

Interpretation

A JOURNAL OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Spring 1994

Volume 21 Number 3

- 261 Mark Kremer Aristophanes' Criticism of Egalitarianism:
An Interpretation of *The Assembly of Women*
- 275 Steven Forde The Comic Poet, the City, and the Gods:
Dionysus' *Katabasis* in the *Frogs* of
Aristophanes
- 287 Tucker Landy Virtue, Art, and the Good Life in Plato's
Protagoras
- 309 Nalin Ranasinghe Deceit, Desire, and the Dialectic: Plato's
Republic Revisited
- 333 Olivia Delgado de Torres Reflections on Patriarchy and the
Rebellion of Daughters in Shakespeare's
Merchant of Venice and *Othello*
- 353 Alfred Mollin On Hamlet's Mousetrap
- 373 Joseph Alulis The Education of the Prince in
Shakespeare's *King Lear*
- 391 David Lowenthal *King Lear*
- 419 Glenn W. Olsen John Rawls and the Flight from Authority:
The Quest for Equality as an Exercise in
Primitivism
- Book Reviews*
- 437 Will Morrisey *The Roots of Political Philosophy: Ten
Forgotten Socratic Dialogues*, edited by
Thomas L. Pangle
- 441 John C. Koritansky *Interpreting Tocqueville's "Democracy in
America,"* edited by Ken Masugi

Interpretation

- Editor-in-Chief Hilail Gildin, Dept. of Philosophy, Queens College
Executive Editor Leonard Grey
General Editors Seth G. Benardete • Charles E. Butterworth •
Hilail Gildin • Robert Horwitz (d. 1987) •
Howard B. White (d. 1974)
- Consulting Editors Christopher Bruell • Joseph Cropsey • Ernest L. Fortin
• John Hallowell (d. 1992) • Harry V. Jaffa • David
Lowenthal • Muhsin Mahdi • Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr.
• Arnaldo Momigliano (d. 1987) • Michael Oakeshott
(d. 1990) • Ellis Sandoz • Leo Strauss (d. 1973) •
Kenneth W. Thompson
- European Editors Terence E. Marshall • Heinrich Meier
Editors Wayne Ambler • Maurice Auerbach • Fred Baumann
• Michael Blaustein • Patrick Coby • Edward J. Erler •
Maureen Feder-Marcus • Joseph E. Goldberg • Stephen
Harvey • Pamela K. Jensen • Ken Masugi • Grant B.
Mindle • James W. Morris • Will Morrissey • Aryeh L.
Motzkin • Charles T. Rubin • Leslie G. Rubin •
Bradford P. Wilson • Hossein Ziai • Michael Zuckert •
Catherine Zuckert
- Manuscript Editor Lucia B. Prochnow
Subscriptions Subscription rates per volume (3 issues):
individuals \$25
libraries and all other institutions \$40
students (four-year limit) \$16
Single copies available.
Postage outside U.S.: Canada \$4.50 extra;
elsewhere \$5.40 extra by surface mail (8 weeks
or longer) or \$11.00 by air.
Payments: in U.S. dollars AND payable by
a financial institution located within the U.S.A.
(or the U.S. Postal Service).

CONTRIBUTORS should follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 13th ed. or manuals based on it; double-space their manuscripts; place references in the text, in endnotes or follow current journal style in printing references. Words from languages not based on Latin should be transliterated to English. To ensure impartial judgment of their manuscripts, contributors should omit mention of their other work; put, on the title page only, their name, any affiliation desired, address with postal/zip code in full, and telephone. Please send THREE clear copies. Contributors using computers should, if possible, provide a character count of the entire manuscript.

Composition by Eastern Composition, Inc.,
Binghamton, N.Y. 13905
Printed and bound by Wickersham Printing Co.,
Lancaster, PA 17603

Inquiries: Patricia D'Allura, Assistant to the Editor,
INTERPRETATION, Queens College, Flushing, N.Y.
11367-1597, U.S.A. (718)997-5542

Deceit, Desire, and the Dialectic: Plato's *Republic* Revisited

NALIN RANASINGHE
University of Dallas

This work will defend Plato against perhaps the gravest of the many accusations that have been levelled against him over the last twenty-four centuries. Plato, it is charged, teaches in the *Republic* that benevolent totalitarianism is the form of governance most appropriate to human nature.¹ The insatiable desires of man ensure that any freer form of political association will inevitably breed anarchy and tyranny. Plato's conservative critics have been more muted in their tone, at least to the time of Nietzsche; while sharing Plato's apparent pessimism towards the desires, they ignore his more bizarre suggestions and concentrate on forming strong prejudices and healthy habits. This belief in the futility of educating desire is shared by new, shriller voices on the left who use the *Republic* to support their suspicion that education is nothing more than an insidious means of domination and control. Addressing myself especially to those who are both impressed by the brilliance of Plato's insights and distressed by his apparent severity, I will show how a close reading that pays proper attention to dramatic and historical considerations allows a very different understanding of the text to emerge.

Instead of reading the *Republic* as a vividly detailed account of how the ideal political order is established and maintained, I will show that the *Republic* is actually a comic depiction of the absurdities that result when a fundamental disjunction is set up between justice and eros. At the risk of being judged too flippant, I would even claim that Plato's *Republic* is the original "Polis Academy." Far from being a summation of Plato's deepest thoughts on the art of ruling, the *Republic* is itself a labyrinthine process of pedagogy that tests the reader's powers of reflection and poetical imagination to the utmost. In a very real sense, reading the *Republic* correctly is every bit as difficult as climbing out of the Cave. We must remember that the content and the form of Platonic teaching are not at variance. In other words, Plato did not choose indirection for the sake of elitism and obscurity; he is also teaching us about the desire and incapacity of human beings, ourselves included, to receive virtue through information transference and coerced order.

One pointer as to how the *Republic* should be read is provided at the beginning of the *Parmenides*, which seems to be structured so as to call our attention

to the *Republic*. The narrator of the opening segment is a man called Cephalus, who travels to Athens where he seeks out Glaucon and Adeimantus. In the preliminary remarks which precede Parmenides' long monologue, Zeno describes his own style of writing and tells Socrates that he made no pretense of disguising from the public the fact that his work was written as "a sort of defense of Parmenides against those who made fun of him by showing that his supposition . . . leads to absurdities . . . this book is a retort . . . in the same coin by showing that their own suppositions . . . lead to even more absurd consequences" (128c–d). Zeno reminds Socrates that this work of his youth was not written dispassionately, as an older man would, but out of a youthful desire for controversy. Apart from giving an indication as to how the *Parmenides* should be approached, we seem to be provided with a hint that the *Republic* should be viewed in the same fashion. As in every dialogue, Socrates does not claim to convey knowledge wholesale; he indirectly leads the individual mind to knowledge by exposing various shortcomings in the definitions given by his interlocutor.

Further suggestive information with regard to the context of the *Republic* is given by Xenophon, who tells us in the *Memorabilia* that Glaucon was "attempting to be an orator and striving for headship in the state even though he was less than twenty years and none of his friends or relatives could stop him though he would get himself dragged from the platform and make himself a laughing stock" (*Mem.* III. vi). Xenophon goes on to say that only Socrates, who took an interest in Glaucon for the sake of Plato and Charmides, managed to check him. Socrates does this by questioning Glaucon and making it clear that his ignorance prevented him from making any contribution of value to the polis. This gives us some sense of how Glaucon was regarded in his own day and age; he is clearly not a potential Alcibiades, Dion, or Alexander being taught how to establish and maintain a tyranny. In this context we should also bear in mind the *Seventh Letter* and Plato's passionately expressed distaste for the methods of the restored Oligarchs; the *Republic* is not an academic exercise blithely undertaken by one unaware of the practical consequences of political frustration and hatred.

