

another curious sentiment on what new Terrence Malick material will arise in the wake of the forthcoming *The Way of the Wind*.

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The Political Soul: Plato on Thumos, Spirited Motivation, and the City. BY JOSH WILBURN. (Oxford: OUP, 2021. Pp. vii + 340. Price £80.00.)

In this excellent book, Josh Wilburn argues for a new interpretation of Plato's conception of the spirited part of the soul and shows that this conception informs his political philosophy throughout his career. In Part I, Wilburn defends his interpretation of the spirited part of the soul. Chapter 1 argues that Plato held seriously the view that the soul has three parts, each of which should be understood as a distinct source of the psychic motions and motivations that cause and explain human action. Chapter 2 turns to the spirited part and argues that while most commentators have focused on spirit's aggressive motivations, Plato recognises *two* faces of spiritedness, the most primitive expressions of which are savageness and aggression towards the foreign (*allogrion*) and gentleness and affection towards the familiar (*oikeion*). Chapter 3 argues that the spirited part is the uniquely social or political part of the soul in so far as spirited motivations are (i) what make it possible for humans to live together in and protect their communities, and (ii) primarily shaped by social and political influences.

Parts II–IV of the book apply these ideas to the three 'stages' of Plato's career. Chapter 4 provides an interpretation of the Great Speech in the *Protagoras*, according to which the art of politics, which enables humans to live together in communities, consists in the capacity to experience spirited motivations such as anger, shame, and justice. Chapter 5 highlights passages in numerous early dialogues, including the *Crito*, *Laches*, *Gorgias*, and *Meno*, that display the role of spirit in the transmission of popular values and ethical norms. Chapter 6 turns to the *Republic* and provides an account of how musical and gymnastic education target and mould the different parts of the soul. Chapter 7 shows how Plato exploits spirit's aggression to the foreign and affection for the familiar to cultivate both intra-personal and inter-personal harmony in Kallipolis. Chapter 8 focuses on the *Timaeus* to provide an imagistic account of spirited cognition, which explains how the rational and spirited parts communicate.

Chapter 9 argues that in the *Statesman*, spiritedness plays a crucial role in defining the statesman's expertise, which involves harmonising individuals who tend towards the aggressive versus gentle sides of spirit (i.e., the naturally courageous and moderate). Finally, Chapter 10 argues that in the *Laws*, Plato stresses that the good political community must nurture the gentle side of spirit and that education and law, including the preludes to the law, primarily target the spirited part of the soul.

Wilburn's book is meticulously argued, original, and wide-ranging, offering insightful interpretations of an impressive range of passages. Of special note: Wilburn not only engages with Plato's ideas on the spirited part but also draws attention to passages in the epic and poetic traditions to further support his interpretation. In what follows, I focus on the heart of Wilburn's book: his novel interpretation of the spirited part of the soul. While I am sympathetic to his interpretation, I will highlight some features of Plato's characterisation of spirit that are in tension with Wilburn's view.

The star text for Wilburn's interpretation of the spirited part is a passage in *Republic II*. As is well known, Socrates argues that in his ideal city, Kallipolis, each citizen must do the work for which they are best suited by nature and education. Since the city needs guardians—individuals who protect the city against internal and external enemies—they must find citizens who are spirited so that they can courageously defend the city. But this leads to a problem: the spirited nature is aggressive, and yet guardians must be the opposite, namely, gentle, otherwise they will destroy those they are supposed to guard. Socrates finds a solution to this problem in the nature of well-bred dogs, who are both aggressive to those they do not know and gentle towards those they are familiar with and know. He concludes that future guardians must not only be spirited but philosophical, for it is the philosophical nature that judges anything to be a friend or an enemy, or what is one's own versus alien, based on whether it knows it or not (374e–6c).

According to Wilburn, Plato's solution to the problem of combining the aggressive and gentle natures is to draw a distinction between two groups of people (those who are familiar and one's own and those who are alien), and Wilburn concludes that the spirited nature can be both aggressive to one and gentle to the other. But in fact, Plato argues that the spirited nature is the *opposite* of the gentle nature, suggesting that spiritedness does not include gentleness. And his solution is to draw a distinction between two different natures that can be combined in one individual: the spirited and the philosophical, suggesting that reason is the source of gentleness.

