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The Unnamed Fifth: *Republic* 369d

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Halfway through Book II of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates, Glaucon, and Adeimantus embark upon their famous construction of a "city in speech" (369c). Their aim is to read the idea of justice off the scrutable face of the city as an alternative to having to fathom the obscurer depths of men's individual souls (368d–369a). Full development of the city in speech occurs in a series of distinguishable phases, culminating in the program of education that Socrates proposes for his philosopher-kings at the end of Book VII (521c–540c). Of the many transitions that mark the overall development, two stand out for being the only ones marked by a dramatic interruption of the conversation. The one is occasioned by Glaucon in Book II (372c) and the other by Adeimantus (on behalf of Polemarchus) at the beginning of Book V (449b). Groundwork for the city in speech begins with Adeimantus and runs through two stages before Glaucon interrupts. The second, elaborated from 370c–372b, produces a model city that Socrates soon calls "healthy" and "truthful" (372e), while the very first stage of the construction is dubbed "the most necessary city" (*hê anagkaiotatê polis*) and it is made up "from four or five men (*andres*)" (369d). As it happens, the very brief account of skills demanded by "the most necessary city" had included only four by name: the arts of the farmer, the housebuilder, the weaver, and the shoemaker.

In light of the procedurally crucial resolve to spell out their city with the largest, clearest, most discernible alphabet possible, the casualness of this "four or five" at the very outset appears arbitrarily vague; there is no evident reason for allowing the outlines of the model city to become blurred so early on. Still worse, however, is the oxymoronic conjunction in exactly the same Socratic breath of "most necessary" and "four or five." Is the fifth needed or not? What sort of superlative necessity can they have discovered, if Socrates is unable even to count the number of occupations essential to "the most necessary city"? These two observations suggest that Socrates' mention of a fifth man is not some casual slip of the tongue or thoughtless momentary embellishment. It is too logically embarrassing or ridiculous for that. The unnamed fifth, therefore, presents a puzzle that calls for interpretation. Why should he (Socrates does say *andres*) have been mentioned at all? What could his unnamed function be?

Adeimantus happens to make no comment about the oddities in Socrates' summary statement that "the most necessary city would be made from four or

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five men” (369d). Were it not for the fact that Socrates’ interlocutors are so often represented as only partially understanding the force and direction of his questioning, this might be some ground for dismissing the need to interpret the unnamed fifth. More importantly, though, Socrates’ remarks do not have to be meaningful in the context of his immediate conversation in order for them to be meaningful at all. Not only in the particular case of the *Republic* is there an audience represented within the dialogue, there is also the audience beyond the dialogue for whom Plato has constructed his monologic text. Moreover, it is to this latter level that all intradramatic speculations must eventually be referred. I have already given two reasons for supposing that at least Plato intended the unnamed fifth to be noticed, whether or not it could also be said that Socrates was tacitly addressing others in the dialogue or saying more than he knew Adeimantus would understand for reasons of his own—where “own” has only dramatic meaning. My aim in what follows is to confirm that the unnamed fifth was meant to be noticed and to show that it is worth noticing, by deriving directly from the document entitled *Republic* the means for articulating its larger contextual significance.

I

Plato’s dialogues are full of the quirkiest details. Hermeneutic response to such details varies along a continuum from impatient dismissal to sycophantic obsession. While I intend to pursue an expansive rather than lean interpretation of the unnamed fifth, there is in this case an obvious deflationary (though not dismissive) reading that in the interests of moderation needs to be considered first. It will turn out to be not so much incorrect as inadequate.

Here is the entire discussion leading up to Socrates’ summary characterization of the “most necessary city” at 369d:

- S. “Well now, first and greatest of our needs is the provision of food for the sake of being and living.”
- A. “Absolutely.”
- S. “Second is the need for housing, and third the need for clothing and such things.”
- A. “That’s so.”
- S. “Come then,” I said, “how will the city be up to such provision? How else but that one be a farmer, another a housebuilder, and some other a weaver? Or shall we also install there a shoemaker or some other caretaker of bodily things?”
- A. “Quite.”
- S. “So the most necessary city would be from four or five men.”
- A. “Apparently.”

