

Interpretation

A JOURNAL OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Fall 2003

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Two Whig Views of the American Revolution: Adam Ferguson's Response to Richard Price

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What this essay seeks to show is that late eighteenth-century Whig thought was able to accommodate two different approaches to political philosophy that differed both in their epistemological roots and in their approach to the origins of government and the nature of political institutions, while at the same time arriving at similar conclusions regarding what constitutes a free and open society. It is indicative of the wide range of views that Whig doctrine could accommodate both Adam Ferguson and Richard Price, two thinkers whose views diverged in so many particulars, both of whom were regarded as staunch Whigs and, depending on the particulars, as allies of the colonial cause. Indeed, Ferguson and Price put forward two distinct strands of late-eighteenth century Whig ideology that were to continue on into nineteenth-century classical liberal thought. Ferguson's views, like those of Hume and Burke, reflected a theory of liberty for the most part based on the development of British traditions and institutions that evolved and took their shape from countless individual actions over centuries, each of which contributed to establishing a free society but none deliberately designed with that end in view. Price's political philosophy, on the other hand, was far more rationalist and was predicated on the notion that the ends for which political society existed and the particular institutions that conduced to those ends were open to reason and that it was possible to deliberately design the political arrangements under which we lived to maximize individual liberty. F. A. Hayek has made much of this distinction, maintaining that the political presuppositions embraced by Ferguson can alone give rise to a regime of liberty and that Price's rationalistic philosophy inevitably leads to authoritarianism (see Addendum 1). As I hope to show, however, this claim is seriously deficient with respect to eighteenth-century Whig doctrine and to the arguments put forward in support of the

American Revolution.

At the time Richard Price published his *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty* in 1776 he had already gained a reputation as one of the most ardent defenders of civil and religious liberty and republican values in Great Britain. The son of a Congregationalist minister, Price was born in the parish of Llangeinor in Glamorgan, Wales, in 1723. At the age of seventeen, Price entered Coward's Academy in Tenter Alley, Moorfields, where he studied under John Eames, a friend and disciple of Isaac Newton. It was doubtless while a student at the Academy that Price gained his lifelong interest in mathematics and his philosophical rationalism. While Price rejected his father's harsh puritanism, he appeared quite early in his education to have determined to prepare for the ministry and was ordained a Non-Conformist minister in 1744. His church at Newington Green, a center of Dissent for a number of years, soon became a magnet for reformers and radicals, among them Mary Wollstonecraft, John Howard, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Adam Smith. Price's principal philosophical work, *A Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals* was published in 1758, and it was this work that resulted in his being awarded a doctorate in divinity by Marischal College, Aberdeen, in 1769. Price's "discourse on the love of our country," a ringing defense of the revolutionary events in France preached in November 1789, provided the immediate stimulus, not only for Burke's *Reflections* (1790), but for a huge number of responses. In 1791, the year in which he died, Price became a founding member of the Unitarian Society.

The Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, the Principles of Government, and the Justice and Policy of War with America, prepared in the winter of 1775–1776, made its appearance on February 8 and became an immediate success. Several thousand copies were sold within a few days of its publication, 60,000 copies by the close of 1776. The work ran into five editions within five weeks and into twelve editions within the year (Thomas 1924, 74). No one interested in the affairs of the empire was ignorant of its contents. The essay prompted the Council of the City of London to award Price its highest honor, the Freedom of the City, for laying bare "those pure principles of which alone the supreme legislative authority of Great Britain over her colonies can be justly or beneficially maintained" (Thomas 1924, 76). The essay was quickly republished across the Atlantic, with editions appearing in Boston, New York, Charleston, and Philadelphia (Peach 1979, 9). And while its effect on the pro-independence forces was not nearly as great as was that of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, the *Observations* did contribute to the arsenal at the disposal

of those seeking a separation from Great Britain.

Price's pamphlet was regarded as so significant a challenge, both to the government's position on America and to the arguments put forward by those who accepted the authority of Parliament to tax the colonies, that it gave birth to a profusion of responses. The government's policy was ardently defended by, among others, Josiah Tucker, John Fletcher, and the Methodist John Wesley. Dr. John Shebbeare, who was regularly paid by the government to defend its positions and who had previously been pilloried for libel, penned one of the most scurrilous of the replies, while Edmund Burke's response (1776) was one of the mildest. In one of his most famous missives, Burke called for conciliation with the rebellious colonies, although he did not go so far as repudiating the abhorrent Declaratory Act, which had been enacted during the Administration of the Marquis of Rockingham, with whom Burke was associated. The Act, passed in March 1766, declared that the colonies in America "have been, are, and of right ought to be" subordinate to the parliament of Great Britain, which had "full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind the colonies and people of America" (6 George III, c. 12; Statutes 1767, 27:19–20). So heinous did Price find this claim that he wrote of it, "I defy any one to express slavery in stronger language" (Price 1979a, 82–83).

One of the most measured of the published rebuttals to Price's essay was that written by Adam Ferguson, the Scottish philosopher and professor of pneumatics and moral philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. Ferguson's sympathies, like those of a large number of Scottish men of letters, were with the British government, whose understanding of the constitutional relationship of the American colonies to the authority of Westminster was regarded as consistent with both British tradition and British law. Ferguson had earlier shown some sensitivity to the colonial cause and had condemned the Stamp Act as politically inept and foolish. In a letter to John MacPherson, probably written in 1772, he noted that "I think Greenvilles Stamp Act a very unlucky affair for this Countrey. It has brought on a disspute in which this Mother Countrey as it is very properly called has made a very shabby figure, And I am affraid cannot mend the matter" (Ferguson 1995a, 1:95). Indeed, prior to the outbreak of hostilities, Ferguson's views on the events in America were not dissimilar to those of his friend David Hume, who was contemptuous of government policy, although he never went as far as did Hume in urging that the colonies be given their independence (Fagerstrom 1954, 259–260). Even as late as the beginning of 1776 Ferguson, while convinced of the legality

of the government's position, expressed concern that Britain would not be able to extricate itself from the impasse it had arrived at. These speculations were occasioned by his having received a copy of James MacPherson's pamphlet "on the Rights of this Countrey against the Claims of America" (MacPherson 1776). "I have never had any doubt on any of the rights Established in this Pamphlet," Ferguson maintained. "The only Question with me was what this Countrey in Wisdom ought to do in the Situation at which the Colonys were Arrived. This Question becomes every Day more complicated & more difficult" (Ferguson to John Home, 27 January 1776, Ferguson 1995a, 1:134).

It appears that, as early as 1772 Ferguson had been approached by the Administration to publish his views on the American crisis, doubtless in the expectation that the high reputation in which he was held by educated colonists might work to blunt their increasing hostility towards Britain. As one of the leading figures of the Scottish Enlightenment, Ferguson was well known and his work highly respected. Indeed, the Scottish Enlightenment, as one historian has noted,

was probably the most potent single tradition in the American Enlightenment. From Hutcheson to Ferguson, including Hume and Adam Smith, came a body of philosophical literature that aroused men from their dogmatic slumbers on both sides of the Atlantic. (Schneider 1963, 216)

Scottish moral philosophy was decisively established in America through the mediation of John Witherspoon, who arrived in the colonies from Scotland to take up the position of president of Princeton—then known as the College of New Jersey—in 1768. Witherspoon, one of the more outspoken Evangelical ministers in the Church of Scotland, brought with him an intimate knowledge of the work of the leading Scottish writers, which he kept current and attempted to impart to his students. Thus, Ferguson's *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, his principal work, appears among the books comprising Witherspoon's recommended reading list for his course in political theory (Thompson 1976, 528; Witherspoon 1912, 144). A student of Witherspoon's, James Madison was especially receptive to Ferguson's writings (Branson 1979), but Madison was certainly not alone among Americans in having studied Ferguson. Data presented by Lundberg and May (1976) indicate that between 1777 and 1813 the *Essay* appeared in no less than twenty-two percent of the American library catalogues and booksellers' lists examined.

Jefferson had been introduced to the works of the major Scottish thinkers when a student at William and Mary College, and among the

items listed in the catalogue of books he sold to the Library of Congress in 1815 was a copy of the *Essay*. (Sowerby 1952–1959, 3:20–21: item 2348). The basic library list that Jefferson prepared for a friend in 1771 contained works by Adam Smith, Thomas Reid, David Hume, and Henry Home, Lord Kames (Jefferson to Robert Skipwith, 3 August 1771, Jefferson 1950, 78–80). Having studied for two years under William Small at the College of William and Mary, it is inconceivable that Jefferson had not also read and digested Ferguson's works. Indeed, one commentator has gone so far as to maintain that Jefferson was so thoroughly immersed in the thought of the Scottish Enlightenment that the *Declaration of Independence* cannot be properly understood except in terms of Scottish political and moral philosophy (Wills 1978). While there is no historical warrant for this eccentric conclusion, there is overwhelming evidence that Jefferson had read and digested the works of the major Scottish writers.

In New England the effects of Scottish philosophy in shaping the American Enlightenment were even more profound than in the South. Scottish thought was to prove crucial in temporalizing Calvinist doctrine and replacing it with secular conceptions of history and progress. As one intellectual historian has observed, one can only imagine the effect of sentiments such as these on minds steeped in a Puritan theology that viewed man as entirely dependent on God, whose earthly magistrates we are obligated to obey (Schneider 1963, 38). It was Adam Ferguson who gave this sweeping secularization its best expression: "We speak of art as distinguished from nature," he wrote,

but art itself is natural to man. He is in some measure the artificer of his own frame, as well as his fortune, and is destined, from the first age of his being, to invent and contrive . . . If we are asked therefore, Where the state of nature is to be found? we may answer, It is here, and it matters not where we are understood to speak in the island of Great Britain, at the Cape of Good Hope, or the Straits of Magellan. . . . If the palace be unnatural, the cottage is so no less; and the highest refinements of political and moral apprehension, are not more artificial in their kind, than the first operations of sentiment and reason. (1995b, 12, 14)

When the first shots were fired at Lexington in April 1775, Ferguson was almost fifty-two years old and had held the chair of philosophy at the University of Edinburgh for eleven years. He was born at Logierait, Perthshire, on the border of the Scottish Highlands, on June 20, 1723, the youngest child of the parish minister. Having received his early education at the parish school and the local grammar school, he was sent to the University of

St. Andrews in 1738, where he gained a reputation for classical scholarship. Ferguson took his M. A. degree in 1742 and, in the same year, entered the Divinity Hall at St. Andrews. Soon thereafter he transferred to Edinburgh University and in 1745, after having completed only three years of the required six-year course of study in theology, he was offered the deputy chaplaincy of the Black Watch Regiment, largely, it appears, because of his knowledge of Gaelic. In July 1745 he was ordained in the Scottish Kirk and raised to the rank of principal chaplain. He remained with his regiment until 1754, at which time he resigned his commission and quit the clerical profession.

With the help of his friend David Hume, Ferguson was appointed to the post of Keeper of the Advocates Library, Edinburgh, in 1757, having succeeded Hume to that office, thus providing Ferguson with access to one of the best libraries in Europe. Following the death of the professor of natural philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, and again through the intercession of, among others, David Hume, Ferguson was named to that chair in 1759: five years later, in 1764, he transferred to the chair of pneumatics and moral philosophy, which he held until his retirement in 1785. It was during his tenure as professor of moral philosophy that three of his four most important works were published; the *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, in 1767; the *Institutes of Moral Philosophy*, a synopsis of his lectures on moral philosophy, in 1769; and the *History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic*, in five volumes, in 1783.

Citing ill health, Ferguson resigned his professorship in 1785, at the age of sixty-two, to be succeeded in that position by his one-time student and friend Dugald Stewart. In lieu of a pension, Ferguson had made arrangements with the University to continue to draw a salary as senior professor of mathematics. The position was, of course, a sinecure and all lectures in the field were, in fact, delivered by a junior professor. During his retirement Ferguson completed his major work in moral philosophy, a revision and expansion of his *Institutes*, entitled *Principles of Moral and Political Science*, which appeared in two volumes in 1792. He died on February 22, 1816, in his ninety-third year, at St. Andrews, Scotland, and is buried in the grounds of the cathedral there (For biographical data on Ferguson see Fagg 1995, 1: xx–cxvii; also see Kettler 1965, 41–82).

While Ferguson's political sympathies were decidedly Whiggish, it is likely that his views on American independence were in part shaped by the economic loss that would likely follow a change in Scottish commercial relations with the colonies. More important, Ferguson saw no

diminution in the liberties of Scotsmen in the wake of the Act of Union of 1707; in this he reflected the votes cast by most Scottish members of Parliament, who regarded the arguments put forward by the British government as constitutionally correct. Although Ferguson agreed with Hume that the government's colonial policy was doomed to failure, he regarded the American position on taxation as without any merit whatever. The notion that England should underwrite the costs of garrisoning an army in North America to protect the colonists, while being blocked from taxing the beneficiaries of this policy, struck Ferguson as nonsensical. Having received the benefits of subjects, it followed that the colonists were under an obligation to discharge the duties that accompanied these benefits. It is true that England had profited from its trade with America, but this held equally true of America in its trade with the mother country. Indeed, the laws of nature clearly provided that one body politic could legally submit itself to the authority of, and contribute to the supplies of, another, as was the case, Ferguson maintained, with the American colonies in their relation with the Parliament of Great Britain.

These conclusions, well known to the authorities, prompted the North Administration in 1772 to approach Ferguson with a view to publishing a pamphlet in support of the government's policies in North America. To this suggestion, Ferguson, in writing to Sir John Macpherson, declined, noting that "I could come under no Obligations which I am affraid the Step of your Friendship Suggests would seem to Promise." Ferguson adds that, while he will not write a pamphlet, "I will continue to write you what occurs to me" and noted that he would have no objection to his comments being brought to the attention of Lord Grafton (Ferguson 1995a, 1:96), who had served as Prime Minister from 1767 to 1770 and was, at the time of Ferguson's letter, Privy Seal in the North government.

In 1776 Ferguson was again approached, this time by Sir John Dalrymple, who had at first suggested that Ferguson participate in a plan to contribute regularly to a weekly journal defending the government's policies, but this scheme appears never to have been implemented. However, Dalrymple was successful in gaining for Ferguson a handsome government stipend at the beginning of 1776. Dalrymple argued that Ferguson had been a faithful adherent of Administration policy on numerous occasions, especially with regard to the colonies. However, his support, unlike that of so many of his colleagues, had never been acknowledged with some favor or another, and as a consequence, according to Dalrymple, Ferguson had begun to grow somewhat bitter. As a consequence, he was awarded a grant of £200 per annum, conferred

on him on January 23, 1776 by the King's Warrant under the Privy Seal of Scotland (Fagg 1995, 1:xlix–l).

The effect of this subsidy appears to have been immediate. Price's *Observations* appeared on February 7, and Ferguson quickly began work on a rejoinder to the essay, which he sent to the government to be used as they wished. On behalf of the government, Sir Grey Cooper, who held the post of Secretary of the Treasury, instructed the publisher William Strahan in Edinburgh to print Ferguson's essay (Letter from Grey Cooper, 23 March 1776, Ferguson 1995a, 1:137), and it was soon republished by a group of printers in Dublin (Fagg 1995, 1:l). The pamphlet, which appeared under the title *Remarks on a Pamphlet Lately Published by Dr. Price, Intituled Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, the Principles of Government, and the Justice and Policy of the War With America, etc., In a Letter from a Gentlemen in the Country to a Member of Parliament*, sold for one shilling and was very well received, being quoted at length in the *Critical Review* and the *Monthly Review*, two of the leading magazines of the day (see Addendum 2). Even Price referred to its author as "one even of the most candid as well as the ablest of my opponents" (Price 1979a, 140).

Ferguson's attitude towards the colonies appeared to have hardened following publication of his *Remarks*. Again writing to John Macpherson, on October 27, 1777, Ferguson expressed the hope that British forces, "for our own Credit, [would inflict on] that people ... a sound drubbing." Once having done so, however, Ferguson supported the removal of British troops from the rebellious colonies inasmuch as their upkeep would be beyond the financial capacities of the colonies to sustain. He writes:

I protest that if we had news to morrow that Howe had beat Washington and Burgoyne Arnold the use I would make of it would be to leave America with contempt. For it looks as if no Calamity would force them to Submission & if it did their Submission is not worth haveing. Their whole resource for any Visi[ble] time to Come will not pay the Army that ke[eps] them in Submission. So I am partial enough to Great Britain to wish them to the bottom of the Sea. (1995a, 1:156)

What occasioned this mean-spiritedness and led Ferguson to such a foolish miscalculation regarding the colonies' economic capacities is impossible to say. He continued in the same vein three months later, when, after outlining a military campaign that he felt would prove sufficient to subdue the rebellion, he noted: "In our Way to this Object the Rebels may be

induced to prefer accommodation to the Continuance of Such A War. But Lord have mercy on those who expect any Good in this business without Sufficient Instruments of Terror in one hand & of Moderation and justice in the Other” (Ferguson to John MacPherson, 15 January 1778, Ferguson 1995a, 1:162). Having been selected to join the Commission appointed to seek some accommodation with the colonies, Ferguson felt it expedient to moderate his views, somewhat, prior to setting sail to America in early 1778. He noted in yet another letter to John Macpherson that he hoped the Administration would signal to the colonies that they had no intention of invading American liberties, and that they supported the establishment of a general parliament for America. “My Idea of a General Parliament for America may appear odd,” Ferguson wrote. “What Unite them; should they not rather be kept Separate that we may govern by dividing. I have much to say on that Subject being much impressed with a notion that one great state is much more easily Governed than many Small ones” (12 February 1778, Ferguson 1995a, 1:166)

In the fall of 1777, General John Burgoyne, who had led an invasion force from Canada with the intention of linking up with the British army in New York City, suffered a decisive defeat at Saratoga, and on October 17 Burgoyne and his whole army surrendered to General Horatio Gates. The news of Burgoyne’s defeat caused a sensation across the Atlantic. The French government set in train formal diplomatic efforts to recognize America’s independence, and the British government, in an effort to be as conciliatory as possible, abruptly reversed its policies. In February the North Administration introduced bills in Parliament repealing all acts passed since 1763 that the colonies had complained of. At the same time, a commission was struck whose purpose was to enter into negotiations with the Americans to grant the colonies almost anything they wished, provided they remain loyal to the Crown. While the British government was not prepared to assume responsibility for the redemption of colonial paper money or the financial burden undertaken by the colonies by the war, the fact that it was prepared to come to an accord on extremely generous terms led many within the North Administration to believe that conciliation was likely.

The commissioners were appointed by George III, who personally had little hope that they would prove successful. As its head, the Crown appointed Frederick Howard, fifth Earl of Carlisle, and its membership comprised William Eden (later Lord Auckland), a close friend of Lord North, and George Johnstone, who had been appointed the first governor of West Florida in 1763 (Fagg 1995, 1:xl). It was Johnstone, an old friend of Ferguson, who was

responsible for inviting Ferguson to accompany the Commission to America. Upon arriving at Philadelphia in June, the Commission appointed Ferguson its secretary and immediately attempted to enter into negotiations with several members of Congress (Stevens 1889–1895, 5:401; Sparks 1853, 2:136). These proved a complete failure, nor was the Commission any more successful in prevailing upon Washington to grant Ferguson a passport through the American lines to treat directly with Congress. Having been defeated at reaching agreement with the colonies short of recognizing their independence and withdrawing all British troops, the Commission returned home in late 1778 (Brown 1941, 244–292; Van Doren 1941, 63–116). Ferguson continued to occupy himself with Commission business until the spring of the following year, at which point he resumed his chair at the University.

Despite having spent six months in the colonies, Ferguson's sentiments regarding the colonial cause had not softened since having written in reply to Price two years earlier. Indeed, if the *Manifesto and Proclamation* issued by the Conciliation Commission in October 1778, of which Ferguson was one of the authors (Fagg 1995, 1:lxxxiii), is any indication, Ferguson's animus towards the colonists had deepened in the wake of America's alliance with France, a nation, it was argued, that traditionally opposed freedom of conscience and that held religious toleration, which Englishmen took for granted, in contempt (Van Doren 1941, 112–113). A treaty with France, the *Manifesto* observed, would convert the existing hostilities between those sharing a common heritage into a world struggle. In light of this, it went on, self-preservation would justify England's destruction of the colonies (Brown 1941, 284–285). Thomas Paine was especially offended by the *Manifesto's* claim that France was the "natural enemy" of both England and America and devoted a good part of *The Crisis*, no. 6, to criticizing Ferguson for his use of the notion of "natural enemies," which Paine characterized as a meaningless barbarism (Paine 1995, 186–190).

Richard Price, it need hardly be added, was not moved to alter his views in light of America's alliance with France although he appears to have shared Ferguson's aversion to a treaty between a people dedicated to establishing a free society and a nation as closely tied to its feudal past as was France. In early 1778, he had published a new edition of his *Observations* to which he appended a second essay replying to his numerous critics. This second pamphlet, which first appeared in February 1777 under the title *Additional Observations on the Nature and Value of Liberty*, was issued with the *Observations* in January 1778, as *Two Tracts on Civil Liberty*, to which he added

a general introduction and supplement. Price's introductory observations pointed to the need to hasten a resolution of the conflict with the colonies by acceding to their demands, a comment prompted by his belief that an American-French alliance was imminent. "The consequences [of not acceding to America's demands]," he wrote, "must be that the colonies will become the allies of France, that a general war will be kindled and, perhaps, this once happy country be made, in just retribution, the seat of that desolation and misery which it has produced in other countries." Indeed, once the alliance was concluded Price saw even less reason to deny the United States its independence (Price 1979a, 60). "France," he later maintained,

has acknowledged the independence of America. Every power in Europe is ready to do it. All real authority is gone; and it cannot be expected that by any nominal authority we can bind them to anything that interferes with their interest. In these circumstances, all hesitation about yielding independence to them seems unreasonable. (Quoted in Thomas 1977, 261–262)

A reading of Price's *Observations* and Ferguson's response naturally raises the question, in which ways did these two writers, who shared so much of the Whig tradition and who were both highly regarded for their political insights by so many colonists, differ from each other in their assessment of the events in America? In this regard, it will prove useful to contrast Price and Ferguson with respect to the philosophical differences that bore most decisively on their views of the American crisis.

EPISTEMOLOGY AND ITS RELATION TO ETHICS

As F. A. Hayek has pointed out, Ferguson and Price are particularly good exemplars of the two distinct liberal traditions of which he writes: the one empirical and unsystematic, the other speculative and rationalistic. And even though Hayek refers to the first as English and the second as French, he concedes that both views were embraced by intellectuals on both sides of the Channel and especially by Englishmen like Price who regarded the French Revolution with enthusiasm (Hayek 1960, 56).

While Locke was clearly a major influence in shaping Price's views, the underlying epistemology that shaped Price's political philosophy differs markedly. In his *A Review of the Principal Questions in Morals*, first published in 1758, Price maintains that certain ideas, for example those having to

do with identity and causation, are simply not derivable from our sensory experiences but rather are known through rational intuition. Equally, our intellectual perceptions of right and wrong, our notions of moral rightness, follow immediately from our understanding and, once having been intuited, are appealable to nothing more fundamental. Among these immutable and objective truths of which the mind is aware are our duty to God and our sense of justice. And justice, in turn, is the duty to respect property, which includes an individual's life, limbs, faculties, and goods (Zebrowski 1994, 29; Peach 1954, 370–385). Alongside this view, Price also asserted that utility and benevolence constituted legitimate criteria for judging the rightness of an act. At the point at which these several principles of morals might conflict, Price asserts, reason will dictate which principle has priority.

It is this epistemological foundation that underlies Price's discussion of civil liberty in the *Observations* (Peach 1979, 18). When Price notes that civil liberty entails that every man act as his own legislator—that is, that each of us participates in some capacity or another in determining the rules that govern us (Price 1979a, 70)—and that no community can rightfully assume authority over a person or his property without adequate representation, he conceived these claims as deductively true. It is, Price would contend, in the nature of free societies that those who live in them have the right to legislate for themselves, since as truly free agents their disposition is such that they would legislate correctly.

Ferguson's approach to ethics varies considerably from that of Price. His *Essay*, while apparently a work in conjectural sociology, was regarded by Ferguson as primarily an extension of his researches into moral philosophy, the starting point for which, he believed, was the study of the way man functions, both as an individual and in conjunction with others. He regarded all aprioristic notions of man's nature as unsatisfactory and maintained that the only adequate method of gaining information about the principles of ethics was by studying man within the context of his history. "Before we can ascertain the rules of morality for mankind," he wrote, "the history of man's nature, his dispositions, his specific enjoyments and sufferings, his condition and future prospects, should be known" (Ferguson 1769, 2). Indeed, Ferguson insisted, we are as capable of gaining real knowledge about the nature of human beings and the laws governing how they are to be treated as we are about the physical universe.

This, coupled with Ferguson's belief in the inevitable moral progress of the human species, led him to conclude that it was possible to

define the ends towards which man ought to move and, indeed, was moving, as he approaches a more perfect condition. An empirical investigation of man's nature would provide the facts from which we are able to determine what his ends are. "Our knowledge of what any nature ought to be," he observed, "must be derived from our knowledge of its faculties and powers and the attainment to be aimed at must be of the kind which these faculties and powers are fitted to produce" (Ferguson 1792, 1:5).

The sharply divergent epistemological presuppositions that shaped the arguments that Price and Ferguson put forward account in part for Ferguson's criticisms of Price's notions of liberty, one of whose divisions Price characterizes as our "power of following our own sense of right and wrong." Ferguson notes that were we to accept this definition, then it follows that any constraint whatever on our behavior constitutes a species of slavery. However, Price is here claiming that we are morally unfree to the extent that we are prevented from complying with our sense of what is right; this formulation, when applied to civil liberty, leads inexorably to the conclusion that to be truly free entails our being able to legislate for ourselves. As one commentator has observed, Ferguson's response that this interpretation would empower thieves and pickpockets to make their own laws, misses the point since what Price is claiming is that it is in the nature of things that in a truly free society all its citizens, as morally free agents, would act rationally, in keeping with rectitude and virtue (Peach 1979, 19). Further, Ferguson argues that, inasmuch as the great end of government is to secure to each of us our persons and our property by restraining others from invasive acts, it follows that liberty, as Price understands the term, that is, the absence of any restraint, is inconsistent with peace and civil society. But, again, Price's argument has reference to external restraints on truly free agents, whose choices would already be restrained by their moral sense.

