόνιον … ἑρμηνεῦον καὶ διαπορθμεῦον θεοῖς τὰ παρ᾽ ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἀνθρώποις τὰ παρὰ θεῶν, τῶν μὲν τὰς δεήσεις καὶ θυσίας, τῶν δὲ τὰς ἐπιτάξεις τε καὶ ἀμοιβὰς τῶν θυσιῶν, ἐν μέσῳ δὲ ὂν ἀμφοτέρων συμπληροῖ, ὥστε τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸ αὑτῷ συνδεδέσθαι.
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> *The daimonic … interprets and carries over to the gods things from men, and to men things from the gods, from the one prayers and sacrifices, and from the other orders and rewards for sacrifice. It fills the space between both and thus binds the all to itself.*[3]

This definition has two parts — the first sentence establishes the liminal role of *daimones*, while the second elaborates on the metaphysical role they play.[4] We will analyze both roles to understand what the *daimōn* is to Plato, and we will find that it is a concept that is essential to understanding the role of reason in his philosophy.

In their liminal role, *daimones* enable supernatural activities like divination and dreams. *Daimones* guide men through their lives by reminding them of the divine order humans cannot see on their own. Their liminal function may also

[3] Plat. *Sym*. 202e. Text used is Plato, *Platonis Opera: Volume I: Euthyphro, Apologia Socratis, Crito, Phaedo, Cratylus, Sophista, Politicus, Theaetetus*. Edited by E.A. Duke, et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). All translations are my own.

[4] By liminal, we mean relating to the boundaries between the worlds of gods and men. Liminal activities would maintain these boundaries and transcend them, and a liminal role would be one based in passing between mundane and divine realms. The metaphysical role is viewed, not as a human seeing one part of a process, but as a Demiurge seeing the entire process. The liminal role cares for the health of relationships between gods and men, while the metaphysical role maintains the health of the cosmos. For this reason, we might call the metaphysical role "cosmological," though we here use "metaphysical" in order to contrast the timeless nature of this role to the transitory nature of the liminal.

be expressed more directly, as is illustrated in the dialogues by the δαιμόνιον of Socrates. This *daimonic* entity warns Socrates directly, as a voice, when he ought to stop what he is doing, and it guides his educational mission.[5] It shows what the gods will.

By "carrying over" things between men and gods, the *daimōn* acts as a bridge between the mundane and divine worlds. It allows humans to understand the world of the gods, but it also assists in the transition from life to death, guiding souls, again like Hermes, to the underworld. διαπορθμεύω literally means "to carry across a river" or "to ferry across." This alludes to the function of *daimones* described in Plato's afterlife myths, as guides, not only during life, but also during the journey to the underworld upon death. *Daimones* oversee the transition of the human soul from the human world to the divine world.[6]

In their liminal role, *daimones* connect the order of the divine world to the human world. It is harder to understand the second part of the definition, about the metaphysical role of the *daimōn*. What does it mean that the *daimōn* fills space between the human and the divine? And how does it bind the all to itself? There is some clarification in the *Timaeus*, in a passage on how the *daimōn* relates to the soul:

> ὡς ἄρα αὐτὸ δαίμονα θεὸς ἑκάστῳ δέδωκεν,
> τοῦτο ὃ δή φαμεν οἰκεῖν μὲν ἡμῶν ἐπ᾽ ἄκρῳ τῷ

[5] See Plat. *Apol*. 40a-b, where Socrates uses the silence of the *daimonion* as proof that his death might not be an evil, and Plat. *Alc. 1* 103a, where Socrates discusses the role of the *daimonion* in education, saying that it stops him from approaching potential students until the time is right.

[6] See especially The Myth of Er, Plat. *Rep*. 10.617d-620e. As *daimones* act as carriers of souls, we might be reminded of Hermes' role as the psychopomp, or guide-of-souls. For a discussion of the god in this role, and an argument for how this archetype is expressed through philosophy and psychology, see the excellent Karl Kerényi, *Hermes, Guide of Souls* (Washington, DC: Spring Publications, 1986).