Socrates’ countdown of needs stops at three: food first, shelter second, then “clothing and such things” third. There is some vagueness built into the last of

these needs, and it seems to be the ground for the question of whether the enumeration of skilled men corresponding to them should be extended to include “a shoemaker or some other caretaker of bodily things.” Although the “other caretaker” is not named, he is different (*tin’ allon*) and therefore counted separately from the shoemaker, in the same way that the weaver is “some other” (*allos tis*) in relation to the farmer and housebuilder. The named occupations may reasonably be taken to correspond to the “four” of Socrates’ summary, which leaves “some other caretaker of the bodily things” as the obvious candidate for the unspecified fifth. Whatever else may be said about this, the number of human occupations—in other words, the character of human life—even in the most necessary city is underdetermined by the number of man’s basic needs. This is represented by the indeterminate inequality of “three” and “four or five.” In fact, “four or five” is strictly speaking not even a number. The most necessary city, once realized, is necessarily indeterminate.

The deflationary reading would have matters end here; Socrates says “four or five” because he has named four and only vaguely alluded to the possibility of a fifth caretaker of bodily things. I accept the correlation, but deny that it sufficiently explains either the indeterminacy of the count itself or the merely generic characterization of the unnamed fifth. There is still an inconsistency between the resolve to be as precise as possible and the insouciance of counting “four or five,” and still an inconsistency between the claim to have described the *most* necessary city without having said anything of the specific need in which the fifth occupation is rooted, that is, the need that makes it truly necessary. There must therefore be more meaning to be gleaned from the simple fact that the unnamed fifth is a “caretaker of bodily things” than this vague characterization. Moreover, there is even greater reason to suspect some irony in the text at this point, for in expatiating on bodily care Socrates is made to add a shoemaker to the “most necessary” city. Not only are shoemakers not obviously necessary, Socrates himself is notorious for going about unshod. If Socrates does not need shoes, the shoemaker is not necessary for at least the Socratic way of life (cf. *Phaedrus* 229a, *Symposium* 174a).

This observation can be immediately interpreted in one of two ways: either shoemaking is without further qualification less necessary to the city than weaving, housebuilding, and farming, or Socrates is out of place even at the most fundamental level of the polis. On the second reading, the civilization implied by shoes would be a necessary part of political life yet not a necessary part of the philosophical one. But if shoes should mark the city for the sake of this contrast, it is still puzzling why they should do so with utmost necessity. On either reading, then, the sophistication or apparent luxury of shoes, their non-necessity, cannot be overlooked.

Socrates’ mention of a shoemaker intimates that corporeal need, while compelling, does not in truth supply the complete measure even of the most necessary city. According to Socrates’ picture, the cities of men embody needs for

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things not strictly necessary for survival, for things like shoes in addition to food, shelter, and clothing. The principle that underlies this enriched form of need is not survival, to which need only food is explicitly related in Socrates' list, but care (*therapeia*). This Socrates clearly indicates by his general characterization of the unnamed fifth as "some other caretaker (*therapeutês*) of bodily things." In seeking to care for the body, one seeks more than to ensure its survival, hence one is inclined to speak of self-preservation as an instinct instead of something purposive. Rather, such caring implies an emerging consciousness of the body's well-being and its potential flourishing, in other words, an emerging consciousness of the good. For this reason, it could be said that care responds to need with infinitely more than is necessary, for it locates need inside a universal horizon; care for the body is the first manifestation of human freedom.² There can therefore be no simple deduction of the forms of human care from physical necessity alone, and hence the number of primary arts must indeterminately outstrip the number of corporeal needs, even at the very foundation of the city in speech.

