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CHOOSING JUSTICE: SOCRATES' MODEL CITY AND THE PRACTICE OF DIALECTIC

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Glaucon's demand to be shown the inherent choiceworthiness of justice exposes the limits of dialectical argument. Acknowledging these limits, Socrates proposes that his interlocutors join him in an alternative activity, making a city in speech. This model city proves to be "entirely opposite" to existing cities, above all (as Socrates observes) because it restricts the practice of dialectical argument to those who first demonstrate a capacity for synopsis, that is, for seeing things as a whole. Socrates holds that one must be able to see things as a whole in order to benefit from the use of dialectic. I interpret the political institutions of Socrates' model city accordingly, as being instrumental to the practice of dialectic. Hence, I reject the prevalent readings of the *Republic*, which present these institutions either as a blueprint for public policy or as a parody of political idealism. Instead, I suggest that the interlocutors' discussion of censorship, the noble lie, and communism is propaedeutic, fostering the synoptic capacity necessary to benefit from the practice of dialectic, including dialectic aimed at revealing the choiceworthiness of justice.

Midway through his conversation with Thrasymachus in book 1 of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates is persuaded to postpone his quest for a precise definition of justice, for "what Thrasymachus is saying now seems to me to be much more important" (347e2–3).¹ Thrasymachus, we recall, had abandoned his original thesis—that justice consists in the advantage of the stronger—and has taken up a new position, contending that the unjust life is stronger and better than the just life. This shift prompts Socrates to turn to his young companion, Glaucon, and pose two questions: "Which way, Glaucon, will you choose? And which seems argued the more truly to you" (347e4–6)? The second question is by no means superfluous.² Socrates evidently anticipates that Glaucon's preference may rest upon something other than the better argument. Indeed, it is not so much clear thinking as *native breeding* that Socrates credits when he praises Glaucon's inclination toward justice (*tên physin . . . tropou*, 367e6–368b2). Quality of breeding is an admirable thing, of course; but it is hardly to be mistaken for mature human excellence. Nor is Glaucon's *tropos*—his present "bent" or inclination—indicative of a firm or decisive choice for justice. On the contrary, Glaucon remains fascinated by the tyrannical, or perfectly unjust, life. Moreover, he supposes that to possess mature human excellence (whether that be justice, injustice, or the clever alternation of both), one must also be able to give a rational account confirming its superiority. So although Glaucon is inclined to prefer justice, he feels he has lost his way because he has not yet heard a satisfying proof of its superiority (358c6–8).

The precariousness of Glaucon's circumstance is only aggravated by the extraordinary quality of his heart and mind. The radiance of his intellect renders Thrasymachus and other likeminded lights of the sophistic firmament virtually invisible as Glaucon introduces an eidetic or formal structure to the inter-

locutors' rambling consideration of justice. Justice, he suggests, is intelligible as a tertiary kind of good, desired not for its own sake but only for its consequences—consequences that might be acquired even more efficiently by other means. Moreover, as Socrates testifies, Glaucon is "always and in everything superlatively courageous" (*aei te dê andreiotatos . . . pros hapanta*, 357a2–3). This superlative courage or manliness (the Greek permits either translation) is perhaps most evident in Glaucon's taking up the cause of injustice. For he thereby puts his own admirable nature in jeopardy in hope of acquiring mature human excellence. Still, it is one thing to recognize such courage as a prerequisite in the quest for mature human excellence and quite another to tout it as a sufficient criterion by which to decide whether or not justice counts as that excellence.³ Yet Glaucon declares (putatively for the sake of argument) that he will henceforth accept justice as human excellence only if it can be shown to profit a "real man" (*hôs alêthôs andra*, 359b2). The real man, as Glaucon conceives him, is not shackled by the bonds of necessity that tie others to the civic community. It is inferior human beings who are compelled to seek justice as an alternative to what they most fear (suffering injustice) and what they naturally desire (committing injustice). Justice, thus understood, is merely a convenient mediocrity, not an excellence of soul. Glaucon thus foresees the distinctive gambit of all modern political thought by identifying the root of justice in a utilitarian compromise or social contract. But his proud spirit will not abide the egalitarianism presupposed in the typically modern development of this gambit. On the contrary, he recognizes that the social contract theory of justice, which looks to the inferior rather than to the superior specimen, demonstrates only that justice is circumstantially choiceworthy, not that it is in any way essentially so. Glaucon accordingly challenges Socrates to praise