It is true that Price later concedes that freedom is consistent with "limitations on our licentious actions and insults to our persons, property, and good name," but, Ferguson argues, Price has recourse to this amendment only after having been shown that his earlier formulation is far too broad. Interestingly, Price's addendum serves to bring his notion of liberty into line with that offered by Locke and reflects Ferguson's own conception of personal liberty as not so much a power but the security of our rights. "The liberty of every class and order is not proportional to the power they enjoy," Ferguson notes in his response to Price, "but to the security they have for the preservation of their rights" (Ferguson 1776, 11). Doing what we please, Ferguson

argues, is not what liberty is about. Rather, being free to act as we choose, circumscribed by the rights of others and secure in our right to so act, is the defining characteristic of a truly free society. In point of fact, this seems to be very close to what Price is suggesting.

Thus, it appears that both Price and Ferguson, by completely divergent routes and despite differing epistemological underpinnings, arrive at similar conclusions respecting the nature of liberty. Independent of exactly how rights are defined, both Price and Ferguson agree that a free society is one, in Ferguson's words, "which secures to us the possession of our rights, while it restrains us from invading the rights of others" ([Ferguson] 1776, 5).

RIGHTS

Price had defended America in its controversies with the Crown since their inception. Indeed, he regarded the cause of the colonies as the cause of all free Englishmen and saw in colonial resistance to the depredations of the North Administration the best hope that freedom would be preserved in Britain. The colonists, Price maintained, in fighting the English battle for liberty, were preserving a future asylum for those seeking freedom (Cone 1952, 73).

The concept of liberty Price puts forward in the *Observations* borrows heavily from Locke and differs only in minor particulars. Indeed, Price admits as much. In the Preface to the fifth edition of the *Observations*, Price acknowledges that "the principles on which I have argued form the foundation of every state as far as it is free; and are the same with those taught by Mr. Locke, and all the writers on civil liberty who have been hitherto most admired in this country" (Price 1979a, 65). While he was prepared to put forward utilitarian arguments in support of certain political ends, Price does not rest his case for freedom on any doctrine of utility but bases it firmly on a foundation of natural rights whose principles are eternally valid. Price divides liberty into four aspects: physical, moral, religious, and civil, all of which reflect some notion of self-direction. Physical liberty entails the power to act as an agent free from physical restraint; moral liberty consists in the power to conduct oneself in accord with one's sense of right or wrong; religious liberty lies in being able to choose those beliefs and modes of worship that conform to the dictates of one's conscience; and civil liberty refers to the community's power to govern itself by laws of its own making.

Price's understanding of rights is purely Lockean. Rights, he maintains, derive from our nature as human beings and are inalienable. They are to be understood in their negative designation only, prohibiting certain actions on the part of others directed at the rights holder; that is, one's right to something entails that others may not intervene should the rights holder attempt to exercise it. It does not entail that others are positively obligated to help the rights holder to exercise it. My right to my life denotes that I may do all within my power consistent with the rights of others to keep myself alive (that is, that I am under no obligation not to prevent myself from dying) and that others are prohibited from intervening should I attempt to preserve my life. Religious liberty, Price writes, is "the power of exercising, without molestation, that mode of religion which we think best or of making the decisions of our consciences respecting religious truth the rule of our conduct, and not any of the decisions of our fellow-men." (Price 1979a, 68). It follows that, inasmuch as we each possess the same inalienable right to this liberty, no one may use this right in such a way that he encroaches on the equal liberty of others. Price argues that this is self-evidently true, since were it not, then "there would be a contradiction in the nature of things, and it would be true that every one had a right to enjoy what every one had a right to destroy" (Price 1979a, 81). However, my right does not imply any positive duty on the part of others that they help save me. The right to one's life does not connote that one will be free from disease, nor that it is incumbent on others to do all they can to prevent one from dying, but only that they not actively intervene to kill you. Even under circumstances where two people are confronted with conditions such that one man's life is contingent on the other's death, neither may raise his hand against the other under pain of violating this right, despite the fact that both will die. Or, put more simply, my right to something, say my liberty or my life, entails only prohibitions on others and not positive commands.

All civil government, Price maintains, both originates with the people and exists to advance their happiness by securing these rights (Price 1979a, 69). Those governments that operate on principles at variance with this debase the natural ends of government and enslave their citizens. Free government, furthermore, is the only kind favorable to human improvement. Since the essential function of government is to insure that we may peaceably enjoy our rights, and since this conduces most to our happiness, nations that are administered in conformity with other ends pervert the natural and inherent equality with which God has endowed each of us.

Ferguson's conception of rights is at sharp variance with that

offered by Price. Just as notions of private property evolve as societies develop from the rudest to the most polished, so it is with rights, whose primary function is to secure property and thus insure our liberty. These rights evolve over time and owe their origin to the inequalities of station and the attempts to curb the abuse of power that arise as societies advance from savagery to civilization. This subordination of rank that marks all societies except the most primitive is, Ferguson writes, natural and salutary. “It is a common observation,” he notes:

that mankind were originally equal. They have indeed by nature equal rights to their preservation, and to the use of their talents; but they are fitted for different stations; and when they are classed by a rule taken from this circumstance, they suffer no injustice on the side of their natural rights. It is obvious, that some mode of subordination is as necessary to men as society itself; and this, not only to attain the ends of government, but to comply with an order established by nature. (1995b, 63–64)

Unlike Price, Ferguson rejects the idea that our rights and the personal liberty that they allow are natural and attach to us by virtue of our humanity, independent of our history. In fact, he argues, they take their specific shape from the totality of events that shape our past and differ in particulars as society evolves. He observes:

Liberty, in one sense, appears to be the portion of polished nations alone. The savage is personally free, because he lives unrestrained, and acts with the members of his tribe on terms of equality. The barbarian is frequently independent from a continuance of the same circumstance, or because he has courage and a sword. But good policy alone can provide for the regular administration of justice, reconstitute a force in the state, which is ready on every occasion to defend the rights of its members. (1995b, 247)

The distinction between Price and Ferguson on the issue of rights emerges most clearly in Ferguson’s *Remarks*, where he juxtaposes Price’s appeal to the concept of natural universal rights to the historical obligations and privileges that in law determine the relation of the colonists to Great Britain.

“The Doctor is pleased to say,” Ferguson writes, “that the question of right, with all liberal inquirers, ought to be, not what jurisdiction over them, precedents, statutes, and charters give, but what reason and equity, and the rights of humanity give” ([Ferguson] 1776, 16). Ferguson expressed amazement at this approach to politics, which, he felt, could only lead to

expressions of private interest and opinion, depriving one of the fixed landmarks provided by precedents, statutes, and charters.

In any case, Ferguson did not regard liberty as dependent on the presence of abstract rights. Rather, the crucial determinant of a free society was the stability of those institutions that guaranteed our ability to enjoy what rights we in fact had. Throughout his writings Ferguson emphasizes the singular importance of the security of property, without which justice and liberty would be impossible. It is the preservation of our property and station that makes society possible and secures to each of us the rights that we have acquired. Indeed, the paramount function of government is to insure to its citizens this security. "Liberty consists in the security of the citizen against every enemy," Ferguson maintained in his *Principles*,

whether foreign or domestic, public or private, from whom, without any provision being made for his defence, he might be exposed to wrong or oppression of any sort: And the first requisite, it should seem, towards obtaining this security, is the existence of an effective government to wield the strength of the community against foreign enemies, and to repress the commission of wrongs at home. (1792, 2:465)

Ferguson's views on the prescriptive rights to which all Englishmen were heir certainly reflected the arguments embraced by Americans at the start of the conflict, but as the struggle intensified it was Price's reiteration of the Lockean notion of natural rights that struck the colonists as more appropriate and that pervaded the colonial arguments against the Crown in the later stages of the struggle. Finally, it was not the prescriptive rights of Englishmen but Locke's conception of man's innate rights that found its most eloquent expression in the *Declaration of Independence*.

THE NATURE OF EMPIRE

Price and Ferguson approach the question of the nature of empire with clearly different presuppositions. It seems clear that Ferguson conceives of the empire covering the home islands and the American colonies as a unitary political structure comprising one people bound together by the same laws, customs and traditions. He observes that the colonies, by virtue of having been part of the British empire, are subject to the sovereignty of the mother country and to its legislature ([Ferguson] 1776, 41). Price, on the other hand, offers a conception of empire that is clearly federative, with each

constituent unit independent of the others with regard to its internal affairs and all paying loyalty to the same sovereign. For Price, the logic of contemporary circumstances appears to have shaped his views on the relation of one aggregation of free people to another. “An empire,” Price maintains,

is a collection of states or communities united by some common bond or tie. If these states have each of them free constitutions of government and, with respect to taxation and internal legislation, are independent of the other states but united by compacts or alliances or subjection to a great council representing the whole, or to one monarch entrusted with the supreme executive power, in these circumstances the empire will be an empire of freemen. If, on the contrary, like the different provinces subject to the Grand Seigneur, none of the states possess any independent legislative authority but are all subject to an absolute monarch whose will is law, then is the empire an empire of slaves. (1979a, 80)

It is worth noting that Price, together with almost all the English radicals who were sympathetic to the colonial cause, opposed a total severing of political ties between Great Britain and America and hoped that some reconciliation with Great Britain would prove possible. Indeed, the primary purpose of his *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty*, which was published before the States declared their independence, was to prevail upon the British government to moderate its policies in such a way as to reestablish an imperial connection. Price’s proposal would, if adopted, provide the necessary machinery to safeguard the rights and liberties of Americans while maintaining a political link between British North America and Great Britain (Bonwick 1977, 97–102).

Ferguson’s notion of the British empire of the eighteenth century is far more traditional. Having expanded its territory and having originally populated these new areas with its own people who carried with them British law, the empire constituted nothing more than a geographical extension of the original state, whose ultimate political authority remained where it was previously lodged. In fact, the colonies, economic satellites of the mother country, had as their primary function the generation of wealth for Britain. The mere expansion of territory, Ferguson would have maintained, was not sufficient justification for the creation of separate, constituent sovereignties, each independent of the others and reliant on the central authority only on issues touching the whole. The history of mankind, Ferguson contended, reflects this motive to empire, a desire to extend the limits of the exist-

ing state and to unite the whole under one central power while severely limiting the degree of self-government in the provinces.

In America's case especially, justice demanded that the colonies contribute to the upkeep of this centralized empire inasmuch as they were the recipients of the most essential benefits the mother country could extend to them, by securing their property from domestic and foreign assault and by providing them with an outlet for their goods ([Ferguson] 1776, 18–19). Britain's relation to her colonies was indeed particularly generous, Ferguson maintained. "It is certainly true," he wrote, "that no nation ever planted Colonies with so liberal or so noble a hand as England has done" ([Ferguson] 1776, 26). In light of this, it was incumbent on the American colonies to indemnify her for the expenses that the central authority had determined had been incurred on their behalf.

It is interesting that in his *Essay* Ferguson called attention to the dangers that adhere in too extensive an empire, the effect of which is to deprive us of a stage on which men of political integrity and sagacity can play a role. "When we reason in behalf of our species," Ferguson writes,

although we may lament the abuses which sometimes arise from independence, and opposition of interest; yet, whilst any degrees of virtue remain with mankind, we cannot wish to crowd, under one establishment, numbers of men who may serve to constitute several; or to commit affairs to the conduct of one senate, one legislative or executive power, which, upon a distinct and separate footing, might furnish an exercise of ability, and a theater of glory, to many. (1995b, 61)

Despite this caution, however, he remained committed to supporting the conflict with the colonies until Britain was successful in reestablishing its North American empire. At some point following the return of the Carlisle Commission to Plymouth in December 1778, Ferguson penned a memorial regarding American independence in which he maintained that "the danger and the consequences of this separation are so great as to justify every trial that can be made to prevent it" (Ferguson 1995a, 2:556 [Appendix H]).

In the event, the success of the American cause put an end to the empire as Ferguson conceived it and transformed its essential nature from one of political dominion to one of economic penetration. It has recently been noted:

British statesmen in the late eighteenth century were sometimes given to musing that a world-wide network of commerce was preferable to an Empire of rule over land and people. Some histori-

ans have argued that a “revulsion against colonization,” accentuated by the quarrel that led to the loss of most of Britain’s dominions in North America and coinciding with the rise of industrialization, brought about a shift away from an empire of rule to the pursuit of trade and influence throughout the world. Trade, it has been argued, came to be preferred to dominion. (Marshall 1998, 25–26)

STATE OF NATURE AND GOVERNMENT BY CONTRACT

No issues make clearer the distinction between Ferguson’s conception of political institutions as the products of evolution and of spontaneously generated growth, and Price’s notion of these institutions as the deliberate product of human design, than their views on the state of nature and the social contract.

Price, like Locke, holds that political authority derives and, indeed, can only derive, from the people. Men are no more naturally obliged to obey their government than they are their neighbor. The obligation to conform to the dictates of the civil magistrate stems solely from the freely extended consent of the person governed, without which one cannot become the subject of another or be constrained by law not of one’s making. As Price argues:

All civil government, as far as it can be denominated free, is the creature of the people. It originates with them. It is conducted under their direction; and has in view nothing but their happiness. All its different forms are no more than so many different modes in which they chuse to direct their affairs, and to secure the quiet enjoyment of their rights. In every free state every man is his own Legislator. All taxes are free gifts for public services. All laws are particular provisions or regulations established by COMMON CONSENT for gaining protection and safety. And all Magistrates are Trustees or Deputies for carrying these regulations into execution. (1979a, 69)

Every man is his own legislator in a free state, according to Price, in the sense that every man, in a truly free state, participates in making the political decisions or in choosing those who make the political decisions that govern him (Price 1979a, 140).

Indeed, in one significant area Price goes significantly further than does Locke in leaving greater power in the hands of the people. Locke’s social contract, like those of most other political theorists who invoke the

notion, is such that it empowers its signers to determine the form of political authority that will prevail, together with its duration and its limits. Once having established the terms of the original social contract, however, those bound by its terms are forever constrained to observe its provisions unless the magistrate violates his obligations. They hold no residual power to change the form of government, having ceded such a right when removing themselves from the state of nature. Price, on the other hand, maintained that ultimate sovereignty over the form and style of government was never surrendered and remained in the keeping of those who were governed throughout. The political sovereignty of the people is continuous and may be exercised as and when they see fit. "Without all doubt," Price writes, "it is the choice of the people that makes civil governors. The people are the spring of all civil power, and they have a right to modify it as they please" (Price 1979a, 148).

Price's arguments supporting the colonists' demands for a change in the civil magistracy are thus even stronger than those that would have been put forward by Locke. Not only had the civil magistrate, in the form of the Royal Court and the various Administrations responsible for American policy since the end of the French and Indian War, violated the terms of the original contract whereby the English colonists who settled in the New World were guaranteed their rights, but it was also the case that the American people wished to reorder their political institutions to better reflect their needs and wishes, which they had every right to do. Despite the fact that the history of the relationship between Great Britain and her American colonies was an oppressive and despotic one, the colonists were under no obligation to prove that the British magistracy had breached the contract it had entered into with its subjects to protect their rights. It was sufficient that they wished to replace the political authority of the mother country with one more in keeping with their welfare.

Unlike Price, Ferguson rejected the notion that civil society and government are artifacts, creations of some original contract whereby free and equal beings living independently in some natural state devoid of political authority came together to confer their natural rights and powers on a newly-designated sovereign. Committed to approaching the study of man and society scientifically, that is, to describing man as he is actually observed, Ferguson rejected the notion of "man in the state of nature," in the sense of man before the advent of society. "Mankind are taken in groups," he wrote, "as they have always subsisted." That society is coeval with man is confirmed by the fact that the individual is the bearer of social dispositions and that regardless of where

we find man, we find him gathered together with others (Ferguson 1995b, 10).

Ferguson rejected the social contract theory as a valid account of the origins of government with many of the same arguments earlier offered by Hume (Hume 1978, 534–39). The establishment of formal rules enforceable by a permanent political institution emerges, claimed Ferguson, not from the desire to create a stronger social union, but rather in response to the abuses that arise from an imperfect distribution of justice. Ferguson held that a system of formal political arrangements did not rest on consent but was gradually shaped to meet the interests of justice with respect to securing private property (Ferguson 1995b, 118–24). It is a useless analytical tool, he claimed, to posit the idea of universal consent to what was, in fact, the gradual emergence of formalized rules of action which took their origin in earlier modes of behavior. “What was in one generation a propensity to herd with the species,” Ferguson observed, “becomes, in the ages which follow, a principle of national union. What was originally an alliance for common defence, becomes a concerted plan of political force” (1995b, 118).

Ferguson does, however, make use of the term “state of nature,” but he confines its use to his ethics rather than to his political theory. He regarded a progression towards excellence or perfection as the governing principle of all moral life. Thus, at one and the same time, Ferguson enunciated a law of perfection that offered an explanation both for individual morality and for social progress. For Ferguson, the natural development of the individual and the species towards perfection describes the “state of nature.” Any point that lies along this continuum of development is as much man’s “state of nature” as is any other point. “If the palace be unnatural,” wrote Ferguson in an often-quoted passage, “the cottage is no less; and the highest refinements of political and moral apprehension, are not more artificial in their kind, than the first operation of sentiment and reason” (1995b, 14). In his major work on moral philosophy, Ferguson noted:

The state of nature or the distinctive character of any progressive being is to be taken, not from its description at the outset, or at any subsequent stage of its progress; but from an accumulative view of its movement throughout. The oak is distinguishable from the pine, not merely by its seed leaf; but by every successive aspect of its form; by its foliage in every successive season; by its acorn; by its spreading top; by its lofty growth; and the length of its period. And the state of nature, relative to every tree in the wood, includes all the varieties of form or dimension through which it is known to pass in the course of its nature. (1792, 1:192)

COMMERCE

Despite the fact that both Price and Ferguson were aware of the advantages to be derived from commerce, in the case of neither writer was their support unreserved. While the nature of their fears regarding an unrestrained commercial society were similar, Price was particularly fearful that a substantial increase in luxury might pose a fatal threat to liberty. This is not to suggest that Price advocated an austere and frugal lifestyle as alone compatible with a free and independent nation. He appears to have been aware of the benefits that accrued to Great Britain from its flourishing trade with the American colonies. "This trade," he maintained,

was not only thus an increasing trade, but it was a trade in which we had no rivals, a trade certain, constant, and uninterrupted, and which, by the shipping employed in it, and the naval stores supplied by it, contributed greatly to the support of that navy which is our chief national strength. Viewed in these lights it was an object unspeakably important. But it will appear still more so if we view it in its connexions and dependencies. It is well known that our trade with Africa and the West-Indies cannot easily subsist without it. And, upon the whole, it is undeniable that it has been one of the main springs of our opulence and splendour and that we have, in a great measure, been indebted to it for our ability to bear a debt so much heavier than that which, fifty years ago, the wisest men thought would necessarily sink us. (1979a, 102–103)

Despite these sentiments, however, Price's preferences were clear. He saw in a society that devoted itself primarily to commerce and the acquisition of wealth a source of servility and venality that would inevitably lead to corruption and the loss of liberty. With respect to the decline in trade between Britain and the American colonies, Price noted, "having all the necessities and chief conveniences of life within themselves they have no dependence upon [their pre-Revolutionary trade], and the loss of it will do them unspeakable good, by preserving them from the evils of luxury and the temptations of wealth and keeping them in that state of virtuous simplicity which is the greatest happiness" (Price 1979a, 115). These views are particularly surprising inasmuch as Price was fully aware of the benefits of international trade in encouraging tolerance among diverse communities and in fostering peaceful relations between states, a sentiment raised to a principle of liberal ideology in the following century. "Foreign trade," he wrote,

has, in some respects, the most useful tendency. By creating an intercourse between distant kingdoms it extends benevolence,

removes local prejudices, leads every man to consider himself more as a citizen of the world than of any particular state, and, consequently, checks the excesses of that love of our country which has been applauded as one of the noblest, but which, really, is one of the most destructive principles in human nature. Trade also, by enabling every country to draw from other countries conveniencies and advantages which it cannot find within itself, produces among nations a sense of mutual dependence, and promotes the general improvement. (1979b, 210)

Yet, despite Price's economic sophistication—Price was a seminal contributor to the study of finance and insurance and was universally so regarded—he repeatedly viewed America as exempt from these benefits. Indeed, immediately following the passage just quoted, Price wrote, “There is no part of mankind to which these uses of trade are of less consequence than the American states” (1979b, 211). And, in a letter to Ezra Stiles written after the war's conclusion, he observed that “it may be best for the united states that their rage for foreign trade should be checked, and that they should be oblig'd to find all they want within themselves, and to be satisfy'd with the simplicity, health, plenty, vigour, virtue and happiness which they may derive from agriculture and internal colonization” (2 August 1785, Price 1991, 2:297). Price appears to have believed that men in an agrarian society, who were under no compulsion to act in their narrow self-interest and whose connections with one's fellow men and with the community were deeper, were more likely to defend their rights against domestic and foreign invasion. Price expanded on these views in 1785 when he returned to the subject of American independence:

Better infinitely will it be for them to consist of bodies of plain and honest farmers, than of opulent and splendid merchants. Where in these states do the purest manners prevail? Where do the inhabitants live most on an equality and most at their ease? Is it not in those inland parts where agriculture gives health and plenty, and trade is scarcely known? Where, on the contrary, are the inhabitants most selfish, luxurious, loose, and vicious, and at the same time most unhappy? Is it not along the sea coasts and in the great towns where trade flourishes and merchants abound? So striking is the effect of these different situations on the vigour and happiness of human life, that in the one, population would languish did it receive no aid from emigration, while in the other, it increases to a degree scarcely ever before known. (1979b, 211)

Ferguson was far more positive in his assessment of the benefits of commerce than was Price, despite what he regarded as its potential

dangers. He was prepared to concede that commercial societies, which he equated with societies based on the principle of private property, would inevitably display an uneven distribution of wealth. But this inequality, he argued, served the function of acting as a spur to industry and an incentive to the labor of the great mass of the population (Ferguson 1792, 2:371), the ultimate effect of which would serve to encourage the production of ever-greater quantities of wealth, thus benefiting all members of the community. “The object of commerce is wealth,” wrote Ferguson, and “in the progress, as well as in the result of commercial arts, mankind are enabled to subsist in growing numbers; learn to ply their resources, and to wield their strength, with superior ease and success” (Ferguson 1792, 1:253–54).

He further argued that active participation in commercial life encouraged men in the exercise of a host of virtues, including industry, sobriety, frugality, justice, even beneficence and friendship (Ferguson 1792, 1:254). Although Ferguson contended that civilization was not invariably accompanied by a high degree of commercial activity, he did insist that the prime motive force for individual and social progress was ambition, “the specific principle of advancement uniformly directed to this end, and not satiated with any given measure of gratification.” And ambition, in turn, he noted, operated no less “in the concerns of mere animal life; in the provision of subsistence, of accommodation, and ornament,” as “in the progress of society, and in the choice of its institutions” (1792, 1:235). Further, and more important, Ferguson saw no conflict between those social arrangements that acted as guarantees of individual liberty and those that encouraged an increase in wealth. Indeed a good part of his *Essay* is devoted to explicating the proposition that “the laws made to secure the rights and liberties of the people, may serve as encouragements to population and commerce” (1995b, 136). He contended that the forces that lead to an expansion in population, which Ferguson equated with social wealth, required the successful pursuit of commerce coupled with a vigorous defense of individual rights. “The growth of industry,” he wrote, “the endeavours of men to improve their arts, to extend their commerce, to secure their possessions, and to establish their rights, are the most effectual means to promote population” (1995b, 140). Indeed, one intellectual historian has observed that one of the chief reasons for the popularity of Ferguson’s *Essay* among Americans was its unambiguous defense of commercial society over more primitive cultures, despite other social costs that might possibly accompany civilization (Pearce 1965, 85).

All this is not to deny that Ferguson dealt extensively with

the harmful effects of the increasing division of labor that marked advanced commercial societies. These effects he regarded as possessing the potential of producing a permanent subordination of rank, thus allowing for the rise of despotism (Hamowy 1968). “Many mechanical arts,” he wrote,

require no capacity; they succeed best under a total suppression of sentiment and reason; and ignorance is the mother of industry as well as of superstition. Reflection and fancy are subject to err; but a habit of moving the hand, or the foot, is independent of either. Manufactures, accordingly, prosper most, where the mind is least consulted, and where the workshop may, without any great effort of imagination, be considered as an engine, the parts of which are men. (1995b, 182–183)

In elaborating the consequences of the division of labor, however, Ferguson did not conclude that it would inevitably prove to be a Trojan horse whose ultimate social effect would be the destruction of a free and virtuous society. Although the division of labor might well place strains upon the social fabric and make possible a permanent subordination of the many by the few, it also facilitates the fullest expression of each individual’s natural abilities and personal excellences and hence serves a particularly valuable moral and social purpose. “With the benefit of commerce . . . [and the division of labor which naturally accompanies it],” Ferguson noted, “every individual is enabled to avail himself, to the utmost, of the peculiar advantage of his place; to work on the peculiar materials with which nature has furnished him; to humour his genius or disposition, and betake himself to the task in which he is peculiarly qualified to proceed” (1792, 2:424).

Ferguson’s response to the question of whether the dangers inherent in commercial societies could be averted was unambiguous. So long as the members of the community take an active role in civic affairs, so long as they prevent the division of labor from embracing the more crucial aspects of political and military life, it is possible to secure the nation against despotism. It was for this reason that Ferguson strongly supported the establishment of a civilian militia and authored several tracts pointing out the dangers of a professional army, the best-known of which was his *Reflections Previous to the Establishment of a Militia* ([Ferguson] 1756). In sum, while it is true that commercial societies bring with them the risks of despotism in the form of an overspecialization of function and a permanent system of subordination, a decline into tyranny need not follow. The stifling of public involvement in the affairs of state—either through the throttling of individual capacity consequent on an extensive division of labor or out of an all-consuming concern solely for one’s

private wealth—is, in the end, what makes despotism possible. Encourage the populace to actively participate in the civic and military affairs of the nation and tyranny can be averted. Man’s ability to uncover the laws that determine his condition provides him the opportunity to avoid what might otherwise be regarded as that corruption to which all commercial societies might descend.

These differences in their approach to political philosophy persisted in regard to the events in France two decades later. While Price was a fervent champion of the revolutionary cause, Ferguson was to express grave reservations respecting French attempts to “transform their Monarchy into a Democracy” (Ferguson to John MacPherson, 31 July 1790, Ferguson 1995a, 2:340). He could not tolerate the pretensions of French revolutionary ideology and was dubious that any of the political tinkering undertaken by the various revolutionary bodies would prove of value in either establishing or maintaining a freer polity. At one point he even refers to the Revolutionary forces as “the Antichrist himself in the form of Democracy & Atheism” (Ferguson to Alexander Carlyle, 23 November 1796, Ferguson 1995a, 2:408). Ferguson maintained that by abetting the revolutionaries in America the French court had set a dangerous example to its own people (Ferguson to John MacPherson, 19 January 1790, Ferguson 1995a, 2:336–337). The cataclysm in France, he argued, posed a significant threat to the security of Great Britain and to the peace of the Continent. Indeed, Ferguson’s particular concern was that Britain would be dragged into what had started as an internal French conflict but would likely become international.