The peculiarly unnecessary addition of the shoemaker as fourth in "the most necessary city" is a first clue that the necessity proper to cities cannot be understood on the paradigm of survival. It is not material necessity. For creatures that care, their actions are compelled in different ways from the activities of creatures that do not, and such a difference is at the root of politics.³ The paradigm of care, which contains the seed of freedom from the given, is inserted even before Socrates arrives at the unnamed fifth. It is against this background that the latter may be further understood.

II

The unnamed fifth has been all but universally neglected. Aristotle at least noticed him (*Politics*, iv 1291a23) yet gave no further comment. Most recently, however, Seth Benardete has hazarded that the unnamed fifth must be a warrior.⁴ Warriors do not officially appear until some time after Glaucon's interruption and therefore after Socrates and company have long since expanded their model beyond the most necessary city. At first the warriors appear under the ambiguous designation of "guardians (*phulakes*)" (374d), and not until much later is the distinction between rulers (*archontes*) and warriors (*stratiôtai*) explicitly made (412a). It is clear, though, that they are originally introduced to serve an expressly military function and lead a martial way of life. The development that leads from the most necessary city to the emergence of warrior-guardians is the requisite background for understanding Benardete's proposal.

The most necessary city was never, in the first place, complete. Having gotten to "four or five," Socrates soon points out that the skills of farming, housebuilding, weaving, and the rest are in need of auxiliary arts. They there-

fore add carpenters and smiths, cowherds and shepherds, merchants, sailors, shopkeepers, and laborers, together with a market and a system of currency (370d–371e). What does this list mean? The highest ends of such a city are no more than agricultural and mercantile, its basic structure simply economic. No explicit mention is made of political or governmental structure, no account given of social structure, family life, or religion, and no reference made to war and the need for military resources—at least not while the city is being constructed.⁵ Socrates' rhapsodic summary of the idyllic way of life in such a community prompts the spirited Glaucon to break in, claiming that his brother's city is not fit for men but fit only for those most accommodating and unspirited of animals, namely pigs (372d).

With notable alacrity, Socrates takes up Glaucon's point and rapidly sketches what he calls the "fevered" (*phlegmainousa*) or "luxuriating" (*truphōsa*) city, in contrast with Adeimantus' city which he now calls "healthy" and "truthful" (372e).⁶ Socrates adds a whole swarm of further occupations in order to satisfy Glaucon's expectations (373b–d), beginning with huntsmen and "imitators" (*mimētai*). These two additions make it clear that both spirit (*thumos*) and imagination were absent from Adeimantus's austere polity. Other groups mentioned include the craftsmen of female adornment, reminding us that women and the political consequences of sexual relations had been conveniently overlooked in the original construction, and a whole host of servants, implying a far more complex social structure than was envisioned by Adeimantus. First on the list of servants are teachers, reminding the reader of education, and last are the doctors. The total number of new occupations is seventeen.

The significance of the transition pivots on the natural force of specifically human desire and its crucial link with the forms of recognizably human politics.

Adeimantus's healthy city dissatisfies Glaucon because it leaves the ways of human life in servitude to nature as given. It acknowledges that the given is not on its own sufficient, for this is the precondition of any and all political association (cf. 369b), but the healthy city merely manipulates the given (tilling fields, building houses, weaving cloaks) and pursues activities that supplement the given for the sake of simple bodily goods. To be sure, such goods are developed within the horizon of care, but care of the body as practised in the healthy city is for the most part preservational (excepting the hint contained in the use of shoes). There is, for example, no teacher of gymnastic in the healthy city to make of the body more than is given, let alone a teacher of the soul. Adeimantus' city accepts the insufficiency of the given without moving to reject, deny, efface, transform, or transcend it. It merely deals with it. Its productions are convenient rather than beautiful, or meaningful, or noble. This is all summed up in Glaucon's image of the accommodating pig, who will wallow in whatever is at hand and whose horizon of satisfaction extends little farther than the feeding trough.

