possibility, revealed in Book 5, of a gender-neutral philosophical 'courage'. This possibility does not, however, eliminate all masculine associations from the new philosophical *andreia*: a residual ambivalence may reflect a situation in which Plato was torn between a fully gender-free concept of human goodness and an educational image of philosophy that could appeal to young males in his culture. Plato's views never hardened: H.'s book ends with a short chapter on the *Symposium* (where *thumos* appears, she thinks, in the guise of both erotic aspiration and Alcibiades' dangerous passions) and an epilogue on the complex relationship between *andreia* and *sôphrosunê* in *Politicus* and *Laws*, a relationship indicative of lingering doubts about the educability of *thumos*.

This interesting book is lucidly written and refreshingly free of obfuscation, but its structure depends on some subtle cross-weaving of themes, hence my relatively full description of its main arguments. H. reads Plato in an open-minded manner (though her programmatic principle on p. xiii is sometimes belied by claims about Plato's 'beliefs' *vel sim.*), taking the dialogues to contain prompts and problems for readers, rather than fixed positions; formal analysis alone will often miss the point (pp. 117, 119 n. 19). This allows her to explore the implications of Platonic arguments critically but generously, without always pressing for definitive solutions. Some parts of the work are thinner than others—the slightly patchy treatment of the two *Hippias* dialogues in Chapter 6, for instance. But the overall interpretation of *thumos* sustains itself well, even if the dialogues' shifting perspectives on *thumos* leave room for further argument over, for example, its relation to epithumetic desires, its 'animal' quality (Plato's own text and vocabulary make so much of this), or even its relevance to the Platonic Socrates (the most non-thumoeidic of persons, one might suppose). H. is right to see Homeric antecedents as a crucial influence on and target for Plato's reworking of courage; her discussion of Achilles is illuminating (a reference to D. Tarrant, *CQ* 44 [1951], 60, would have been *à propos* here). No doubt H. is right that Plato could not altogether escape from masculinist preconceptions, but I am unconvinced that the need to recruit young males to philosophy was a key factor: anyhow, surely the evidence for female students in the Academy deserved a mention? H.'s book contains much stimulating analysis. Her scholarship is mostly dependable, though it is false (p. 245) that *Republic* 5, on which H. is skimpy, makes no distinction between auxiliaries and rulers (see e.g. 458b–c—with 460b for female rulers). The bibliography contains some items that are nowhere cited.

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PLATO'S POLITICAL PASSIONS

W. R. NEWELL: *Ruling Passion. The Erotics of Statecraft in Platonic Political Philosophy*. Pp. vii + 205. Lanham, Boulder, New York, and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000. Paper, £20.95. ISBN: 0-8476-9727-4.

Ruling Passion can (and does) claim originality in tracing its subject through Plato's *Gorgias*, *Symposium*, and *Republic*. Its thesis, however, lies in the distinctive tradition of Leo Strauss: for the statesman whose erotics N. has in mind is, first and foremost, the tyrant, not the philosopher king, and Eros is the god of his *hubris*. Desire, which in simpler accounts of Plato's psychology is characterized as an irreducible attraction

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https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/53.1.55 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to particular pleasures, is here underpinned by yearning of a different order altogether: for a world unstructured by the subtleties of Plato's metaphysics, a Presocratic cosmos built on 'chance motions and unstructured energies of phusis' (p. 46; cf. p. 58). Allied with the 'primordialist' outlook to which this gives rise comes an ugly, Nietzschean ethics as well: the 'spontaneous passion for mastery' (p. 47), for tyrannical self-assertion in an inherently selfish universe. Plato, of course, is tough on tyranny, and tough on the causes of tyranny—but there is a limit to what he can do. In the *Symposium*, he attempts to refine *eros* into something more 'sober' (p. 174) and ultimately, he thinks, more satisfying. But by the time he wrote the *Republic*, he had come to believe that things are not even this simple: for *eros* in the *Republic* has a natural ally in *thumos*, which shares its primordialist leanings (indeed, takes from it its direction towards 'specific substantive objects', p. 116). In this case, Plato's only solution to the problem of tyranny is to break the bond between these two, to realign *thumos* with reason and employ it against its old ally. But while this may work in the short term, it can never be a perfect remedy: *thumos* remains a hearty type, easily bored in the company of the intellect; and its fidgeting ultimately causes the breakdown of the order so carefully contrived. Indeed, the inevitability of this breakdown leads N. to argue that the *Republic* as a whole (and at least *qua* work of political philosophy) is purely 'heuristic, pointing to likely obstacles in the way of achieving . . . pure synonymity between reason and convention' (p. 160).

Strauss's history of philosophy was explicitly a means to an end, and judgement of it must take this mitigating circumstance into account. N., however, relies more directly on the historico-philosophical validity of his reconstruction; and he fails, in my view, to justify the exuberant pessimism he brings to Plato's texts. If N. emphasizes, in theory at least, the 'doubleness' of *thumos*, in practice he gives little space to Plato's overwhelmingly positive assessment of its rôle; and he may be right to think that there is a sinister portrait of Eros somewhere in Plato's attic, but is wrong to ignore altogether the real erotic charge which brings life and cheer to Plato's own positive philosophy—not just in the *Symposium* either. To suggest that mathematics might be 'arid' (cf. p. 168), and quite generally to work with a distinction between the dusty, 'sober', and cerebral concerns of the intellect on the one hand, and the passionate urges of *thumos* and *eros* on the other, is simply to ignore Plato's view of what it is like to do philosophy. But I do not, in the end, move these as reasons not to read the book. For one thing, the aspects of Platonic psychology exaggerated by N. (not least the rôle of *thumos*) are aspects generally underplayed or ignored in more conventional literature, and deserve their turn. For another, *Ruling Passion* is a fast-paced, action-packed read: as stimulating and provoking as it is unlikely to meet with universal agreement.

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PLATO'S ATLANTIS AND THE EXPLODING PLANET

A. F. Alford: *The Atlantis Secret. A Complete Decoding of Plato's Lost Continent*. With a Foreword by C. Gill. Pp. vii + 541. Walsall: Eridu Books, 2001. Paper, £18. ISBN: 0-9527994-1-3.

The reader of this book first encounters Poseidon, his eyes blazing with red rage,

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https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/53.1.55 Published online by Cambridge University Press