Price’s views on the Revolution are, of course, well known, primarily because of Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, written in response to Price’s comments. The sermon Price gave at the Old Jewry on November 4, 1789 before the Society for Commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain reflected his enormous enthusiasm for the events taking place in France. The nominal purpose of the address, which Price entitled *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country*, was to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the Glorious Revolution. In doing so, Price linked the events of 1688–89 with the American Revolution and the reforms in France in one of the most impassioned speeches delivered during the course of this tempestuous period “I have lived to see the rights of men better understood than ever,” he said,

and nations panting for liberty, which seemed to have lost the idea of it. I have lived to see thirty millions of people, indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice, their king led in triumph, and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects. After sharing in the benefits of one Revolution, I have been spared to be a witness to two other Revolutions, both glorious. And now, methinks, I see the ardor for liberty catching and spreading, a general amendment beginning in human affairs, the dominion of kings changed for the dominion of laws, and the dominion of priests giving way to the dominion of reason and conscience.

Be encouraged, all ye friends of freedom and writers in its defence! The times are auspicious. Your labours have not been in vain. Behold kingdoms, admonished by you, starting from sleep, breaking their fetters, and claiming justice from their oppressors! Behold, the light you have struck out, after setting America free, reflected to France and there kindled into a blaze that lays despotism in ashes and warms and illuminates Europe! (1991b, 195–96)

It is a reflection on the scope of the eighteenth-century Whig tradition that it could encompass two writers whose views were as dissimilar in certain particulars as were those of Price and Ferguson. Yet both were legatees of the Revolutionary Settlement of 1688 and both accepted its ideological premises. Both agreed that a free society was one that recognized the primacy of private property and the critical importance of the rule of law, and both identified individual liberty with the rights of citizens to act as they chose, limited only by a modestly intrusive government. Finally, both had original insights into the nature of freedom and despotism that enlightened and informed. Whig doctrine clearly was broad enough to accommodate these two divergent views, neither of which fell victim to authoritarian leanings. In light of this, it is not difficult to see why, despite their differences, the American colonists were receptive, at one point or another in their arguments with Great Britain, to both these thinkers.

ADDENDA

1. The first of these traditions Hayek denominates as English, while the second he associates most closely with French political theory, particularly that of the Physiocrats, the Encyclopedists, and Rousseau, despite the fact, as he points out, that it reflects the views of a number of English writers, among them Jeremy Bentham, the other Philosophical Radicals, William Godwin, and Richard Price. While the empiricist, evolutionary approach to the development of political arrangements is compatible with a free and open society, Hayek contends, the French rationalist tradition invariably eventuates in the total state. Hayek first addressed what he perceived as this distinction in British and French liberal thought in *Individualism: True and False* (Hayek, 1949) and resumed his discussion in *Freedom, Reason, and Tradition* (Hayek 1958), which was reprinted in slightly altered form in 1960 (Hayek 1960, 54–70).

2. The practice of rewarding authors sympathetic to the government and hiring publishers to place the Administration's point of view before the public was extremely common during the eighteenth century, having begun with the Administration of Robert Walpole. Periodicals and pamphlets were extremely powerful organs of opinion during the period, it having been estimated that there were at least twenty readers for each copy sold. This is hardly surprising given their cost. A professional such as a surgeon or high-level government clerk earned, on average, no more than £2 per week and consequently, once bought, pamphlets and newspapers were widely circulated from one reader to another and often read aloud in coffee houses (Lutnick 1967, 2, 12–34).

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Mind Your Own Business: The Trouble with Justice in Plato's *Republic*

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Scholars over the years have given careful and copious attention to Plato's *Republic*, though not always to its subtitled topic, justice, and not principally to the first of its two justice questions, the meaning of justice. Rather, the second justice question, the goodness of justice—or the truth of Socrates' claim that justice leads to happiness—is the subject which scholars, inquiring about justice, find the more intriguing (Sachs 1971; Vlastos 1971; White 1984; Kraut 1997). This paper focuses on the first of these questions (touching on the second briefly at the end) and offers as a definition of justice—order.

The dialogue, though, defines justice differently, as minding one's own business. Examination of this definition shows that it derives from the technical arts, in particular from the division of labor, and that it describes, quite accurately, the behavior and responsibilities of the artisan class. But when applied to the warrior class, the definition, while not incomprehensible, is peculiar and inapt—indeed, given the behavior and responsibilities of the warrior class, it is the last definition that would come to mind. Are the warriors then unjust, or, if just, does justice change its meaning? Neither conclusion is warranted, at least not fully: the warriors are just—after a fashion—and the meaning of justice remains the same—so long as one understands that justice, substantively, is order. As for minding one's own business, the formal definition, it is now explained as the motive for maintaining order, and the manner in which it is maintained. But it is the motive and manner of artisans, not of warriors, who maintain order as patriots, not as professionals; and by self-abnegation in a community of pleasure and pain, not by self-absorption in specialized arts. Warriors practice justice differently because their duties are different, as is their potential for harm.

The conundrum that just warriors seem hardly to mind their own business is accounted for partly by the realization that justice, at bottom, is order (which the warriors also, but differently, maintain), and that right order exists where discrete parts are arranged to comprise an integral whole capable of performing a specific function. But then a problem arises, for Socrates' city seems neither to have a function more specific than its own self-preservation nor to have parts genuinely distinct. Justice is an abstraction which no city or soul can perfectly embody. The point, however, is not that Socrates' political and pedagogical foundings fail to measure up, but that the measure itself is not good; that justice as order comes at the price of individual achievement. Evidence is presented that the city is straining against its own order, or that subjects and citizens, in each of the classes, are quietly encouraged to transcend justice, to move beyond their partiality and strive to become complete. It finally is suggested that the reason why justice is so strangely, so unattractively, and, in the case of warriors, so inappropriately defined—as minding one's own business—is precisely to provoke just this sort of resistance. Other scholars, mainly of the Straussian persuasion, have come to a similar conclusion (Strauss 1964, 127; Bloom 1991, 409–11; Nichols 1987, 122–23), but none by the route taken herein.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF JUSTICE

What is justice? It is truth telling and giving back what is owed, says Cephalus, the aging, metic patriarch whose home is the site of Plato's *Republic* (331c). Not exactly, interjects Polemarchus, Cephalus's solicitous son; justice, rather, is helping friends and hurting enemies (332d). Nonsense, thunders Thrasymachus, the impatient and petulant sophist. Justice is the advantage of the stronger (338c); it is ruling (with all of the trappings of law and justice) for the sake of the rulers—the strong. But who are the rulers and who are the strong? queries Glaucon, a companion of Socrates and the dialogue's most perspicacious interlocutor. Are not the many strong against the few, and is not justice their agreement not to do wrong so as not to suffer wrong? Justice, he proposes, is a social contract mutually useful to all (weaklings) who sign on (359a–b). Or is justice something infinitely more mysterious? When Socrates finally declares himself, after founding a city in speech and locating its several virtues, he defines justice as “the minding of one's own business and not being a busybody” (*ta hautou prattein kai m_ polupragmonein*) (433a8–9). (Translations of the Greek are from Bloom [1991]. Line numbers are those in *Platonis Opera*, vol. 4, 1978 and are given only when necessary.)

As mysterious as this definition may be, it is not wholly unex-

pected, since Socrates prepares for it by his responses to the expository efforts of others. When Thrasymachus likens the sophist-trained ruler to a precise artisan, Socrates replies that such a ruler would not employ his art for selfish advantage but for the benefit of the ruled (340d–342e). The professionalism that comes from doing one thing only and doing it well—from minding one's own business—obliges the artisan to keep faith with the standards of his craft. Also, the city of pigs, constructed by Socrates in answer to Glaucon's brief against justice (and that by Adeimantus, Glaucon's brother), has as its foundational principle "one person one art" (*heis mian*) (370b6), or the division of labor, which Socrates later suggests is a "phantom" of justice (*eid_\lon*) (443c4). In fact, from the very beginning, in response to Cephalus and Polemarchus, Socrates implies a kinship between justice and knowledge, insisting that the just man is one who knows ends (the consequences of truth telling and repayment of debts) and one who knows means (the how-to skill of craft). Just behavior seems thus to arise from technical knowledge, itself the product of specialized labor, and specialized labor seems to be the standard way in which people go about minding their own business (406d–e).

What then can we infer about justice, defined as minding one's own business, once we know its ties to, and perhaps its origin in, the practice of art? First, that justice—much to our wonderment—is privatizing, meaning that justice is nonrelational or minimally relational. It is nonrelational in the case of the jack-of-all-trades, as he might be called (Benardete 1989, 49), the unassociated subsistence worker who supplies all of his needs and shares his produce with no one—and about whom the phrase "minding one's own business" is first used (369e–370a). It is minimally relational in the case of the artisan who plies his own one trade and is related as producer and consumer to other artisans plying separate trades of their own. The farmer sells his corn to the carpenter and buys his plow from the blacksmith and is otherwise little obligated to his neighbors. It is said that artisans enjoy "sweet intercourse" with one another (372b7); this they may do, but their communal feasting, in the city of "utmost necessity" (369d11), is not an activity connected to justice. Need is the basis of justice, and exchange is the activity by which justice is practiced (371e–372a). Of the two, the jack-of-all-trades is the more self-sufficient and self-involved, but he is quickly discarded in favor of the specialized artisan because divided labor develops the natural aptitudes of workers and differentiates them by trade (370a–c).

So the second thing we learn from the association of justice and art is that justice is specializing, and, as a related third, that it is differenti-

ating. Artisans are not interchangeable laborers, but are separate, individuated beings. The shoemaker is different from the weaver because neither can do the work of the other. Shoemaker and weaver are known by their crafts. How common it is for people, when introducing themselves, to specify what work they do: “Hi, my name is Sam Malone; I’m a barkeeper and ex-baseball player”; or to inquire as to the occupation of others: “Nice to meet you; what line of work are you in?” Occupation defines people; it individuates, it differentiates, it confers identity. It also causes dependence. Without the shepherd, the weaver has no wool; without the weaver the house builder has no coat. Divided labor binds the arts together in a network of mutual dependencies. There is community in that network, if only of the minimalist kind.

We are told that true art is knowledge put to service for others (342c–d). The doctor in the precise sense serves his patients, the pilot in the precise sense serves his passengers. Accordingly, artisans serve themselves by the wages they collect—usually money, though other forms of compensation exist (347a).

How then do these separate, individuated, and dependent beings—these specialized, fee-for-service artisans—relate? At first quite haphazardly, because their city of pigs is an unregulated marketplace (though one seemingly protected by an invisible hand ensuring the proper supply and distribution of artisans). But when Socrates and his cofounders move from the true and healthy city to the luxurious and feverish city, and from there to the purged city (399e8) of guardians and auxiliaries, the relation among the arts falls under closer scrutiny. Need, aptitude, and good fortune are insufficient to arrange the various arts, because class division and government arrive in tandem with the warriors. The parts of the city are no longer just arts, separate but equal; they now are classes, separate and unequal, and designated by their metallic qualities (gold, silver, bronze, or iron). Likewise, command, obedience, and common purpose all enter the city. With these the association changes from a loose aggregation of crafts to a highly structured, articulated whole. The city becomes a composition, with differentiated parts performing tasks for which they are specially designed. Were the city a bicycle, its composition would include a frame, handlebar, and seat; and wheels, tires, chains, pedals, and brakes; and the parts would keep to their places and mind their separate businesses in order for the bike to accomplish its vehicular mission. The seat, for instance, would not ask to change places with the handlebar so as to have a chance at steering, because the ride would be unsafe as well as uncomfortable! Like a bicycle then, the city, divided by classes, is a hierarchy of parts.

Similarly, justice is a hierarchy, an arrangement of discrete and unequal components into a functional unit.

Justice then, defined as minding one's own business and extrapolated from the arts, exhibits the following five characteristics: specialization, differentiation, dependence, fee-for-service, and privacy (saved for last). The artisan is a specialist who practices only one craft. He derives his separate and distinct identity from the art that he perfects and the role that he performs. He depends on other specialists to supply his unmet needs. He is useful to his customers through the product that he sells, and useful to himself through the fee that he earns. And, in general, he is private; he keeps to himself, is minimally relational, and does not meddle in the affairs of others. Justice exists where there are (as in the case of the bicycle) specialized, differentiated, and interdependent parts, rightly related, with each part sticking to its own job, and with the collection of parts forming a purposeful whole.

JUSTICE AND THE WARRIORS

But if this is justice as applied to artisans, what about justice as applied to warriors? Is the warrior a just man (or woman) for being specialized, differentiated, dependent, compensated for services, and private? Warriors are specialists in the art of war, added to the city out of deference to the principle of one person one art (374b). So, yes, warriors are specialists—except that the art they are taught is not the art of war per se (we hear nothing about their training as heavy-armed infantry), but music and gymnastics; and the wars they fight are not against neighboring states (mainly), but against pedagogical reformers wanting to change the curriculum. Of course the warriors do constitute an army, and the army does fight wars—and some attention is paid to the army's size (423a); to the wages, mess, and quartering of its soldiers (416d–e, 543c); to the safety of gold and silver children, who as apprentice warriors accompany their elders on campaign (466e–467e); to the rewards for courage and the penalties for cowardice (468a–469b); and to the treatment of defeated enemies (469b–471b). But the army is not ordered by ranks (phalanxes) or subdivided by jobs (archers, slingers, cavalry, hoplites); its command structure is undeveloped (consisting merely of guardians and auxiliaries); and its weapons, as with all of the city's goods, are rudimentary and unimproved. Often the competence of this army is asserted (416e, 422b, 467c, 521d, 543c), but never is it really argued for; and what prowess it exhibits seems more a function of solidarity and troop morale than of soldierly skill (423a). Compared to carpenters, smiths, herdsmen and the like, these warriors have no art, no specialty (Bloom1991, 351); what they have instead are finely tuned

souls. Even their gymnastic training serves psychological purposes chiefly (410b–c). Book 5 is where the rigors of the warriors' life under communism are fully disclosed; it is a book conspicuously lacking in one-person-one-art specialists, for in it are women given work and training belonging to men, comedians implored to be serious (452c5–6), and philosophers compelled to rule as kings.

Might the warriors, though, be differentiated beings, even if not made that way by the precise practice of art? Actually, they are distinguished from workers by metallic qualities and divided among themselves into guardians and auxiliaries. Collectively they are a class apart—and then a class within a class. But individually they are quite alike. Birth does not distinguish them, since, without families, they are neither wellborn nor baseborn. Nor does wealth, since they have no property. And we have seen that art is of no use here, since they are not divided by military specialty. Some do command while others obey, but guardians are promoted in rank, primarily it seems, because of their age. They are the elders among the warriors, the auxiliaries the young, who, when senior, become overseers themselves (412c, 414b). There are real differences of spirit and intellect that must be passed on to the next generation; but the “courageous doctor” who supervises the eugenic “marriages” struggles to disguise the inequality and its sexual consequences with lies, ceremonies, and the charade of chance distributions (459c–460b). And, although the disguise is not complete, with martial accomplishments publicly acknowledged (468a–e), the most fundamental of all distinctions, that of psychic worth, or natural aptitude, is disregarded in the end, since golden-class status is accorded to all who die honorably in battle (468e) (Benardete 1989, 121). They, and others who lead exemplary lives, are in death worshipped as demons (469a–b). Significantly, it is not in life, but in death, that they are worshipped, at a time when special distinctions can do no harm to the egalitarian oneness of the class. In fact, so alike are the warriors that even female warriors are the same, or about the same, as their male counterparts (454d–456b). Indeed, so alike are they all that when one is joyous, all are joyous; when one is sad, all are sad. There is a “community of pleasure and pain” in which “most say ‘my own’ and ‘not my own’ about the same thing” and no one drags “off to his own house whatever he can get his hands on apart from the others” or introduces “private pleasures and griefs of things that are private” (462b–c, 464c–d).

But are not the warriors dependent beings, seeing as how they depend on farmers for their food, on weavers for their cloaks, on carpenters for their barracks, and on armorers for their weapons? Yes, warriors do one thing

and depend on others to do the rest. But that “rest” does not include fancy meals prepared by gourmet chefs or advanced medicines provided by expert physicians (403e–410a). The warriors’ education in music and gymnastics is intended to minimize needs by anesthetizing appetites. Warriors achieve near self-sufficiency by doing without, not by doing for themselves. And self-sufficiency born of self-denial is the goal, because abstemious warriors are less likely to covet the modest possessions of the working class. As for dependencies within their own class, the absence of divided labor removes that source of diversity most responsible for rendering workers interdependent beings. Warriors all practice the same, undifferentiated martial craft, so there are no specialized archers on whom the hoplites depend. Warriors do depend on guardians for their instruction, but that relationship is generational and on the model of a family; and the final hope is that even these “family members” will coalesce into a “single human being” (462c10) with a single set of experiences. In sum, the warriors strive to exist as one uniform and homogenized being, not as interdependent members of a multifarious class.

Plainly the warriors serve their community; the question is whether, like artisans, they also serve themselves. The justice of minding one’s own business is self-referential and self-interested (Craig 1994, 141). But the warriors receive practically nothing in the way of material reward; and the spiritual reward of honor goes principally to philosophers. Thus when asked if the warriors are happy, Socrates equivocates (420b–421c).

Privacy, the first characteristic noticed, is the last characteristic considered, because of its somewhat generic status. Are the warriors private? Hardly. They live in public housing without locks on their doors. Their meals they take in common (416d–e, 468c–d). They possess no property, for the gold and silver of their souls substitute for gold and silver vessels and adornments (416e–417a). They have neither spouses nor children to call their own, nor parents whose love once nurtured them or whose identities they even know. They pass through the same schooling, take the same exams, and—apart from the sorting into guardians and auxiliaries (a distinction of no real consequence until the appearance of philosophers)—do pretty much the same thing. They certainly meddle in each other’s affairs, for what could be more private than the rearing of a child—but the children are raised communally; or more private than sexual love—but the matings are arranged by an agent of the city. The warriors live under communistic institutions, and communism’s goal is to perfect the public and destroy the private (Nichols 1987, 62).

It is important to note that Socrates does try extending his definition of justice to warriors and rulers. He observes, for example, that rulers, when judging lawsuits, take care to ensure an appropriate assignment of goods, which assignment, by causing petitioners to have what properly belongs to them and to have nothing more, is thought to be an instance of justice from another view. But it is “the having and doing of one’s own and what belongs to oneself” that Socrates stipulates is justice, not the ruler’s judging as such (433e–434a). Socrates also states that warriors are just by attending only to their auxiliary duties, leaving money-making to the workers and governing to the rulers; or that justice is a matter of the three great classes staying in their places, not trading jobs and meddling in each other’s affairs (434b–c). But then it belongs to the warriors to meddle in the money-making affairs of the workers, watching to see that no one is rich and no one is poor (421e–422a). Nor is the warriors’ meddling limited to controlling profits and income disparities, since the arts are further supervised to ensure the grace and harmony of all manufactured goods, with standards of beauty imposed from without (401b). As the city’s police, the warriors are involved in the enforcement of aesthetic norms—and would their oversight be any less meddlesome to the workers than having, say, Soviet commissars present on the factory floor? It will be objected that such interference is a part of the warriors’ job. Agreed; but then it is a job that sometimes overrides the class barriers otherwise thought to be essential to justice and a job that mostly is indifferent to the technical specializations of one person one art. In any case, minding one’s own business is proffered as a definition of justice before all of the institutions of the city have been disclosed (Craig 1994, 233), before it is fully revealed (in book 5) that the warriors individually have no business of their own to mind.

Justice is defined as minding one’s own business, and private business is best minded by the differentiated specialist sticking to his craft, while at the same time exchanging goods and services with complementary specialists sticking to theirs. The warriors, though, do not mind their own business (except in the attenuated sense of forswearing property and supremacy); instead they mind each other’s business and are consummate busybodies. Are we to conclude then that the warriors, the city’s most representative members (419a), are unjust for possessing none of the characteristics of justice? Such a conclusion is too improbable, however much some sections of the dialogue might suggest it. Better then to say that the warriors practice justice differently, but so differently that one wonders why Socrates would still want to call what the warriors do “minding one’s own business.”

JUSTICE DEFINED

We will consider later the dialogue's purpose in bringing forward a definition of justice so ill-suited to the warrior class. For now let us look again at the definition itself and at what it implies. That look will uncover problems with the definition, problems that go to explain Socrates' intention in eschewing the commonsensical definition of justice, as a social virtue, in favor of one so asocial and paradoxical.

Artisans in a city and appetites in a soul constitute parts of civic and psychic wholes, and justice obtains, it has been said, when parts stay in their places and do their own thing. But why are parts willing to play a subordinate's role? What interior state disposes each part to perform its assigned function and to do no more? In the case of artisans, that state is specialization, called "one person one art," from which "minding one's own business" as the definition of justice later emerges (433a). Minding one's own business is the motive artisans have for being just, since by narrowing their focus to what they do well, they are less attracted to what they do poorly and are less tempted to interfere where they do not belong. A modern example makes the same point: unionized carpenters would never presume to install wiring, nor would electricians presume to hang sheet rock. Justice is given this privatized definition because specialized labor explains why artisans keep to their tasks and respect the organization of the economy and the economy of the whole. Or, put differently, specialized labor explains the manner in which artisans behave justly—the how instead of the why. Artisans maintain order by contentedly practicing their single trades and leaving the management of the city to others. Justice is the maintenance of order—at least when examined at the level of the part. Since artisans are not rulers with supervisory duties, artisans contribute to the maintenance of order merely by honing their technical skills.

But the situation is different for warriors. While not rulers themselves, they nonetheless are public persons with public responsibilities. They know more of the city's business than do artisans, and they defend the city's order, less by minding the business of javelin throwing, than by lending loyal support to philosopher-kings. In this, their motive is patriotic devotion, self-sacrifice, and class solidarity, rather than one-person-one-art specialization. Warriors are actively just, maintaining order by what they do—defense—unlike artisans, who are passively just, maintaining order by what they refrain from doing—meddling. Also, warriors have power. They are the strong and spirited ones, the ones with training as soldiers and access to arms. If injustice is to their liking, no person or institution is positioned to stop them. And so

injustice must never be to their liking. To that end they are reared to love the city and serve the common good. The temptations of private goods do not much disturb them because they are one with the city and take its good to be their own. Should artisans succumb to these temptations, warriors stand at the ready to police their unjust behavior; but with no police force outside their own ranks, warriors must internalize a sterner morality, a morality able to direct and constrain even though lacking the philosopher's knowledge of natural justice (parts in their places). Selfishness, of a kind—a satisfied and unambitious selfishness—is the foundation of artisan justice; for artisans are just by developing their differences, by minding their private business, and by separating themselves from the whole. But selflessness is the basis of warrior justice, for warriors are just by disavowing their differences, by meddling in the business of others, and by losing themselves inside the whole.

While minding one's own business is justice as experienced and practiced by the part—and by the artisan part more obviously than by the warrior part—viewed from afar, justice is the order of a whole. Order, right order, is the better, more comprehensive definition of justice. Socrates implies as much when at 443d he describes the concord of a rightly ordered soul, with parts cooperating as friends, or as notes on a harmonic scale. Once elsewhere does Socrates associate justice with harmony, in his attempt to prove to Thrasymachus that the just soul is mightier than the unjust soul—for justice causes harmony, and harmony causes strength, whereas injustice causes faction, and faction causes weakness (350d–352b). Immediately thereafter (this time wanting to show that the just soul is happy), Socrates associates justice with virtue, and virtue with power needed for work. Eyes and ears have work peculiar to themselves (seeing, hearing), and virtue is the power (sight, hearing) by which the organ's work is properly done (352e). The soul's work, he says on the occasion, is managing, ruling, deliberating, and living (353d); and the soul's power, he later states, at 518c, is prudence (to which animation should be added to account for living). Also at 518c, he likens prudence in the soul to sight in the eye, each a natural power that depends on the proper orientation, upward toward light, to accomplish its work. Art, or education, is the agency which effects this “turning around” (*periag_g_*) (518d4), in the course of which other virtues, “produced by habits and exercises” (518e1–2), are developed and lend assistance. Justice is among these conventional virtues. Justice is the right orientation, organization, or conditioning of a soul such that its natural, even “divine” (518e2), power of prudence can perform its true function. Or, as said at 443e, justice is any act which helps to produce and sustain this right condition; or again at 444d–e, justice, equated now with virtue, is “a

certain health, beauty, and good condition of a soul" (*euexia psych_s*) (444e1).

Although there is some imprecision about whether justice is a single virtue or is virtue entire, in light of the above citations, it seems appropriate to say that justice/virtue involves three fairly distinct elements. It is, first, the power, faculty, or capacity present in any natural or artificial thing. Horses have virtue, the capacity to run, carry, and pull; likewise pruning knives have virtue, the capacity to cut vines (352d–353a). Virtue, secondly, is correct conditioning, which in the case of a horse is the nourishment, exercise, and rest needed for health, and which in the case of a pruning knife is the care and maintenance of a well-sharpened blade. In the case of multipartite organisms or machines, conditioning also is the right assembly of parts. Finally, there is work, a function of power. Because horses have the power to run, running is their work. Creatures other than horses also run, but not as fast or with as much grace and stamina. Horses are made for running—although some breeds run faster or longer than others, while other breeds pull heavier loads or show more spirit in battle. Specialization is therefore a critical factor, for the more specialized the power, the more certain is the work belonging to the agent. Specialization explains why vine cutting is the work of pruning knives and not the work of daggers or leather-cutters (353a). Specialization is responsible for the quality of work; but so also is conditioning, since a pruning knife with a dull blade may be worse at vine cutting than a sharp-edged dagger. Accordingly, a highly specialized power, properly organized, oriented, or conditioned, as the case may be, has work to do and performs it well, and the expert execution of work is the cause and meaning of happiness. Work-produced happiness is the end; virtue is the means. And either the soul's virtue is justice simply, or the soul's virtue is justice (good condition) and prudence (specialized power) combined. In Socrates' closing remarks on the subject, justice is enlarged to include the prudence of intellect, the force of spirit, and the desires of appetite, each *power* trained and tempered, and the three together arranged into a harmonious whole (that is, *conditioned*) (444d). That arrangement, rightly done, puts reason, or the philosopher, in charge; with spirit, or the warriors, in an auxiliary station; and with appetite, or the workers, in a subaltern's role taking orders from above.