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Glaucon, on the other hand, represents the gesture of actively negating the given, of being unwilling to accept that simple necessity must dominate human life. His own first suggestion for how to improve his brother's city is to get the vegetarian feasts that were portrayed by Socrates off the "rushes strewn with yew and myrtle," i.e., up off the ground, and onto the tables and couches appropriate to civilized men (372d).⁷ Glaucon thus asserts a certain freedom by setting up distance between himself and the earth, creating such distance by interposing artefacts produced by a form of human ingenuity unimpelled by material necessity but driven by an inchoate urge for refinement.

At its root, human dissatisfaction with the given is indeterminate; simple rejection or negation does not result in any specific plan of action. Hence the young Glaucon is represented as not being entirely sure of what is missing from his brother's city. Socrates, on the other hand, the expert in human eros, has fathomed the reaches of human desire and is perfectly capable of immediately filling out Glaucon's presentiment in terms of their city in speech.⁸ There may be extravagance and luxury in the full-blooded version of Glaucon's city, but it is at least a city in which art, sex, social structure, education, politics, and in a moment, war may be found and recognized. The fevered city is manifestly a more adequate portrayal of the phenomena of civilized political life, because it acknowledges the forces of spirit, imagination, and erotic desire.

Immediately following their second expansion of the city, the first having been from utmost necessity to health and the one now from health to luxury, Socrates discerns the origin of war (373d):

- S. "And what about the land, the land that was then sufficient for feeding the men then; it will become small from having been sufficient. Or how should we speak?"
- G. "This way," he said.
- S. "Then there will be need of cutting off the land of our neighbours, if we are going to have enough to graze and plough, and there will be need for them to cut off ours, should they too let themselves go to the unlimited acquisition of wealth, overstepping the boundary of what is necessary."
- G. "Quite necessarily, Socrates," he said.
- S. "So we shall go to war after that, Glaucon? Or how will it be?"
- G. "This way," he said.
- S. "Well let's not say yet," I said, "whether war works evil or good, but only this much, that we have in its turn discovered an origin of war out of those things that most of all occur bad in cities, both in private and in public, when they occur.
- G. "Quite so."

For reasons he does not here specify, Socrates simply assumes the existence of other cities and a natural scarcity of material resources. The first supposition makes no difference to the conflict implied by finite resources and expansive desire, for the same conflict would also occur in a single, global polity. The

second supposition is initially problematic because it suggests that war is rooted in the merely contingent and extrahuman fact that resources happen to be scarce. Socrates' deeper point, however, is that natural, given resources are in principle inadequate to the demands of emancipated (but as yet undisciplined) human desire. This is why he speaks of letting go "to the unlimited (*apeiron*) acquisition of wealth, overstepping the boundary of what is necessary," a possibility attributed not only to the other cities but also to their own. War is rooted in the indeterminate omnivorousness of human desire. The human negation of the given is comprehensive, totalizing, and thus intrinsically prone to the vice of *pleonexia*, of wanting more than is sufficient.

The path has now been traced from farmers to warriors and so I return to Benardete's account of the unnamed fifth. He reasons as follows:

Glaucon and Socrates originally expanded the city dialogically (373d7), and now it is confronting invaders; but a moment's reflection shows that the army cannot be first formed now but it had to precede the original expansion; indeed, it had to precede the surplus the city created for export. The soldier must have been an original member of the true city. He is the fifth man (369d11). (P. 54)

Benardete's first point rightly uncovers the prestidigitation involved in Socrates' calling their army an army of "guardians." Regardless of the possibly pedagogical purposes of such a maneuver with respect to the overall course of the conversation, in its essence the fevered city requires aggressors as much as it requires defenders. Fighting is, on the reading I have given, coeval with the totalizing form of desire that underlies the move away from the healthy yet subhuman city of pigs. The spirited expansion of the city is necessarily aggressive, and forsakes passive caretaking of the body for a whole host of possible goods that would not exist at all were it not for the presence of human beings. Guarding therefore is, as Benardete maintains, logically posterior (though code-termined with the possibility of invasion) to the aggression at the heart of active human freedom.