> σὠματι, πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐν οὐρανῷ συγγένειαν ἀπὸ γῆς ἡμᾶς αἴρειν ὡς ὄντας φυτὸν οὐκ ἔγγειον ἀλλὰ οὐράνιον ….
>
> *We say that God has given to each a daimōn which inhabits the summit of the body, to lift up what is heavenly in us to heaven, away from the earth, being as we are heavenly creatures, not earthly ones.*[7]

This passage at first seems to contradict the definition from the *Symposium*. In the *Symposium*, there are two separate worlds, for gods and men, and *daimones* connect the worlds through supernatural activities. In the *Timaeus* passage, meanwhile, the *daimōn* plays an entirely new role. It actively lifts us toward heaven, rather than supervising and facilitating an afterlife process that is already in place. Rather than being just a guide, it is a part of us.

The treatments of the *daimōn* in the *Timaeus* and *Symposium* are not, however, contradictory. The portrayal of the *daimōn* as part of the soul shows what Plato means by "filling up space between" and "binding the all to itself." The *daimōn* is stronger than just a messenger. It is a connection between the human and the divine that is more like an ever-present bridge.

This connection lifts what is divine in the soul to heaven. Plato's Allegory of the Chariot in the *Phaedrus* clarifies how this works. In the allegory, the soul is described as a chariot with two horses and one charioteer. The word for charioteer, ἡνίοχος, can also mean "guide" or "governing one," suggesting an analogy, at least, between it and the *daimōn*. While the bad horse, which represents desire for physical pleasure, pulls the

[7] Plat. *Tim*. 90a. Text used is Plato, *Platonis Opera: Volume IV: Clitopho, Respublica, Timaeus, Critias*. Edited by J. Burnet (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922). All translations are my own.

chariot downward, the good horse, representing a desire for honor, and the charioteer, representing reason, may pull and guide the chariot upward. The chariot is best when it rides alongside the gods, and when it is able to see the Truth that gods always see in the divine world.[8] Reason is a guide that pulls the soul to heaven, the ruling part of a partially divine soul that, to be happy, must be in line with the divine order. The human soul belongs, in part, to the divine world, and the *daimōn* is what maintains that connection.

The *daimōn* bridges the divine and human worlds, connecting them by facilitating supernatural activities. It holds together what appears to be separate and unites two parts of the universe. In Plato, the liminal role of connecting humans to the divine and the metaphysical role of binding the mundane and divine worlds are essential for a coherent cosmology. We will have difficulty, however, treating these cosmological elements with any thoroughness here; more important for our examination is Plato's analogy between reason and the *daimōn*, as this is both easier to demonstrate and more relevant to contemporary philosophers who would dismiss a cosmology with such mythical components. The *daimōn* is a concept that illuminates certain qualities of reason. Reason is a guide through life, a principle that applies equally to the mundane and divine worlds, and thus "binds them together" by preventing a dissonance between gods and men. The *daimōn* and reason both allow us to see the truth that orders the universe. They both guide the passions without tyrannizing them. Reason

[8] Plat. *Phaedrus* 246a-248b.

resides within our souls as a *daimōn* and pulls what is divine in us toward heaven.

**II. How Should We Care for Our *Daimones*?**

Why should we listen to our *daimones*? If the *daimōn* is merely a concept that elaborates on the role of reason, Plato's myths, and the threat of divine punishment therein, cannot motivate us. And if the *daimōn* does nothing more to explain philosophy than reason alone, it cannot be useful. We must look to the examples Plato provides of lives that are good because of the *daimōn*. These examples will show how the *daimōn* explains more than reason alone, and they will show why it is important to listen to our *daimones*. We shall begin with the character who most regularly listens to his *daimōn* and uses reason to live a better life — Socrates.