THE PROBLEM OF JUSTICE

To repeat: Justice is an ordering of parts (a conditioning of powers) that assists in the performance of a task. The city is rightly ordered when wise guardians, aided by spirited warriors, govern appetitive workers. But what purpose does the city realize by being ordered this way? Has the city an

objective which when achieved proves the rightness of its order and justness of its actions? The easy answer is that the city's purpose is the making of philosophers. In most cities philosophical potential is squelched, squandered, or despised (490e–497c); in Socrates' city it is carefully cultivated. But then Socrates' city educates philosophers in expectation of using them as kings; and philosopher-kings, rather than ends in their own right, are instrumental goods serving a higher purpose. This we know, in part, from one of the dialogue's many parables—the “ship of state.” In the telling, Socrates likens the philosopher-king to a stargazer on board ship, a man whose astronomical expertise qualifies him as the ship's true pilot, but who is passed over, nevertheless, in favor of one or more assertive sailors competing for the captaincy (488a–489c). The stargazer belongs at the helm because his navigational skills are needed to bring the ship safely to port. But a question arises: Has this “ship of state” a destination the reaching of which requires that knowledgeable stargazers be put in charge, or is its function simply to stay afloat? *Where is the city going such that it needs philosopher-kings to get it there?* Trading aqueous for terrene metaphors, we know that the philosopher, at least, is going out of the cave, out of the land of shadows and into the land of light. But it is not the philosopher's mission to bring this sunlit truth into the cave; nor is it his mission to escort all of the citizens to the light above (Bloom 1991, 403). The philosopher returns to the cave and rules there as king in order to establish a social hierarchy (by assigning people to their respective classes), to prevent faction within the warrior class (by monopolizing high office), to provide for auxiliaries deferential to himself (by overseeing the music and gymnastic education and by supervising the institutions of communism), and to train his own philosophical replacements (by teaching dialectics to a gifted few). Working backwards, we discover the true purpose of these activities: for students are instructed in dialectics so that there might be philosophers who are kings; and there are philosopher-kings so that there might be warriors educated as auxiliaries; and there are educated warriors so that the laboring class might enjoy the blessings of a government that does not oppress. Without philosophers in authority, power passes to undisciplined warriors, who exercise it for their own selfish advantage, just as Thrasyachus asserts. “Rest from ills” (*kak_n paula*) (473d5) is the stated purpose of philosophical rule. But “rest from ills” means domestic peace provided by good government—in other words, staying afloat by the “ship of state.” It would seem, therefore, that the “ship of state” has no destination, the city no function. Order is for its own sake. But order is justice, and justice is virtue; and virtue is the power/condition that facilitates work. Justice is, or is supposed to be, a means to something higher, not an end in itself. It is a

means to what is indubitably higher in the case of the philosopher who uses the right ordering of his soul to ascend to "the Good." But no other soul makes that ascent, and, at any rate, the philosopher is for the sake of the city (520a), not the city for the sake of the philosopher. Accordingly, justice is problematic, because no communal work is accomplished by it; and, except for the philosopher, no psychic work is accomplished either.

There is a second problem complicating justice in the city. Justice is the relationship of parts to each other and parts to the whole. Without parts comprising a working whole, justice does not, cannot, exist. We have already seen that the whole is in doubt, since the city serves no purpose beyond its own well-ordered survival. But an even larger question pertains to the parts. Are people really carpenters, shepherds, shoemakers by nature? They have aptitudes, inclinations, and opportunities, and if they act on these they develop skills and are able to perform competently fairly specialized tasks. But in Socrates' city they are assigned their jobs and sometimes compelled to stay at them (374b, 406c, 421b–c, 519b–520a). If carpentry were a natural calling, would an assigner be needed to discover this woodworking aptitude; and would compulsion be needed to keep carpenters at their labors? It appears that either the city does not respect natural aptitude in every case, and occasionally converts carpenters into, say, stone masons; or that natural aptitude is less certain, less determinative, and frankly less useful than Socrates would have it be. For the city needs not just carpentry but specialized applications of the woodworking skill. Now a person may well have an aptitude for woodworking, but is there such a thing as a natural-born furniture maker distinct from a natural-born homebuilder, shipbuilder, or wagon maker? How specialized can the arts become and still be products of nature (Craig 1994, 144)? In fact, is not the very idea of a specialist by nature something of an exaggeration, a fiction or noble lie serving the interests of the city? The city needs specialized workers, and so the city sets about creating them, fine tuning capacities and inclinations which nature only generally suggests (Nichols 1987, 67–68). But if people are not this partial by nature, how rightly ordered, how just, is the association that treats them as parts?

Carpenters minding their specialized business is not the real issue, however (421a, 434a), and by book 4 Socrates de-emphasizes these professional designations, calling carpenters, and their fellow artisans money-makers instead (*chr_matisteis*) (434a7–8, 441a1). As members of the money-making or chrematistic class, artisans represent the appetitive many; and the challenge henceforth is to prevent moneymakers from interfering with the

business of the ruling class and to defend the metallic divisions against amalgamation (434b–c). The justice of the city consists then in separating appetitive workers from spirited warriors from rational guardians and giving to each group responsibilities appropriate to its nature. In the process, two of these groups develop specialized virtues: prudence in the case of guardians, and courage in the case of auxiliaries—and all three classes practice moderation. But how different are these virtues? The prudence of guardians is once described as knowledge of the city as a whole (428d). But the examinations which identify guardians do not test their knowledge, but rather their steadfastness, stubbornness, and lack of curiosity. Guardians are those among the warriors whose opinions cannot be stolen from them by speech or by time, or taken forcibly from them by grief or by pain, or surrendered unwittingly by them owing to bewitchment by pleasure or fear. Guardians are dogged defenders of the opinions communicated by the city’s education (413b–414a). They guard the city by caring intensely for its institutions more than by knowing acutely its business. Their prudence, such as it is, rests on habit and experience and reflects the wisdom that comes with age (522a). They supposedly are different from auxiliary warriors whose class virtue is courage. But warrior courage is similarly defined as the preservation of opinion, in particular the opinion that educational change is terrible beyond compare. Likened to a colorfast dye, warrior courage is touted for its resistant properties, its insensibility to pain, fear, and bodily desires. Speech and forgetfulness are not repeated, so it is possible that guardians have some intellectual defenses against sophistic novelties and better memories. But the difference seems one of degree, not of kind. After all, what the guardians guard is exactly what the auxiliaries guard, namely the education and rearing against subversive change (423e–424c). As for moderation, called “a certain kind of order” (430e6), it is barely distinguishable from justice (a certain kind of order), the former defined as agreement about who should rule (431e–432a), the latter defined as parts in their proper places. In fact, so extensive is this blending that all virtues are comprehended by the one virtue, justice. For consider: The city is just by virtue of the classes minding their own business. When that happens, the classes also are moderate, since they agree about whose business it is (and is not) to rule (thus moderation effectively is justice). Some citizens are additionally courageous when they defend the city’s education, the central tenet of which is the hierarchy of the metallic classes, or the right ordering that is justice (thus courage effectively is justice). And some are prudent when they care for the city that makes them its rulers—that is, they care and are prudent when by minding their own and the city’s business they are just (thus wisdom effectively is justice).

If differentiated by their virtues, the classes are simultaneously compounded by their virtues, as moderation, practiced alike by rulers, warriors, and artisans, verges into justice; as prudence and courage verge into each other, then also into justice; and as justice, the comprehensive virtue, animates—indeed causes—moderation, prudence, and courage (433b). All of these virtues relate to the order of the city; indeed, they all reduce to an opinionated acceptance of the order of the city.

There is more equality in human nature than Socrates' city chooses to admit. That is so since all human types are mixed, with honor-loving warriors tempted by money-loving desires (548a), and with pleasure-loving artisans capable of prideful rebellion (556d). Radical inequality is confined to the philosopher, who, by knowing being while others opine becoming (475c–480a), seems practically of another species, a god among men. And yet even the philosopher is mixed (547e), for as philosopher and king, he is both contemplative and spirited (521d, 525b, 543a–c; Coby 2001, 394–99). Truly pure types are not to be found instantiated in matter, but exist as forms “intellected” by mind. “Of the many fair things,” asks Socrates, “is there any that won't also look ugly? And of the just, any that won't look unjust?” (479a; 523b–c, 538d–e). Justice, the idea, is unsullied by injustice; but just men and just deeds partake of their opposites. So also does the just city: its division into parts looks just and unjust because no person or class is perfectly distinct from other persons or classes (Strauss 1964, 118–19). Appetitive workers, for example, develop their rational capacities through the arts that they practice, and spirited warriors betray an appetitive nature when they ally with moneymakers instead of with philosophers (547e–548a).

It is not our thesis that no reality attaches to reason, spirit, and appetite, or that significant differences in tendencies and aptitudes do not exist (Craig 1994, 64–67, 104–09). People are unequal—only not as unequal as natural justice requires. No person (with faculties unimpaired) is so captured by appetite as to be devoid of spirit and reason; and no person is so head-in-the-clouds abstract as to be disconnected from emotions and desires. Perfect justice obtains—or would obtain—where there were bodiless brains and brainless bodies united to form a corporate whole. But people are not made this way, and so the union of people is less than essential and less than perfectly just. All three parts of the soul are present in every soul (505e, 518c). Accordingly, it is inexact to portray the artisan as personified appetite or the warrior as personified spiritedness. It also is inexact to treat the city as an image of the soul (Annas 1981, 129–31; Williams 1999, 255–65). The individual person is a

potential whole, who, for the sake of the city, is turned into a part (though not without notice taken of personal strengths and weaknesses). To say this is not to deny that people are incomplete; but they respond to their incompleteness by aspiring to be more. Some workers aspire to be inventors; some warriors aspire to be rulers. All people aspire to be happy, and happiness requires that potentially whole people rise above the civic roles they are assigned (420b). The trouble with justice, defined as maintenance of order, is that it condemns human aspiration that exceeds the limits of talent or the needs of the city. Workers wanting to be citizens are unjust, as are warriors wanting to have families.

THE TRANSCENDENCE OF JUSTICE

The anomaly of a warrior class exhibiting none of the (art-derived) characteristics of justice was previously accounted for by the special policing function performed by the warriors—the fact that warriors have power and so require a morality based on self-forgetting rather than on self-regard. A modest elaboration on the meaning of justice helped further to explain the exceptional morality of warriors: to wit, justice is order, and just people are those who maintain order (443e), the artisans by perfecting a trade, the warriors by defending the city. As it happens, perfecting a trade is closely related to minding one's own business (443c), the formal definition of justice, but defending the city is only distantly related and seems not related at all when one reflects on how meddlesome the warriors actually are. And yet the formal definition never changes to accommodate the dilated occupation of the warriors. If justice is particularized work, where parts of a whole mind their specialized business, then the effort by warriors to mind the city's business, renouncing the private for the sake of the public, while ordinarily an act of justice, is by the terms of the dialogue an act of injustice or at least an act of non-justice. So a second explanation for the anomaly of a “non-just” warrior class is that Plato is trying subtly to alert his readers to the problematic status of justice (that order has no purpose and the parts are not real), while Socrates is trying subtly to wean his interlocutors from their need for justice—to dampen, that is, their demands for perfect order, where everything is exactly as it should be (358d, 366e, 367e). By this account, the warriors are not just (that is, specialized, differentiated, dependent, compensated for services, private) because the dialogue is moving steadily toward the transcendence of justice, sowing discontent with partiality and place by enlarging the range of class-bound responsibilities (Clay 1988, 21–23). The warriors transcend justice (parts in their places) in the sense that they identify with their class and their class with the city. They interest themselves in public affairs (contracts,

lawsuits, imposts, regulations, etc.) (425c–d, 433e) and expand their horizons beyond weapons proficiency. They further combine with the city, itself undying, by sacrificing their mortal selves in combat. This they do notwithstanding the fact that the city, whose closed education they ferociously defend, becomes a laboratory for the discovery of new disciplines (528a–c)—and so as the city opens itself to new ideas, so also must the warriors. (What are the warriors supposed to think when solid geometry is added to the curriculum? Surely they cannot go on believing that change necessarily is decline from perfection.) But most telling in this campaign to lift the warriors from the particular to the universal (from parts to wholes) is the injunction that they regard all of Greece as but one city, and warfare among Greeks as but faction among citizens (470b–471b). Warriors are noble dogs who love the familiar and hate the unknown (375d–e); under Socrates' tutelage, the boundaries of the unknown recede for these warriors, with Hellenic cities "incorporated" and barbarian lands "surveyed"—since barbarians are now treated as formerly were Greeks (471b). Initially told that their birth is autochthonous and that their city is native to its people like the soil is home to a plant (414e), the warriors finally are told that the whole of Greece is their motherland.

This effort to transcend justice—to go beyond it, escape it, resist it, overcome it—is in fact constant across the dialogue, beginning with the first discussion of art and continuing into the foundings of healthy, feverish, and purged cities respectively—to say nothing of Callipolis, presided over by philosopher-kings. Artisans come in two varieties: precise artisans and wage earners. Precise artisans think not of themselves, but of the needs of their customers (342c)—or if they think of themselves, they endeavor to satisfy their artistic, not their material, needs. Artisans are enjoined to concentrate on the perfection of their arts and to disregard the pleasures of wage earning. In this they face a pedestrian version of the choice between philosophy and tyranny—the satisfactions of the mind versus the satisfactions of the body. They transcend their bodies, even their personal identities, in the process of becoming physicians in the precise sense, musicians in the precise sense, etc. They do not "get the better of" (*pleonektein*) their equals or superiors, because they know their art well enough to respect its standards and to honor those practitioners blessed with surpassing talent (349b–350c). They are paid a fee, but the wages they earn come to them as add-ons and as a secondary affair (for example, the trained physician who secondarily is a business person managing an office) and not from the practice of art, *per se*. Thus from the start, precise artisans are put on a path of transcendence. Innovation is a transcending of established patterns; and while precise artisans are forbidden to innovate (422a), they will

do so nonetheless (they will rebel), since innovation is an invariable consequence of divided labor (370c), and preciseness a measure with no fixed meaning.

Precise artisanship is a concept that appears again in the city of pigs. It is noteworthy that Socrates, when looking for building blocks of this his first city, chooses art over family, knowledge over love. Had he chosen otherwise (as does Aristotle, for example) (1252a24–1252b1), particularity and exclusivity would have figured more prominently in the city. Blood, not trade, would have acted as the bond of union. Rational and objective standards of regularity, efficiency, and precision would have counted for less. And the groundwork would not have been laid for women to transcend their biological mission and to function instead as artisans, warriors, or philosophers, depending upon their individual psychic talents. Technical knowledge does separate and particularize (one person one art), but hardly to the same extent as do kinship relations. Precise artisans honor the best; family units favor their own.

The feverish city emerges out of the city of pigs at the point where appetites are emancipated and legitimized. If reason is a universalizing activity, appetite is a localizing one. Accordingly, the feverish city is not rising toward universality but slouching toward particularity. On the other hand, the city's need of extra crafts opens its gates to new arrivals, and its need of extra land brings it into contact with neighboring peoples. Initially that contact is violent and unjust; but it also is the beginning of a process that culminates in the revelation that all Greeks are fellow citizens and all barbarians fellow Greeks. Of course, in between comes the purging of appetites and the assignment of individuals to their respective metallic classes.

The purged city is the perfection of one-person-one-art particularity. It is the place where justice, once located, is determined to mean minding one's own business. But even here there is wider knowledge in play than the professionalism of art. Workers are moderate, not merely submissive and indifferent. They agree about who should rule, and so the philosopher's kingly business is partly their own, enough to enable them to consent to his government. And the warriors' education in music and gymnastics must be extended to them too, enough that their souls can be properly assayed (415b–c, 459e, 460b, 546d). (A much-debated point is this matter of educating [or not educating] the offspring of the working class. The ambiguity in Plato's account is first called attention to by Aristotle, who takes no position [1264a11–1264b6; Hourani 1949, 58–60; Strauss 1964, 114; Reeve 1988, 186–91].) Certainly they are taught the tenets of the Noble Lie, and so they learn what the warriors learn, that the city is by nature, harmonious and one. And since they are tasked

with creating beautiful wares to help tame the warriors' spirit (401b–c), they must, to some degree, imbibe the warriors' sense of beauty.

The dominant lesson issuing forth from the city of appetites purged is that workers and warriors must stay in the places to which they are assigned, and that it is unjust to be more than one can be. Is it though unjust to be *all that* one can be? What are we to make of those artisans who try their hand at philosophy because "their bodies are mutilated by the arts and crafts ...[and] their souls are doubled up and spoiled as a result of being in mechanical occupations" (495d; 522b)? For some artisans, the "subtlest" at their crafts, art is a "prison," Socrates admits (495d4, d2). Are they unjust for flying from their confinement toward occupations more challenging and magnificent? If justice condemns their aspiration, because order is disturbed by ambition, freedom, and the pursuit of excellence, then is not something amiss with justice; and might the transcendence of justice take on the character of an obligation to oneself?

We have overreached. The artisans just described are labeled impostors by Socrates, unworthy suitors of the maiden philosophy. Their ambition is unjust because they aspire to a position they cannot fill and do not deserve. Presumptuous of their worth or disdainful of merited status, they are akin, Socrates suggests, to a bronze worker, who, released from his bonds and possessing some silver, asks for the hand of his impoverished master's daughter. These marry, bondsman and daughter, but their union is unnatural, yielding offspring who are deformed, "sophisms" in place of "true prudence" (496a8–9). The imagery used by Socrates implies that the artisan-sophist is male, while philosophy, the beloved, is female. By contrast, the philosopher, pictured elsewhere, is both male and female—and offspring to boot:

It is the nature of the real lover of learning to strive for what *is*; and he does not tarry by each of the many things opined to *be* but goes forward and does not lose the keenness of his passionate love nor cease from it before he grasps the nature itself of each thing which *is*. ... And once near it and coupled with what really is, having begotten intelligence and truth [male], he knows and lives truly, is nourished [offspring] and so ceases from his labor pains [female], but not before. (490a–b)

The philosopher is complete, whole, and self-sufficient. He is all that he can be, exiting the cave of society and dwelling among the forms. The dialogue celebrates his achievement even though his self-sufficiency means that no longer is he part of an entity larger than himself, and that no

longer is he just. For justice requires membership in and dependence on a group; but the philosopher has left the city, does not need the city, and is not naturally a part of the city. The philosopher compelled to rule is rather like a vocalist capable of solo performances but made to sing accompaniment in a chorus (Aristotle, *Politics*, III.13.21). Is justice human excellence developed to the fullest, or excellence compromised but put to service in an association of unequals (Craig 1994,167)? By all accounts, it is the latter—parts of a whole keeping to their places for the sake of the whole. But there is this contrary action whereby parts transcend their places so as to upgrade their business and widen their perspective. Artisans, warriors, and philosophers all extend themselves in the direction of universality, augmenting their narrow arts of making, fighting, and guarding with employments more comprehensively conceived—consenting, governing, philosophizing. When they do so, however, order is disturbed and injustice committed. Education destabilizes order and is putatively unjust. Is education good, notwithstanding its unjust effects? If it is, then is justice not good, or what kind of good is justice (357b–358a)? When the soul makes its ascent to “the Good,” it does so dissociated from the body and dissociated from its spirited and appetitive parts (532c). Reason associated, including reason ruling, is reason maimed, for the body and the soul’s lesser parts constitute a community that maims the contemplative properties of the soul (611b). Reason is fulfilled and happiness achieved when reason is alone, minding its noetic business, rather than associated, minding the political business of human beings. This utmost in human striving can be alternately regarded as divinization and the soul’s salvation (500c–d, 589d, 590d), or as hubris and (changing spiritual traditions) original sin. For the most part, the dialogue adopts the latter view (for example, the bronze worker’s rebuff, the philosopher’s descent), but the encouragement it gives to enterprise, growth, and transcendence shows the former view to be present as well. There is a challenge put to Socrates to prove justice congruent with the happiness of the individual. This is not a challenge that Socrates satisfactorily can meet. The associational requirements of justice are static and confining; the educational needs of the individual are dynamic and expanding.

CONCLUSION

When students are asked if they would like to live in Plato’s Callipolis, not many respond affirmatively—and this despite the fact that, to a surprising degree, they already do. For, while on campus they live in barracks called dorms; they eat their meals communally, in messes called student centers; they have little or no money, or little or nothing to spend it on; and

those who bring cars have no place to park them; they have friends and acquaintances, but not spouses and children, and their sexual partners they change frequently; they spend their days in study (of course they do!) and depend on others to supply their material needs; finally, they are watched and graded and promoted according to merit, with a chosen few invited to join the “guardian class” by becoming professors themselves. Still, they denounce the *Republic*—firmly, consistently, and almost unanimously—and by implication the lives they presently are leading. Their objections to the best city’s practices are numerous, to be sure (the censorship of poetry, the telling of lies, the abolition of families, the exposure of children, etc.), but none is so common or so vehemently expressed as their dislike of job specialization. Partly they worry about premature judgments (this partly caused, one suspects, by their recently having taken the SATs!); partly they crave choice and variation and expect that doing the same thing always, no matter how well, can lead only to boredom; partly they are egalitarians and will countenance no discriminations of any sort. Mainly, though, they see assignment to class as a discouragement to ambition, effort, and self-improvement—good things, all, which they expect justice to promote and reward. That justice instead says keep to your place and mind your own business is incomprehensible to them and morally repugnant. They think they are rejecting the *Republic*. It is the argument of this paper, however, that the *Republic* supports them in their discontent and may even be responsible for it, by greatly complicating, if not quietly subverting, its own teaching about justice.

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Katabasis in Plato's Symposium

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At his trial, Socrates was charged as a “thinker on the things aloft,” as well as one who investigated “all things under the earth” (*Apology* 18ab). In the *Symposium*, Plato depicts the manner of Socrates’ investigations of both above and below through his use of imagery of ascent and descent. When analyzing Plato’s *Symposium*, it is common to speak of an erotic ascent. The speeches are arranged in order of dialectical ascent, beginning with less-finely made ones and progressing finally to the speech of Socrates. In the “ladder of love” imagery in Diotima’s speech, we see an ascent through bodily erotics towards a vision of “Beauty Itself.” A considerable amount of scholarship has been devoted to the study of the ascent in these speeches. However, the imagery of descent in the drama of the dialogue has received little attention. Following the textual methods of Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin, this article contributes to the novel approach to Platonic scholarship of which Zdravko Planinc, Barry Cooper, Jim Rhodes and Leon Craig are the most interesting current practitioners. This article stresses the importance of descent imagery in the *Symposium* for building a more complete understanding of the dialogue. By his use of such imagery, Plato alludes to Odysseus’s journey to the Underworld and his subsequent second sailing homeward.

I. ERIC VOEGELIN ON *KATABASIS* AND THE LIVING DEAD

Many scholars have noted that the *Symposium* begins in a similar fashion to the *Republic*. The *Symposium* begins with Apollodorus saying, “I happened to be going up (*anion*) to town from Phaleron the other day, when one of my acquaintances caught sight of me from behind” (172a). Likewise, the *Republic* begins with Socrates saying, “I went down (*kateben*) yesterday to the Piraeus” (327a). Like Apollodorus, Socrates too is stopped from behind. Immediately, Plato alerts his readers to be attentive to the close

relationship between imagery of descent in the *Republic* and imagery of ascent in the *Symposium*. He challenges us to consider the significance of such imagery as we read.

Eric Voegelin has analyzed the significance of the word *kateben* in the *Republic*. He finds that “the first word, *kateben* (I went down), sounds the great theme that runs through it [the *Republic*] to its end” (Voegelin 1957, 52). The imagery of depth and descent at the beginning of the *Republic* recalls the “Heraclitian depth of the soul,” and “the Homer who lets his Odysseus tell Penelope of the day when ‘I went down (*kateben*) to Hades to inquire about the return of myself and my friends’” (53). The Piraeus, according to Voegelin, is a symbol for Hades. He argues that “the descent of Socrates to Hades-Piraeus in the opening scene of the Prologue balances the descent of Er ... to the underworld in the closing scene of the Epilogue” (54). The recurring image of descent at the beginning and the end of the *Republic* is then scrutinized in light of the imagery of ascent as found in the cave *ikon* at the middle of the dialogue (514a–517a). Voegelin identifies the interchanging images of ascent and descent:

It is disquieting ... that the truth of human existence can be found both by descent and by ascent. The truth brought up from the Piraeus by Socrates in his discourse, and the truth brought up from Hades by the messenger Er, are the same truth that is brought down by the philosopher who has seen the Agathon. We are reminded of the Heraclitian paradox (B60): “The way up and the way down is one and the same.” (1957, 60)

Katabasis, or the experience of the depth of the soul and its forces gives rise to the “directional ambivalence” discerned by Voegelin. From the depth of the psyche that has sunk into death and disorder “comes the force that drags the philosopher’s soul up to the light, so that it is difficult to say whether the upper There is the source of his truth, or the nether There that forced him up” (62).

Voegelin’s insights into the central role of *katabasis* in the *Republic* are important for the development of a better understanding of the “ladder of love” represented in the *Symposium*. In both cases, the depth of the Dionysiac soul is depicted by a descent in the drama of the dialogue. We are confronted in both dialogues with the “psyche that has sunk into death and disorder.” In the *Republic*, Socrates descends to the Hades of the Piraeus in order to offer his prayers to the goddess Artemis-Bendis, or chthonian Hecate, who is said to attend souls on their way to the underworld. According to

Voegelin, it is the "pamphylianism of the Piraeus," or the equality of the participants in the festival and its "common level of humanity" that makes the Piraeus akin to Hades; the "everyman" quality of the Piraeus runs parallel with the portrayal of Hades in the Pamphylian myth, since in death "again all men are equal before their judge" (Voegelin 1957, 54). Intermingled with his identification of Hades with equality, Voegelin suggests that the Piraeus is likened to Hades, due to its decadence, as a symbol of the decay of Athenian society: "Down went the way from Athens to the sea in space; and down went her way from Marathon to the disaster of the sea power in time" (52–53). The equality of the Piraeus is therefore tied to a laxation of character (*ethos*): "The equality of the harbour is the death of Athens" (54).

Where Socrates goes down to the Piraeus to pray to the chthonian goddess, in the *Symposium* he goes to the house of Agathon (literally, "the Good") in order to offer an encomium to Eros. Just as in the "Hades-Piraeus" of Voegelin's account, so too is Socrates' journey to the house of Agathon a kind of descent into pamphylianism, since in the tragic poet's house a decadent sort of equality or pamphylianism is clearly exhibited. Agathon bids his servants to behave as masters (175b), so that there are no hierarchies or distinction between the free and the enslaved. The master relinquishes his rule over the slavish; metaphorically, the house of Agathon is akin to the disordered soul; the higher, ruling part of the soul (the mind, or *nous*) neglects its proper function in ordering the lower, appetitive part of the soul, thus permitting wanton indulgence in pleasure (*hedone*). The house of Agathon becomes an image of the decadent soul that has neglected the proper ordering of its unequal parts. The unequal parts that properly rule and are ruled, the higher and the lower, are instead treated equally. It is into the decay of such a soul that Socrates descends as he participates in the speeches of the banquet. Pederasty, as a "lack of self-restraint with regard to pleasure" (*Laws*, 636c), is an image of this sort of decadent equalization of the ruling and ruled parts of the soul. In political affairs, Voegelin points out that the Pamphylianism of the Piraeus was the death of Athens; we offer a similar analysis of decadence in the *Symposium*; for in erotics, pederasty is likened to a kind of death of the soul. It is from this pederastic death of the soul that Socrates will ascend dialectically through the speeches.

