The Discourses of Epictetus. Edited by Christopher Gill. Translation revised by Robin Hard. London: Everyman, 1995. Pp. xxvii + 351. $8.50 (paper).

William O. Stephens

A new edition of Epictetus' works has been sorely needed for some time, since Oldfather's 1925 and 1928 Loeb editions have more than a few passages that strike the modern reader as stuffy. In contrast, this Everyman edition has a consistently clear and readable translation. Moreover, it has an informative yet compact introduction, useful and concise notes, chronologies of Epictetus' life and times, a glossary of some of the Greek terms mentioned in the introduction, suggestions for further reading, and an unusual but welcome inclusion called '*The Discourses* and the Critics'. I will comment on most of these components below, devoting most space to the translation.

Gill divides his introduction into several paragraphs on 'The Form and Purpose of the "Discourses"', four pages on 'Epictetus and Stoicism', and a few paragraphs on 'The Influence of Epictetus'. I definitely agree with Gill's observation that 'Current interest in Hellenistic and Roman philosophy, and especially in practical ethics and the philosophical therapy of the emotions, gives Epictetus' therapeutic discourses renewed importance in academic life at the present time' (xxiv). As evidence of the interest in the Hellenistic philosophical therapy of the emotions, for example, consider Nussbaum 1990 and 1994. I would further contend that Epictetus is a very valuable source of *extended* discussions of the application of Stoic ethics, yet he is often overlooked in favor of our Latin sources, Cicero and Seneca. So among the recent texts in late Stoic philosophy, this edition happily joins the fine new translations by Griffin and Atkins 1991 and by Cooper and Procopé 1995.

Nevertheless, one criticism of the introduction can be made. In his description of Epictetus' account of how to deal with externals (select among indifferents) Gill writes, 'In Epictetus, this theme shrinks into insignificance. He focuses almost wholly on the stark contrast between virtue, which depends on assent and choice, and is fully "up to us", and the indifferents (which are presented, emphatically, as "matters of indifference"), which are not "up to us" and which are described as mere "externals"' (xxii). In one chapter of the *Discourses*, however, after explaining that 'materials are indifferent, but the use which we make of them is not indifferent' (ii 5.1), Epictetus proceeds to draw two apt analogies to illustrate the proper approach to the use of externals: dice-players making skillful use of the indifferent counters and indifferent dice (ii 5.2-3) and ball-players skillfully throwing and catching the indifferent ball (ii 5.15-17). He then cites as an example of skillful 'ball-playing' Socrates' adeptness in making his defense in court, freely paraphrasing *Apology* 26e ff. Curiously, discussion of these two analogies by one 'critic' is included in '*The Discourses* and the Critics' section

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(348-349). It is odd that Gill fails to see how these passages bear on the issue of the selection of indifferents. But in any case, Gill's claim that in Epictetus the theme of selecting among indifferents shrinks into insignificance exaggerates so much as to mislead.

Hard provides a readable, sound translation. He revises Elizabeth Carter's 1758 translation using Oldfather's Greek text. With respect to the style of the translation in general, Hard renders a number of passages more elegantly than Oldfather. For example, for 'Ως καὶ σὺ ἀλεκτρυόνα οὐ λέγεις κακῶς πρᾶξαι τὸν νικήσαντα καὶ κατακοπέντα, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἀπλῆγα ἡττηθέντα' (iv 1.124) Hard translates 'Just as you too do not say that the winning cock, even if wounded, has fared badly, but the one that is beaten without a scratch' (239) while Oldfather translates 'Just as you too do not say that the cock which has won a victory, even though he be severely cut up, has fared badly, but rather the one who has been beaten without suffering a blow' (Oldfather 1928, 287).

On the other hand, a few of Hard's passages come off rather flat compared to Oldfather's. Consider, for instance, iii 26.38-39:

> ἆρ' οὖν ἐνθυμῇ, ὅτι κεφάλαιον τοῦτο πάντων τῶν κακῶν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ ἀγεννείας καὶ δειλίας οὐ θάνατός ἐστιν, μᾶλλον δ' ὁ τοῦ θανάτου φόβος; ἐπὶ τοῦτον οὖν μοι γυμνάζου, ἐνταῦθα νευέτωσαν οἱ λόγοι πάντες, τὰ ἀσκήματα, τὰ ἀναγνώσματα, καὶ εἴσῃ, ὅτι οὕτως μόνως ἐλευθεροῦνται ἄνθρωποι.

Oldfather 1928, 239-241:

> Will you, then, realize that this epitome of all the ills that befall man, of his ignoble spirit, and his cowardice, is not death, but it is rather the fear of death? Against this fear, then, I would have you discipline yourself, toward this let all your reasoning tend, your exercises, your reading; and then you will know that this is the only way in which men achieve freedom.

Hard (223):

> Why, do you not reflect, then, that the source of all human evils, and of mean-spiritedness and cowardice, is not death, but rather the fear of death? Discipline yourself, therefore, against this. To this let all your discourses, readings, exercises, tend. And then you will know that in this way alone are men made free.

