like this suggest a certain isolation from mainstream debate, or at least a loss of focus in a mass of material.

It is difficult to know how to criticise much of S.'s discussion of Plato, Aristotle and the rest, because he does not indicate where he is trying to interpret his sources and where, in contrast, he is using them as a springboard for his own speculations. However, the general impression is that he is more interested in the latter, as is perhaps unsurprising in a work which aims to draw grand conclusions from so large a range of texts. For example, S. makes an interesting connection between the Homeric and Platonic θυμός, but, instead of pursuing it in greater depth, immediately sweeps on to moralise about the 'strivings [of the will] that are different from purely sensuous and purely intellectual strivings' in the 'man as such' (pp. 299–300).

The account of Plato's psychology is taken almost exclusively from the tripartite model of the *Republic*, with little acknowledgement of variations in other dialogues, such as the *Timaeus*. It is symptomatic of the high level of generality at which S. is operating that his index does not include Plato's works, or Aristotle's, as individual entries, but simply lists references to the two authors by theme (under 'Plato', 'aesthetics', 'anglers', 'cognition', etc.).

S.'s work represents a new attempt to assess the significance of Plato and Aristotle upon European thought and to advocate a more central place for their conception of happiness in modern life. It is doubtful, though, whether he has established a sufficiently powerful schema to encompass the superficial similarities of approach in thinkers of widely different periods, cultures and disciplines.

V. Adluri's translation will make the volume, previously not well known outside the confines of German academia, available to an Anglophone audience. His rendering is generally adequate, although it has not succeeded in avoiding all the traps of literality ('fundament of cognition' is perhaps not what S. intended, p. 277).

University of Warwick E.C. PARK
emma.park3@gmail.com

AMERICAN PLATO

TUCKER (A.) *Plato for Everyone*. Pp. 256. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus, 2013. Paper, US$21. ISBN: 978-1-61614-654-2.
doi:10.1017/S0009840X14000961

It might be unfair to call this volume 'too cute by half'; T. would likely prefer it to be called 'cool', the term he chooses as a translation of the Greek *aretê*, 'virtue', particularly in the context of the *Meno*.

T.'s strategy is to make Platonic dialogues more current and relevant by recasting them as stories with a different setting and updated characters, though the text is in many places loosely similar to the original. In that way present-day students need not be distracted and burdened by all the references to ancient Greek persons and events, allusions and more that so often seem significant for Plato's points. In that way 'we can use Socrates as a guide for understanding our contemporary dilemmas and choices, just as if he were living among us today' (p. 13). There are of course those of us who say that we can do that using the originals.

In T.'s version of the *Crito* – his first chapter, 'Is it Good to Die for One's Country?' – Socrates receives a draft notice to fight in a senseless war in which his country – and no

pretence that it might be Greece – has intervened on one side of a civil war, guilt and responsibility to share on all sides. A young Socrates has protested this war, but now is approached by his friend Chris, who did not want to wake him up because he was asleep like a 'neutral Swedish baby' (p. 17). Cute, perhaps, but it completely misses the irony of Crito's concern when Socrates was soon to die; and do Swedish babies indeed have the precocious self-knowledge to be aware of their country's neutrality? The discussion moves on to the meatier 'The Immoral Majority and Public Opinion' and 'Justice, the Rule of Law, and Democracy'. And in a run-away argument, Socrates: '"If I run away now, I will feel as ridiculous as if I took a subprime mortgage, without a job or other assets, and then suddenly, facing foreclosure, sought to annul the mortgage agreement and keep the house". "Think about Canada", whispered Chris' (p. 38).

'The Essence of Cool (After the *Meno*)' features Miles, 'the coolest guy around' (p. 45), with wealthy parents, relatives and friends, a student at Skidroll College of Professor Georgie, one of the highest paid philosophy professors anywhere (p. 45). Gorgias? some sarcastic Brit might ask. Comparison to the torpedo fish stands more or less as in text (p. 63), but with the odd non-textual, 'Pretty boys like it when they are compared to animals' (p. 64). The excursus with the slave is replaced by Socrates' appeal to his grandmother and great aunt, the Pythagorean prohibition of beans (with a lame joke about Mexican restaurants) and, finally, introduction of Miles's chauffeur. Finally the role of Anytus is taken by Ronald Drumb, son of a self-made millionaire.

'Good, Evil, and God (After the *Euthyphro*)' has Socrates teaching at the religious Agora Preparatory School for Boys in Virginia, where concerned parents brought charges. The Euthyphro role is played by televangelist Hugh Thrip (p. 99). Enough said.