Through *katabasis*, the Dionysiac soul confronts death and decay. In the *Symposium*, Socrates attends a banquet of living men who are nevertheless somehow dead according to the imagery of the dramatic *katabasis*; so too is Socrates somehow dead, for as a philosopher, he is one who "practices

dying” (*Phaedo* 64a, 67e). By mingling the symbols of death and life in the *Symposium* through a dramatic *katabasis*, Plato would have his readers consider the meanings of these terms in a philosophic context.

Voegelin has discussed Plato’s “mythical play with the symbols of life and death in the *Gorgias*.” According to his analysis, “death can mean either the entombment of the soul in its earthly body, or the shedding of the body. Life can mean either earthly existence, or freedom of the soul from the frenzy of the body” (Voegelin 1957, 42). Applying these symbols to the *Symposium*, we find that the banqueters and Socrates are alive and dead in different ways. The banqueters, though alive by virtue of their earthly existence, are likened to the dead in Hades insofar as they suffer from a spiritual pamphyliism, wherein the soul cannot be released from the frenzy of the body but remains entombed, at the whim of *hedone*. All the banqueters, with the exception of Aristophanes and Socrates, engage in the bodily frenzy of pederastic pleasures, and in this respect they may be regarded as dead.

Socrates, although alive by virtue of his earthly existence, may also be considered dead insofar as he is a philosopher who practices dying, or separating the soul from the frenzied body while still alive, to the extent that this is possible. Clearly, Alcibiades’ account of Socrates’ physical stamina on campaign, his tolerance for pain, cold, and hunger, as well as his unresponsiveness to pederastic advances all are meant to demonstrate the extent to which Socrates has succeeded in his philosophic practice of dying (216c–221c). The manner in which Socrates may be considered dead is also the manner in which he alone, among all the banqueters, is uniquely alive in the second sense outlined by Voegelin. Only the soul of Socrates enjoys freedom from the frenzy of the body. By comparison, all the other banqueters are dead, in this regard.

Another level of meaning in the symbolism of life and death in the *Symposium* may be added to those detected by Voegelin in his exegesis of the *Gorgias*. Death can mean the inability to ascend from Hades, just as life can mean the ascent from death. In the *Symposium*, Socrates confronts the death of the soul through his dramatic descent into the pamphylian crowd (*ochlon*) of souls attending the banquet; erotic ascent occurs dialectically through their speeches. However, the pamphyliism of the dead banqueters prevents them from following Socrates in a dialectical ascent through speech. Their inability to ascend corresponds to their deadness. On the one hand, the image of the pamphyliism of Phaedrus, Pausanias, Eryximachus, and Agathon is their pederasty. On the other hand, Aristophanes’ pamphyliism stems from his refusal to admit that reason must be given the place of rule in the hierarchy

of the soul. Without the recognition of a ruling principle in the soul, there can be no proper ordering of the soul; the soul remains disordered in its pamphylianism; it is a dead soul held by frenzy and entombed in the body.

To recapitulate, where Socrates "goes down" at the beginning of the *Republic*, Apollodorus "goes up" from Phalerum at the beginning of the *Symposium*. However, not only are the two dialogues tied together by their similar beginnings; their middles and endings are also mirror images. Where, according to the cave *ikon*, the philosopher goes up in the center of the *Republic*, Socrates goes down to the Hades of the banqueters in the *Symposium*. That Agathon's banquet is akin to Hades is explicitly attested to by Socrates himself in the *Protagoras*, in which all the named participants save Aristophanes are present at a similar gathering (314c–316b). Similarly, where the Pamphylian goes down at the end of the *Republic*, Socrates goes up the ladder of love with Diotima at the end of the speeches; additionally, Socrates stands up at the end of the dialogue and leaves the banquet while the others sleep as dead men. By recognizing the element of *katabasis* in the *Symposium*, we are made aware of the full amplitude of Socrates' eroticism, which is now revealed as extending down into the deepest depths, as well as up towards a vision of "Beauty Itself." Plato incorporates the imagery of *katabasis* into the drama of the *Symposium* in order to complete the otherwise incomplete depiction of Eros found in the dialectical ascent portrayed in the speeches. Plato's depiction of *katabasis* through a veiled dramatic means is necessary in order to reveal the full amplitude of the mysteries of Eros.

In this article, we examine the manner in which *katabasis* imagery is embedded in the *Symposium*, and how this imagery informs our understanding of the dialogue. We demonstrate that Plato models the *katabasis* of Socrates on the Homeric account of Odysseus's *katabasis*. He depicts the *katabasis* dramatically as a descent into the pamphylian depths of the soul; each of the characters at the banquet corresponds to one of the dead encountered by Odysseus during his own *katabasis*. By presenting the characters in the *Symposium* as somehow like the dead in Hades, Plato offers us a rich portrayal of the many ways in which pamphylianism and the death of the soul may be manifest in various personalities. In light of the *katabasis* imagery, the dialectical ascent in the speeches will be viewed not only as an overcoming of erotic death, but also as the mirror image of this dramatic descent into death. In our interpretation of the *Symposium*, as in Voegelin's analysis of the *Republic*, we find that erotic ascent only occurs where the death of the soul is confronted and overcome through descent.

II. THE SHADOWY IDENTITY OF THE SPEAKERS

The question arises, “If the *katabasis* of Socrates in Plato’s *Symposium* is modeled upon the *katabasis* of Odysseus in book eleven of Homer’s *Odyssey*, then to which characters in the Odyssean Hades do each of the banqueters correspond?” The corresponding identity of each of the characters in the banquet with those found in the Odyssean Hades is veiled and requires careful consideration. However, Plato leaves us clues to the solution of this riddle in both the *Symposium* and the *Protagoras*.

1. PHAEDRUS

In his own flirtatious speech in praise of the beloved, Phaedrus compares himself to Achilles (179d–180b). The identification of Phaedrus with Achilles would therefore suggest that Eryximachus, his lover, corresponds to the shade of Patroclus (Rosen 1968, 57). However, when viewed in light of the *katabasis*, the character of Phaedrus is reminiscent of the shade of Patroclus (*Odyssey* 11.468). Plato gives us grounds for being suspicious of Phaedrus’s self-comparison. When Eryximachus advises the banqueters against debauchery, Phaedrus says “I am accustomed to obey you” (177d). This is clearly not an Achillean utterance. Rather, Phaedrus inverts his own speech concerning his identity with Achilles. It is Patroclus who obeys Achilles, since he is Achilles’ *therapon*, his “companion in arms” and attendant. Unlike Phaedrus, Achilles is accustomed to obey no one, but always strives to be the best (*aiein aristeuein*) (*Iliad* 6.208).

As Rosen points out, in Phaedrus’s self-identification with Achilles, his “reasoning seems to break down, or at least to contradict the interpretation thus far given” (1968, 57). Phaedrus has deviated from his initial premise that the beloved will not die for the lover, who is of lower significance. In Phaedrus’s view, the lover acts under the possession of Eros; he is not the “father” of his own actions, glory, or personal advantage. The beloved, however, is a non-lover; he is not possessed by Eros, and hence “wins more honor by acting in human terms rather than with divine inspiration” (58). In this way, “[t]he beloved acts not from inspiration but by calculation of his political advantages” (59). Given Phaedrus’s admiration of the non-loving beloved and his elucidation of the relation between *erastes* and *eromenos*, his self-comparison to Achilles is not convincing. Rather, the gruesome military struggle over the dead body of Patroclus in book seven of the *Iliad* reminds us of the pederastic speech competition in the *Symposium* for the body of Phaedrus. Phaedrus himself conjures up the image of an army of lovers who will fight

and die for a common beloved (178e–179b), and the reader quickly gathers that he fancies himself to be such a beloved. Just as the dead body of Patroclus can no longer respond to its lovers, neither can Phaedrus, the non-loving *eromenos*, offer love in return to his various suitors. Like the cadaver of Patroclus, Phaedrus is an erotically dead trophy for the winner.

2. PAUSANIAS

Following the imagery of *katabasis* further, we find that the character of Pausanias is akin to the shade of Tantalus (*Odyssey* 11.582–92). This identification is suggested by the reference to the shade of Tantalus in the *Protagoras* (315c–316a). In this passage, Prodicus is compared to Tantalus, and Pausanias is found in bed with him. The comparison of Prodicus with Tantalus in the *Protagoras* seems difficult to understand without reference to Pausanias and the *Symposium*. Prodicus was primarily concerned with education concerning virtue. In his famous piece recorded by Xenophon, "The Choice of Heracles" (*Memorabilia* 2.i.21–34), Prodicus depicts Heracles being counseled by Virtue and Vice. Whereas Vice encourages Heracles to live a life of ease, debauchery and license, Virtue implores him to take the long and difficult path (*chalephen kai makran hodon*) (2.i.29; *Republic* 504b), and to steer clear of base appetitive pursuits, pederasty included (*Memorabilia* 2.i.30) in favour of more noble and glorious ones. Arguably, the reason for Plato's reference to Tantalus in this passage is not immediately obvious until we examine its relevance to the character of Pausanias, who follows Prodicus, and who appears as one of the speakers in the *Symposium*.

The characters of Tantalus and Pausanias are worthy of comparison on a personal level. Tantalus, like Pausanias, is an "old man" (*geron*). As his punishment after death, he stands in a pool that nearly reaches his chin, but the water recedes from his mouth whenever he wishes to drink. Likewise, trees laden with fruit surround him, but whenever he seeks to eat from them, the wind tosses the fruit high towards the clouds. It is noteworthy that Tantalus's crimes concern partaking in forbidden and base appetites. He was ejected from the company of the gods for stealing their food to give to mortals, and for serving the gods with the flesh of his own son Pelops at a banquet. The crimes of both Tantalus and Pausanias arise in the venue of a banquet. Both are to be criticized for their forbidden appetites, and for desecrating the bodies of the youths. Tantalus offers forbidden food to mortals; Pausanias would feed the perverted sexual appetites of Athenians for young flesh by means of law reform (181e–185c). Where Tantalus desecrates the body of his own son, Pausanias stands accused of endeavoring to desecrate the bodies of the youth of Athens.

In high comedy, Pausanias finds himself unable to appease his base sexual appetites with a meal of young flesh. He is an old and decrepit pederast, unattractive to young boys; even Agathon, his own long-term eromenos, refuses his advances. Like Tantalus, Pausanias finds himself in the helpless position of one who is endlessly tortured by his own unquenchable appetites; hence, as well, his resort to legal manipulation to serve his desires.

3. ERYXIMACHUS

Since Phaedrus's self-identification with Achilles has proven to be misleading, it would therefore compound the error if we were to deduce presumptuously from his account that Eryximachus is akin to the shade of Achilles as his lover. In fact, the clues that we find in the *Protagoras* advise against it. Whereas Pausanias is found in bed with Prodicus, Eryximachus is found sitting before Hippias of Elis (315c), who is explicitly compared with the shade of Heracles (*Odyssey* 11.601–26). In the two dialogues named for the sophist himself, Plato presents Socrates' discussions with Hippias using devices of the comic stage (Woodruff 1983, 1). It therefore seems likely that, by his comparison of Hippias and Eryximachus with Heracles in the *Protagoras* and in the *Symposium*, Plato would have us examine the more comic aspects of the Heracles myth.

As with the linkage between Prodicus and Tantalus, so too is the association of Hippias with Heracles left rather murky by Plato in the *Protagoras*. The purpose of the Hades reference is unclear without the further reference that Plato makes to the banqueters in his *Symposium*. By linking Eryximachus to Hippias, Plato suggests that the comparison with Heracles will be primarily a comic one, since the dialogue *Hippias Major* "is distinguished from other Platonic works by its richly comic and unusual vocabulary, and by its startling use of ridicule against Socrates' adversary" (Woodruff 1983, 41). Consideration of the vices and indulgences shared by both Heracles and Eryximachus is of particular importance.

The gluttony of Heracles is dealt with most poignantly in Aristophanes' *Birds* (1565–1694). In his comedy, Aristophanes portrays the worship of Heracles as akin to sacrificing honeypies to a cormorant (*laros*) (567), a ravenously greedy seabird with a pouch under its beak for storing fish. Heracles appears in the comedy as one of three official envoys from the Olympian gods to the birds, who wish to have their dominion over the earth returned to them. Whereas Poseidon is keen to obtain a fair settlement with the birds, Heracles wishes to strangle whoever is responsible for blockading the

birds, Heracles wishes to strangle whoever is responsible for blockading the gods (1575). However, upon seeing Peisetaerus cooking up some bird meat, Heracles' mood changes; he is perfectly willing to trade over all of Zeus's authority on earth just to attend the feast of poultry (1603).

In his portrayal of Eryximachus in the *Symposium*, Plato would have us recall Aristophanes' portrayal of Heracles as a "stupid glutton" (*elithios kai gastris*) in the *Birds* (1604). Eryximachus counsels against gluttony for food and procreative sex, growth and generation, on the one hand; but he may also be viewed as advocating "stupid gluttony" in the form of pederastic *eros* on the other. Like Heracles, he has been given the hard labor of arbitrating justice. Heracles comes to attain a settlement between the birds and the Olympians; Eryximachus speaks concerning the importance of moderation in the processes of generation and growth in order to avoid injustice (188ab). However, Heracles forgets his duty to Zeus when confronted with his own voracious appetites. Similarly, Eryximachus lapses from justice by advocating pederastic debauchery: "orderly men must be gratified, as well as those not yet orderly in such a way that they may become more orderly, and watch out for their Eros. And this is the beautiful, Heavenly Eros of the Heavenly Muse" (187d). Eryximachus prescribes gratification of the pederastic, "Heavenly Eros" (*ouranios eros*) "in every action" (*en panti ergo*) (188c), as a substitute for the virtue (*arete*) of true moderation (*sophrosyne*) in relation to appetites for generation and growth. He thereby shirks his medical duties in order to pursue his own disordered erotic attraction to boys.

The relation of Aristophanes' *Birds* with Plato's *Symposium* is further revealed by parallel speeches about pederastic Eros, and by mention of Socrates' *katabasis*. Just as we find considerable praise of pederastic Eros in the speeches of the banqueters at the house of Agathon, so too in the *Birds* do we find a speech in praise of "winged" Eros as the origin of all things (693–704). "Eros the seductive" (*Eros ho potheinos*) (696), is praised by the birds as responsible through them for pederasty: "Many beautiful boys swore they wouldn't, and almost made it to the end of their eligible bloom, but on account of our power the *erastai* got between their thighs" (705–6). Similarly, where in the *Symposium* we have detected the imagery of *katabasis*, so too in the *Birds* is the *katabasis* of Socrates explicitly mentioned by the chorus:

Far away by the Shadefoots
lies a swamp, where all unwashed
Socrates conjures spirits.

Pisander paid a visit there,
 asking to see the spirit
 that deserted him in life.
 For sacrifice he brought a baby
 camel and cut its throat,
 like Odysseus, then backed off;
 and up from below arose to him,
 drawn by the camel's gore,
 Chaerephon the bat. (1553–64)

Mention of Socrates' *katabasis* is used to usher in the appearance of Poseidon, Heracles, and the Triballian god (1565–1693). It is noteworthy that Aristophanes' *Birds* was performed one year after the mutilation of the Hermae and the profanation of the mysteries; it clearly makes the gods of Athens look ridiculous, but only after invoking the name of Socrates to call them forth. It is likely that Plato would have had Aristophanes' image of Socrates' *katabasis* in mind, along with the comic speech on Eros and the profanation of the mysteries when he composed the *Symposium* some time later.

4. ARISTOPHANES

Phaedrus, Pausanias, Eryximachus, Agathon, and Alcibiades all participate in pederastic activities. Socrates and Aristophanes do not. Pederasty has been shown to be an image of pamphylian decay and disintegration. When the mind through reason no longer rules the lower, appetitive soul, the entire psyche becomes disturbed by the frenzy of the body and the desire for pleasure. Pederasty is the image of pamphylian frenzy in the *Symposium*, and without the hierarchy of reason to order the soul, the possibility of dialectical ascent is denied. Hence, pederasty is a kind of erotic deadness. However, Aristophanes is not a pederast. Nonetheless, he is, according to the imagery of *katabasis*, one of the erotically dead. The portrayal of Aristophanes as one of the erotically dead indicates that Plato's conception of pamphylianism is not reducible to pederastic behaviour. Further investigation of the meaning of erotic deadness is required in light of this complexity.

Aristophanes does not like pederasty, as is clear from his comedies, where he accuses it and mocks it as a corrupting influence upon the

young. Yet he does not like Socrates either; hence, his depiction in the *Clouds* of Socrates as a pederast (496–504, 694–745). Why then, is Aristophanes placed among the *ochlon* of pederasts in the *Symposium*? Michel Foucault argues that this is Plato's joke. According to Aristophanes' myth, "[a] boy will naturally love men if he is half a male being: he will 'take pleasure' in 'lying beside males' and in 'being entwined with them' (*sympeplegmenoi*)" (Foucault 1985, 232). Hence, Plato "amuses himself" by having Aristophanes reverse the reproaches found in his comedies against pederasty. In the myth of the circle men, pederasty is the sole preserve of those who are most male by nature; they have as their ancestors that ancient race of sun gods (190b); hence, they are ranked more highly than those descended from the earth and the moon. It is the descendants of the sun who in their youth gave themselves to men because they were looking for their other half, and "for the same reason, once they are adults they will pursue boys" (Foucault 1985, 233; Strauss 2001, 119–42).

Rosen finds criticisms of Aristophanes' rejection of reason (*logos*) and philosophy (*philosophia*) implicit within this myth. Contrary to Foucault, Rosen argues that Aristophanes is presented in the *Symposium* as voicing his opposition to pederasty (Rosen 1968, 148–49). He does, however, consent that Aristophanes praises homosexuals (198e; Dover 1996, 41–50; Ludwig 1996, 537–62; Saxonhouse 1985, 15–32). "In general, Plato and Aristophanes are agreed upon the symbolic meaning of pederasty, or the revolt against the fundamental law of genesis. The problem is how to contain the hubris of the body by justice, or how to transform it into the just hubris of the psyche." In Rosen's view, Aristophanes makes the "fatal error" of mistrusting *logos*. He rejects *logos* "because it is lacking in implicit virtue or morality"; *logos* is therefore too dangerous to be made the supervisory principle (Rosen 1968, 124–25). Rosen gives an account of Aristophanes' quarrel with philosophy and reason:

According to Aristophanes' misogyny, there can be no rational way to distinguish justice from injustice; the *techné* of *logos* can defend either side, and indeed it gives injustice a distinct advantage. Since man stands or falls with justice, it and the polis are better defended by myth than by *logos*. For *logos* undermines their roots in looking beyond men to heavenly or superhuman phenomena. (1968, 137)

Hence, rejecting any need for an account or *logos* of pederastic injustice, he resorts to "Aristophanean obscenity" (125) in order to revile non-generative pederastic practices, and to tame the passionate psyche to obey the law (*nomos*) of the body, which is essentially "the law of genesis."

Aristophanes' myth is told in order to emphasize the importance of generative sexuality for the city: "The city, man's highest good, depends for its existence on the generation of human beings and on belief in the Olympian gods" (Rosen 1968, 121). In this way, Aristophanes' piety is also his patriotism (Strauss 2001, 147). However, Rosen points out that if no account of *eros* is demanded, then Aristophanes, "the spokesman for the city" (Rosen 1968, 131), will be unable to preserve the city from corruption. Ultimately, Aristophanes' obscenity will be ineffective against pederastic *eros*; by denying the possibility of ascent through the *logos* of dialectic, Aristophanes is left without a means to ascend from the Hades of pamphylism that he deplures.

Rosen has clearly delineated the character of Aristophanes' *misology* (*Republic* 411d; *Laches* 188c; *Phaedo* 89d). He points out that Aristophanes expresses mistrust of *logos* because he sees dialectic as essentially amoral and lacking in implicit virtue. For Aristophanes, there is no intrinsic difference between sophistry and philosophy; he does not agree that philosophy "takes up" (*anairein*) questions in an ascent towards the truth; for him, the dialectic of philosophy is the sophist's eristic speech (*eristikos*, from *eris*, or "strife"); it is a kind of speech bent simply on the destruction and defeat of any proposition whatsoever. Hence, Aristophanes is critical of Socrates, who in the *Clouds* makes the unjust and weaker speech prevail over the stronger, just speech (Rosen 1968, 111–18; *Clouds* 888–1104).

Returning to our analysis of the imagery of *katabasis*, we recall that in order for *katabasis* to occur, there must first be a sacrifice of blood. The blood of the living attracts the shades as a kind of reprieve from the death of Hades. In the *Odyssey*, the shades drink from the blood of sheep, and they are promised the blood of a barren heifer upon Odysseus's return home; in the *Symposium*, the banqueters are offered the speech of Socrates—dialectic will be the blood sacrifice. However, just as Ajax refuses to drink from the sacrificial trench in the *Odyssey*, so too does Aristophanes refuse to drink from the blood sacrifice of dialectic in the *Symposium*.

The figure of Aristophanes is most akin to the shade of Ajax (*Odyssey* 541–67). In the *katabasis* of Odysseus, Ajax appears as the only shade who does not press round him full of questions; he refuses to drink from the blood sacrifice, still embittered against Odysseus over the loss of Achilles' arms. Ajax is said by Odysseus to have surpassed all the others in beauty (*eidos*) and achievements (*erga*) (550), save Achilles himself (469–70, 550). Odysseus

admonishes him to curb his anger (*menos*) and his obstinate pride (*agenora thymon*) (562), but Ajax is unresponsive.

Dialectic is the means for *anairesis*; it permits ascent from the depths of Hades towards a vision of "Beauty Itself." Bloom notes that the speech of "Socrates is duly praised by everyone except Aristophanes, who attempts to speak about the references to his own speech" (Bloom 2001, 154; *Symposium* 212c). By rejecting Socrates' dialectical speech, Aristophanes also rejects *anairesis*, or dialectical ascent; consequently, he too must remain forever in Hades. Like the distant and accusing Ajax, Aristophanes remains aloof from the sacrifice of speech, and he continues to hold his grudge against Socrates as one of his "first accusers" (*Apology* 18ae). The figure of Aristophanes illustrates how erotic deadness can arise from sources other than pederasty, such as *misology*, or the denial of the possibility of erotic ascent and the legitimacy of *logos*. Like Ajax, Aristophanes too surpasses all the others save Achilles in his beauty and achievements. Aristophanes makes the most beautiful and most memorable of all the speeches in the *Symposium* (Bloom 2001, 104–5; Salman 1990, 233–50; Ludwig 1996, 537). However, although he surpasses all the others in speech, he fails to surpass Agathon in his stamina for drinking and discussion. Towards daybreak, only Agathon and Aristophanes remain awake with Socrates. Aristophanes is the first to fall asleep, followed by Agathon (223bc). Agathon, as we shall see, is akin to the shade of Achilles.

5. AGATHON

Plato portrays Agathon in the *Symposium* at the height of his career as a tragic poet. We know that he is the long-term beloved of Pausanias (193b), having been with him since early childhood (*Protagoras* 315de). In addition to Agathon's long-term exposure to pederasty, we learn from the *Protagoras* that Agathon, while he was "still a boy" (*eti meirakion*), had been exposed to sophists like Protagoras, Hippias of Elis, and Prodicus of Ceos (315cd); elements of his own speech at the banquet betray the influence of Gorgias. We may also surmise that his exposure to sophistry was no doubt continual due to his close association with Pausanias, a man strongly attracted to sophistry, who is depicted as sleeping with sophists (315d).

In addition to Plato's depiction of Agathon, we also have the characterization of him given by Aristophanes. In the *Thesmophoriazusae*, "the famous, well-known," or "often-bugged" Agathon (*Agathon ho kleinos*) (30) is propositioned by a caricatured Euripides to dress and to behave like a woman in order to spy on the women of Athens assembled for the

Thesmophoria, a festival held in honor of Demeter. Agathon is severely mocked in the *Thesmophoriazusae*. At the beginning of the play, the old man and brother-in-law of Euripides, Mnesilochus, states that he does not know who Agathon is. Euripides says in response, “Surely at any rate you have fucked him, but that doesn’t mean that you know him” (*kai men bebinekas su g’alla ouk oisth’isos*) (35). Eva Keuls points out this implies that “the old man had copulated with Agathon anally, and hence had not seen his face” (Keuls 1985, 291). Aristophanes mocks Agathon not only for his passive homosexuality; he is also teased for his effeminacy. It is mentioned that he wears his hair netted like a woman, and that he also wears a girdle (138–39); he is said to assume a woman’s garb and habits when singing of women (151–52), and to make himself feminine (171). His face is fair, pale, and shaven, his voice womanish, and his features soft and comely” (191–92). Agathon refuses to spy on the women for Euripides, but he lends Mnesilochus a dress (*himation gown*), a bra (*strophion*), a woman’s head band (*mitras*) and a hair net (*kekryphalou*), as well as a woman’s robe and shoes (249–63). Clearly, Agathon is criticized by Aristophanes both for his effeminacy and for his passive homosexuality.

Agathon is a central, yet enigmatic figure in the dialogue. The banquet is held in his honour as the winning poet, but he produces an inferior speech between the two best speakers, Aristophanes and Socrates. His name equivocates with “the Good,” and yet he is clearly the most pamphylian of all the speakers. Agathon’s character is central in the dialogue because in him we find a curious juxtaposition of opposites. Through the speeches we ascend dialectically towards a vision of “the Beautiful”; and yet dramatically, we descend through the souls of the characters to Agathon, the master of a house in shambles and pamphylian disorder. By equivocation, we ascend dialectically towards “the Beautiful,” while simultaneously we descend dramatically towards “the Good.” Hence, in the figure of Agathon, the images of ascent and descent, as well as the language of beauty and goodness, are tied together.

The wraith-like qualities of Agathon’s character are clear when we examine his comments upon the arrival of Socrates at the banquet in light of the Odyssean *katabasis*. When Odysseus wishes to descend to Hades, he must first summon the dead by making a feast of sacrificial blood for them (*Odyssey* 11.34–41). In the *Symposium*, the blood that is lapped up by the dead is replaced by wine, the blood of Dionysus. However, the imagery of a real blood sacrifice still prevails at this point over that of wine. Upon seeing Socrates, Agathon says to him, “Come here, Socrates. Lie down beside me, in order that by touching you I may enjoy the piece of wisdom that came to you

on the porch" (175c). Socrates clarifies the intention of Agathon by his response. He compares Agathon's desire for wisdom to a wick siphon that carries water from one wine cup to another (175de). At this point, Plato bids us to ask why he chose water to fill wine cups rather than wine in this image. Socrates and Agathon are here the receptacles for wine.