Because he listens to his *daimōn*, Socrates earns the distinction of being "δαιμονίῳ … καὶ θαυμαστῷ."[9] ("*daimonic* … and wonderful.") In the words of Alcibiades, Socrates:

> τὸ δὲ μηδενὶ ἀνθρώπων ὅμοιον εἶναι, μήτε τῶν παλαιῶν μήτε τῶν νῦν ὄντων, τοῦτο ἄξιον παντὸς θαύματος …. καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους κατὰ ταὔτ᾽ ἄν τις ἀπεικάζοι: οἷος δὲ οὐτοσὶ γέγονε τὴν ἀτοπίαν ἄνθρωπος, καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ λόγοι αὐτοῦ, οὐδ᾽ ἐγγὺς ἂν εὕροι τις ζητῶν, οὔτε τῶν νῦν οὔτε τῶν παλαιῶν ….
>
> *He is not at all the same as other men, neither in the past nor the present. This is why he is so wondrous …. Everyone expresses a model, but not him. He is so out-of-place, in way and ideas, that dead or alive, you will find no one like him.*[10]

[9] Plat. *Sym*. 219c.
[10] Plat. *Sym*. 221c-d. Text used is Duke et al., *Platonis Opera*. All translations are my own.

There are similarities between this passage and the description of a philosopher in the *Theaetetus* worth noting: "μάλα γὰρ φιλοσόφου τοῦτο τὸ πάθος, τὸ θαυμάζειν: οὐ γὰρ ἄλλη ἀρχὴ φιλοσοφίας ἢ αὕτη …." (For there is a feeling very much of the philosopher: wonder. This and nothing else is the beginning of philosophy….)[11] In both Alcibiades' description of Socrates and Socrates' description of the philosopher, then, we find two important qualities. One is wonder — both for those around the philosopher and for the philosopher himself. The other is out-of-placeness, or being *atopos*. The philosopher does not fit comfortably in any category or type, and others notice this.[12] The philosopher's use of reason explains neither his unique experience of wonder nor his out-of-placeness alone. The concept of the *daimōn*, and the individual that listens to the *daimōn*, does, however, explain these qualities.

One who has a strong connection to the divine — one who listens to the *daimōn* — regularly experiences and exudes wonder. He brings the divine world into the human world, and astound both himself and those around them. This is most regularly shown when Socrates brings his companions and himself to a state of ἀπορία, or distress and befuddlement.[13] And one who has this experience and brings it to others must necessarily be out-of-place. Being between two worlds, neither completely human nor completely divine, leaves the philosopher with the problem of finding a place, and the ability to balance

[11] Plat. *Theaet*. 155d.
[12] See Plat. *Theaet*. 173a-176a. for a catalogue of ways the philosopher does not understand his neighbors, and ways they do not understand the philosopher.
[13] This type of distress happens most often at the end of the so-called "Socratic" dialogues, for example the *Euthyphro*, though it can occur in dialogues usually considered later, such as the *Gorgias*.

the divided soul. Socrates is able to do the latter, having complete control over his physical appetites and acting honorably, but is unable to do the former, leaving Plato to develop his own solution — the Academy.

So — the philosopher has a special kind of personality that depends on the *daimōn*. It is called *daimonic*, because the philosopher is more able than most to listen to the *daimōn*. The philosopher induces wonder in himself and others, often resulting in some hostility from others. The philosopher is out of place and out of the ordinary, and seeks a place.

These qualities give philosophers a unique life, one that is better than other lives.[14] They also lead the philosopher into dangerous situations — the paradigmatic example is Socrates, who by questioning his fellow citizens invites his own death. The risk of upsetting others did not prevent Socrates from being *daimonic*, but it did end his life. While Socrates did not consider this to be a bad thing, Plato recognizes that we might disagree.

If the *daimōn* places philosophers in dangerous situations, what should philosophers do to protect themselves? And if they seek a place for themselves, how can they find it? To Plato, the answer to both questions is education. Education is the central concern of the *Republic*, and a central concern of Socrates himself. It is the purpose of the *daimōn* to reveal the truth and guide humans toward better lives — the *daimōn* educates those who listen to it. It is up to philosophers to make it easier for people to listen to their *daimones*, and for Plato the best way to do so is to teach and learn removed from public life, in the Academy. As Socrates says in the *Apology*, "Who really

[14] The life of the philosopher is at the top of the hierarchy of lives in Plat. *Phaedrus* 248c-e.

fights for justice, if he is destined to stay safe for a little while, must occupy a private station, not a public one."[15]

Education helps philosophers listen to their *daimones* and respects both the *atopia* of philosophers and the nature of the human soul as a composite of emotion, physical desire, and reason. Education must allow reason to rule, not as a tyrant, but as a guide. This means education must prepare us to listen to our *daimones*, and must help the *daimōn* itself perform its role as a guide.