It is, on the other hand, difficult to see how the army needs to be formed prior to the emergence of Glauconian desire. The wholly mercantile world of the healthy city is also a peaceful one, as Socrates emphasizes when he comments that its inhabitants "will live out their lives in peace and health" (372d). Those who define their lives in economic terms can take pecuniary advantage of war and might welcome it for that reason, but they can have no interest in waging it. Merchants do not care who wins. The only threat on this score to the health of the healthy city is the strange potency of money. If care for comfort, security, and refinement of material good should become desire for the unlimited power apparently promised by massive wealth then of course commerce becomes transformed into war. But that move transgresses exactly the same boundary transgressed by Glaucon on behalf of more civilized and noble inflections of indefinite desire. In sum, warriors might be useful to the mercantile

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ends of Adeimantus's city, but there is no principle within its dynamics that makes them necessary.

III

If the unnamed fifth cannot be a warrior, what else or who else could he be? My positive answer to this question falls into two parts. The first counts as a preamble to the second and examines the general functional significance of the unnamed fifth in the development of the city in speech. The second is my interpretation of the unnamed fifth's specific character.

In the first section, I interpreted the indeterminate count of "four or five" in terms of how human care necessarily outstrips the dull imperatives of the given. This outstripping is reflected both in the fact that the count is left indeterminate, for it could only be made determinate if caring and surviving were commensurate in kind, and in the fact that the tasks of the fifth are left unspecified; care has more forms than need demands. If care of the body is a minimal expression of human freedom, passive though it be in comparison to the expansiveness of Glauconian desire, then the unnamed fifth becomes a placeholder for all the future forms of human freedom. In this generic sense, the unnamed fifth would indeed be an anticipation of the warrior-guardian, but he would also be an anticipation of the swarm of occupations Socrates adds in the initial construction of the fevered city, not to mention an anticipation of the philosopher-king. Whether one thinks of the tasks added to complete the healthy city as new forms of freedom or not depends on one's assessment of their auxiliary status. In any event, the placeholder function, while consistent with the hypothesis of the unnamed fifth as a warrior, does not require it.

Socrates understands that the city of utmost necessity needs elaboration if it is to become an adequate model for human political life and thus an alphabet for the spelling out of justice. It is not until they have described the healthy city in its entirety that Socrates asks if it is complete (*telea*) and where justice and injustice may be found within it (371e). As it happens, Adeimantus cannot locate the elements of justice in his own city and Socrates does little to help him; instead he waxes eloquent on the healthy, truthful way of life that soon provokes Glaucon to declare its pastoral charms swinish. Socrates also understands that the healthy city is similarly inadequate. As already noted, his elaboration of the luxurious city swiftly draws attention to the powers of eros, spirit, and imagination overlooked in the previous construction, and it is not long before he passes onto the complex topics of education and rule, also unconsidered in the account of Adeimantus' city.

So much, then, for the general functional significance of the unnamed fifth. The next question is whether there is anything native to the structure of the most necessary city in its own right that allows one to specify a task or tasks

that belong intrinsically to it but which were not, for whatever reasons, mentioned. I have two possibilities to suggest.

The most obvious “caretaker of bodily things” that Adeimantus and Socrates fail to mention in reflecting on the most necessary city is the *doctor*.

Besides its intrinsic plausibility, there are a few textual clues that support this reading for the occupation of the unnamed fifth. It will be recalled that doctors are explicitly mentioned as the last of the seventeen occupations first added to create and support the fevered city. Here is how they are introduced (373d):

- S. “Accordingly, won’t we also be in much greater need of doctors, spending our time this way than we would be spending it in the previous manner?”
- G. “Much greater.”