Following the imagery of *katabasis*, Socrates is full of living blood; Agathon is dead, and therefore empty of blood. In this grotesque image, Agathon the wraith wishes to suck the blood of Socrates. However, Socrates defends himself from the blood-sucking Agathon, claiming that his own blood is not blood but water. He will not make of himself a blood sacrifice for the dead. Rather, he will offer up to them dialectic in his own speech as the blood. In effect, Socrates points out to Agathon that his desire for the blood of life in order to find reprieve from the deadness of Hades cannot be fulfilled by either sophistry or pederasty. Underlying both sophistry and pederasty is the notion that wisdom can be taught by one person to another. The only lifeblood available for an ascent from Hades to a vision of "Beauty Itself" is dialectic.

The imagery of Socrates as a blood sacrifice is coupled with Agathon's threat of a lawsuit (175e). Through this linkage, the imagery of *katabasis* also serves to shed light on the *Apology*, where Socrates is wrongfully accused and ultimately sacrificed by those like the dead; namely, those who while awake live as though they are asleep (30e–31a). The *katabasis* further explains Socrates' profession of fear (*phobetheis*) of the crowd (*ochlon*) at the victory feast on the day before (174a). The *ochlon* is the same group of sleepwalkers and dead souls that will put him to death as a blood sacrifice in 399 BCE.

The imagery of *katabasis* becomes a mirror image of the ladder of love depicted in the speech of Diotima. At either end of the ascent and descent we find "the Good" (dramatically in the person of Agathon) and "the Beautiful" (dialectically in the speech of Diotima). At the same time as the speeches are arranged in ascending dialectical order at the banquet from the point of view of the ladder of love image, so too are the speeches arranged in descending order according to the dramatic imagery of *katabasis*. Just as at the apex of the ladder we find a vision of "the Beautiful," so too in the lowest pit of Hades do we find an image of "the Good," namely, Agathon. If the speeches at the banquet begin at the door with Phaedrus, they end at the farthest depths of Hades with Agathon, whose name means "the Good." Indeed, the image of a descending seating order from Phaedrus to Agathon is suggested by Socrates at 222e, where he asks Agathon to "come and lie here below me" (*deuro hypokato*

emou kataklinou). Voegelin's analysis of directional ambiguity in the *Republic* is also apt for interpreting the *Symposium*. Where an image of "the Good" and a vision of "Beauty" appear at the extremes of both *katabasis* and *anairesis*, "it is difficult to say whether the upper There is the source of his truth, or the nether There that forced him up" (Voegelin 1957, 62).

In the *katabasis* of Odysseus, Achilles appears as "king over all the perished dead" (*Odyssey* 491). Plato indicates that the identification of Agathon with the shade of Achilles is correct by having Alcibiades crown him (213b). Like Achilles, Agathon has followed the dictum *aiein aristeuein* in order to pursue honour. Indeed, Agathon's smaller crowd (*ochlon*) has gathered for a banquet that is held in honor of his victory in tragedy before the larger crowd (*ochlon*) at Lenaea. In the *Symposium*, the various *ochloi* are images of Hades in the same manner as Voegelin speaks of the Piraeus. The *ochlon* that Socrates feared the other day is essentially the same as the smaller *ochlon* at the banquet. The essential identity of the two *ochloi* is revealed dramatically by Socrates' mention of his fear of both crowds (174a, 198ac).

Plato likens both *ochloi* to Hades. Just as Agathon, the "king of the dead," would like to suck the blood of Socrates, so too does the *ochlon* of Athenian society demand a sacrifice of blood from Socrates in the *Apology*. Agathon's *ochlon* was present in the larger *ochlon* at the Lenaeon festival, and Socrates exposes the few by showing that the group at the *symposion* is no different from the many: they are not wise; they are simply a smaller multitude. Socrates exposes the false distinction that underlies Agathon's praise for the few; his "greatness of thought" is revealed to be arrogance (*megalophrosynen*). Moreover, Socrates' fear of the blood-sucking *ochlon* is shown to be a real fear; it is not simply an ironic statement. The common element in both *ochloi* is shamelessness. It is the shamelessness of Agathon that enables him to garner the most applause from both *ochloi*; and it is the lack of shame before beauty that Socrates finds particularly fearful.

After Agathon's speech, Socrates finds himself unable to offer the sort of shameless encomium to Eros demanded of him by the others. The irreverence and shamefulness of the encomiums offered by the banqueters is highlighted by Socrates' quotation from Euripides' *Hippolytus*. Hippolytus is the son of Theseus and the Amazon, Antiope. He is a devoted hunter and a worshipper of Artemis, goddess of the hunt. However, Hippolytus ignores Aphrodite, and for this reason, Aphrodite responds by afflicting Hippolytus' stepmother, Phaedra, with a passion for him. In Euripides' version of the

tragedy, Phaedra resists her dark desires, but having confessed these to her nurse, the nurse endeavors to meddle in her affairs, and she attempts to convince both parties to act on this lust. Phaedra's nurse makes Hippolytus swear an oath of silence before telling him about Phaedra's secret, incestuous lust. Hippolytus rejects Phaedra's incestuous desires, and he berates the nurse with the line, "My tongue swore, but my mind was still unpledged" (612), suggesting that if he had known of Phaedra's horrible desires he would never have sworn not to reveal them to his father. Phaedra, her incestuous lust having been discovered, concocts a treacherous plot to kill herself and to blame Hippolytus for raping her.

Socrates uses this story to mock his drinking companions, and to expose their *eros* for what it is: incestuous madness, both unholy and shameless. Socrates is like Hippolytus. He is a hunter, for he hunts the *agathon*, as Eros also hunts (203d), and he seeks it as a dialectician in his comrades' speeches. Like Hippolytus, Socrates ignores Pausanias's "Heavenly Aphrodite," (180d) not wishing to do her unholy bidding. Socrates chastises his companions as though they too were meddling nurses; he mocks them for being effeminate and shameless. However, unlike Hippolytus, Socrates does not care for his oath, nor does he hide the truth from his father. He refuses to offer the first kind of encomium; he goes directly to Phaedrus, "the father of the discourse" (177d), and the one most desirous of hearing Eros praised in this manner. Phaedrus, perhaps enjoying the sight of lovers quarrelling and competing before him, heartily agrees to allow Socrates to offer a second kind of encomium to Eros: one that tells the truth about him. But before he may embark upon this encomium, Socrates desires to ask questions of Agathon, in order to get his agreement (199b). Socrates uses these questions as Odysseus used his sword to ward off the dead. By this cross-examination and disgrace (*elenchos*) of Agathon, Socrates separates out the true from the false, and thereby introduces the second kind of encomium.

Although Agathon has won the competition in tragedy at Lenaea, Plato has him rather comically fail to win the competition in speech for the body of Phaedrus. Like the other pederasts, Agathon dedicates his own speech not only to Eros, but also to Phaedrus, whom he addresses (197e). Where Achilles succeeds in retrieving the body of Patroclus, Agathon is left empty-handed. Instead, Phaedrus chooses to spend the night with Eryximachus. The comedic elements of this comparison are further developed by the fact that Achilles is the picture of manliness, whereas Agathon, in the estimation of Aristophanes, is a grotesque of effeminacy.

6. ALCIBIADES

So far, we have argued that pederasty is an image of pamphyllism. Characters at the banquet who engage in pederasty are likened to the dead in the manner outlined by Voegelin. However, pederasty is an incomplete and non-exhaustive image of pamphyllism. As we have seen, although Aristophanes does not engage in pederastic behaviour, his *misology* is an alternative expression of pamphyllism. Likewise, Alcibiades, who engages in pederasty, is not portrayed as one of the erotically dead. We have established a link between pederasty and erotic death that requires clarification in light of this complexity.

That Alcibiades is not erotically dead is clear from the torn state of his soul (*psyche*); he oscillates between tyranny and philosophy, the two absolute extremes of daimonic identity described in Plato's *Phaedrus* (248de; Voegelin 1957, 135–41). The tension that exists within his psyche is illustrated by the gathering depicted in the *Protagoras*. Here, Alcibiades is not enumerated as one of the shades in the retinue of the sophists; rather, he enters with Critias just after Socrates (316a). While not among the erotically dead, Alcibiades is seen in the company of an upcoming tyrant, and yet also as one in the train of Socrates. By portraying him in such antithetical company, Plato presents Alcibiades as having great daimonic amplitude. Similarly, in the *Symposium*, Alcibiades does not precede Socrates to the banquet, but follows him. Upon his late arrival at the banquet, Alcibiades intends to crown Agathon as his beloved (212e). Like Agathon, he too lusts after the things honoured by the crowd (*ochlon*). However, “turning around” (*metastrephomenon*) he sees Socrates, and he feels that he must crown his “wonderful head” as well (*thau-masten kephalen*) (213e). Aristophanes, by contrast, does not suffer this great tension in his psyche. His soul lacks such great amplitude since he has no predilection for either extreme. He despises tyranny, and he reviles philosophy. Only the character of Alcibiades, among all the banqueters, experiences such great erotic tension.

The fact that Alcibiades sits down between Agathon and Socrates (213ab) dramatically illustrates the tensions in his own soul (*psyche*). Alcibiades has come to Agathon having gone away from Socrates, as one having “succumbed to the honours of the many” (*hettemeno tes times tes hypo ton pollon*) (216b). He experiences his “going away” from Socrates as “running away” like a fugitive (*drapeteuso*), and as an escape or flight (*pheugo*). The torn state of his psyche is a bane to him; in the presence of Socrates, he has been “thrown into confusion” (*etethorubeto*) (215e) and “enslaved” (*andrapododos*).

Socrates is alone in making Alcibiades suffer shame (*to aischynesthai*) (216b). Socrates' words (*logoi*) alone cause him to admit that "it was not worth living to be as I am" (216c). His pursuits other than philosophy appear worthless to him. Alcibiades desires the honours of the many, but in the presence of Socrates, he is unable to praise anyone else (214d). At times, he finds this great psychic tension unbearable, and he wishes that it could be destroyed in himself; hence, at times he admits, "I would often gladly see him [Socrates] dead" (216bc); however, if this were to happen, he "knows well" that he would be more "weighed down" (*achthoimen*) than ever (216c). The great daimonic amplitude of his psyche cannot be quashed; it must be suffered. About Socrates, he admits to the rest, "I have been affected by his words," and that the effect of these words still remains (215e). The figure of Alcibiades suggests that the possibility of erotic ascent remains open even to pederasts, or for those possessed by a daimonism that rejoices in destruction and resists ascent.

III. THE PERORATION OF AGATHON'S SPEECH AND THE EERIE CLAMOUR OF THE DEAD

This final section of the article deals specifically with the significance of Agathon's speech in light of the *katabasis* and subsequent *anairesis* in the *Symposium*. Many scholars have found it puzzling that a speech of the quality proffered by Agathon should come just before the speech of Socrates. Although Agathon's speech is "conspicuously well ordered," it "turns completely on verbal equivocations" (Benardete 2001, 188–89; Dover 1980, 122–24). Bloom remarks that "[i]t is an interesting question why we should be given the peaks of comedy and philosophy in this dialogue, but only a sadly diminished representative of tragedy." He finds Agathon's arguments "faintly ridiculous" (Bloom 2001, 112). Why, if the speeches in the *Symposium* are arranged in ascending order of truth and beauty, does Agathon's encomium follow rather than precede the beautiful speech of Aristophanes, for instance? Turning to the imagery of *katabasis* in the *Odyssey*, we discover that, in concordance with Voegelin's findings concerning *katabasis* in the *Republic*, so too in the *Symposium* must *anairesis* from the depths be spurred on by the force of fear in the midst of death and disorder. Socrates' fear is not of bodily death, for he dismisses such fear in the *Phaedo*; rather, what is truly fearful is the infection and decay of the soul through evils, vice, and ignorance. This helps to explain why the beautiful myth of Aristophanes is not sufficient to propel "the philosopher's soul up to the light." Following Voegelin's analysis of ascent and descent, we suggest that fear of an "eerie clamour" is required as an impetus for *anairesis*. It is precisely for this reason that Agathon's speech must follow the

others; only Agathon's speech is able to muster up an eerie clamour of applause from all the banqueters. We will now attempt to identify the precise nature of Socrates' stated fear in the *Symposium*.

The applause at 198a indicates that Agathon's speech has pleased everyone except Socrates. Earlier in the dialogue (194a), Socrates said that the speech made by Agathon about Eros has made him fearful. At 198a, Socrates re-asserts this fear. He asks Eryximachus if he was not prophetic when he said just now (194a) that Agathon would speak wonderfully (*thaumastos*), and that he would be in perplexity (*aporesoimi*). Eryximachus corrects him, saying that Socrates had said that Agathon would speak well (*eu*), not wonderfully, and that he doubts that Socrates is perplexed. Eryximachus is partially correct. Previously, Socrates predicted that Agathon would speak well (*eu*) rather than wonderfully (*thaumastos*). How indeed could the Good (*agathon*) not speak well (*eu*)? By reminding us of his prediction and its failure, Socrates emphasizes the double sense in which he uses the term "Agathon" in reference to his host. "The Agathon," as "The Good," would always speak well. This aspect of Socrates' "prediction" is valid. Agathon the poet, by contrast, does not speak well in his encomium to Eros. It is in this second sense that Socrates' prediction has failed. However, Socrates has noted that Agathon the poet said many wondrous things. Wonder, as we know from the *Theatetus* (155d), is the starting point for philosophy. Wonder is also the experiential element of *katabasis*; descent into the death and decay of the soul is a wondrous thing, just as Odysseus's *katabasis* was wondrous. It is from wonder, being the germ of philosophy, that the possibility of dialectical ascent (*anairesis*) first arises. It is the wonder inspired by Agathon's speech that provides a beginning point for the *anairesis* of dialectic.

Although Eryximachus is correct about the failure of Socrates' prediction, Socrates is nonetheless also correct: Agathon the poet did not speak well. And contrary to Eryximachus's suspicions, Socrates is indeed fearful and perplexed. Socrates is perplexed because he is made to wonder at the things said by Agathon; he is also perplexed because he is the next speaker that must offer an encomium to Eros, and yet he is not able to offer the sort of flattering encomium that would please his fellow drinkers. Socrates is fearful of Agathon's speech because it is shameless. He suggests that the speech of Agathon has been shameful due to its flattery. Flattery results in heightened pamphylism, since flattery treats unequal things (such as the noble and base) equally, and results in disorder and decay. Flattery also discourages both wonder and ascent insofar as it is an indulgence that aims at obscuring the truth

rather than revealing it. Socrates' concern over the shameful and flattery of the speeches adds to his perplexity as to how he will offer his own encomium, if indeed his own speech about Eros must flatter rather than tell the truth. Socrates notes the influence of Gorgias in Agathon's speech, and he is unable to give a similar speech because he is full of wonder as a philosopher; he is not a non-wondering sophist.

1. THE GORGON'S HEAD AND PERSEPHONE

We arrive at a further understanding of Socrates' fear and perplexity by examining his explicit reference to the *katabasis* of Odysseus (*Odyssey* 11.632–35). Socrates finds the end of Agathon's speech particularly fearsome, saying, "I was afraid lest Agathon, at the finish of his speech, having sent the head of Gorgias, formidable in speaking, against my speech, would turn me to voiceless stone" (198c). Socrates suggests many things by this allusion to Homer. First, he plays on the similarity of Gorgias's name to that fabled race of monsters, the Gorgons. In Greek myth, a Gorgon was a female monster, the very appearance of which could turn human beings to stone. The suggestion is that there is something monstrous and effeminate about the flattering rhetoric of Gorgias, and that Agathon, insofar as he imitates the manner of Gorgias, is also monstrous and effeminate. Moreover, Gorgias's sophistic manner of speaking destroys all dialogue, for it renders others speechless (*aphonoi*). Whereas we learn in the *Republic* that dialectic "takes up" (*anairin*) (533cd) any statement and discovers the extent to which it is true, in the *Euthydemus*, we learn that sophistic rhetoric, or eristic, destroys every statement without concern for its truth. This destructive, silencing speech is Gorgonic, and Socrates suggests by his allusion to Homer's *Odyssey* that Agathon's encomium is eristic or sophistry.

Second, Socrates mocks Agathon's effeminacy by this allusion. Not only is Agathon effeminate insofar as he is like Gorgias who is himself like the Gorgon; Agathon is also effeminate insofar as he resembles the goddess Persephone. In the *Symposium*, Agathon is depicted by Socrates as threatening to raise up the head of the Gorgon in the form of Gorgias's manner of speech. In the *Odyssey*, it is Persephone who threatens to raise up the Gorgon's head. It is also worth noting that Persephone is said to have been raped by Hades. By alluding to this rape, Socrates not only mocks Agathon's effeminacy, but also his submissive, pederastic tendencies. Further, because the Gorgon is ugly, Socrates is voicing his own disgust with Agathon. Clearly, Socrates is not sexually attracted to Agathon, and having called him an ugly, effeminate monster, Socrates firmly rejects Agathon's pederastic aspirations.

2. THE DEATHS OF ODYSSEUS'S COMPANIONS AND THE VOYAGE HOMEWARD

In the Homeric passage quoted by Socrates, Odysseus is in the midst of giving an account of his journeys to a group of Phaeacians and their king, Alcinous, during a festive banquet. The king has commanded him, “And now, speak and tell us truly: where have you been driven in your wanderings?” (*Odyssey* 8.572). Odysseus praises the atmosphere of the banquet (9.4–11), and then proceeds with his tale. He tells his fellow banqueters of his own journey to the underworld. Odysseus travels to Hades in order to question the blind prophet Teiresias (11.477–80) concerning how he will make his “happy way home” (11.101). However, consulting with the dead is fearsome, and it fills Odysseus with panic. The dead rush forth at him, and he must guard with his sword the blood sacrifice that gave him entrance to Hades. By guarding the blood, Odysseus also controls who among the dead may drink from it. Upon meeting Teiresias he is told that his only hope of getting home is to control the appetites of his men as well as his own, to avoid the irreverent slaughter of the Sun-god’s cattle and, leaving these untouched, to fix his mind on returning home (11.103–12).

It is important for our understanding of the *katabasis* in Plato’s *Symposium* to dwell upon the significance of the desecration of Hyperion’s cattle. Eating of their flesh is an impious act of unrestrained and base appetites. After Odysseus’s companions have partaken in this forbidden banquet and are ready to depart from the island of Thrinacie (397–419), the god kills them all. Parallels exist between the fates of Odysseus’s companions and the banqueters at Agathon’s feast. In the *Symposium*, the speeches are the food that sustains the pamphylian appetites of the pederasts for praise of Eros. By partaking in the speech competition for the body of Phaedrus, the banqueters show no restraint, and they allow their basest appetites to receive praise as a kind of divinity. However, behaving in this manner they become erotically dead, and are therefore likened to the shades of the underworld.

Odysseus is told by Teiresias that he will only reach his homeland after the destruction of his company, and only aboard a foreign vessel (11.112–15). Teiresias also gives Odysseus a simple rule for communicating with the dead: “Any ghost to whom you give access to the blood will speak the truth; any to whom you deny it will withdraw” (11.145–49). According to this rule, Odysseus communes with several dead heroes, and he expresses hopes—similar to those of Socrates in the *Apology*—of conversing with the men of still earlier times: “those legendary children of the gods” (41ac). But before he is

able to do so, a throng of the dead surround him by the tens of thousands, "making their eerie clamour." It is at this point that Odysseus's panic rises uncontrollably, for he fears that "dread Persephone might send up from Hades' Halls the gorgon head of some ghastly monster" (11.630–36). Filled with fear, Odysseus abandons his sacrificial trench and sets off for home.

The *Symposium* is a philosophic explication of Odysseus's journey homeward. Socrates too attends a banquet, whose host, like Alcinous, wants him to tell of his marvelous adventures. Alcinous and Arete tell Odysseus, "I could stay here till the blessed dawn, if only you could bring yourself to remain in this hall and continue the tale of your misfortunes" (11.373–77). Similarly, Agathon and Aristophanes stay up talking with Socrates until dawn. Both Socrates and Odysseus speak of their journeys homeward; both journeys are erotic. Odysseus longs for his homeland, Ithaca, and for his wife, Penelope. Socrates longs for his own true homeland, the Good (*agathon*) Itself, but his journey is philosophic and dialectical rather than by boat.

Like Odysseus, Socrates too must guard the blood—in this case, the dialogue—and take control of who shall speak by introducing the figure of Diotima. The encomiums to Eros have erupted into an eerie clamour, and the applause of the banqueters surrounds him like a throng of the dead. The speeches have been pamphylarian. Socrates' companions have not controlled their appetites; in this regard, they are like Odysseus's companions who kill Hyperion's herd. And like Odysseus's companions, one by one, they are killed off. All except Socrates form a minion of the dead. Only Socrates is able to walk away from the banquet at dawn; all others are taken by sleep. Agathon's crowded, unargued ending to his own encomium also resembles the minion of dead that surrounds Odysseus in the underworld. In fact, it is primarily the ending to Agathon's speech that prompts Socrates' allusion to the *Odyssey*.

Surrounded by the dead, Socrates' mind remains fixed on returning home. Socrates has come to the party seeking the *Agathon*, his homeland, having stated previously that "the good go of their own accord to the feasts of the Good" (174b). Socrates desires to pursue the *Agathon* by following Eros and speaking the truth. And now, wishing to return to his homeland, Socrates must take charge of who shall speak. In the *Odyssey*, the dead whom Odysseus allows to drink tell the truth. However, Socrates' fellow banqueters are not like the dead in this regard. The dead have the power to see the truth clearly and to tell the future, which the living do not. For this reason, Socrates must fend off all the dead. His dialogue will not be with any of the banqueters;

instead, he only permits Diotima, a divine woman, to speak. Socrates must travel home alone; but he can only do so, like Odysseus, by boarding a foreign vessel: this ship is Diotima, the foreigner and woman from Mantinaea. After Agathon speaks, the clamorous dead converge upon Socrates. Like Odysseus, he escapes them, and his voyage homeward is undertaken with the assistance of Diotima.

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Leon R. Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis*,
New York: Free Press, 2003, xv + 700 pp., \$35.

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This old-fashioned conclusion [namely, that man is the peak of evolution, both in possessing the *highest*, and also in possessing the *complete range* of, faculties of soul], supported in the Western tradition largely by biblical religion, seems now to be unfashionable, not least because of the challenge Darwinism seems to pose to a literal reading of Genesis ...

(Kass 1985, 272n)

Looking at the book of Genesis, with Leon Kass's illuminating commentary alongside, makes us think again about what it means to read the Bible. This last is hardly unprecedented. Something similar happened to Kass himself before ever setting out to write his commentary, as he makes a point of telling us autobiographically (xi–xv). Kass started out as a physician and scientist, albeit one open to and engaged in the reading of philosophical books, including Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality Among Men* and Kant's *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*, which he read as free commentaries on the early chapters of Genesis. But Genesis itself did not seem to him at first to stand up well beside its philosophical competitors. What prompted him to reconsider was an unexpected conversation with Robert Sacks, whose own philosophical commentary on Genesis would find its way into previous issues of this journal. The result was a series of informal, then formal seminars at University of Chicago, Kass's intellectual home, which were devoted to "wisdom-seeking and wisdom-loving" readings of the text—readings that, as he says, "seek to discover the truth about the world and our place in it and to find thereby guidance for how we are to live" (1).

The foregoing details suggest something of the spirit of Kass's

commentary, which recalls its own formative process by frequently acknowledging pertinent insights first spelled out in students' seminar essays and in subsequent personal communications. Kass is a friendly investigator rather than a sectarian apologist. He shares his examination of such features of the biblical text and teaching as are visible or discernible to any thoughtful reader nowadays. He eschews the hard-and-fast assumption of current biblical scholarship that Genesis is little more than a compilation of documents left over from its own time and place of origin—as if it were somehow speaking only about itself, not about the human and related matters it appears to be speaking about on its surface. Instead he finds the text receptive to his philosophical inquiries and hospitable to his attempt to state its teachings in ways that address and illuminate today's moral perplexities too. In a word, though it is admittedly not a biblical word and he has misgivings about using it (44n17), Kass discovers in Genesis a viable and sorely needed teaching about—human—"nature." He elucidates the book's "anthropology" (9). In so doing, he does not mean to suppress the book's theological character, but to bring this out for what it is. To cite a theological expression with a view to the strictly philosophical meaning it seems to have for Kass: grace does not destroy nature but perfects it (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 1, A. 8 ad 2; Kass 1985, 344–45).

Accordingly, Genesis's opening chapters provide a cosmological and anthropological backdrop for the patriarchal narratives that follow. Drawing on Umberto Cassuto's and Leo Strauss's accounts of Genesis 1 in particular, Kass anatomizes the first six days of creation to show how what comes into being are things of visibly distinct and heterogeneous kinds, knowable thanks to their embodying and displaying intelligible distinctions as such. For Kass, the text's articulating the conditions for the knowability of things ("nature") is the secret of its trustworthiness in speaking about things. This vindication of Genesis 1 is undisturbed by the Darwinism Kass shares to a considerable extent with his fellow biologists. After all, as he points out, the mechanisms implicit in the six-stage creation activity may be assimilated to those of Darwinian evolution, especially since creation "days" are of unspecified duration. Also, the "beginning" from which creation starts (Gen. 1:1) is perhaps not an absolute starting-point, but one deliberately limited to things within our purview, things of concern to us as human beings, of which we are told simply on a need-to-know basis. And anyway, ordinary Darwinists tend to focus narrowly on how species came to be, not on what they are or ought to be in their eventual flourishing—Genesis's own focus when it comes to human beings.

In Kass's analysis, Genesis's remaining pre-patriarchal chapters (Gen. 2–11) narrate a sequence of permanently possible ways of life for human beings. Each way of life is shown to be inherently unsatisfactory, so as to establish the plausibility, or rather the moral necessity, of a new way of life guided above all by divine instruction rather than by humans' own attempts to understand and arrange things entirely to suit themselves. The first of these "natural" possibilities, for example, is life in Eden, a garden that is designed to satisfy the nutritional and other bodily needs of its original human inhabitant, Adam, yet where it turns out to be "not good for [him] to be alone" (Gen. 2:18). This difficulty persists and intensifies even in the attempt to solve it. Among other things, Adam's search for a fitting companion, which leads to his naming all the other animals and to his (and Eve's) receptivity to the serpent's questioning God's prohibition against eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, brings about the first stirring of reason and, with that, not the "fall of man" so much as "the *rise* of man to his mature humanity" (88; Kant 1963, 55–56). Henceforth Adam no longer belongs in that isolated and isolating environment, which may be seen in retrospect as having been created not merely to house him but to expose the natural limits of his proto-human individuality. Similar ironies soon beset the ways of life of Adam's offspring: the fratricidal founder of cities, Cain; the lawless warrior-heroes, the Nephilim; the simple-minded just man, Noah; and the builders of the universal-technological-secular city, Babel.