Ultimately, all we learn from Xenophon and history can only redirect us to the text. Although a Platonic text is autonomous, like natural theology it is both readable in theory by reason alone and capable of being illuminated through revelation. In this context the revelations of Xenophon are all the more helpful because they restore to us what was presupposed as general knowledge in the audience for whom Plato wrote. Xenophon's *Memorabilia* should also be used as a source for questions with which to bombard the text. We may ask whether Socrates intends (and succeeds in) dissuading Glaucon from entering politics. We may also ask why Plato seems to depict Socrates, who was accused of corrupting Critias and Charmides, in the act of corrupting their nephew and his brother Glaucon. This question becomes even more significant when we recall

Xenophon's claim that Socrates undertook to educate Glaucon because of Plato and Charmides.

Although Leo Strauss, who points out the importance of Xenophon's information, reads the *Republic* as "the most magnificent cure ever devised to every form of political ambition,"² it is clear that Xenophon's Socrates is not hostile to all political ambition. Immediately after the conversation with Glaucon, Xenophon recounts a much earlier encounter that Socrates had with Glaucon's uncle Charmides, who is encouraged by Socrates, against his will, to enter politics (*Mem.* III.vii).

Another source of relevance is the *Charmides*; this dialogue seems to foreshadow the themes of the *Republic*, not simply because of the relationship between Charmides and Glaucon, but also by the way in which a lack of temperance or self-knowledge leads to the consequences described in the *Republic* and seen in Charmides' political career. Temperance is to the soul what justice is to the city. We recall Socrates saying that before he gave Charmides the charm to cure his headache, he had to see whether Charmides possessed sufficient temperance to use it (158c). This situation is illustrative of the fundamental paradox of education, and indicative of the untransferability of virtue or temperance. Even though Socrates has caught a glimpse of the potential of Charmides that has inflamed him with great desire (155d), the possession of potential is not sufficient. It is also worth bearing in mind that we cannot expect Glaucon's soul to be improved markedly by one evening spent with Socrates; even Alcibiades had to find out the hard way that a one-night stand with Socrates was not a sufficient means of absorbing virtue. Temperance is not a quality that Charmides or even Socrates himself could claim to own; it is rather a state of being constantly attentive to the moral archetypes that remind the soul of its powers and responsibilities. Also noteworthy is the definition of Critias that self-knowledge is minding one's own business (161b). Critias' subsequent career as a leader of the restored Oligarchy would be too fresh in the minds of Plato's readers for any use but the most ironic to be made of this definition of justice in the *Republic*.³

Returning to the *Republic*, we must see that Glaucon's place in this dialogue is crucial. If we remember that it is Glaucon whose political ambitions are being assessed by Socrates, then the dialogue can be seen as a response to Glaucon's understanding of justice rather than a treatise on the nature of the Just. In other words, the *Republic* does not represent Socrates' account of justice; we should take in all seriousness his claim at the end of Book I that he does not know what justice is. Rather, Socrates serves as a midwife who delivers up the unsatisfactory implications of the views that Glaucon holds and does not make public. We should examine very closely the demand that Glaucon makes of Socrates in Book II before drawing any conclusions about the political ideas that Plato endorses in this work. In Aristophanic language, the *Republic* is in Cloud-Cuckoo-Land, and Socrates is a philosophic midwife/

cuckoo who runs away with and hatches another bird's wind-egg. We must not fault Socrates for refusing to provide an explicit account of justice at this time. Justice is discussed against the ominous background of Charmides' failure to learn temperance. It may even be that the very notion of Justice is too stultifying a term, too opposed to eros, and too tied in with the Metaphysician's need for stable self-conserving systems, to offer much possibility for genuine equity. Perhaps the very Socratic revolution consists in the replacement of cosmic justice by temperance? In short, the *Republic* is not an attempt to construct and conserve a coherent whole: Plato is not Aristotle; this account will present strong evidence that he is not even a Neoplatonist. Rather, we must enjoy the rich imagery of the text as it draws us into a better appreciation of the grandeur and frailty of human existence.

Glaucon plans to rule a city. Instead of deriving his political philosophy from a clear awareness of the soul, his understanding of the soul is blindly derived from his fierce ambition to exercise power. Should city or soul be reformed first? Glaucon says the former, but Plato implies the latter. A true understanding of the polis must derive from an appreciation of human nature. It must not come out of a desire to rule which is indicative of a disordered soul that does not know itself. An unexamined life, such as Glaucon's, cannot be the basis for statesmanship. The subtext of the *Republic* is an argument that Socrates conducts through and with Glaucon's ambitions, an argument in which Glaucon is made aware of his political incapacity in a way that is all the more effective in its avoidance of public embarrassment.

This argument is also conducted against Aristophanes and the various conservative accusers and critics of Socrates; they are shown the consequences of the romantic and comic notions which undergird their own complaints against the present age.⁴ They would like to go back to a golden age which has never existed in fact. The very beginning of the *Republic* with its treatment of the questions surrounding the repaying of debts seems to be designed to call our attention to Aristophanes' charge in the *Clouds* that Socratic dialectic is unjust because it teaches debtors to quibble about what is properly owed instead of making prompt and literal performance of what is expected of them. It turns out that Glaucon would like to bring Aristophanes' comic vision into literal existence; this is part of Plato's indictment of poetry which amounts to an indictment of the mimetic tradition. We see Glaucon blindly imitating Socrates' parody of Aristophanes' satire, which is itself a wistful invocation of a past that never could have existed. Our own age witnesses the compounding of this absurdity when literal readers of the *Republic* go on to accuse Plato and Socrates of totalitarian ambitions. We are truly in a situation where men blindly interpret shadows at several removes from the truth. Glaucon in his state of ignorant ambition is identical to the man not in possession of his wits who was refused restitution of what he entrusted for safekeeping. Instead, he is provided with Socratic interest: valuable awareness of his own unsettled condition. Like

the dog that did not bark in the night, Glaucon is perhaps best remembered for what he did not do; he did not follow the example of Critias and Charmides and share in their notoriety. Like Odysseus in Book X (620c–d), he apparently chooses a long and inglorious life of obscurity and takes his leave of us rejoicing in his good fortune. This essay will try to depict the powerful but subtle chain of reasoning that sent him on this path. The *Republic* is thus evidence of the unorthodox but honorable way in which Socrates satisfied his obligations to Athens.

Glaucon's views on justice and injustice are filtered through Book I of the *Republic*, which recounts a series of increasingly spirited exchanges about the nature of justice that Socrates had with Cephalus, his son Polemarchus, and the sophist Thrasymachus. All three interlocutors anticipate Glaucon's position that the just life is unhappy because justice is essentially antierotic. The underlying theme of Book I is the raging force of eros which compromises and threatens any possibility of justice or social stability. When Cephalus tells Socrates that his advanced age has made him immune to desire and more susceptible to speeches, he quoted Sophocles as saying that he felt as if he had run away from a frenzied and savage master. Quite apart from anticipating the sentiments felt by the prisoner in the cave, and telling us something about the character of its rulers, we are made aware of the tremendous effort that is expended in fighting desire. Plato's readers were doubtless aware that a few years after the dramatic date of the *Republic*, Sophocles' sons sought to have him declared of unsound mind because of an attachment that he had formed with a flute girl. Cicero tells us that the ninety-year-old poet proved his sanity by reading from his latest play, *Oedipus at Colonus*.⁵ As well as explaining the Lear-like animosity that Oedipus shows towards his sons, this historical snippet also advises against declaring premature victory over eros: one could edit Solon and cry warningly: *Call no man unerotic until he is dead*.