Chapter 4, 'Your Children Will Condemn You. Socrates' Defense Speech (After the *Apology*)', takes up the charges of corruption made by Agora Preparatory parents. He charges his older accusers: 'You may remember the Broadway production of … *Skyscrapers*, in which a character named Socrates climbed up high-rises, attempting to study the stars and then trying to use antigravity …' (p. 127). He goes through his knowledge of ignorance, his talks with plumbers and engineers, his conclusions – and the contrast with 'the group of parents who … gang up on me on behalf of all the financial advisers, lawyers, politicians, artists, religious leaders, and engineers I have ridiculed over the years' (p. 133). Cross-examination of the accuser is with Mel Etuxor – Get it? – and reaches to Hawking, Dawkins and Darwin.

The final segment, 'Death and Liberation (after the *Phaedo*)', is set in a proto diner on I-81, just south of Binghamton. Not a prisoner, Socrates is an ALS patient in a hospice, the jailer replaced by a nurse. As in the *Phaedo* itself, there is a large cast of characters and Socrates here composes a variant on *Sleeping Beauty*. Arguments about death, suicide, the relation of body and soul follow, roughly in the order, but not with the orderliness of the original.

The obvious question about this book is 'Why?'. Supposedly it is to make the ancient material more accessible to today's undergraduates or lay philosophical readers. But why is it more direct to talk about a play called the *Skyscrapers*, where everything we are told is modelled on Socrates' references to Aristophanes' *Clouds*, than to talk about Aristophanes' *Clouds* in the first place? Why is it more direct to talk about the Vietnam War and its relation to the Peloponnesian War and to Socrates, than to talk about the latter and leave it to students to come up with the many possible relations to the former and to many other things? If Plato wrote with a clear realisation that his examples from his own contemporaries might be lost on future readers, but would remain examples of general relations in political and social life, then the specification of a particular set of modern examples narrows the possibilities. It does not open up potential windows.

T. does stick closely to the arguments of the texts he is recasting but the settings often distort rather that illuminate the points Socrates is making. The five dialogues usually linked to the account of Socrates' trial and death are, with the exception of the *Meno*, dramatically continuous. All that is lost in this volume, for Socrates is hopping from one place to another engaging in very different projects. At least for this reader the central message that Plato conveys in this set of dialogues is lost; we do not meet a Socrates who is engaged in the project of the examined life and who is willing to die (not from ALS but) because he has been condemned to death by the Athenians for this engagement.

American University ANDREA TSCHEMPLIK
atschem@american.edu

VIRGIL'S PRESENCE

Cox (F.) *Sibylline Sisters. Virgil's Presence in Contemporary Women's Writing*. Pp. xii + 284. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Cased, £58, US$99. ISBN: 978-0-19-958296-9.
doi:10.1017/S0009840X14000420

Virgil's presence is omnipresent on the pages of C.'s excellent book, showing how deeply and pervasively his influence still speaks to contemporary women writers, even when they are reacting against the persistence of the patriarchal culture they find extolled in it. *Virgil's presence* is a term by which C. means less a guiding shade of the dead past than a writer so fully alive to the richness of language that he reads us back to ourselves, through the exaltations and perplexities of our shared mortal condition. At its grandest, and most elemental, as when Anchises speaks in the underworld of the *Aeneid*, the text assumes the voice of a Wordsworthian spirit that 'moves within all things' (*spiritus intus alit* . . .) and is the source of their creaturely 'fear and desire', as well as of their 'grief and their delight'. C.'s approach to influence is not so much a claim for 'relevance', since that is always relative, and less exciting as literature, but rather as a recognition of scope; and it is in the sweeping, great-heartedness of Virgil's concerns, and the plenary ways they generate correspondingly big-hearted approaches in the writers C. cites, that the reader encounters instances by which the book is made revelatory.

Perhaps the most powerful writing C. cites comes from descriptions of London during the blitz, a city under siege, like Troy in the great Book 2 passages of the *Aeneid*. In A.S. Byatt's *The Little Black Book of Stories*, the mind is darkly impressed upon by the invasion:

> Death was close. Friends you were meeting for dinner, who lived in your head as you set off to meet them, never came, because they were mangled meat under brick and timber. Other friends who stared in your memory as the dead stare whilst they take up the final shape your memory will give them, suddenly turned up on the doorstep in lumpen, living flesh, bruised and dirty, carrying bags of salvaged belongings, and begged for a bed, for a cup of tea.

And here's a passage from the Medieval scholar Helen Waddell's recollection of burning London:

> If all else goes from the schools, let us at least keep the second book of Virgil. I speak of it with passion, for something sent me to it on that September afternoon when the Luftwaffe first broke through the defenses of London, and her river burned. You remember the cry of Aeneas waking in