The importance of listening to the *daimōn* is alluded to in the *Phaedo*, when Socrates says philosophy is practice for death.[16] As discussed above, the *daimōn* leads the soul to the underworld upon death, and the soul must follow it well. Philosophy, by teaching us to follow our *daimones*, prepares us for this final journey. We listen best to our *daimones* by ordering our souls, as is described in the *Timaeus*: "εὖ κεκοσμημένον τὸν δαίμονα σύνοικον ἑαυτῷ, διαφερόντως εὐδαίμονα εἶναι." (By keeping the *daimōn* living inside him well-ordered, a man is supremely happy).[17] "εὐδαίμονια" is notoriously difficult to translate — it means "flourishing as best a human can." Plato suggests an etymology based on the word "δαίμον" within it. Human flourishing is being well with one's *daimōn*.

We have examined Plato's definition of the *daimōn*, and we have explored how he builds his views about the philosopher around it. According to Plato, those who listen to their *daimones* are *atopoi*. They are without a place and in search of one. They need an environment and an education that allows them to see

[15] Plat. *Apol*. 32a.
[16] Plat. *Phaedo* 64a.
[17] Plat. *Tim*. 90c. Text used is J. Burnet, *Platonis Opera*. All translations are my own.

the truth, which allows them to treat reason as a guide through life and into death. Philosophers cannot treat reason as a mere faculty — the *daimōn* is a concept that allows us to see it as a guide, as something that binds existence together, and as something that orders our souls. Listening to and caring for the *daimōn* allows *eudaimonia*.

Of what does this education consist? We do not have the space in this paper to examine Plato's many ideas on this front. We do, however, have two standards Plato has indicated as important for philosophy to acknowledge. One is a concern for the *atopia* of philosophers, and the other is attention to the relationship between reason and emotion. Before seeing how these standards are addressed in contemporary philosophy, we will spend some time illustrating them.

We have noted that *atopia* is the out-of-placeness embodied by those who listen to their *daimones*. We might ask how we know Plato thinks philosophy must address *atopia*, and why it must do so. I would argue that Plato suggests his concern for this quality by his inclusion of Alcibiades in the *Symposium* — after six speeches about the nature of love, crowned by a definition and full treatment by Socrates, Alcibiades appears to address a key feature of love, namely that it removes one from their typical position in the world and makes the love-object appear new and without equal. If *atopia* is a central part of love, it is a central part of loving wisdom, too.

Perhaps the clearest proof of Plato's concern for *atopia*, however, is that he writes dialogues which, more than do treatises, invite readers to engage and become a part of the philosophy the author has begun. Plato writes philosophy in a

way which does not treat his readers as "empty vessels."[18] Rather, they are individuals ascending a ladder of understanding, and they must be acknowledged as somehow impossible to simplify. This is further reflected by how Plato's sketch of the *daimōn* suggests that reason must not tyrannize one's emotions. A principle cannot simply be applied once read in a work of ethics — on the one hand because philosophical education cannot be applied, one-size-fits-all, to every student, and on the other because emotional drives and appetites cannot simply be turned-off at the behest of reason.

A good philosophy is one that acknowledges the individualities of those who follow it and does not treat reason as a tyrant over the passions.

**III. How is Ethics Shaped?**

We will examine three contemporary philosophers with these two standards in mind. This examination will help us to see if Plato's concerns are shared by modern ethics, and it will help us understand how the concept of the *daimōn* shapes philosophy.