Socrates suggests to Cephalus that it is his wealth and not simply his good character that enables him to face the disabilities of old age; it is because of his money that he can make reparation to gods and men for the sins of his lustful youth. His wealth serves to protect him from the worst of the fears which afflict old age. Because he inherited his money he did not need to accumulate wealth out of necessity, a form of desire which makes justice in the sense of strict reparation impossible. If Cephalus isn't as attached to his wealth as one who had to earn it, how much more under the grip of necessity would one be who had not earned enough? This is one of the recurrent themes of the *Republic*; is justice *knowledge* of what is appropriate need or is it *poetry*: wealth suppressing the necessary desires of poverty to secure conditions of stability and order for itself? The complexity of this question is compounded by the strategic need for the second type of justice to disguise itself as the first.

Polemarchus, not Cephalus's only son but the sole legatee of his argument, is all too aware of the problems that beset the defense of inherited wealth

amidst conditions of political instability. If Cephalus represents the no-longer-tenable old order, then Polemarchus stands for the uncertain present and Thrasymachus the threatening future. Cephalus views justice in terms of reparations to others, but Polemarchus desires coerced restitution of property from enemies. Polemarchus also cites a poet, Simonides, to buttress this position, claiming that justice is giving to each exactly what is owed; his definition repudiates the very origin of the Athenian polity, when Solon abolished debt slavery and cancelled all other debts despite the loud anger of the wealthy. When Socrates points out that giving what is owed implies knowledge of what is appropriate in a situation where simple reparation is not so easily made, Polemarchus attempts to short circuit any discussion of this question (which entails knowledge of what is good and evil) by saying that he understands justice as license to do good to friends and harm to enemies. Polemarchus views justice in subjective and partisan terms: a man's friends are just and his enemies unjust. The love he feels towards his friends leads him to find relish in giving his enemies their just deserts. What is repaid has little to do with material accounts; honor and dishonor are the currency of the realm of spiritedness. As a result, these spirited men find it hard to acknowledge the most basic property rights of their enemies.

There is the further problem that spiritedly just men like Polemarchus do not seem to have any nondestructive traits or skills. An adversarial relationship is suggestively implied by the long series of contrasts between crafts and justice, while all of the productive skills seem to be connected to injustice, i.e., not being part of the just faction, rather than justice. A just man cannot be only useful as a guardian of what has been entrusted to him (the family of Cephalus was in the business of shield-making) when the origins of property are to be found in acts of violent acquisition; he also needs productive enemies who can be plundered or controlled with the assistance of other "just" friends. Plato obviously meant his readers to note that the dramatic context of the *Republic* provides poignant testimony to the transient nature of such friendships. While the two young aristocrats, Glaucon and Adeimantus, are presently on good terms with the wealthy metic family of Cephalus, in a few years Polemarchus would be killed by a faction led by their uncles and Socrates' former companions Critias and Charmides. These Oligarchs then proceeded to enrich themselves at the expense of the metics.⁶

Socrates soon convinces Polemarchus that greater benefit and harm can be done to friends and enemies respectively by one who knows who his friends and enemies really are, as well as what is truly beneficial. This is the positive value of justice, and its importance can hardly be exaggerated in an adversarial situation where internecine conflict is more the rule than the exception. Polemarchus is then made to admit that since doing injustice to enemies only makes them worse, it is never just to injure anyone, even though it might seem to be advantageous. Socrates claims that justice, by its very essence, cannot make

men unjust; justice is like all the other arts in that it improves all who come into contact with it with respect to its subject matter. This view is flatly opposed to the subtext that we have just observed according to which a group of “just men” define their enemies as unjust to justify their subsequent malevolent conduct towards them. In the language of the *Euthyphro*, the just is not just, just because it is called just by the just; it is called just by the just because it is just. Socrates’ view of justice stresses the unity and common interests of a polis, while the other definition would emphasize, exacerbate, and exploit antagonisms between various economic and social strata.

Thrasymachus now intervenes to defend violently his thesis that justice is the advantage of the stronger. Justice in the idealized sense in which Socrates has described it is illusory and tragic in the worse sense. True justice, as Thrasymachus depicts it, can be portrayed in Nietzschean terms as a stabilizing force overcoming the tragic delusions of idealistic ethics. Socratic rationalism leads the individual to make impossible moral demands of life; this is why Thrasymachus accuses Socrates of snivelling and needing a wet nurse. He would agree heartily with Nietzsche’s claim that justice is in the service of life; justice has no right to make unrealistic demands of life because justice is a creation of life. The fullest implication of this position is that justice is constructed so that those too weak to govern, and give meaning to the whole in seeking their own advantage, can accept the meaning given to life by the strong without suffering from moral vertigo. Conversely, the superiority of those wearing spurs consists not simply in their ability to create their own values, but also in their prudence in not revealing that they have created nature/convention in accordance with the laws of life. This is why the perfectly unjust ruler must appear to be perfectly just and even demand recompense for his seemingly just deeds. Thrasymachus must agree with Nietzsche that the key to happiness is the strong accepting the truth about life and creating noble life-sustaining lies for the weak, who are incapable of bearing or even apprehending the truth about justice. Making unrealistic demands on life only leads to moral and social chaos.⁷

Thrasymachus is robbed of his triumph by Socrates, who is in a position to force him to admit that his own professional activities as a sophist are conducted according to the adversarial and exploitative model that he has just set out. Although Thrasymachus charges money for his lessons, we are entitled to suspect that this is not the sole advantage that he gains from sophistry. Even the public defeat and discomfiture of Thrasymachus support his own point about the political necessity of untruth: the associates of the perfectly unjust man should be kept in the dark as to his intentions. Thrasymachus could have rejected Socrates’ analogy from the sciences in even stronger terms by claiming that it was to the advantage of the weak to be dominated by the strong, thus presenting injustice on the grandest scale as the master discipline which regulates the health of the polis by purging it of what was dangerous to its content-

ment and stability. This was why he could not take the easy way out offered by Cleitophon's position, which would produce conditions of pluralistic anarchy instead of the monistic totalitarianism that Thrasymachus himself would prefer. He is unable to deploy this ideal of the perfectly unjust ruler, an ideal that Glaucon later steals from him and describes without his permission. Thrasymachus' refusal to bring forth these arguments indicates that he has been reminded of the *public* untenability of his position by Socrates. Glaucon is acute enough to see that Thrasymachus' weakness lay not in his argument but in his imprudence in giving open expression to an indecent truth; the famous blush of Thrasymachus is a belated recognition of this need for the *appearance* of honor. Socrates has shown himself to be the more prudent of the two in this battle between just and unjust speech. The question for Glaucon now has to do with what Socrates conceals beneath his unattractive and ironic facade. Just as Socrates asked Cephalus in relatively crass terms whether a life without desire was worth living, Glaucon now indirectly aims an even cruder question at Socrates. He seeks to know what Socrates gets out of living the way he does. Glaucon wonders if he secretly enjoys illicit pleasures while seeming to be a just pauper.

Glaucon asks Socrates whether he would truly persuade or merely appear to have convinced them of the superiority of justice. This question shows that he is very much aware of the distinction between appearance and reality underlying Socrates' apparent refutation of Thrasymachus. Glaucon sets up a threefold classification of goods: those desired for their own sake, those desired for consequences, and those desirable both for their own sake and their consequences. Glaucon believes that justice is practiced only for its presumed consequences and not for its intrinsic qualities; he challenges Socrates to defend justice strictly on the basis of its inherent effects, although Socrates has already told him that he understands justice to be preferred both for itself and for its results. Glaucon's challenge presupposes the impossibility of the good life; not content with denying the good effects expected to accrue from a just life, he goes on to burden it with every misfortune and asks Socrates to compare it to an unjust life that has every material advantage. Adeimantus compounds the problem by excluding consideration of rewards and sanctions in the afterlife.