justice in itself. Socrates must show the power of justice when it is present all by itself in the soul, apart from its wages and consequences (358b4–7, d1–2). Nay, Socrates must reverse the reputations of the just man and the unjust man to ensure that the judgment of their lives will be rendered correctly and not settled for the sake of consequences alone (360e1–6, 361b5–d3).

Glaucon claims to be unimpressed by conventional teachings in favor of justice. So besides providing the indispensable root of extraordinary courage, Glaucon's manly spirit evidently encourages an exaggerated sense of his own freedom from mere conventionality. He needs reminding (as Socrates points out) that the prisoners in the cave of political culture are "like us" (515a5). In view of Glaucon's exaggerated sense of independence, we may expect that beneath the veneer of his bold challenge to conventional justice lies a core of unexamined conventionality. Glaucon, we may say, does not sufficiently know himself. Adeimantus, his fearless yet less enterprising brother, is more perceptive than Glaucon in this regard. Undaunted by his brother's dazzling account of the superiority of injustice, Adeimantus coolly notes that Glaucon has failed to identify "the very thing that most needs to be said" (362d5). Adeimantus elaborates this most needful consideration, which will in good measure determine the course of the interlocutors' subsequent conversation. In so doing, Adeimantus observes that Glaucon's challenge to Socrates fails to take into account the influence of customary teachings concerning virtue and vice on the souls of the youths who hear them (365a6–b1). As a result, Adeimantus suggests, Glaucon fails to realize that even he is not yet in a position to make a meaningful choice between justice and injustice—no matter what Socrates says by way of response to his challenge.

According to Adeimantus, the customary teachings concerning virtue and vice subvert the soul's capacity for acquiring mature human excellence. Due to a distortion of soul induced by such teachings, we too may be ill equipped to make the choice that Glaucon longs to make and that we too must make if we are to move beyond dispositional inclination toward mature excellence. It is with this counterproductive education in view that Adeimantus bids Socrates "not only to show us by rational argument that justice is mightier than injustice, but also to show what it is that each by itself makes [*poiouosa*] of the one who possesses it" (367b2–5, e1–5). Though less dazzling than his brother's challenge, Adeimantus' charge is in fact more radical. For Glaucon's challenge merely calls for a static account of justice's superiority, an account revealing justice as pleasing to the human soul as currently disposed. But Adeimantus correctly discerns that Glaucon's desire to make an unprejudiced and fully informed choice between justice and injustice requires a dynamic account, an account recognizing that the choiceworthiness of justice depends upon its unique capacity for healing the deformity

from which the conventionally educated soul currently suffers.