Divine instruction as Kass understands it is the Bible's corrective for the aforementioned ways of life, as well as for others to come during Genesis's patriarchal chapters (Gen. 12–end) and beyond. Its core is a teaching about patriarchy, that is, family. God first chooses a suitable potential patriarch, Abram (to be renamed Abraham, "Father of Multitudes" in Hebrew), then sets about to educate him for the job. Abra(ha)m is shown to undergo a chiastically arranged series of eleven tests (263; Gen. 12–22). The first is simply to respond favorably to God's summons by moving on from Haran, where his late father had settled after leaving Babylonian city life behind en route to Canaan on his own, and proceeding to Canaan, which God now promises to him and his descendants along with future political greatness, glory, and blessings (Gen. 12:1–6; 11:31)—though with what further conditions we are to learn. Subsequently, Abraham's central test is to accept God's demand to "walk before" Him and be "wholehearted [*or perfect or blameless: tamim*]" (Gen. 17:1; Kass's trans. and interpolations), a test connected with God's reiteration of His earlier promise, on the one hand, and with Abraham's name change as well as with his circumcising himself and his people to commemo-

rate their ongoing covenant with God, on the other. As a final test, however, God suddenly asks (*sic*) Abraham to sacrifice his long-awaited son and heir (cf. the Hebrew particle *na'*, “please,” in Gen. 22:2)—as if to undo everything He has already promised and done. Kass himself has reservations about whether he has adequately understood the rationale for God’s shocking and terrifying request of Abraham, but sees a need to offer a plausible alternative to the theological irrationalism of, say, a Søren Kierkegaard. On reflection, the request may not be quite so abrupt as it seems. The rationale, Kass argues delicately, has to do with our being informed beforehand—although or because Abraham is not—that the whole incident is *only* a test (Gen. 22:1). Namely, it forces Abraham to contemplate relieving God of the purely political component of His promise to make him an exemplary patriarch (by eliminating the God-given son whom he loves and through whom alone that promise is fulfillable) while retaining the purely private obligation that gives moral substance to the promise (by continuing to walk before God wholeheartedly—as he shows, for example, in his tender and spontaneous dialogue with his son on their way to the remote place designated for the sacrifice). Abraham’s wholehearted assent to God’s request, and God’s anticipating as much by providing a ram as a last-minute substitute for the proposed human victim, complete his eleven-step education in patriarchy.

His previous adventures have taught him more than a little about the divine and have readied his soul for this final trial and lesson. He has repeatedly heard God’s call and His abundant promises. He has experienced awe, the religious passion, during the dark vision between the sacrificial pieces; he has enacted the new covenant marked by (self-)circumcision—a symbolic act of “partial sacrifice,” betokening dedication to God’s ways; he has been God’s partner in judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah and, in his own heart, has accepted responsibility for (what he thought was) the “death” of Lot; he has learned of God’s support of Sarah, his wife, and of the importance of marriage; he has beheld the wondrous birth of Isaac and endured the banishment of Ishmael. He has witnessed not only God’s dreadful power but also His insight into men’s souls, as well as His solicitude, honesty, justice, restraint, and providence. He has received (from Melchizedik, king of Salem and priest of the Most High God [14:8–22], and from Abimelech [21:22]) the testimony of foreign witnesses to (his own) God’s majesty. Last but in importance first, he has known intimately God’s benevolence toward him in the gift of Isaac, delivered as promised—the first clear manifestation of the great blessings vouchsafed him when God first called him. (333–34)

As Kass observes, nothing in this impressive list of Abraham's divinely supervised experiences, rituals, collaborations, acknowledgements, blame- and praise-sharing, and gift-getting so far has shown in return, "fully and unambiguously, why and how he is a follower of God" (334). The (divinely thwarted) child-sacrifice test puts Abraham's motive and manner into relief, for both God and himself, and likewise for the reader.

Family life, together with the inside and outside threats to its flourishing, is the heart of the way of life of Abraham's heirs in the next three generations—though of course not its be-all and end-all, namely, righteousness and holiness. Kass shows how none of the heirs is quite the man their founding father was. From now on, Genesis concentrates on the transmission of Abraham's family-centered piety from one generation to the next, even more than on the virtues-in-process of the heirs themselves, which show up largely in how well or poorly they receive and transmit. Under the reverberating impact of more than one domestic impropriety per generation, each new patriarch's family suffers some serious breakdown, including especially the disruption of primogeniture, before a successor-to-be, sobered and educated in the aftermath, steps forward to restore the family's integrity by refounding it as well as circumstances allow. As Abraham's rather listless successor Isaac is biologically not his firstborn (that was Ishmael, banished with his Egyptian mother, Abraham's concubine, to become the eventual founder of a separate nation), so too Isaac's plucky successor Jacob is not his firstborn (that was Esau, also the founder of a new nation), nor likewise Jacob's slow-to-emerge successor Judah, the fourth son of the wife whom Jacob would rather not have married. In their several refoundings, Abraham's heirs are seen to rediscover, as it were, the nature of the family in the larger scheme of things. The emergence of Judah rather than Reuben, his eldest brother, or than Joseph, the favored son of Jacob's favorite wife, is elaborated at considerable length under the rubric of "the generations of Jacob" (Gen. 37:2), with which the biblical book culminates, as does Kass's commentary. Judah intervenes during Reuben's inept attempt at saving the young Joseph from fratricide at the hands of his jealous brothers, to persuade them instead to sell Joseph to passing slave-traders who transfer him down to Egypt, where after a further descent into prison Joseph's managerial and dream-interpreting talents soon catapult him into a position as Pharaoh's chief administrator; Joseph thereby saves Egypt from a coming famine, albeit at the price of enslaving almost all Egyptians and of becoming almost entirely Egyptianized himself. Meanwhile Judah leaves his brothers, presumably in disgust at their unbrotherly treatment of Joseph and its subsequent cover-up, until he is brought to recognize, thanks to the dramatic

ingenuity of his daughter-in-law Tamar, that in ignoring her longstanding Levirate-marriage right he has sadly neglected his family duties not only toward his children but, by extension, toward his father and brothers too. Returning to his father's household, Judah accompanies his brothers from famine-stricken Canaan to Egypt, where all of them but one go to buy food for the family, and where a Joseph unrecognized by them in his new Egyptian setting tries to stage-manage his reconciliation with them by taking a hostage to guarantee that they will make a second buying-trip, this time with Joseph's full-brother Benjamin, whom Joseph then threatens to execute on a trumped-up charge—until Judah, speaking up for the others as the brother who had pledged himself to their father as security for Benjamin's life, pleads with Joseph to spare Benjamin by offering their lives collectively in his stead. Weeping, Joseph finally reveals himself and presents himself as the family's (human) savior, though as Kass plausibly suggests, he never quite reassures the brothers, who continue to suspect Joseph's fancy administrative cleverness and, what amounts to the same thing, his assimilation to Egyptian ways, that is, his departure from their great-grandfather's reverent wholeheartedness—which they, not he, will carry on.

We are left with the question of whether these exemplary refoundings of the patriarchal family are, in the final analysis, best understood as Genesis's taking due account of "nature" or, alternatively, as the vicissitudes of a divinely instituted tradition that is nevertheless highly illuminated by Kass's appeal to its "natural" elements (57n1). (Parenthetically, we note that the frequency of occurrence of "nature" and its cognates tapers off as his book goes on: 128 times, if I am not mistaken, during the 218 pages of commentary on Genesis's pre-patriarchal chapters [25–243] and only 76 times during the 412 pages of commentary on Genesis's patriarchal chapters [247–659], not counting 23 times during Kass's introduction and once during his epilogue [1–21, 661–66].) Thinking again about the evident absence of "nature" from the biblical text—or rather, assuming Kass is correct, its merely implicit presence—we must therefore consider the possible difference between Genesis's own view of things and Kass's. Kass himself emphasizes that, by its own lights, Genesis 1ff., while making things remarkably intelligible, is not exactly philosophical (57–58). It not only downgrades the heavenly bodies (to which philosophical speculation is naturally directed) to simply created status, so as to elevate the role of their Creator, but also casts doubt on whether unassisted reason is properly capable of guiding human life, without the righteousness and holiness supplied by divine instruction. The wonderment creatures provoke is, in the end, not meant to invite ongoing investigation so much as to instill proper awe

and reverence (3, 12, 53, 91–92; Kass 1994, 223–25; 2002, 53). Creatures share in the mysteriousness of their narrated beginnings and come with a full and indelible set of instructions from their maker (Deut. 4:2, 5:29–30). Still, all this is a philosopher’s way of speaking, not the Bible’s own. Must we then say that the Bible, in its own terms, is ultimately dismissive of Kass’s approach? Not necessarily, especially given that it appears to welcome independent-minded readers by calling attention to its inherent wisdom and intelligibility “in the eyes of the nations” (14; Deut. 4:5–8; Sacks 1980, 29). Kass, we may say, reads Genesis with an eye to nature so as to recover something of the book’s attractiveness and credibility alongside, or in the face of, philosophy or science. “Addressing us as lovers of our own cleverness,” he concludes, “[Genesis shows] how the limitations of human reason corrupted by pride and vanity can be corrected by acknowledging our debt to powers beyond our control” (665). Kass illuminates these character-exhibiting and character-building features of the book and helps us look inside.

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Colloquial Hermeneutics: Eva Brann's *Odyssey*

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Eva Brann, *Homeric Moments: Clues to Delight in Reading the "Odyssey" and the "Iliad,"* Philadelphia, PA: Paul Dry Books, Inc., 2002, xiv+326 pp., \$19.95 US/ 29.95 CAN

Eva Brann has written a most unusual book, one that will make its readers think both about Homer and about the meaning of "interpretation." Deceptively simple, *Homeric Moments: Clues to Delight in Reading the "Odyssey" and the "Iliad"* ignores all the conventions of contemporary scholarly books. It has forty-eight little chapters, the shortest only two pages long. Readers will be intrigued to find that several chapters have the same names; several bear names of characters, with the author's epithets substituted for Homer's. Phrases and sentences are repeated at different places, sometimes with slight variations. The first thirty-four pages are spent "Accounting for the Title." The author is learned about Greek mythology, religion, philosophy, syntax, diction and metrics. But there are no footnotes, index, bibliography, or untransliterated Greek quotations. Ancient commentators are mentioned, but the vast secondary literature on Homer is not, although Brann obviously has read it too in the fifty years during which she has been poring over Homer's stories, "both by myself and with students" (xiii). Only poets are present as helpful fellow readers of Homer. For the most part, they are quoted anonymously, although identified in endnotes that also provide the locations of most of the Homeric passages discussed. Famous passages are not usually referred to by the names the scholars use—the "Teichoscopia" and various "aristeias," for example. The book contains no references to Brann's own scholarly tomes, *Greek Geometric Pottery*, *The World of the Imagination*, *What, Then, Is Time?*

and *The Ways of Nay-saying*, although *Homeric Moments* frequently explores these same questions. What Eva Brann is up to in her latest offering remains to be seen; it is obviously a labor of love.

Brann believes that Homer's poems are for everyone, that they are about recognizable human beings and the things they think about, and that those who delight in them should not turn them into alien artifacts accessible only to a few: "If you're human, Homer is home territory" (20). Thus, she offers a "way of reading" the epics which she distinguishes from "what critics call a 'reading,' that is, a total interpretive hypothesis" (19). In the introductory chapter, she briefly acknowledges the recent academic debate about "criticism," making it clear that she thinks that *authors* write *books*, that they *intend* to convey ideas and to teach their readers, and that they give "clues" to help these readers see what they *mean*. She rejects the notion that "an ingenious professional reader ... may play any half-plausible riff off the text" (12), as well as the post-modern denial of a poet behind the poem. Rather, in a spirit of "reverent faith" (13) that the poet knows what he is doing, the interpreter can help others read receptively and attentively by encouraging them to rely on their own lives and learning. The imaginative interpretation does not "deconstruct" the poet, legitimating any and all interpretations. Nor does it mine Homer for "philosophemes and political proto-theory" (23). Brann does not doubt that the "poems contain them"—but "embodied and contingent, as life contains them," and not as "covert systematic lessons" (23). She does not discuss "the Beautiful" or "Being" or "Becoming," although she does suggest that the "single-minded Parmenides ... is in almost every way the intended opposite of Odysseus" (22). She does not provide a long theoretical discussion of the oft-noted first appearance in Greek literature of the word *nature*. But references like those to "elemental nature" (191) and the "natural marriage bed" (299), as well as a pervasive concern with Homer's thinking about *human* nature, will guide the reader, in a tone appropriate to the story, to think about "nature" as an idea in Homer. Finally, she describes a monster, the three-headed Cerberus of misguided readings of Homer (24–30): "mentality," the error of reading the poems as records of alien or primitive thought; "formulaicism," the error of thinking that the formulas are *merely* instruments to help the oral poet remember; and "intratextuality," a "denatured" (30) way of reading Homer's stories as merely self-referential words cut off from a coherent "extratextual" world. Homer's world is a web, but it is not self-contained; we readers are meant to "round out the text" with our own "auditory and visual imaginations" (30). Except for an occasional remark, this is the last we hear of the critics. This clear and sensible explanation of matters of momentous importance to

contemporary professional interpreters of literature now gives way to Homeric “moments” and “clues to delight.”

Before we return to the title, a word should be said about Brann’s distinctive style. It will come as no surprise that she speaks in ordinary conversational English, avoiding technical jargon and stuffy abstractions, and does not hesitate to use a modern colloquialism to catch the meaning of the original. Thus, Odysseus “snowed his audience” (47); he is aided by “a swineherd and a ranch hand” (25). She speaks in the first person, and permits herself exclamations (“What a couple!” [273]), “oracular assertions” (175), and lists of “comments” (169, 228). The withholding of citations until the very end is intended to help the reader concentrate, without interruptions, on Homer’s text. But for some readers this might result in *more* flipping away from the story Brann is recounting. Perhaps brief locations of quotes and the identification of poets *within* the text might have made the book even more comfortable to read. Several pictures are included; and there are references to other stories; and observations about animals, children, shared human predicaments, and much more in the coherent “extratextual world” she defends at the beginning.

CLUES

Brann cautions against the elaborate verbal webs that some literary “theorists” weave in their interpretations, yet she herself reads with sharp attention to the “clues” in Homer’s elaborate weaving of words. Technically, a “claw” is a ball of yarn or a thread, like the one that guided Theseus out of the Cretan labyrinth. In the preliminary chapter and the forty-eight chapters that follow, there are clues and cues, signs and keys, veiled facts and hidden treasures. She says that the *Odyssey*, “the most complexly told tale I know,” is “clear and decodable” (120), and she offers clues to the interpretation of allegories, verbal images, and whole stretches of the story. A brief allusion to a myth may reveal the deeper meaning of an episode. So, too, do Greek etymologies, especially of names, in which Homer often points to the character of a person or place.

A chapter about the gods begins the book. “The Homeric gods are not ‘believed in’” (36)—this is not theology—but, carefully observed, they are an important clue to understanding the life of us mortals. Their levity points to our gravity, their freedom to our limitations. Like the divinities on the Parthenon frieze, they appear large and detached, yet they are present; they observe and they take us seriously. Paradoxically, these less serious “beings of the imagination” (45) show sharply how mortality itself is a clue to everything seriously human.

Similes are also clues with which the attentive reader can tease out the full meaning of Homer's "word texture" (83). Chapter 20, "*Simile: the Double Vision*," and many discussions of particular similes throughout the book show how these "brief raptures" (138) transport the reader from the present moment to the extended meaning of what they describe: to the peaceful background of the warring foreground of the *Iliad*, or to echoes of other characters and incidents. Brann will make the "poetic devices" come alive for both freshmen, who don't yet know that they might matter to them, and for experienced readers, who will find much that they have not noticed before. In the penultimate chapter, she offers a metaphor for the famous Homeric flashbacks. They are "time chasms," Homeric moments that allow the reader to travel long and far, while no time at all passes in the narrative. The embedded stories "deepen the human situation by opening up its foundations in the past beneath it" just as the extended similes project "harsh human events onto a distant horizon of art and nature" (292).

In the preliminary chapter, Brann cautions against the distractions of the "Homeric question" concerning the author of the epics, and of historical discussions about itinerant singers, oral verse, Yugoslavian bards, and other admittedly interesting topics. Such information must be obtained by reading secondary works that attempt to show how inherited, traditional formulas and epithets provide clues to the working mode of the "singer of tales." But Brann rightly insists that anyone, even a newcomer to the world of Homer, will soon see that the finished product as we have it is a thoroughly artful weaving together of these raw materials, wherever they came from, with an eye to the stories and thought of the poems. Following Brann's example, the reader will find clues for thought in Homer's selection of epithets and formulas, in his exact repetitions, variations, and changes in word order and rhythm. Unraveling this kind of clue will surely make the reader appreciate and delight in the "tight knit of Homer's tale" (38), even if we notice, as she does—with apparent delight—that Homer does occasionally nod.

Brann declares at the beginning her "agenda . . . to snaffle at least a few readers into learning Greek" (11). On nearly every page she shows how Homer's vocabulary, word order, and metrics are also clues to the meaning of his stories. She rightly assures us that even *some* access to the original Greek will enable a reader to understand *much* more while reading a good translation of Homer. But she is determined that even her Greekless readers will not remain clueless. With her transliterations, translations, and lucid explanations, they too will be able to appreciate Homer's puns and begin to

hear his pops and crackles, slips and slides, dactyls, spondees, and caesuras.

In addition to the many “small discoveries” that provide clues of the sort discussed so far, Brann shares several “large conjectures” (Preface). These more extended interpretations take shape in the course of the book and are stated in several extended passages. The first is that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are continuous; the former is the background: harsh, austere, and admirable; the latter complements and contains it, is softer, multifaceted, and delightful. Achilles and Odysseus are best understood in each other’s light: *minunthadios* (“brief-lived”) and *tlaôn* (“enduring”) are mutually revealing, as are *mênis* (“wrath”) and *mêtis* (“guile”). Odysseus is the same man in both books. It takes a second epic to reveal that Ajax has a tragic as well as political dimension, and that Helen is capable of doing some good in the world she once shattered. Thus, although Brann remains an agnostic about the Homeric question, in her “way of reading” she is an unabashed “Aggregationist.” She does not look to philological evidence or the shapes of shields, but focuses steadily on the plot, characters, and thought of the poems. Quite sensibly, she thinks that the night raid of book 10 of the *Iliad*, whenever and however it got there, is undeniably “Homeric” (63). Perhaps this is why she weaves together the twenty-four books of the *Iliad* and the twenty-four books of the *Odyssey* into forty-eight continuous, interpretive chapters.

A second, larger conjecture in Brann’s reading is to see the *Odyssey*, not as the other half of the *Iliad*, but as double in itself. Here she “clues out” (a quaint verb that she seems to like) a plausible reading that shows that there are two odysseys. One is the *Odyssey* told by Homer, about a man who returns from a distant war after ten years of delays, detours, lost companions, and adventures in the “real” world. The other is the odyssey told by that man himself. Peopled by nymphs, monsters, and extra-human helpers, it has a fairy-tale quality. But these adventures are “truths told in figures” (247), and are thus rich in observations about real opportunities, desires, and dangers in Homer’s real human beings, ones that every reader of Homer will recognize as his own. *Odysseus* tells this odyssey to the Phaeacians, and, again, at home, in bed, to his wife after they are reunited. Brann also carefully examines the “lying tales” *Odysseus* tells before he reveals his true identity in Ithaca; they are a “tissue of fact” (246) spun from scrambled versions of the “real” voyage home after the fall of Troy.

The discussion of Penelope’s immediate recognition and delayed acknowledgement of her long-wandering husband is one of the most satisfying sections of Brann’s book of clues. Here the delight is partly that she is

pointing her fellow readers to Homeric clues about *clues*—the “signs” (*sēmata*) that these two astonishingly well-matched people are sending to each other as they come together after twenty years. Homer becomes more and more complex even as we see more deeply into the web.

MOMENTS

An extended discussion of time as a philosophical question is not to be found in this book. Instead, one encounters dozens of pregnant and provocative observations—momentary comments on the lives of beings that, while ephemeral, are nonetheless capable of transcending time: in memory, anticipation, and imagination. Some, like Achilles, glow intensely, but briefly, and go out, leaving behind them an eternal memory of their moment of glory in the world. Others, like Odysseus, live long, patient, calculating lives: they build and acquire, travel and govern, explore and inquire, and come home to wives and to children who will live after them. Rather than extending the discussion of these great Homeric alternatives, Brann illustrates them, not with purple passages yanked out like raisins from a cake (10), but offered as “moments . . . that are artfully enmeshed in the surrounding narrative” (11). She focuses the reader’s attention on moments when time stops (98) or is at a standstill (155), when someone marks time (259), keeps time from running out (265), or kills time (265). There are moments that seem to last forever, and years that go by faster than it takes to chant a few lines of dactylic hexameter. In epic there is no single “Moment of Recognition” as there is in tragedy (284), but multiple recognitions that unfold in stages. Learning differs from development. Odysseus can be stable in character yet *polutropos*, different at different moments. Brann reminds us how, at different moments, we all “can be beautiful: we glow and crumble” (49–50). At the end of the *Odyssey*, “even the palace glows” (50). Such changes are a great wonder in Homer and in our own lives: familiar, yet so strange that we too might almost say a god is behind them.

Some of Brann’s “oracular assertions” are explained; others are offered momentarily for the reader to live with and ponder for as long as he likes. The book seems to attempt in writing something like the experience of a stimulating seminar, a “seeding” ground for further thought. Brann points to some clues, explains and develops others, and keeps sending the reader back to the text to see how to respond to her suggestions. Some will find the book choppy and wish she’d say more, comment more thoroughly on everything in a Homeric moment, conclude a fully developed argument about the whole epic. But this is clearly not her aim. For example, she touches briefly, though repeatedly, on the question of verbal and visual description. Homeric moments

are vignettes, snapshots, points in pointillist paintings, and fragments of a mosaic. Depictions in words, however, unlike pictures, take time; their parts are not simultaneous and they can never be instantaneous moments. But painters like Breughel the Elder and de Clerk show details that Homer's words can only "intimate" (125). To supplement her own words, Brann includes some pictures: a detail from a Greek potsherd and the old shoes from Van Gogh's painting. The carefully selected nine blocks of the mosaic-like cover depict—in the glowing red and black of painted pots—epic moments in the lives of the people Homer makes us see. This "mystery of cognitive mysteries" (130)—"how words can bring about images" (130)—is not pursued here, but she says that the "visibility" of blind Homer's poems requires of his readers "visuality ... the readiness to form mental images ... that are independently revelatory" (130) from moment to moment as the story unfolds. The discussion then moves on, from what the reader sees to what Achilles sees as he faces Hector.

ONE "HOMERIC MOMENT": AN EXAMPLE

A brief account of one of Brann's interesting explorations will demonstrate the "way of reading" that she offers. Following her example, readers will take note of the beginnings, middles, and ends of the poems. She notes Odysseus's central adventure, and at one point even calculates the middle line of the *Odyssey*. Spartan Helen is, by any account, one beginning of the stories of both Achilles and Odysseus. When she is present, she is usually the center of attention. She appears three times in the *Iliad* (books 3, 22, 24) and is mentioned frequently elsewhere. In the *Odyssey* she appears, ten years later (books 4, 15), in what appears to be a stable and decorous restoration of her position as queen of Sparta. In *Homeric Moments*, she takes center stage at the virtual center of Brann's forty-eight chapters. (Chapter 24 is the second longest in the book.) Her first observation is that Helen, whose irresponsible self-indulgence has been the source of terrible suffering and destruction, is nevertheless capable of sensitivity and generosity, which help prepare an unformed and apprehensive youth for manhood. She recognizes Telemachus and acknowledges him as his father's son, and she treats him as worthy to be that son. Brann "clues out" remarks and gestures that make all the difference to Telemachus. I won't repeat them here; the reading makes sense, and, as she says, "the delight is in the details" (107).

A second clue in this middle chapter suggests something about the man of many turns that may not have occurred to many readers before: that in addition to his liaisons with island nymphs and goddesses, and his flirtation with a nubile princess who would marry him in a moment, our

hero Odysseus has also had more to do with Helen of Troy than is explicitly reported by Homer or by himself. We know that although he is not a handsome playboy like Paris or a rich king like her husband, he has, at various moments in the decade it took to destroy Troy, caught the attention of Helen. Brann points to Helen's reports of him in the *Iliad* (book 2) and the *Odyssey* (book 4), and even to the custom of bathing strangers, as evidence that "much-daring" (another meaning of *tlāôn*) Odysseus and the most beautiful woman in the world have, at some moment, fully known each other. This conjecture, perhaps the sort of "wild surmise" she hopes her readers will make (4), is surely worth more than a moment's thought. Brann does not extend the discussion, presumably because she reserves this "delight" for her readers, who should head straight back to the text—preferably having learned some Greek on the side—to see if they agree. Those who end up rejecting her conjecture will think hard about both Odysseus and Helen on the way to that rejection.

In this spirit, let us return to book 4 of the *Odyssey*. The reader who appreciates Brann's observations about Helen and Telemachus and about Helen and Odysseus may, nevertheless, have reservations about the picture she paints. Helen and Menelaus are living a decorous life at Sparta, but surely a sorry one. The whole story, as well as Homer's details, points to this conclusion. Brann suggests that the weddings at the beginning of book 4 conjure up an incongruity: the thought of Helen as a grandmother. Her readers might also note that Menelaus seems to have doubts that his line will be perpetuated. They might "clue out" that the daughter Helen abandoned when she ran off with Paris (and who, by one of Brann's calculations, might be thirty years old) is to marry Neoptolemus, the one whose picture Brann found on the potsherd in the agora and has included in this book. This son of Achilles is shown hurling Priam's young grandchild to his death from the wall of Troy. Further sleuthing about Neoptolemus will reveal his subsequent murder of Priam himself—on an altar. The other wedding is of Menelaus's son Megapenthês ("great sorrow"), born to a slave woman after the legitimate mother of his children took off with her guest. The hospitable weddings and feasting that Telemachus finds on his arrival are proceeding with all due decorum, but if the reader attends to the details, he may find that the scene that Menelaus and Helen have stitched together is a brittle cover-up, even if it can yet do some good in the world. Menelaus is a sad and aging man who says that his treasures mean little to him. He seems to be waiting, as his Greek name suggests, to be released from the pains of life to the Elysian immortality that is due to him because he is Helen's husband. Who can imagine, after all that passed, that he ever really wanted her back? In an unfinished story, "After Ten Years," C.