By framing the question in this extreme fashion the sons of Ariston make it impossible for Socrates to defend the good life in any positive way. They have already accepted the judgment of Thrasymachus and Cephalus that justice is nothing more than the denial of eros. While Socrates has already refuted this charge in his encounter with Calicles in the *Gorgias*, he is now faced with a significant refinement of this definition of injustice. This modification is of course the Machiavellian dream of the perfectly unjust life; a life conducted according to scientific injustice that would eschew the barbaric hedonism of Cleitophon and Calicles in order to prosper long and gloriously. The perfectly unjust man would be a practitioner of the kind of master science that so fasci-

nated Glaucon's uncle Critias in the *Charmides*. Such a master science will not be connected to the knowledge of good and evil, as Critias had to acknowledge in the *Charmides* (174b); rather, it will situate itself above good and evil by virtue of its presumption that all morality is constructed in accordance with the law of nature, which dictates that only the strongest and wrongest should rule. This master science thus replaces temperance, because its self-knowledge amounts to a sovereign knowledge of its own creation and business. Glaucon thus seeks to escape the problems that confounded Calicles, who was compelled in the *Gorgias* to describe the unjust tyrant as a sort of natural slave to desire. In effect then, Glaucon aims at overcoming the disjunction faced by Achilles, who had to choose between a long obscure life and a short glorious career of injustice. While Socrates also believes in a long and happy life led through the education of eros,⁸ he cannot defend this possibility before he has shown that injustice and lasting happiness are incompatible.

Glaucon's image of the ring of Gyges provides a very definite indication as to his own inclinations. Glaucon uses this tale to inform Socrates, secretly, that he too would emulate Gyges were he possessed of the power to act unjustly with total impunity; "give each (man) license to do whatever he wants, while we follow and watch where his desire will lead . . . we will catch the just man red handed going the same way as the unjust" (359c). Both Socrates and Glaucon are aware that the discussion in Book I has done little or nothing to overcome Glaucon's hidden desire for tyranny. To achieve the desired catharsis, Socrates must descend into the underworld of Glaucon's desires and vanquish the desire for tyranny. In a sense, any intellectual attempt to display the superiority of the just life is doomed in advance, because the desire for tyranny only rationalizes in order to justify what it has already accepted prerationally. Socrates cannot win his battle for Glaucon's soul by demolishing one set of rationalized fortifications; another Sophist will soon replace these as long as Glaucon secretly continues to desire tyranny. It is not sufficient to address the symptoms of Glaucon's malaise; the depths of his soul must be plumbed for the allure of tyranny to be discredited.

Socrates purges Glaucon of his unjust desires by offering him a city instead of a soul. Instead of depicting a perfectly just life that encountered misfortune and misery as a consequence of its virtue, thereby playing the pander and discrediting his own view that virtue *is* desirable for its consequences, Socrates offers Glaucon what he truly desired: the totally unjust life, perfectly disguised as the perfectly just life. Socrates suggests to Glaucon and Adeimantus that it would be easier to observe justice in the city than in the soul. By watching a city come into being, they would presumably be able to observe the genesis of justice and injustice. The origins of the city are to be found in our not being self-sufficient. This is also a timely reminder to Glaucon that human life cannot be led apart from society; as Socrates told Polemarchus, self-sufficiency was a delusion of some rich man with an exaggerated notion of his capability. The

just life can only be justified and satisfied through its political consequences. Socrates' understanding of justice is very Athenian and cannot be translated into Stoic or Christian terms without suffering great distortion.

The first city to be described by Socrates, while materially sufficient in all other respects, is not found by Adeimantus to be either just or unjust (372a). Although this city, more than any other, is characterized by men "minding their own business" it is significant that this definition is not introduced, even though such a depiction of justice would be wholly consistent with the positions that both Cephalus and Polemarchus held. Justice can only make a belated appearance *after* the erotic Glaucon bursts in—like a wild beast—upon this bucolic society to demand *opson*, i.e. meat. Glaucon's description of this community as a city of swine suggests that he has his own ideas as to how this deficiency may be overcome. Only after Glaucon's introduction of relishes is justice needed. The luxurious city also needs swineherds. Although the city of swine already has shepherds and cowherds, "this animal wasn't in our earlier city—there was no need—but in this one there will be need of it in addition" (373c).

By outstripping the bounds of necessity, the city now needs an army to acquire and defend its luxuries. In keeping with the principle of specialization, it must entrust this responsibility to Guardians, who combine in their natures the sheepdog's capacity for loving friends and hating enemies. Justice is thus introduced only after injustice and eros come to characterize the conduct of the city. This is consistent with what we said about justice being a restraining influence on desire. Justice in this city is simply politically mandated restraint, it is not a transcendental ideal in its own right. Justice is simply the advantage of the stronger imposed on the weak in order to maximize the superiority of the strong. In the crudest terms, the Guardians are only needed after the strong have already grown accustomed to the taste of relishes; their purpose is to guard and preserve this advantage from the enemies of those who define justice.

The Guardians of this city are thus expected to love friends and hate enemies. Socrates tells us that a Guardian will be like a dog in being angry at a complete stranger, "even though it never had any bad experience with him." Conversely, "when it sees someone it knows, it greets him warmly, even though it never had a good experience with him" (376a). Like Polemarchus, this dog is totally ignorant about its true friends and enemies. Such a Guardian is "truly philosophic," since "it distinguishes friendly from hostile looks by nothing other than by having learned the one and being ignorant of the other . . . how can it be anything other than a lover of learning since it defines what's its own and what's alien by knowledge and ignorance" (376b)?

The content of the Guardians' education is now discussed and found to consist entirely of Noble Lies. Because the purged city seeks to downplay the freedom of the individual in order to promote community values of endurance and stability, the educator of the Guardians will use religion accordingly. With

this end in mind, instead of describing a shadowy existence in Hades where all shades are grey, he will speak of significant otherworldly rewards and sanctions in the Blessed Isles and Tartarus respectively. Homer's accounts of Hades serve to remind men of the tragedy and uniqueness of worldly existence; in contrast, myths about reincarnation can be used to emphasize social continuity and remind the many that they cannot escape punishment for their actions. The Guardians will be taught that attempting to escape from the cave is not merely futile but also sinful. We don't hear what the personal views of the founder of the city are on religion. We may infer that his attitude would be similar to that of Cephalus and the crass religion of the unjust man described by Adeimantus: "best would be to keep quiet, but if there were some necessity to tell, as few as possible ought to hear them as unspeakable secrets, after making the sacrifice, not of a *swine* but of some great offering that's hard to come by" (378b).

We must observe that every outward pretence of virtue has been maintained by the educator of the Guardians. He will seek to eradicate any thought of untruth, and his greatest falsehood will be the denial of both the possibility of deception and the conceivability of "the thing which was not." This is why artistic virtuosity is regarded with so much fear: the tyrant must be the only muse in his city if its citizens are to be reduced to mere shadows of their human potentiality. Similarly, laughter is regarded with the greatest hostility because of its connection to aesthetic distance and self-consciousness. The citizens of this community are to be made as literal minded as possible so that perfect mimetic docility can be instilled in them.

Socrates now proposes that the Guardians live under conditions of strict communism. This is deduced from their obligation to love friends and harm enemies: the just man is expected to pillage his enemies and give everything to his friends. This Spartan regimen is found to be all the more appropriate because of the principle of specialization: any accumulation of possessions will make the Guardians that much less efficient at their specialized task. In response to an objection by Adeimantus, Socrates points out that the Guardians exist for the sake of the city and not vice versa. What is important is "the happiness of the city," not the individual happiness of its constituents or classes. Although the Guardians "must give up all other crafts to become craftsmen of the city's freedom" (395c), *they* do not receive any freedom. We are reminded of the discussion with Polemarchus where it was agreed that the proper practice of a skill could not engender its very opposite. The response to this complaint is that all of the crafts, not excluding medicine, exist for the sake of the city so as to produce or fabricate good citizens; as a consequence, all of the virtues are defined according to this highest end, just as justice is defined according to the advantage of the stronger.