'Source' is a particularly poor equivalent for κεφάλαιον. One could also question the choice of 'discourses' to render λόγοι here, not only because Oldfather is surely right to think that Epictetus means not mere *speeches* but the patterns of thinking and arguing ('reasoning') behind them, but also because 'discourses' is the traditional translation of Διατριβαί in the title of the work. So while Hard avoids the expansiveness that can be excessive in Oldfather's translation, he also lacks some of Oldfather's expressiveness.

One of the key concepts in Epictetus' philosophy is the difficult to translate

term προαίρεσις. Hard usually translates it as 'choice' (i 1.23, i 8.16, i 18.17 and 21, ii 23.9 ff. and elsewhere), but in one passage he seems to reach for a compromise between this sense and the sense offered by Oldfather. For Μόνον σκέψαι, πόσου πωλεῖς τὴν σεαυτοῦ προαίρεσιν (i 2.33) Oldfather has 'Only consider at what price you sell your freedom of will' (Oldfather 1925, 23), whereas Hard has 'Only consider at what price you sell your own will and choice, man' (10). Not only is this result rather awkward, but Gill himself evidently would question Hard's understanding of προαίρεσις. Gill writes, 'Epictetus' conception of *prohairesis* ("capacity for choice") is sometimes compared to the modern idea of the "will": *see*, e.g., C. Kahn, "Discovering the Will"... It is perhaps better compared to contemporary philosophical ideas about human beings as motivated by "reasons"; *see* Gill...' (xxvi). But various passages (iv 5.12, iii 1.40, iii 13.17) suggest that in Epictetus προαίρεσις can arguably be construed to refer not just narrowly to the capacity of choice, but to the faculty of judgment which issues *dogmata*, and even more broadly to the locus of personal identity, i.e., the real (inner) Stoic self. I am sympathetic to the view that Epictetus' concept of *prohairesis* represents the entire ethical, intellectual entity of man (Dragona-Monachou 1978-79, 277). So despite being imperfect, Hard's 'choice' at least captures the simple, core meaning and thus is probably a more straightforward rendering of the nuanced term προαίρεσις than Oldfather's 'moral purpose'.

Another flaw in Hard's translation occurs in the important argument that only the φρόνιμος has the power to love (φιλεῖν, ii 22.1-3). Hard translates σπουδάζω 'set one's heart on' (132), but George Long better captures the sense with 'apply oneself to earnestly' and 'employ oneself earnestly about' (Adler 1990, vol. 11, 158). I would suggest 'seriously engage in', since a sense of serious pursuit must be conveyed in this context; the Stoic wise man is often referred to as ὁ σπουδαῖος.

Hard, like Oldfather, follows the tradition of rendering ἄνθρωπος as 'man' (and often τις as 'a man'), and while this practice was once unproblematic, today such usage is troublesome, particularly in passages like iii 24.85. Here Hard translates ἄνθρωποι 'men': 'like those who stand behind generals when they ride in triumph and remind them that they are ἄνθρωποι' (214). 'Men' is misleading in this context because it wrongly carries the positive connotations that Epictetus intends when he urges his students to act like men, that is, Stoic adults endowed with manly virtue (e.g., i 2.26 where Epictetus commends the person who chose to die not as an athlete, nor as a philosopher, but as an ἀνήρ), rather than like children (παιδία: ii 16.25-26, 34, and 39) or girls (κοράσια: ii 16.44). In fact, in the first of the five extracts Gill includes in '*The Discourses* and the Critics', Long writes: 'Following the model of Cynic philosophers, who strongly influenced him, Epictetus uses the word "man" as what we should strive to be but most of us are not. We tend to act as if we were "runaway slaves" (i 29.62); but we should consider "who we are" (ii 10.1). Of himself and his pupils he says: "when we can't even fulfill the profession of man we take on that of the philosopher besides..." (ii 9.22)' (340). This is another instance in which Gill could

have suitably revised Hard's revised translation. Oldfather does better with 'mortals', since this at least captures the idea of finitude Epictetus means to convey. Yet Oldfather's translation is not fully satisfactory either; it falls short of suggesting the inescapable frailties and fallibility that even parading generals have and ought never to forget. Besides, *all* animals are mortals. I would suggest that 'remind them that they are human' may work best.

Notes are provided on Epictetus, on Gill's introduction, on the Greek text on which the translation is based, on almost every chapter of the *Discourses*, on some sections of the *Handbook*, and on a number of the fragments. Gill's notes are generous, without being verbose. They offer background information to orient the nonexpert to Epictetus' Roman world, brief explanations of Stoic doctrines and technical terms as they arise in the text, and references for the passages Epictetus quotes (or glosses) from Plato, Xenophon, Homer, Euripides, and others. The notes also contain references to related passages in Cicero and Seneca, and to some of the secondary literature on Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Scepticism. In one note the emperor who banished the philosophers from Rome in CE 89 is wrongly identified as Diocletian (324), even though he is correctly identified as Domitian elsewhere (x, xv, 322, and on the back cover).