S. Lewis (though not a poet) captures what it must have felt like when they were reunited. Years later, in the *Odyssey*, they have, as people do, patched up a life. The Egyptian tranquilizer *nêpenthês* (“banish sorrows,” compare to *Megapenthês*) that Helen adds to the wine must be considered together with what Brann herself says about the dehumanizing forgetfulness offered by the Lotus Eaters, Circe and Calypso. No doubt she has considered these details and hopes the reader will too. But, although she recognizes the deep melancholy of Sparta, to this reader, her delight in some of her discoveries makes her account seem—in that word that she often uses so effectively—too “glowing.” At the end, she speaks of Helen’s gift of a bridal gown for the future wife of the grateful, even worshipful, Telemachus as “the most apt one possible” (166). But I think Homer means for us to wince—or at least smile—at this wedding gift from Helen of Troy. When Telemachus is more mature, and after he comes to understand a genuine marriage, like the one that produced him, surely he will put Helen’s gift in a far corner of his Ithacan storeroom—and leave it there.

INTERPRETATION AND POETRY

Homeric Moments presents itself as an open and a simple book, a generous offering of advice, examples, and cues to further discussion. It promises “delight” of the highest sort, the pleasure that comes from learning. Although she urges us to start anywhere and “poke around” (4), this is an artfully constructed book, and the more one thinks about it, the more one wonders about its own echoes of the poet she explicates. We read Homer with “an acute sense of homecoming” (14); the interpreter, like Hermes, guides our “Return.” This most colloquial of hermeneutics has forty-eight parts; a highly charged midpoint; new, interpretive epithets (“Ajax the Silent,” “Patroklos the Friend,” “Hektor the Holder”); an allegorical monster of misreading; and phrases that, like epic formulas, repeat exactly or with slight variations at distant moments in the discussion: (“poor stupid kid” (198), “poor, hopeless boy” (198), hair “silver and sparse” (46, 244), and fabulous tales “hermetically sealed” (174, 248). Are these the usual devices and reprises of literary interpretations? Or do they place Brann herself somewhere between the poet she explicates and the poets who are the only commentators she cites? Do some of her “conjectures”—perhaps the one about Helen and Odysseus, or what she “imagines” (290) about Laertes and the conditions of Penelope’s marriage to Odysseus—resemble those of Tennyson, Auden, Muir, and the other poets who have also “clued out” the *Odyssey*? Are some of her clues imaginative, though plausible, additions to Homer, like those of the poets? She says she does not mean to offer revisions (“oppositional readings”) as some poets do, and she certainly hopes to avoid the irresponsible “riffs” of the “ingenious”

theorists. But some of her clues may indeed be imaginative, though plausible, additions to Homer, just like those of the poets.

Finally, does Brann ever “nod” in her own reportage of what’s in Homer? Readers will have to return to the text to see whether the embassy in book 9 of the *Iliad* is a daytime event (61). Are ten days lost at the beginning of her *Iliad* calendar (61, 98), or is Zeus on “non-linear divine time” (111) here as well as, as she conjectures, in the *Odyssey*? Should we (246) or should we not (226) consider the Odyssean adventures a “fairy tale”? Does *Polyphemus* “grow” the grapes that grow in his land, or are they part of “elemental nature” in the land of the Cyclops? Is Helen forty (156) or fifty (161)? Is it really so unusual for her, and not a handmaid, to have bathed Odysseus, since in the previous book Nestor’s daughter, the princess of Pylos, bathes and oils Telemachus? Brann calls attention to a nice detail: Penelope orders a bed to be made up for the beggar Odysseus “inside the house” (xix.598). But isn’t it confusing to call this the “fore-hall” of the palace? That is where Eurykleia says the beggar actually *did* sleep that night (xx.143), just as Telemachus sleeps in the “fore-hall” in Sparta (iv.302). The difference here is crucial, because, of course, it points to the climactic question of the location of the bed Odysseus made for Penelope.

Brann’s last chapter, “Twice Told, Thrice Dead,” returns to her “main notion” (4) that Odysseus’s story is told twice. At his demise, he will make a third return to Hades, where he will have been twice before, once literally (book 11) and once figuratively after he has returned to Ithaka. Here, the interpreter of Brann’s interpretation may add two last observations. The first is this: it is good in these times of prolific professional literary scholarship that there is still room for a learned, intelligent popularization accessible to all readers of Homer. This kind of interpretation is sometimes so revealing precisely because it *retells* the story, calling the reader’s attention to as yet unremarked details—momentous clues and clarifying moments—that send him right back to the first telling and then to further discussions with other readers. In this sense, by the end of Brann’s book, the odyssey has been *thrice* told. The second observation is this: although Odysseus will be “thrice dead” at the end of his story, imaginative interpreters like Eva Brann—and her companion poets—will keep him alive—and “glowing”—forever.

Our Attraction to Justice

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Devin Stauffer, *Plato's Introduction to the Question of Justice*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001, vii + 144 pp., \$50.50 hardcover, \$17.95 paper.

Presenting itself as a commentary on Plato's introduction to the question of justice in the beginning of the *Republic*, Stauffer's book is this and more. Closely observing and carefully analyzing the many particular arguments and dramatic moments that culminate in Socrates' acceptance of the challenge to succor justice as best he can (368c2–3), Stauffer's book presents a sustained reflection on justice, and one that is more than merely an introduction. In meeting this challenge, his book is also a demonstration of how Plato should be read, of the techniques necessary to make good sense of complex arguments presented in a dramatic context, and of the passion to understand, without which such techniques will only be misapplied.

The obstacles to reading Plato seriously are legion. Many arise directly from the complexity and sensitivity of the issues he explores; others may be greater or lesser, depending on historical circumstances. Stauffer finds that today "the general esteem in which Plato is held is at perhaps an all-time low" (2). Stauffer means by this bold and initially improbable claim that despite the frequent invocation of Plato's name, his writings do not receive probing or sympathetic readings by contemporary scholars, for his thought is so out of step with the times. In particular, Stauffer is impressed by the success of Richard Rorty and followers to redirect philosophy from the discovery of

fundamental truths rooted in nature to the articulation of the shared beliefs that are rooted in a particular culture. If philosophy should articulate and affirm rather than discover and explain, then Plato can be discounted as an “objectivist” and a “foundationalist”—impressive for his times, perhaps, but unworthy to guide ours.

To establish that Plato is worth studying as a teacher who just might enlighten us on what is most important, how to live, Stauffer attacks Plato’s attacker. He contends that Rorty rejects only a caricature of Plato and articulates only a pale imitation of “our” shared beliefs: Plato certainly did not pronounce his philosophical teachings from on high, but worked them out beginning from deeply held popular convictions; and an honest articulation of shared beliefs must begin by acknowledging that they are believed to be true, really true, not just believed to be what we believe. If our articulated, shared beliefs have no foundation other than that they are ours, there is no reason to respect and keep them. And yet it would be wrong to see Stauffer’s criticism of Rorty as being guided especially by the search for more solid support for prevailing opinions; his concern is rather to find the best possible way in which to assess them (4). Stauffer seeks the truth, not a defense of the status quo.

Having dismissed Rorty’s postmodernist alternative to philosophy, Stauffer is free to approach Plato. He does this by posing a central moral question, whether justice is independent from and superior to happiness and the good, or, to ask essentially the same thing, why and how did Plato disagree with Kant? Now this is a worthy question, and Stauffer’s book is worthy of it.

Three chapters of Stauffer’s book follow the discussion of the *Republic* as it unfolds, illuminating it along the way. While many helpful observations are made on many different themes, the relationship between justice and the good remains central, and consequently Kant—as the supreme representative of a notion of justice or morality that is sublimely indifferent to the good—is both invoked and retains an implied presence throughout. Above all, Stauffer shows that Plato was no stranger to the sort of straight and narrow path Kant took, and that he had good reasons for not having followed it (15–17).

Consider, for example, the way Socrates leads Polemarchus toward the conclusion that the just man is one sort of expert among many, and that, in particular, he is especially skilled at stealing (334a10). Starting from the view that justice is returning what is owed, Socrates suggests that this is a riddle, and while claiming to be clarifying the riddle, he arrives at the conclusion that the just man is a clever thief. This result is reached not by

the ineluctable march of logic, but especially by Socrates' specific choice of arguments, often questionable ones. Nor is it reached without attention to the moral consequences of the result, but Socrates adds to the drama by attributing this outrageous conclusion to Homer, Simonides, and, of course, to Polemarchus himself (35). Socrates does not simply reason, he provokes. But how in particular, and why?

Socrates' main provocation here, Stauffer shows, is to resist every possible entrance into the argument of what might be called the just, or moral, intention; the importance of the *desire* to help or harm is, thanks especially to Socrates, eclipsed in favor of the importance of the *capacity* to help or harm (36–37). What enables Socrates to lead Polemarchus down this unlikely path is that it is knowledge, and most obviously technical knowledge, that can actually get things done. So, if justice is going to be able to accomplish something good, as Polemarchus wants it to, why should we not look for it among the arts? The hope or expectation that justice be something good affects our understanding of what it is; and the inability of the just intention to produce good results (not to mention that, uninstructed, it can produce bad ones) makes it difficult for Polemarchus to find a way in which the just man is as useful as, say, shoemakers are (332d10–333e3).

So, Stauffer helps us to see that Socrates' emphasis on the arts shows the just intention to be insufficient to secure important goods. Not one to leave difficult questions unaddressed, Stauffer goes on: Why is the just intention necessary at all? If expertise or technical knowledge secures particular goods, and if there is a more architectonic knowledge of the good that can guide our pursuit of particular goods, would the just intention, and Kant's good will, not be superfluous? The good contains its own recommendation; the importance of the just intention emerges in the absence of the good. If, that is, there is an association bound together by a good strictly common to all its members, and deeply good for each, no one member need yield to another. Under such circumstances, knowledge of the good would be in strong demand, the just intention superfluous. The just intention is thus but a substitute for an absent good (38, 75–77, 110–11).

Still not satisfied, Stauffer wonders whether this apparent defect of the good intention, that it appears most important where the good is least fully present, is not precisely what gives it its luster. It is the incompleteness of the common good that makes self-sacrifice necessary, but only through self-sacrifice can one elevate oneself; so perhaps the good intention is properly linked not to the good in any ordinary sense, but to the good of the soul. This

possible elevation of the just intention keeps the case for it alive, though it must now explain why sacrifices made for the good of the soul would be sacrifices (40; 126–30).

Stauffer's treatment of the Thrasymachus section is long (almost one half of his book), complex, and wonderful. It is especially striking as a case study of how an analysis of the drama of a dialogue can deepen one's understanding of the issues that are its explicit focus. Along with Thrasymachus's several arguments, Stauffer also interprets his anger (60n3; 96–97), his frustration (79, 85–86), and his embarrassment (102). Not merely running the risk but committing the vice of oversimplification, I note that Stauffer finds in Thrasymachus a lingering attachment to justice, and this helps him both to explain better the unfolding of Thrasymachus's position and to show that it is not Thrasymachus who presents the most radical response to conventional justice in these pages (101n47; 62).

Surely the main thrust of Thrasymachus's first main argument is to defend the strong, who force and dupe others into acting in accord with their own interest. Calling this "justice," they get others to promote what is really no more than their own advantage, the advantage of the stronger. But they *are* stronger, and perhaps there is no common good anyway, so who can blame them? But Stauffer detects another, opposed strain in Thrasymachus's argument, or in his demeanor: that he is also vexed by these hypocrites who, utterly selfish, present the unselfish service of others as obligatory. The bold expression of Thrasymachus's position is partly an attempt to unmask systematic exploitation under the color of "justice," an attempt itself motivated by a sense of right. Thrasymachus thinks he sees how things stand in actual cities, but he does not entirely like it, and his summary attack is issued partly in a spirit of protest that the world does not live up to our expectations (68–69, 96).

True, other scholars explain Thrasymachus's boldness as a bid to attract students of rhetoric, but Stauffer answers them well. (Stauffer is consistently careful to identify issues on which scholars disagree, and to defend his own reading in light of important alternatives.) He notes, in this case, that unlike the *Gorgias*, there is here no mention of rhetoric, and he adds that Thrasymachus later becomes angry when he (wrongly) thinks that Socrates himself has been duped by the specious case for self-sacrifice: But why, in an amoral world, should one not be pleased to encounter fools (69n13)? Stauffer's Thrasymachus is moved by justice, not only by the prospect of money and reputation.

Other details in the Thrasymachus section help to clinch

Stauffer's case that Thrasymachus—even Thrasymachus!—feels an attachment to justice, notwithstanding his attacks on it. Precisely the anger of his attacks is a sign of his vexation with the weakness of justice, a sign that he, in effect, is “blaming justice for being unjust” (85n33). Nor can Thrasymachus completely shake free of more conventional opinions about justice, which from time to time will invade his more radical positions (82: some rulers are unjust, so justice cannot be only the advantage of the stronger; 84: some men are truly just, not merely pretending to be, out of fear or for some gain; 85: some tyrants are criminals, so there is a moral standard by which to blame them; 97: rulers ought to put the common good before their own). In short, Stauffer detects in Thrasymachus's remarks and attitude a touch of blame, along—admittedly—with much praise as well, for those rulers who exploit their subjects and call it justice. And, even when he praises the perfectly unjust man, Thrasymachus does so in a way that reminds of the hopes we ordinarily attach to justice (101n47).

Faced with the evidence that Thrasymachus feels a lingering attachment to justice, Socrates does not seize on it and nurture it; instead, he surprises Thrasymachus with a view as fully liberated from a concern for the good of others as is Thrasymachus's official position. Thrasymachus's lingering attraction to justice, understood in the conventional way as deference to the interest of another or to the common good, an unwitting and unwilling attraction though it may be, is put in striking contrast to Socrates' own powerful invocation of the art of wage earning, which looks only to one's own good (346e7–347d8; 91–93). From the perspective of this art, ruling is a burden to be accepted only if necessary, as justice itself may also be. Whereas Thrasymachus, against his will, lapses back into conventional moral attitudes, Socrates implies a radical emphasis on the good of the individual (though he implies as well that he has taken a fresh look at where this good is to be found). No less striking, and perhaps even more revelatory for Thrasymachus, Socrates does not stop short of making specious arguments in defense of conventional moral opinion (102).

In the last part of the Thrasymachus section, when denied the chance to explain himself at length (350d9–350e6), Thrasymachus goes limp. Stauffer shows Socrates' three main arguments here to be glaringly bad, but from them he can conclude, “[W]hile we can easily find something that looks like justice, devotion to the common good that binds a community together, it is not so clear that this will always be good for the individual; so too, while we might be able to find ... what is good for the individual, it is not so clear that this will be justice” (118). This tension is kept in clear view for the remainder of the book.

Stauffer's analysis of Glaucon's speech is especially helpful in clarifying how and with what reason we expect justice to be good for the individual. Glaucon wants Socrates to show that a perfectly just man who undergoes great suffering is in fact happier than is a perfectly unjust man who prospers (to omit the wonderful details with which Glaucon adorns his argument). Stauffer detects in Glaucon's challenge to Socrates the hope for a happiness that transcends and is more durable than that attainable through even the most extraordinary successes related to money, sex, rule in cities, and helping friends and harming enemies. That is, justice is known to entail great sacrifices, but it is also expected to be deeply good for the soul; the very extremes of the sacrifices that it can impose seem to demand that it bring a good of a higher and more refined nature. Ordinary goods, on the other hand, "are undeniably good in an obvious way, [but they] are just as undeniably good in a limited way" (130). A life entailing such sacrifices promises a rarer and truer happiness, and this attracts Glaucon; what troubles him is the chance that the promise might not be kept.

To summarize a central theme: Socrates' interlocutors think of justice as entailing two components, 1) justice as self-sacrificing dedication to others or to the common good (or, rather, to an imperfect approximation thereof, since dedication to a truly common good would not be self-sacrificing), and 2) justice as self-fulfilling attainment of the good order of the soul. These two components of justice may be in tension with one another, for it has not been established that the good order of the soul is attained through service to the common good. Further, they imply that justice is both sacrifice and fulfillment at the same time, for justice both obliges us to act for something other than ourselves, while at the same time it promises that such "sacrifices" will result in our happiness or good order of the soul. Although Kant too sees that moral conduct should bring happiness or something like the self-fulfilling attainment of the good order of the soul, he does all he can to protect his moral teaching from being affected in any way by the goal of attaining such a result (14). And yet if Kant is going to appeal to morality as perceived by "ordinary reason," and if Socrates' interlocutors in the *Republic* are worthy indicators of this ordinary reason, Kant should not fail to examine also the expectation that it be in some way good for the just man to be just. More faithful to the contradictory character of pre-philosophic opinion, Plato keeps the need for justice to be good at the forefront of his study and does not allow the primacy of duty, or of the *ought*, to silence such an important concern. This complexity keeps Plato's introduction to the question of justice from being his entire teaching, and drives it forward to the doctrines in which the *Republic* culminates, and which have no analog in Kant's work.

Robert C. Bartlett, *The Idea of Enlightenment: A Post-Mortem Study*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001, xi + 224 pp., \$45.

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In his recent book, *The Idea of Enlightenment: A Post-Mortem Study*, Robert Bartlett seeks to inquire into the causes of the death of reason and even to challenge the belief that reason is truly dead. His aim thus goes beyond an “autopsy” of reason (ix), for what he really wants is a resuscitation. As he stresses, Bartlett writes in an age in which most have accepted the death of reason without examination (ix, 3–11). But Bartlett is unwilling to give up so quickly on reason, and he is looking for an adequate defense of reason or for a version of “enlightenment” to which he can reasonably give his allegiance. His great hope is that classical rationalism—the “ancient enlightenment”—can provide what he seeks. Accordingly, Bartlett’s powerfully argued and beautifully written book culminates in a return to classical thought: the second, and by far the longer of the two main sections of the book, presents studies of Thucydides, Plato, and Aristotle. These studies are remarkable not only for their combination of breadth of argument and attention to textual detail, but also for the seriousness with which they take the possibility that the greatest classical thinkers grasped the most important truths about human life and the world.

Bartlett begins from modern rationalism, that is, from “the momentous political-philosophic program known as the Enlightenment” (3), the collapse of which has given rise to the conviction that reason is dead (3–11). Rather than attempt the impossible task of giving a complete account of the Enlightenment, Bartlett focuses on one of the forgotten giants of this movement, Pierre Bayle, and one of its still recognized giants, Montesquieu. Bartlett does not pretend that his treatment of Bayle’s *Some Thoughts on the Occasion of a Comet* or Montesquieu’s *Spirit of the Laws* is an exhaustive

account of either work. Instead, he concentrates on what he argues is the central issue that confronts any attempt to enlighten political life, namely the rival claims of philosophy and divine revelation to supply man with the guidance he needs (11, 13–14). Thus the aim of Bartlett’s analysis of the arguments of Bayle and Montesquieu concerning religion is not merely, as it might seem, to clarify the modern view of the proper relationship between religion and politics, but also to uncover the modern approach to confronting the most important claims raised by religious orthodoxy. Yet these two issues prove ultimately to be related in Bartlett’s analysis, for he suggests that the vast political project that Bayle and Montesquieu helped to launch had a transpolitical purpose, or, stated differently, that the modern approach to confronting the claims of religious orthodoxy had as perhaps its most important feature the transformation of political life. Bartlett explains: “One may say that the deepest stratum of the modern philosophic response to the pious is an exhortation to behold what we are assured will be a new and better Jerusalem, built by human hands and fit for human habitation here and now” (42). In the aim of enticing men to build this new city, Bayle and Montesquieu, despite their apparent differences, were united according to Bartlett; most importantly, they both looked forward to a political transformation that would promote a gradual fading away of serious religious faith as comfort, security, and the spread of commerce would make man at home in the world and “detach the soul from religion” (29–32, 37–43). Such a hope helped to bolster their confidence in reason even as their more direct and “theoretical” arguments failed to refute the claims of orthodoxy (15–17, 21–23, 32–42). Thus Bartlett can go so far as to say of Montesquieu: “What appears to be the theoretical foundation of Montesquieu’s political prescriptions is in fact deduced from those prescriptions: the politics justifies the theory, not the other way around” (42). Yet precisely this relationship between modern politics and the modern confidence in reason entailed “a gamble” which set reason up for a fall (42). For, if the confidence in reason rested on political hopes, we can understand why the critique of the modern political project—of the “new and better Jerusalem”—would lead, as indeed it did, to a loss of faith in reason or to a crisis in modern rationalism. The critique in question was launched by Rousseau and carried further by Nietzsche. Bartlett’s account of modern rationalism thus concludes with a brief statement on this crucial turning point in modern philosophy, a statement that is too brief given its importance to his theme (42–43).

If early modernity was a time of great hopes, we now live amidst the wreckage of those hopes. But our situation is more complex than that: we also live with the other effects of the modern project, a project that,

while a failure in some respects, certainly had a major impact on the world and on our souls. Such a situation is difficult to escape, because an escape would require that we reawaken in ourselves concerns that the likes of Bayle and Montesquieu helped put to sleep (consider, in particular, the quotation from Henry Adams at the beginning of Bartlett's second chapter [13]). However, our very dissatisfaction with our situation is itself a sign that these concerns have not entirely vanished and that they may still be recovered (187–93). It is in part to aid us in this recovery that Bartlett encourages a return to classical rationalism. Classical rationalism, he suggests, can redirect our attention to our deepest concerns and to the most important questions of human life, and it may also be able to supply a more adequate vindication of the cause of reason. This latter point is crucial, since only an adequate vindication of reason or philosophy would allow one to conclude that the modern project, which ultimately led to the collapse of reason, was not a necessary venture by philosophy and thus that the collapse of reason could have been avoided. In raising the possibility that the ancients may have succeeded where the moderns failed, Bartlett is following a trail blazed by Leo Strauss. And for this reason Bartlett discusses Strauss's return to the ancients before undertaking his own. Bartlett's acknowledgement of the work of Strauss is appropriate; for, in addition to undertaking the most rigorous and unqualified return to classical thought of anyone in the last century (including, among others, Alasdair MacIntyre [45–54]), Strauss devoted greater attention than any thinker in recent history to the issue that Bartlett regards as central to any attempt to vindicate philosophy (54–63). Moreover, Strauss was the first to make the suggestion, which Bartlett is extremely interested to investigate, that the classical approach to that issue can be found in the great attention paid by classical philosophers to questions of "morality," or, in their terminology, the just, the noble, and the good (62–63; 57–61).

What, then, is the classical treatment of these themes? And how does that treatment bear on Bartlett's central question? I can give only the broadest outline of Bartlett's answers to these questions, answers which deserve to be read with the great care that Bartlett himself devotes to the classical texts he discusses. First, Bartlett argues persuasively that the vindication of rationalism against its greatest rival was a central concern not only of Plato and Aristotle but also of Thucydides. Bartlett's treatment of the opening section of Thucydides' *War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians*, a section that includes Thucydides' challenge to Homer and the "poetic" account of the world, prepares the reader for Bartlett's discussion of the more familiar Thucydidean themes, especially those of justice and nobility. For Bartlett wants his reader to

reflect on Thucydides' treatment of justice and nobility with a view to the implications of that treatment for the question of the divine (67–75, 92–102). Crucial in this connection are Thucydides' (and Bartlett's) efforts "to understand the demand on the world that nobility brings with it" (101), together with the doubts Thucydides raises about the consistency of nobility as understood by the likes of the pious Athenian general Nicias. Among its other virtues, Bartlett's analysis of Thucydides' work should help his readers understand why Thucydides paid almost as much attention to questions of religious belief (oracles, sacred shrines, oaths, etc.) as he did to questions of justice and the necessities of war, a fact about Thucydides' work which has puzzled scholars living in a supposedly more sophisticated age (67–68).

Bartlett's treatment of Thucydides is followed by a discussion of Plato's *Republic*. As in his discussion of the modern Enlightenment, Bartlett is again forced to be selective. Instead of commenting on the entire *Republic*, to say nothing of Plato's many other dialogues, Bartlett focuses on Plato's image of "the cave," the most famous of all images of "enlightenment" and "the source of the very metaphor of enlightenment" (107). But Bartlett's treatment of the cave requires that he consider that image in the context of some of the broader themes of the *Republic*. Most important to understanding the cave, according to Bartlett, are the themes of philosophic rule—especially the question of the philosophers' willingness to rule—and the Idea of the Good. These themes prove to be related: the philosophers' understanding of the Idea of the Good is the source of their reluctance to rule (113, 120–23). This suggestion, which can be found on the surface of the *Republic* (517a8–519d7), raises as many questions as it answers. In particular, what is it about the Idea of the Good that the philosophers understand that affects their desire to rule? Bartlett's answer to this question is "the primacy of the good for us" and "the consequences" of that primacy (123). This answer, itself in need of further explanation, is elaborated in Bartlett's unconventional account of the Idea of the Good and its relationship to the human soul (113–120). More immediately relevant to the argument of Bartlett's book as a whole, however, is the understanding of "enlightenment" presented through the image of the cave. In Plato's view, enlightenment is possible only as a private matter, that is, for individuals as individuals, or, in the language of the image, while some may succeed in leaving the cave and gazing at the sun, "it is impossible to shine the sun's light down into the cave" (122).

To say that the classical philosophers thought that political communities could not become enlightened is not to say that they did not care about political communities or seek to move them in a direction that would

make them, if not enlightened, at least more open to reason and less hostile to it. In fact, the classical philosophers, according to Bartlett, were not convinced of the *impossibility* of public enlightenment so much as they were convinced of its *limits*. And to further understand those limits is the aim of Bartlett's treatment of Aristotle's *Politics*. This task has the fortunate consequence for Bartlett's reader of requiring a further clarification of what the classical philosophers regarded as the truly rational or "scientific" view of the world and a further discussion of how they confronted the most fundamental challenge to that view. In particular, Bartlett's treatment of Aristotle's response to the adherents of divine law supplements his treatment of Thucydides' response to those who embrace a "poetic" account of the world and who report experiences that would seem to support such an account (139–163). But, to repeat, the main task that Bartlett sets for himself is to consider Aristotle's view of the possibility and limits of enlightenment, and to reflect on whether any political order, even Aristotle's "best regime," could ever fully deserve, in Aristotle's judgment, to be called "enlightened." The answer to this last question proves to be a qualified "to some extent": rather than seeking to undermine, as Bayle and Montesquieu did, the belief in the divine, Aristotle sought merely to "temper" the passions that accompany such belief (126–27, 163–85). Bartlett concludes his book with an argument in his own name for the greater moderation of Aristotle's aims and for their superior wisdom. Above all, by preserving a form of political life that focused citizens' attention on what is truly most important, Aristotle did not cultivate the kind of indifference to the fundamental questions about nature and the divine that has proven to be the unfortunate outcome of the grand project of the modern Enlightenment (187–93).

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