The manifestly austere and artificial regimen that has been prescribed for the Guardians necessitates the creation of another class of Guardians whose task is to educate them and "guard over enemies from without and friends from

within—so that the ones will not wish to do harm and the others will be unable to” (414b). The former Guardians are now demoted to the level of Auxiliaries, while only the guardians of the Auxiliaries will be the Guardians proper. This refinement of the structure of the city would seem to be dictated by the necessity of the true Guardian possessing proper knowledge of who his friends and enemies are. The Auxiliaries merely function as the dependent and ignorant bodyguards of the real Guardians; they also create a sort of “ring of Gyges” around the true Guardians so that their workings will not be perceived by the many. This structure mirrors the three-step corruption of the idea of justice over Book I: firstly, the Artisans see justice as speaking the truth and repaying what is owed; next, the Auxiliaries help the friends of the city and hate its enemies; finally, the true rulers, who become the most powerful in the city through duping the Auxiliaries, now act according to Thrasymachus’ definition and seek their own advantage while cloaked in the appearance of justice.

Once the complete hierarchy of the just city has been established, its Guardians may proceed to purge and pillage the Artisan class through their Guardians. The function of the Auxiliaries is turned around from protecting the city from its external enemies to policing its own citizens; the army is transformed into the mother of all secret polices. The various restrictions on music and poetry devised for the sake of the Auxiliaries will obviously affect the cultural life of the polis significantly, but Socrates now describes economic measures which will complete the transformation of the City of Swine into a totalitarian State. The “stability” of the Artisan class is most threatened by wealth and poverty, since the one engenders indolence and the other wrongdoing; furthermore, as a result of either jadedness or necessity, both economic extremes introduce innovation to the city. We are not told where any economic surplus would be diverted, but it is easy to conclude that, since both the Auxiliaries and Artisans are not supposed to be wealthy, this wealth could only end up in the hands of those who are both discreet and immune from the temptation of eros: the Guardians. The heavy emphasis on the perfect unity of the city also means that the procreation, employment, and marriages of the citizens will be arranged and micromanaged by the Guardians.

We should pause at this juncture to compare the life of the Guardian of the just city to the unjust life that Glaucon described in the following way: “First he rules in the city because he seems to be just. Then he takes in marriage from whatever station he wants and gives in marriage whomever he wants; he contracts and has partnerships with whomever he wants and . . . he gains because he has no qualms about doing injustice. So then, when he enters contests, both public and private, he wins and gets the better of his enemies. In getting the better he is wealthy and does good to friends and harm to enemies” (362b). When we measure the Guardian’s life against these criteria, it is self-evident that he rules in the city because of his appearance of justice. As for marriage, because the Guardians have unlimited control over the lives of their subjects,

this requirement is also satisfied to an extent unimagined by Glaucon. Because the Guardians have the power to elevate and demote persons between classes, the seemingly just man can select and exploit his friends with total impunity. With regard to contests, in Book IV the very question as to whether the seemingly just life is preferable is found unnecessary by Glaucon because its superiority is so evident. Lastly, it is obvious that the Guardian is uniquely situated to obtain great wealth and visit enormous benefit and damage on friends and enemies respectively.

Socrates has duly described a perfectly unjust life according to Glaucon's specifications. He must now go on to demonstrate the untenability of this life and reveal the superiority of the truly just life to Glaucon. This process commences when Socrates reverses the parallel between city and soul to suggest that the soul should be divided and ordered as the city was. As a result justice recedes still further, collapsing within the soul of the Guardian himself. The Guardian becomes the knowledge and wisdom of the city. He is, as a result, compelled to train his own soul even more rigorously than when he ordered the lives of the Artisans and Auxiliaries; he is forced to see how much effort is expended in keeping fortune compliant with his domination. So enormous an act of will is quite beyond the capacity of anyone who wishes to enjoy his relishes. Power loses some of its allure and the just city begins to look a little bit absurd.

We must remember that Glaucon is not a crude hedonist of the stamp of Callicles or Philebus. He is ambitious enough to desire power and sufficiently presumptuous to believe himself entitled to it by virtue of his high birth. Glaucon is a prime example of the banality of injustice; left to his own devices he would do no more than maintain the status quo with some degree of ruthlessness and allow himself some profit for his pains, but corrupted by Thrasymachus he could prove to be quite dangerous. Glaucon honestly believes that injustice is natural, and that he, a member of the natural aristocracy, is born to rule. Too indolent to enjoy the exercise of power for its own sake, he is certainly not willing to practice injustice as a fulltime occupation. Socrates will force him to see the unnaturality of attempting to suppress desire in the name of justice. In short, although Glaucon sought to suppress the desires of others so that he could enjoy his supposed natural superiority, he will come to see that he has unwittingly fashioned a prison for himself too, a grim austere cave without friends or leisure. Glaucon may very well echo the words of Achilles and prefer the life of a landless serf to ruling over a principality of shadows.

Because of the artificiality of his enterprise, the Guardian is forced to rely more and more on his own efforts and less on his supposed natural advantages. The totality of the domination that the Guardian enjoys also means that he can never depend on a status quo to support him; he cannot build his security on ground that has been devastated and impoverished by himself. Looking into himself, in search of capacities to sustain his increasingly unnatural and poetic

efforts, Glaucon is compelled to study his own soul; only this knowledge can purge him of his ignorant cynicism towards the desires and lead him towards a less adversarial understanding of justice in both city and soul.

Socrates makes Glaucon turn around within himself and see that not all desires are the same. One must distinguish between bodily desires and the tragic potential of spiritedness. In opposing the mind to the desires we create a situation where the energies of spiritedness are blinded, angered, and directed to serve the ends of the body. As a result, the mind is compelled to devote all of its power to repressing this blind force; like the Guardian in Glaucon's city it can achieve nothing better than a stalemate because of the unnaturalness of its objectives. If we can only accept that spiritedness is not ineducable and should not be lied to, we will be in a far better position to reorder the soul and achieve a truer state of happiness. Spiritedness becomes the natural ally of reason when it is granted, and reminded of, its proper role in the economy of the soul.

While the needs of the desires are specific and limited, spiritedness itself desires to altogether transcend these particularities. The story of Leontius and the dead bodies is now used by Socrates to prove to Glaucon that spiritedness can and does oppose the bodily desires in the name of something more honorable. Reason must navigate a course for spiritedness, just as spiritedness should supply reason with the strength and the integrity that it needs to attain its proper ends. Once reason and spiritedness are reconciled on these reasonable and honorable terms, it then becomes possible to arrive at a more adequate understanding of what is meant by one's proper business. A man's first and most proper business is the ordering and continual governance of his soul, and *sōphrosunē* must precede politics just as self-respect should precede civic friendship. This was the lesson that Socrates unsuccessfully attempted to administer to Glaucon's uncles in the *Charmides*. The *Republic* is a great advance on the earlier dialogue because of its far greater reliance on action and poetic imagery. This emphasis is used in the remainder of the work to introduce Glaucon to philosophy and show him how much more he needs to learn about both city and soul. While Glaucon has already received the information necessary to repudiate the unjust life, Socrates will help him to translate these insights over to the city, so that Glaucon may reject oligarchic politics and choose justice of his own free and informed will.