We will begin by looking at the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, one of the major modern virtue ethicists. MacIntyre believes that it is a mistake to treat all philosophers as members of a single debate with agreed-upon premises. Rather, philosophers throughout history have been part of unique traditions. These traditions establish their own premises and subjects for debate. Real philosophical progress rises from disagreements within these traditions, not between them.[19] He

[18] Plat. *Sym*. 175d.
[19] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 11. For MacIntyre, the main feature of contemporary ethical debate is the inability of debaters to recognize that they argue from different traditions. Disagreements arise because the

also believes that we must look at "each human life as a whole, as a unity," and that modern philosophy often thinks "atomistically" about ethics.[20]

MacIntyre believes that reason must develop, and that education is a central part of ethical life. He also concludes that this education should take place in a community of philosophers, and that outside of such a community, the philosopher cannot grow. MacIntyre also has some concern for integrity, though his teleological bent is not the same as Plato's concern for the integrity of the soul itself. He and Plato would agree that contemporary philosophy is incorrect in focusing on individual acts. But, while Plato would argue for an analysis of moral character based in psychology, MacIntyre would argue that a life cannot be understood until its end. Plato argues for a way of analyzing moral character in the moment, while MacIntyre's teleological view prevents any analysis of moral action at all.[21]

MacIntyre does not recognize the *atopia* of philosophers. He believes that, to debate, philosophers must

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premises and assumptions on each side differ. If two people arguing have completely different assumptions, they will not be able to reason. Rather, reason develops through disagreements *within* a tradition. Reason cannot develop without a community to guide and educate it.

[20] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 205. MacIntyre says life is a unity built of simpler parts, which may make us think he, like Plato, believes in a composite soul. If he does, it does not show in his analysis of the unified life. To MacIntyre, modern philosophy ignores the teleological nature of individuals—agents have beginnings, middles, and ends, and they have a purpose towards which they move. It is a mistake to think of individual actions because virtue is only visible across an entire life. MacIntyre follows Aristotle and Herodotus more than he does Plato. For Plato, individual actions still cannot be judged without reference to the character of the agent. His conception of a composite soul connected to the divine order by the *daimōn*, however, allows virtue to be judged moment to moment. Plato's psychology prevents his philosophy from focusing only on individual actions. It allows him to analyze morality holistically, not atomistically, while still analyzing individual actions.

[21] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 205.

submit themselves to a tradition. This submission requires individuals, not only to address the same problems as others, but also to abandon what interests and concerns run contrary to the tradition they join. In MacIntyre's view, philosophers do not find their place in philosophy. Rather, they remain out-of-place even in a philosophical tradition, until their individuality is tempered. This lack of concern for individuality may be the side effect of MacIntyre's preference for theory above practical ethics and education, and is certainly not an obstacle for more systematic philosophy, but for Plato's philosophy, which has a higher focus on the transcendent experiences and education, this lack of concern for individual experiences alienates students of philosophy and eliminates the possibility of revolution in the field.

Let us turn to Bernard Williams, a critic of consequence- and principle-based ethical theory whose work is centered on integrity. He finds that these two methods deny the importance of emotions in ethics, and that in their moral thinking, reason is made a tyrant instead of a gentle ruler.[22] He finds that integrity, however, is less a way to conceive the soul and more a quality of one's actions: "One who displays integrity acts from those dispositions and motives which are most deeply his, and has

[22] Williams finds this especially in the use of utilitarian dilemmas. In these thought experiments, a choice is presented that has a clear answer from consequentialist reasoning. Alternative answers, usually ones based on moral intuition that disagrees with utilitarianism, is taken to be based on "squeamishness" rather than valid moral input from the emotions. This does not mean that utilitarianism gives the wrong answers in its moral reasoning—in fact, Williams agrees with some utilitarian conclusions. However, the belief that moral reasoning is based on simple calculation that does not at all involve the emotions, to Williams, is an incorrect one. Such an idea denies the integrity of agents, which is based in respecting all parts of the mind—not, as we will see, that this is the same as Plato's composite model of the soul, based on the *daimōn*.

also the virtues that enable him to do that."[23] Nor is integrity connected to a specific state of mind. Rather, it is a way of acting that is sincere and focused on meaningful "projects" related to an agent's goals. These projects are central to giving a life meaning, but do not have to make the agent *atopos*. It need only satisfy the agent.[24]

Williams values integrity, but does not associate it with the composite soul. More importantly, he does not follow Plato in acknowledging that philosophers are in a unique position as regards moral thinking and education. In fact, he does not consider the importance of education or a community of philosophers in his work. Plato and Williams are the same in that they have some concern for emotion and intuition in their accounts of moral decision-making, but their ideas of integrity and their beliefs about the purpose of philosophy are in conflict. Again, we have found a philosopher who has found some elements of what Plato achieves with the *daimōn*, but fails to achieve the two standards we have supposed.