The comparatives are important; it is the only occupation in the new list that is spoken of in such a way. And how could there be “much greater need” in the fevered city, unless there was already need in the city that went before? One is encouraged to overlook the comparative progression because the need for doctors is not explicitly mentioned until the city has become inflamed and swollen, plagued by the unnecessary effects of its effete self-indulgence. But this is not the only form of medicine that Socrates countenances. Much later, in Book III, he has occasion to distinguish the flattering medical art of Herodicus, which tends to those who waste their leisure and freedom in hypochondria, from the much more severe art of Asclepius, which tends to those who need to get well in order to continue performing their citizenly tasks (405d ff.). It is not an accident that the one man who is mentioned by name as being patient to Asclepius’s art is a carpenter (406d, 407b), i.e., a member of the healthy city. The carpenter also happens to be the very first auxiliary to be added to the most necessary city (370d); he is, in effect, numbered directly after the unnamed fifth.

According to these clues, the role of doctor appears to be the pivot between the city of utmost necessity and its elaboration into a healthy one. The very designation “healthy” itself suggests as much, for how could a city of human beings be healthy in body if not by the presence of doctors? But it is striking that while consistently called healthy, doctors are nowhere mentioned by name in Adeimantus’ city. This provokes the evident question: Why are the doctors suppressed?

To state my thesis on this point in shortest compass, the doctors are suppressed because the problem of rule is initially suppressed, and medicine throughout the *Republic* is a metaphor for the preventive and corrective aspect of rule. (The other main aspect of rule, namely guidance, is constantly represented by the image of the pilot. Moreover, pilots and doctors are almost invariably mentioned together. On this imagery see also *Nicomachean Ethics*, ii 1104a10.) Let me now indicate the basis of my twofold claim, beginning with Socrates’ suppression of the issue of rule.

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Socrates reveals his awareness that rule is demanded even by the dynamics implied by the city of utmost necessity in several ways. First is his discussion of the *kairos* in the exercise of any art (370b). There is a proper moment for the performance of any task, and it cannot be left “to await the leisure of the man who does it.” This raises the question of who is to ensure that a man should compromise his leisure, which is to say his autonomy. Next, in introducing the auxiliary art of shopkeeping, Socrates makes a passing reference to “rightly managed cities” (371c) wherein those too weak to engage primary tasks take up the secondary ones. Finally, some time after Glaucon’s interruption Socrates hints at the need for policing the most necessary city when he notes that “we prevented the shoemaker from trying at the same time to be a farmer or a weaver or a housebuilder; he had to stay a shoemaker just so the shoemaker’s art would produce fine work for us” (374b). Aristotle’s commentary on the most necessary city confirms the point: “Yet even amongst the four or however many partners there be, there must be someone to assign and to judge what is just” (*Politics*, iv 1291a22).

The coordination of doctoring and rule is almost too pervasive to require separate comment. In setting up the problem of justice, doctors and pilots appear as important examples in the opening exchanges with Polemarchus (332e) and Thrasymachus (341c, 346b), while they are also mentioned in Glaucon’s request for a more thorough treatment (360e). When rulers (*archontes*) are mentioned for the very first time, their function is directly compared with the doctor, the gymnastics trainer, and the pilot (389b). This is done in an effort to explain the potential justification for using lies as drugs (*pharmaka*), itself a further and subsequently crucial medicinal analogy; Asclepian medicine is characterized as “statesmanlike” (*politikon*; 407e); the infamous “noble lie” of Book III is Socrates’ first actual example of a pharmacological lie told for the sake of the city’s health (414c); at 459c he calls for a “most courageous doctor,” not one of the ordinary kind, who is willing to use a further “throng of lies and deceptions” as drugs “for the benefit of the ruled”; and finally, in the well-known image of the city as a ship (488a ff.), Socrates asserts a direct analogy between the excellence and nobility of the pilot, the doctor, the philosopher, and the statesman (489b).

Not naming the doctors of the healthy city, therefore, is entirely of a piece with not alluding to its governance and the governance of the necessary city at its core. The unnamed fifth is both a doctor and the hidden ruler in the first city; he is both the prime example and regulator of care’s first manifestations. It could be said that the doctor is in truth the first of human beings to overrule nature and by that right he rules those who remain subservient to the imperatives of the given. In other words, his is the first architectonic art. The doctor does not, however, negate the given; Asclepian medicine is the necessary but not sufficient condition for freedom.