As we enter Book V the absurdity of returning to a natural state by means of high artifice is heightened by Plato's use of Aristophanic devices. We are told that since we have completed the male drama we must now go back and complete the female (451c). Comedy and ridicule which had hitherto been excluded from the city now re-enter and reveal precisely why they had been excluded: the city itself has been a poetic creation. Socrates' arguments in favour of community of women are lifted directly out of Aristophanes' late play *Ecclesiazusae*, where the heroine discusses at great length the advantages of communism.⁹ Aristophanes' last utopia also provides for statutory matings, which are

controlled by the leading stateswoman to her own satisfaction. Instead of the three waves of ridicule which drown the just city, we observe instead three aged hags, each older and uglier than the one preceding her, demanding sexual congress with a reluctant young man. When he refuses the first woman on the grounds that she is old enough to be his mother, she is joined by the two others who are presumably too old to have been his mother. This play, which would presumably have been known to the readers of the *Republic* since it came out about ten years after the death of Socrates, serves to remind erotic young men like Glaucon that dirty old men would occupy the best positions in the sexual pecking order of the just city. When Machiavelli said that Fortuna was a woman who was most attracted to virile young men (*The Prince*, Book XXV), he failed to mention that she was actually a hideous old crone who would blunt the erotic urges of even the most shameless and power-hungry youth. Socrates' method of argumentation seems to be an anticipation and refutation of Machiavelli's temptation; it is Socrates' intention to deflate Glaucon's erotic designs on the body politic by showing him how unattractive and draining a task it would be.

Even after the first two waves of absurdity have come crashing down on his city, Glaucon still desires to bring it into existence. Brushing aside all other considerations, he earnestly asks whether and how this regime could be set up. Socrates warns that he created a city in speech to display the political consequences of justice and injustice; he did not intend to dwell on whether this city should come into being. Socrates then makes his famous statement that since political power and philosophy must be combined to cure the ills of cities and souls, any separation of the two should be made impossible. Only the combination of philosophy and kingship could bring the regime they had discussed out of nature and into the sun. This remark makes Glaucon tear off his clothing of justice and demand that Socrates explain himself or suffer the consequences (474a).

Socrates clearly means to deter Glaucon from venturing into politics without adequate philosophical training, but we must also ask why he feels that philosophy without political expression is worthy of active discouragement. Does he merely want the philosopher to return to the cave for the good of the city, or is he saying that philosophy is essentially concerned with political matters? Is the combination of politics and philosophy for the sake of politics, philosophy, or both? Is political philosophy merely a feigned interest in political matters so that a philosopher can go about his own business, or is it the proper business of the philosopher? These questions can only be answered after we see how Socrates' own life measures up to this standard. Although Socrates was certainly not a politician in any sense of the term, neither does his life resemble that of a conventional philosopher concerned with ontological concerns removed from the sphere of everyday affairs. He situated himself between the ideal unity of things and their real multiplicity, and demanded that each should be made

accountable to the other. This position is closely connected to his contention that the best life cannot be led in isolation from the city (497a).

Socrates is trying to teach Glaucon that philosophy is necessary for the well-being of the city because only the philosopher is able to reorient and reconcile the many desires and souls that comprise a soul or city respectively. The philosopher is not a demagogue or oligarch, studying desire with the sophist in order to manipulate the opinions of the many or the moneyed; he is “willing to taste every kind of learning with gusto . . . approaches every kind of learning with delight and is insatiable” (475c). This means that a philosopher does not seek to destroy opinions and desires in the name of truth; his task is to reconcile them by revealing the truth animating their spiritedness. We cannot remain trapped at the level of shadowy opinions and believe that truth is no more than the victor in a battle between blind and insecure factions as to whose perceived advantage should give order to society. In this unhappy situation only the enemies of the polis and panders like Thrasymachus profit, while the citizens destroy their polis. Glaucon must learn not to mistake a thoroughly coerced state of artificially uniform opinion for what is just and true.

Before Glaucon can be made fully aware of the need for philosophy to liberate the city from the tyranny of opinion, Socrates responds to a challenge from Adeimantus, who claims that while most persons who persist in philosophy beyond their youth (shades of Callicles) often become either strange or vicious, even the best cases are completely useless to the city. Socrates responds to this slander with his celebrated image of the ship of state, pointing out that the philosopher is found useless because the advice of the true navigator will never be heeded by the mutinous crew of the ship: they prefer drinking and feasting to the serious work of steering the ship to its proper port. The ship image also carries with it overtones of Athenian naval democracy and readies us for the shipwreck that will shortly ensue. Socrates warns us that the best natures are always led astray in their youth, since the very talents of such a soul, not properly attended to, can breed disaster:

What do you suppose such a young man will do in such circumstances, especially if he chances to be from a big city, is rich and noble in it, and is, further, good looking and tall? Won't he be overflowing with unbounded hope, believing he will be competent to mind the business of both Greeks and barbarians . . . exalt himself to the heights, mindlessly full of pretension and empty conceit? (494c–d)

While this remark reminds us of Alcibiades, Socrates is also thinking of Glaucon and his uncle Charmides:

If someone was gently to approach the young man in this condition and tell him the truth—that he has no intelligence in him although he needs it, and that it's not to be acquired except by slaving for its acquisition—do you think it will be easy for him to hear? (494d)

This provides further confirmation that Socrates' strategy towards Glaucon is different from the direct and unsuccessful approach followed in the *Charmides*. Instead of denying Glaucon what he desires, Socrates has presented him with sovereignty over a state so that Glaucon will see for himself that slavishly following the life of the landless Socrates is preferable to being prince over all of the dead. This is a choice that only Glaucon can make, and we have seen Socrates refine and educate his understanding of what it means. Adeimantus complained that Socrates' method was to continually shift the ground of the argument a little at a time so "when the littles are collected at the end of the argument the slip turns out to be great and contrary to the first assertions" (487b). This is precisely what happens here. The nature of the philosopher is such that it is in love with the truth (485b). Such a man will not tolerate the elaborate edifice of lies that the "just" city is found to consist of; yet it is this philosopher who is supposed to be the savior and king of this regime. This crowning absurdity is surely intended to shift Glaucon's attention from city to soul, so that he may finally see what ambition had made him blind to and renounce his Aristophantasy.

Socrates is now ready to render an account of the process by which opinion is translated into truth. He has already warned Adeimantus that the proper preparation for philosophy entails many years of being tested by images of fears and pleasures of the sort that he has described over the course of their discussion. As a consequence, he is hardly in a position to offer Glaucon anything more than a very tentative representation of this process after only a few hours of discussion: "I only wish that I were able to pay and you were able to receive it itself and not just the interest . . . receive this interest and the child of the good itself . . . be careful that I do not in some way unwillingly deceive you" (507a). This language also harkens back to Aristophanes' charge about repaying debts mentioned earlier.

The Good is "what every soul pursues and for the sake of which it does everything. The soul divines that it is something but is at a loss about it and unable to get a sufficient grasp of just what it is" (505e). The strife between reason and desire is only resolved through an awareness of the Good, since the disagreement is over what is best and most pleasurable for man. This is tied to the celebrated Socratic dictum that man will only do evil out of ignorance. The context of the *Republic* makes this statement clearer. Knowledge of the Good is not abstractly imposed by another; it is only gained when both reason and the desires are made personally aware of the efficacy and sovereignty of the Good.

Socrates uses naturalistic imagery to describe the Good because he wants to use the contrast between the natural and the artificial to support his claim that the tyrant's promise to restore a state of nature is a thoroughly unnatural effort to create an artificial and unjust state. As the sun is the principle of order and growth in nature, the Good is the source and aspiration of all human actions and desires; as the light of the sun conveys the nurturing power of life to

nature, so too does eros mediate between humans and the Good. The nocturnal conversation at the Piraeus from which eros has been ejected mirrors a parallel situation to the cave, which excludes the light of the sun in favor of artificial light that is considered less dangerous. The power of vision functions through light, just as spiritedness can be nurtured and elevated by eros beyond blind tragedy. While Socrates does not disclose what the intellectual equivalent of the sunlight is, the structure of this dialogue and works such as the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium* strongly suggest that it is eros.