The last philosopher we will consider is Julia Annas. She believes that the environment a person is surrounded by shapes the development of virtue. The virtues are characteristic features that are "deep" and lasting.[25] Importantly, she believes that the subjective experience of practicing a virtue is what

[23] Bernard Williams, *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 49.
[24] Williams, *Moral Luck*, 15. That is, the "projects" of integrity are not related to an agent's *atopia* and uniqueness. While act-based systems are not able to adequately account for moral behavior, it is because they do not accept enough data, not because they are systems or act-based. Act-basing that focuses on the projects would account for character, and a philosophy need not account for every individual's differences. This is what Williams believes, but not Plato.
[25] Julia Annas, *Intelligent Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 8-9.

makes it useful. Agents have thoughts that accompany the virtues, and these thoughts are important to learning what it is to be virtuous. Finally, virtue must be learned like any other skill — with teachers, a community, and a respect for the individuals learning.

Annas' philosophy comes closest to what we're looking for. She acknowledges that agents are individuals, and that their individuality and subjective experiences must be respected for them to grow. She recognizes the important roles of pleasure in developing virtue, and doesn't make reason a tyrant over emotion. Finally, she recognizes that education is central to philosophy and ethics.

Even so, her work does not achieve what Plato can build with the *daimōn*. Annas acknowledges *atopia*, integrity, and education, but she does not conceptualize these things fully. To Annas, each person is unique because of her own subjective experience. This seems to miss the mark that *atopia* hits, that the uniqueness of individuals is not due only to their different experiences, but rather is defined by the fact that they are individuals. While Annas regularly describes mental experience, she does not establish a psychological model at all. She acknowledges the importance of emotions, but is not able to conceptualize reason as a guide.

Annas recognizes the importance of education, but makes an important mistake all of the contemporary philosophers we have examined shared — she aims to include all people in her education of virtue, without a particular focus on the philosopher. This goal is admirable, but the *daimōn* is a concept that gives a much more complete description of students and what they need to learn. The *daimōn* individualizes the philosopher and singles him out for special attention.

Contemporary philosophers need not necessarily do the same, but if they do not, we cannot say that reason has replaced the *daimōn* in its effectiveness and power.

These three philosophers' work shares features of the structure Plato builds around the *daimōn*, but still does not reach its strength. MacIntyre sees that philosophy must have some sort of community to function, but does not recognize how the individuality of philosophers factors into this. Williams criticizes the lack of integrity in modern ethics, but does not argue how good philosophical education can remedy such a problem. Annas establishes the ethical features with which we began, argues beautifully for the importance of respecting the whole individual *as* an individual, and truly believes that education is central to this respect. Still, she does not have the metaphysical underpinnings to show how these aspects of ethics are connected, and her work on virtue is almost sterile without this foundation. These philosophers all have some meta-ethical views, and ideas for how philosophy should be conducted, but their philosophies do not have the central feature a *daimōn* would provide. The *daimōn* binds the all to itself — it seems that without it, philosophy is unbound and fragmented.

Our investigation has not shown conclusively how a *daimonic* philosophy would look, but it has shown that in contemporary philosophy, many of Plato's concerns still stand, especially when it comes to issues involving the *daimōn*. It seems, however, that contemporary philosophy has not found a substitute for the *daimōn*. The *daimōn* is more than a myth to Plato. It is a powerful tool for metaphysics and ethics that allows us to conceptualize several concerns that a worthwhile philosophical system should apply itself to. Philosophy should acknowledge the individual, should help educate those who

need educating, and should guide those who are confused by their relationship to the world and the truth. As Plato writes, philosophy begins in wonder — and perhaps the first step to building on this wonder is finding a way to think of the way reason feels to philosophers. Reason is not a tyrant, nor a skill. It is a guide through life, meant to grow alongside us, and meant to help us find a place in the world. The *daimōn* that helps us live and die is a philosopher within us — it is an extremely powerful concept in ethics and metaphysics. It is reason personified, and for philosophy to do what Plato wished it to do, we may need to listen to and care for our *daimones*.

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