Wilburn addresses these issues. To the first, he claims that when Plato says that spiritedness is the opposite of gentleness, he is using 'spiritedness' to refer to only one side of spirit (p. 43). But this raises the question: why does Plato almost always use 'spirited' to refer to aggressive impulses? If the spirited part is the source of both aggressive and gentle motivations, then one

would expect Plato to refer to an excessively gentle and friendly person as spirited. But instances of this are hard to find. Instead, people described as 'spirited,' such as the timocrat, are characterised by their aggressive tendencies (*Rep.* 547e).

Now, Wilburn does draw attention to passages that characterise the spirited part as capable of being gentle. Socrates says that when a person believes he is being treated unjustly, his spirit fights until it is called back by his reason and becomes gentle (440c–d); he claims that a mixture of musical and physical training makes reason and spirit concordant, tightening reason, and making spirit gentle (441e–2a); and he characterises the temperate person as making a potentially angry spirit gentle before sleeping (572a).

But it is not clear that these passages provide strong evidence for Wilburn's view. For Socrates characterises the spirited part in terms of aggressive impulses that can be weakened or eliminated, and not as (i) something that is inclined to gentleness in its nature, or (ii) the source of the positive tendency to be friendly and welcoming towards others. So the passages that Wilburn cites support the idea that spirit is the source of an aggressive tendency that can be made tame, but not necessarily the idea that spirit's *nature* is gentle, or that spirit is the source of friendliness and affection.

Wilburn also addresses Socrates' claim in *Republic* II that the philosophical element is the source of gentleness. He argues that Socrates cannot be serious when he claims that the gentleness and friendliness that we find in well-bred dogs is due to their philosophical nature, for this would mean that dogs have a rational part, and this is something he elsewhere denies (44–5). But Socrates repeats the idea that the philosophical element or reason is the source of friendliness and gentleness at other points in the text.

In *Republic* III, Socrates claims that correct education properly combines music and gymnastics so that the person does not become either overly savage or excessively soft and tame, and he claims that the spirited element is responsible for the savageness while the philosophical nature holds the tameness (410d–e). In *Republic* VI, Socrates claims that someone who has a philosophic soul must be just and gentle, and not unsociable and savage, right from the time he is young (486b–c), thus linking the philosophical nature with a tendency towards being just and gentle. Also in *Republic* VI, he claims that someone with a philosophical nature is least likely to quarrel with others, for he contemplates, admires, and imitates things (the forms) that are always just and orderly and divine (500b–d), suggesting that it is the philosophical nature's love of the forms that makes it gentle and just. Of course, Socrates is talking here of the philosopher, but perhaps someone with a less developed philosophical element loves something similar, say the order or harmony found in the sensible world, and this admiration makes it just and gentle.

Let me turn to a further feature of Plato's characterisation of spirit that is in tension with Wilburn's interpretation. In *Republic* IV, Socrates repeatedly

characterises spirit as having a special relationship to reason: whenever there is a conflict between reason and the appetites, spirit is the ally of reason (440b–e, 441a). It is not clear how Wilburn's view, which holds that the spirited part is the uniquely social part of the soul, and so primarily oriented towards other people, explains this feature of spirit.

Wilburn explains spirit's special relationship to reason by arguing that education turns spirit's tendency to love what is familiar and feel hostility to what is foreign inward by making reason and its judgements familiar and the appetites foreign. More specifically, Kallipolis surrounds the young with truly fine and admirable people, behaviours, and cultural products; since these fine things become familiar, the individual's spirit responds to them with friendly feeling. But correct reason will both be fine itself and deem these familiar things fine, and so reason and its judgements will be familiar, and spirit will respond with friendly feeling (p. 184ff).

But there are two *prima facie* problems with this view. First, the text suggests that spirit is attuned to reason by nature and not acculturation (441a). Secondly, Wilburn's account claims that spirit's love of the fine is secured through its love of the familiar. But surely there are cases where an individual determines through reasoning that what is familiar is not fine. In these cases, what does the spirited part respond to: what is familiar or what reason deems fine? In my view, the text suggests that spirit would respond to what reason deems fine.

None of these challenges should detract from Wilburn's major contribution to our understanding of Plato's conception of the spirited part of the soul and its role in politics. Anyone advancing an interpretation of Plato on the spirited part of the soul and its capacities, moral education, or political expertise must contend with the powerful arguments contained in this marvelous book.

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Spying Through a Glass Darkly. BY CÉCILE FABRE. (Oxford: OUP, 2022. Pp. vii + 251. Price £30.00.)

Cécile Fabre's *Spying Through a Glass Darkly* is a valuable philosophical contribution to a little-studied subject: the ethics of espionage. Compared to the ethics of war, there are very few monographs on the subject and vanishingly few as rigorous as Fabre's excellent book.