The model of the divided line is now used to provide the broadest depiction of the terrain and scope of knowledge that is provided in the *Republic*. The proportion that reality bears to illusion at the lower half of the line is paralleled by the relation that intellection has to thought in the upper half, and the original division between the visible and the transcendental. Just as reality is the measure by which appearances should be assessed, we must similarly allow light to be shed on empirical reality by the ideas. This means that the city of swine, which became untenable through the proliferation of desire, can be ordered in a nonreductive way by the education of desire through the ideas. This procedure stands in stark contrast to the polis of Glaucon, where deceit and illusions were offered as the solution.

The full extent to which deception defines and pervades the seemingly just polis is revealed when Socrates describes the cave, which turns out to be a grotesque and completely inverted representation of the divided line. Instead of the Good and the sun, we discover the fire and, lastly, and with considerable effort, the wholly invisible Tyrant. Once the Tyrant is seen, it must be concluded that he is the cause of all that is wrong and unjust in the cave. Just as the divided line accommodated both pure and applied thought, the cave has provision for the Tyrant and his Auxiliaries. The pure thought of the philosopher has practical issue in working hypotheses which the polis uses to educate and enlighten desire; this procedure is imitated by the Tyrant, who gives his Auxiliaries the modes and orders necessary to suppress totally the prisoners' desires as well as their own. Instead of artisans who trust in natural reality, we encounter prisoners who are totally unaware of both themselves and the physical conditions they live in. Consequently, there is an inversion of the respective domains of illusion and nature, so that appearance passes for reality and vice versa. Although the cave image is, at the most superficial level, a criticism of poets and democracy, the very fact that the escaped prisoner has to accustom himself to view shadows and reflections *outside* the cave proves that he has previously been conditioned to view something even more delusory. We must remember that the proportion of appearance to reality is repeated over at least three points along the divided line. Transcendental reality cannot be reduced to naturalistic terms; this is precisely why Socratic philosophy rejects the comic solutions of Aristophanes and the Oligarchs.

The cave image strikingly depicts the contrast between education and co-

erced habit. The cardinal error is in assuming that the cave and the just regime of Glaucon are not identical but represent the respective extremes of reality and ideality. Such a distorted view of the *Republic* is inevitable if Book VII is torn out of the unity of the work: any Platonic dialogue is an exquisitely subtle construction that demands the most careful and imaginative attention to context and detail. The educated Guardian's task is not to lead his subjects out of the cave but to preside over what even he finds to be a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. This is the clearest proof that Glaucon's city is not the just polis but a *reductio ad absurdum* of an inadequate and inequitable view of justice that only serves the interests of an invisible fourth party. It is significant that the ring of Gyges, in Glaucon's story, was found in a *khasma* or cave beneath the ground, by his ancestor, a *Theteuonta* of the king—a hired serf—entrusted with the king's flocks. Gyges' forebear literally had to choose between being a hired serf—glorified sheepdog—just guardian or an invisible king who truly exploited and ruled over his potentially dead herd.

Returning to the cave, we are again reminded that the real problem with coercion is its inability to bring true knowledge; this is because the whole soul, and not merely the mind, must be prepared to apprehend truth. The prisoner's head cannot be turned in the proper direction without his body being released from bondage. Neither can we transfer knowledge via coercion or habit:

education is not what the professions of certain men assert it to be. They presumably assert that they put into the soul knowledge that isn't in it . . . but the present argument . . . indicates that *this power is in the soul of each* and that the instrument with which one learns—just as the eye is not able to turn toward the light from the dark without the whole body—must be turned around from that which is coming into being together with the whole soul until it is able to endure looking at that which is . . . there would therefore . . . be an art of this turning the soul around, not an art of producing sight in it. Rather, this art takes as given that sight is there, but not rightly turned nor looking at one ought to look at. (518b–d)

Once education is understood in this manner, and *never* (except perhaps in the *Gorgias*) is Socrates more serious, a most glaring light is shed on the injustice and inadequacy of the city that Glaucon required of Socrates. The draconian essence of this polis is revealed, and our identification of this regime with the cave is given further support. It is now revealed that even the philosopher must be coerced to remain in the cave; this is surely no mystery. As we have observed earlier, the idea of a lover of truth devoting his life to propagating falsity is not the least of the many absurdities testing the credulity of the literal reader of the *Republic*. Instead of the philosopher employing his talents in leading men out of the cave (it cannot be overemphasized that Plato holds that *all souls possess this capacity for education*), the just regime “produces such men in the city not in order to let them turn whichever way each wants, but in order that it may use them in binding the city together” (520a). Such a

city, where all three of its classes are denied the pursuit of happiness in order that an abstract definition of justice could be satisfied, most conclusively demonstrates the absurdity of reductively defining justice as the suppression of eros. The practical question of who gains must be raised here; human nature would not allow such a city to come into being unless it were conceived by the desires of some invisible party. Logic demands that we deduce the existence of a wolf in shepherd's clothing who uses this definition of justice to seek his own advantage.

Resuming our examination of Glaucon's education, we must see that the bewildering account given of the philosopher-in-training's preparation is not an actual introduction to philosophy or "the song itself," but an intellectual boot camp. Such a pronounced emphasis on what is mechanistic and cosmological is intended to instill mental discipline and purge the soul of sophistry and relativism; it is best understood from within the context of the cave and cannot be mistaken for the study of philosophy. Socrates never describes how these studies extend beyond the lower half of the divided line; his intention is to impress Glaucon with the exceptional amount of learning that even this "philosophical prolegomena" entails. This was the strategy followed in Xenophon's account, where Glaucon was forced to concede that he lacked the logistical knowledge required to function as an effective ruler. Plato's Glaucon was told quite clearly, in response to his request for an account of the power of dialectic, that he would not be able to follow Socrates at this point, though this would not be through any lack of eagerness on the part of Socrates himself (533a). Such an education could only be given to someone already possessed of a great deal of practical experience and knowledge.

Socrates is now prepared to resume his discussion of the disintegration of the supposedly just city; his objective, all along, has been to show Glaucon how impossible the conservation of such a city is, even in the unlikely event of all of the prior conditions for its genesis being met. It is thus necessary that his argument should be based on the divided state of his respondent's soul. Half of Glaucon, his oligarchic side, is attracted to the material allure of the unjust life; the other half, his spirited side, is attracted to rulership and the prospect of resolving the divisions that plagued Athens. Accordingly, both practical and moral arguments have been used to show Glaucon that his desire for power is both impractical and immoral. Socrates will now demonstrate how this division within Glaucon's soul will cause his city to degenerate with dramatic swiftness. Glaucon has already acknowledged that, through his discussion of philosophy, Socrates had indicated the existence of a still finer city than that of the Guardians which was described prior to the three waves of absurdity (544a). All further discussions of virtue will be based on this philosophic regime rather than the city ruled by the Guardians. It now remains for Socrates to drive home his advantage and uproot every propensity towards injustice that might still remain in Glaucon's soul.

While it was claimed that the fall of the seemingly just regime was caused by the failure of the eugenically maintained class structure of this city, it is difficult to comprehend the jargon that Socrates uses to explain this process, and harder still to resist the inference that he does not intend to be comprehended or taken seriously. It seems far more likely that this pseudo-mathematical gibberish is the language of the appearance of learning that will be used by the Guardian class to conceal their true motives. The truer reason for the degeneration of this polis lies in the failure of the Aristocracy to resist the temptation to publicly enslave the artisans and accumulate material possessions. This temptation can be caused by either material greed or a desire for public honor or satisfaction; it is evident to Adeimantus that Glaucon's soul is almost in this situation: a young Aristocrat is not disposed to sacrifice his relishes for some theoretical moral or prudential concern. Since his reason will discover little satisfaction in following or maintaining an abstract idea of justice, his blinded *Thumos* and starved desires will turn against each other. After depicting Glaucon's soul as it is, Socrates then describes the evils to result if Glaucon and his city were to progress without education.