The final question provoked by the unnamed fifth, therefore, is why sup-

press the issue of rule? I think the reason for Socrates' represented coyness on this score is tied up with the pedagogical need to discipline the inherent fascination, indeed excitement, in the practical question of *who* should rule. A truly serious response to the question of who should rule requires that the most careful attention be given to all the sources of unruliness in the community of human beings—spirit, eros, self-interest, sex, attachment, laziness, vanity—that is, sober attention must be given to the theoretical question of *why* rule is necessary. Hence Socrates postpones his outrageous answer to the practical question, namely that philosophers should rule, until after its theoretical underpinnings are clear. Barely asked, the question of who should rule is naturally prone to cloud the judgment of youthful souls such as Glaucon, Adeimantus, and some of the other young men present. Articulated to the outrageous length of installing philosophers as kings it is virtually guaranteed of having no audience at all. Little wonder, then, that Socrates should introduce his thinking on the matter with such caution.

NOTES

1. Translations from the Greek are mine throughout.

2. Aristotle coordinates consciousness of the good with the essence of man as both rational and political: "speech [*logos*] is for making evident what is advantageous and what is harmful, and therefore also what is just and what is unjust; for this is, in relation to the rest of living things, proper to human beings that only they are able to perceive good and bad, just and unjust, and the rest, and community in these things makes both household and city" (*Politics*, i 1253a15–18).

3. This counts as a rejoinder to Aristotle's criticism in his commentary on Socrates' "first city" that it implies that "every city is composed for the sake of necessities rather than for the sake of what is noble" (*Politics*, iv 1291a18).

4. Seth Benardete, *Socrates' Second Sailing: On Plato's Republic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 54.

5. Socrates tacitly draws attention to many of these oversights when he goes on to summarize the healthy city's way of life at 372a *after* he has supposed it complete enough to pose the question of where to find justice. His summary introduces elements nowhere mentioned in the specific construction: "Setting out noble loaves of barley and wheat on some reeds or clean leaves, they will stretch out on rushes strewn with yew and myrtle and feast themselves and their children. Afterwards they will drink wine and, crowned with wreaths, sing of the gods. So they will have sweet intercourse with one another, not producing children beyond their means and keeping an eye out against poverty or war" (372b). The speech ends on the word "war" because that is precisely where Glaucon is made to interrupt. The reference to not producing children beyond their means is an anticipation of the political vagaries introduced by sexual eros and reproduction that even the best regime cannot ultimately control and which are therefore the ultimate cause of corruption in all regimes (546a ff.).

6. Socrates' epithet here is *alêthinê* (rather than *alêthês*). It can be translated either as "true," which has been the more common for this particular passage, although its primary meaning is "truthful." For an explanation of why "truthful" is the preferable rendition, see Carl Page, "The Truth about Lies in Plato's *Republic*," *Ancient Philosophy* 11 (1991): 1–33.

7. Benardete states the point nicely: "Tables put meat off the ground, and couches put men off the ground (372b4–6); they separate man from pig by elevating him and delay the satisfaction of his desires. They are the first instruments that intervene between the consumer and his immediate consumption of things" (p. 51).

14 · Interpretation

8. Socrates consistently testifies to his own expertise in erotics. In the *Symposium* he describes himself as someone who “knows (*epistasthai*) nothing other than erotics” (177d–e); in the *Phaedrus* he claims to possess the “erotic art” (*hê erôtikê technê*; 257a); and in the *Theages* he is least modest of all: “I happen to know (*epistasthai*) nothing except a certain small subject—erotics. Yet in this subject I rank myself as awesomely accomplished (*deinos*) beyond anyone else among those who have been and among those who now live” (128b).” Socrates is not made to mention those to come because that would include Plato.