The chronologies of Epictetus' life and of his times are nice tools for historically situating Epictetus. The glossary provides brief explanations for some of the key Greek terms discussed in the introduction and notes. Conspicuously absent, however, is an index. To include the chronologies and a short glossary while omitting even a rudimentary index is disappointing. Besides its introduction and bibliography, one reason why Oldfather's edition remains so valuable is the extensive (though not exhaustive) indexes to each of the two volumes. So for scholars wanting to track down passages, Oldfather's edition remains superior to Gill's.

In addition to all the helpful supplemental apparatus mentioned above and full translations of the *Discourses*, the *Handbook*, and Schenkl's selection of fragments ascribed to Epictetus, a most unusual inclusion is a set of five extracts entitled '*The Discourses* and the Critics' provided in order to 'illustrate contemporary scholarly responses to Epictetus and provide further analysis of some of the features of his thought' (338). Two extracts are taken from A.A. Long, one from his 'Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius', Luce 1982, 993-995, and the other from his 'Representation and the Self in Stoicism', Everson 1991, 114-116. The remaining three extracts are from F.H. Sandbach 1975, 165-167, Gill 1988, 187-189, and retired US Vice-Admiral James Bond Stockdale 1993.

In the first extract, Long observes that Epictetus' students were largely upper-class young men who expected to have careers in public life (338). Long rightly emphasizes that Epictetus constantly insists on the development of true moral expertise rather than mere academic knowledge, logical proficiency, or facility in formal argument (339). Epictetus' philosophizing consists not in wrestling with theoretical questions, but in exhorting his audience to apply already accepted Stoic principles to practical challenges encountered in real life. 'But the exhorta-

tion can properly be called philosophical because it is always based on reasons and inferences from propositions that, he assumes, any reasonable man must grant to be true and perspicuous' (339). In Long's judgment, 'Epictetus is at his most effective as a shock psychologist' (339). 'In presenting the demands of the moral life he uses metaphors and examples that may alternate between hyperbole and bathos but rarely fail to seize attention and banish complacency' (339).

Long's second piece discusses the tension between the view that moral responsibility rests with the use we make of our representations and the view that people cannot fail to act in accordance with their representations of what is dominantly in their interests, these representations having already been strongly shaped by the world they grew up in. Long explains that this tension, a standing problem for ethical psychology, 'needs to be recognized and addressed in any serious ethical inquiry' (343), and he offers an excellent account of exactly how Epictetus addresses it.

The extract from Sandbach focusses on Epictetus' distinction between what is 'up to us', our *prohairesis*, and what is 'not up to us', everything external to our *prohairesis*. Sandbach's gloss of what Epictetus means by *prohairesis* ranges from 'moral purpose' (following Oldfather) and 'basic choice of principle' to 'a general attitude towards life' and 'an assignment of value which determines the way in which we "treat our presentations"' (341). While this last is an adequately precise description of *prohairesis* in Epictetus, 'a general attitude towards life' is too loose and misleading. Sandbach further muddies the meaning of *prohairesis* in the passage he quotes from the *Discourses* (i 29.9-12). In it he translates δόγματα as 'thoughts' and προαίρεσις as 'thought', thus confusing the *prohairesis* itself with what it produces. But Sandbach's analysis is troubling in a more subtle way. Sandbach interprets Epictetus' position on dealing with life's events as merely passive tolerance of what the world calls misfortunes (342). He cites two passages from the *Handbook* to support this interpretation, but this reading overlooks the many passages in the *Discourses* in which Epictetus describes how so-called misfortunes can be seen as opportunities for actively exercising one's virtues. Epictetus emphasizes the idea that humans are endowed with the internal equipment for transforming apparent evils into good things, but Sandbach leaves the reader with the impression that Epictetus' Stoic is idle. Moreover, while Sandbach is right to ascribe to Epictetus the view that 'one must not have any emotional attachment to the things that one cannot control' (342), citing the passage in which Epictetus cautions not admiring one's wife's beauty so as not to be angry if she is unfaithful (i 28.11), Sandbach should also have observed that Epictetus believes that the Stoic *does* love his wife and children, and that once we have children it is not in our power *not* to love them (i 23.5). So overall the extract from Sandbach is the weakest of the five.

Gill's contribution is a comparison of Epictetus' account of what it means to maintain one's 'role' in life (Greek *prosopon*, Latin *persona*) with Panaetius' as presented in Cicero's *de Officiis*. This excerpt is from an article on Cicero, and it seems a bit out of place among four other pieces that directly address Epictetus'

thought in its own right.

The extract from Stockdale, on the other hand, is a wonderful choice, since it vividly exhibits how Epictetus' Stoic teachings were used to preserve the sanity and survival of a brutally treated Navy pilot in a Vietnamese prisoner of war camp. This piece proves highly effective in demonstrating how Epictetus meant the *Discourses* as concrete, practical guidance for those living life in the streets, not as idle, academic chit-chat for those in the classroom.

Lastly, Loeb Classical Library volumes seem to rise in price more rapidly than many other translations. By comparison, this new paperback Everyman edition, with its handsome cover and some generous supplementary material, is a great bargain and an excellent choice for students and general readers. If it also succeeds in bringing Epictetus to the attention of a greater number of devotees of ancient philosophy, it will indeed have a happy effect.

Department of Philosophy
Creighton University
Omaha NE 68178

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