Tyranny, desperate and shameless, now becomes the main subject of discussion. Although we have previously examined this life, and found it to be both immoral and impractical on account of the extreme and continual demands that it makes on him who leads it, Socrates will now go on to show that even the considerable and impressive material advantages that accrue from such a life are inherently undesirable. The origins of tyranny are examined and found to be the result of reason's failure to bring the desires into a harmonious relation. This failure introduces insecurity, faction, selfishness, and a struggle between the wealthy and the many: "the city of the poor and the city of the rich, dwelling together in the same place, ever plotting against each other" (551d). As a result, justice is perceived in adversarial and arbitrary terms, as the advantage of the stronger. These conditions of ignorance and despair set up a vicious dialectic between insecure anarchy and brutal authority that reaches a crescendo in the shameless violence of tyranny.

Socrates' discussion of the Tyrant is consistent with his fundamental position that ignorance is the cause of evil-doing. The desires of the Tyrant are similar to those roused in a man lacking a healthy and moderate relation to himself, when his reason is asleep and his "beastly and wild part, gorged with food and drink, is skittish and, pushing sleep away, seeks to go and satisfy its dispositions. . . . It dares to do anything . . . rid of all shame and prudence" (571b–c). This "terrible, savage, and lawless form of desire is in every man" (572b). We have already seen Socrates observe that every soul can be enlightened; if this capacity is not nurtured, many unfortunate things could ensue: a tyrannical soul is created when this part of man becomes "drunken, erotic, and melancholy" (573c). Glaucon now readily agrees with Socrates that one who sees through the facade of pomp set up by the Tyrant would find him to be

slavishly dependent, exceptionally fearful, poverty-ridden, and insatiable. The Tyrant is not the omniscient and omnipotent Guardian he claims to be; he is, in Churchill's memorable image, a fearful dictator perched precariously on an angry and hungry tiger. Even the gaudiest pleasures of his life are illusory, because they only give temporary respite from his infinite neediness; these indulgences make his desires more insatiable, even as they are appeased.

Setting aside the solid geometrical measures that were used to calculate the superiority of the Philosopher King over the tyrant, we may arrive at an identical result by arranging the various lives that we have reviewed in their proper order and finding each deviation to be three times unhappier than the previous term. The life of the Philosopher King comes out 3 times happier than that of the privately philosophic soul, 9 times happier than the timocratic soul, 27 times happier than the oligarchic soul, 81 times happier than the democratic soul, 243 times happier than the tyrannic soul *solus*, and 729 times happier than that most unfortunate of brutes, Tyrannus Rex. This result can also be obtained when we arrange the illusory order of the cave below the ratios of ideality to reality which constitute the divided line: Intellection (1), Thought (3), Trust (9), Opinion (27), Artisan (81), Auxiliary (243), Guardian (729). Allan Bloom notes that 729 also stands for the number of days and nights that Philolaus, the Pythagorean mathematician, calculated a year to consist of (*The Republic of Plato*, p. 470 n. 11). This means that Glaucon's short glorious night as a tyrant is 729 times less pleasant than the truly philosophic life, which knows happiness all the year around.

Book X brings this feast of Platonic poetry to an appropriate conclusion by considering the issues involved in the famous quarrel between poetry and philosophy. Although the *Republic* is notorious for its hostility towards poetry, it is worthy of mention that this work has also historically been treated as an especially dangerous work of poetry. Plato is viewed as the great educator and inciter of philosophical tyranny; his seductive virtuosity only makes him all the more dangerous. The careful reader is expected by Plato to see that the chief issue here concerns the proper relation of philosophy to poetry. They should be related as reason to desire in that poetry provides reason with the eros which philosophy needs to educate and inspire both cities and souls, while philosophy protects poetry from the tragedy of profligate and disorderly eros that, left unresolved, falls victim to tyranny. True poetry is "not only pleasant but beneficial to regimes and human life" (607d); by this Plato does not mean sycophancy to the status quo, but poetry which reminds the soul of its true regime and loves.

Returning to the context of Glaucon's education, the chief issue here is mimesis and the belief that imitation and habituation are the principal tools of education. In the seemingly just city we saw that painting, which is singled out for special criticism here, seemed to be the paradigm for statecraft: in Book IV, the fashioners of the city were painters who possessed the best knowledge of

what was appropriate for the various parts of the city. Then again in Book VI we are told of painters who “take the city and the dispositions of human being, as though they were a tablet . . . which in the first place they would wipe clean” (501a). This is meant very literally; at the end of Book VII we are told that the just regime could only be founded by exiling everyone over the age of ten and taking over their children (541a). This *ex nihilo* model of statecraft is totally inconsistent with the Platonic methods of erotic midwifery and recollected discovery. A philosopher is not a creative artist; he better resembles an art historian and restorer who lovingly recovers and preserves what was present in the first place. The image of the sea Glaucus is very suggestive here since, as in the case of man, “we no longer see his original nature because some of the old parts of his body have been broken off and the others have been ground down and thoroughly maimed . . . he resembles any beast rather than what he was by nature, so, too we see the soul in such a condition because of countless evils” (611d). One could observe, *sotto voce*, that the *Republic* has suffered the same fate.

Glaucou must now restore to justice what was unjustly borrowed of it: the good reputation that it enjoys among gods and men (612d). This he does readily, choosing the just soul over the unjust city. Then, instead of imitating that Glaucus who fed his mares human flesh and was eventually eaten by them, he emulates Glaucus the Lycian, who exchanged his gold guardian’s armor for the bronze of a mere mortal (*Iliad* VI 234–36). Unlike Homer, who thought him deranged, we join Socrates in applauding his choice.

NOTES

1. For the Greek text of the *Republic*, I have used the Loeb Edition, trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930). Allan Bloom’s translation, *The Republic of Plato* (New York: Basic Books, 1968) is the source of all English quotations from the text. Translations of all other dialogues are from the Bollingen Edition of the *Collected Works of Plato*, ed. Hamilton and Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961). For the *Memorabilia* I have used the Loeb edition of Xenophon, trans. Marchant and Todd (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923).

2. Leo Strauss, “On Plato’s Republic,” in *The City and Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1964) p.66.

3. Xenophon says that “Critias in the days of the Oligarchy bore the palm for greed and violence” (*Memorabilia* I.ii.12). Book II of the *Hellenica* describes the conduct of Critias during this period.

4. For an account of Aristophanes’ political philosophy see Stanley Rosen’s explication of Aristophanes’ speech in the Symposium in *Plato’s Symposium*, 2d Ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 120–57. Leo Strauss makes some suggestive observations on the quarrel between Socrates and Aristophanes in “The Problem of Socrates,” in *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism*, ed. Thomas Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1989).

5. Cicero, “On Old Age,” in *Selected Works*, trans. Grant (New York: Penguin 1960).

6. Lysias, a silent participant in this discussion, describes these events in his “Against Erasthenes” in *Lysias*, trans. W.R.M. Lamb, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard

University Press, 1960), pp.221–77. For an excellent reconstruction of this tumultuous period see Peter Krentz's *The Thirty at Athens* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1982).

7. Leo Strauss splendidly sets up the opposition between the Socratic optimism and the conservatism of Aristophanes and Nietzsche in his introduction to *Socrates and Aristophanes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966) pp.3–8. Nietzsche's own criticisms of Socratic rationalism are best expressed in *The Birth of Tragedy*, sections 11–16, and "The Problem of Socrates," in *The Twilight of the Idols*. For Nietzsche's views on the primacy of life over justice see "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," in *Untimely Meditations*. For the claim that it is the responsibility of the strong to impose meaning upon the lives of the weak see Book III of *The Gay Science* and section 57 of *The Antichrist*.

8. The *Protagoras* and *Philebus* give a fuller account of this theme.

9. See Strauss, *Socrates and Aristophanes*, pp.263–82, and *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism*, pp 125–26.