SYNOPSIS AS A CURE FOR PSYCHIC DEFORMITY

What, then, according to Adeimantus, is the conventionally induced deformity of soul that stands in need of healing? Adeimantus begins to elaborate the nature of this deformity by noting the counterproductivity of the arguments customarily offered to encourage justice. Parents and poets (who are so often the architects of civilization) conspire in citing for the edification of youngsters the most tangible and appealing consequences that can possibly be ascribed to justice. As it turns out, however, such tangibly appealing consequences do not belong exclusively (or even necessarily) to justice. So the speeches made in support of justice with the best of intentions only inflame a callow desire for things that are, if anything, more easily obtainable by foul means than by fair. When youngsters raised in this fashion encounter arguments of a different cast contending that injustice is shameful only by opinion and that the gods themselves are willing to overlook one's crimes in exchange for ceremonial bribes, they realize, Adeimantus says, that "one ought to turn wholly toward appearances" (363e5–365c3). It is the exclusivity or one-sidedness of this "turn" that deforms the soul. For a soul turned *wholly* toward appearances is indeed like a captive compelled to gaze at shadows cast upon the wall of a cave. The human soul in such a condition is deprived of its capacity for reflection upon the linkage, be it ever so tenuous, between shadow and substance. When appearance becomes everything, appearances no longer mean anything. Once freed of any mooring in reality, appearance no longer offers even an oblique clue to what truly is. Appearance then exists as nothing more than an invitation to the projection of fantasy and a temptation to willful manipulation. As a result of the soul's turn wholly toward appearances, reason becomes cramped and deformed. Reason ceases its search for the true and the good in considering the merits of justice and injustice; instead, it is wholly subsumed in "calculation" (*logizomenos*), specifically in that calculation which concludes that injustice is mightier than justice always and everywhere as long as one has the capacity to manipulate appearances (366a6–7). From this perspective the comparison of just and unjust lives becomes a forgone conclusion rather than the preparation for a decisive choice. Thus Adeimantus perceives that one's soul must be healed—its whole orientation toward appearances corrected—before one is prepared to make a judgment regarding human excellence. He perceives, moreover, that it is unlikely that *any further argument* could provide such healing (366b3).

It is, of course, paradoxical to identify Glaucon as a victim of the conventional, soul-deforming process of

childrearing that is described by Adeimantus, for it seems that much of what we find appealing in Glaucon derives from his unyielding rejection of convention. But it would be premature, to say the least, to describe Glaucon's scorn for social bonds as sufficient to effect the genuine turnabout, or *periagôgê*, that Socrates later identifies as essential to the soul's pursuit of wisdom (518c4–d1, 520c5–8). Yet Glaucon hardly seems guilty of the fixation upon appearances condemned by Adeimantus. If anything, Glaucon may be said to hold appearances (i.e., what seems to be, as distinguished from what truly is) in utter contempt (357a4–b4, 361c4–d3). But one wonders whether the scorn and contempt that one observes in Glaucon's rejection of conventionality is a mark of liberation or is itself an advanced symptom of the psychic distortion Adeimantus has described. Perhaps Glaucon's demand to hear justice praised "in itself and for itself" (*auto kath' hauto*, 358d2) is merely the inversion typical of psychological denial, in which he transposes the theme Adeimantus finds characteristic of traditional childrearing. Consideration of this possibility might remain purely speculative were it not for the fact that Socrates, too, indicates the inadequacy of Glaucon's contemptuous turn from appearances. For Socrates identifies as "the most beautiful or noblest" (*kallistôi*) not the kind of good that Glaucon describes as desirable "in itself and for itself" (*auto hautou heneka*, 357b6) but the kind that is to be loved "both on account of itself and on account of the things coming into being from it" (*kai di' auto kai dia ta gignomena ap' auto*, 358a1–2). Socrates thereby suggests that Glaucon's turn toward the thing itself might well be an impediment to the discovery of the finest, noblest, and most beautiful things, whose discernment requires a *comprehensive* glimpse of the thing itself *and* what comes into being from it. Socrates thus indicates that if Glaucon is accurately to determine the character of human excellence, he must first develop the capacity for *synopsis*, or comprehensive vision. This is the same capacity that Socrates later explains is necessary if one is to benefit from dialectical argument (537b8–539d7). Moreover, Socrates describes Glaucon's ideals of perfect justice and injustice as "statues," that is, mere images (360e1–361d6). Socrates thus suggests that by heaping contempt upon appearances in his probing for reality, Glaucon will never get beyond the shadowy realm of images. The reality he supposes he has discovered turns out to be just another figment upon the wall of the cave. On this basis, I hazard to say, we may conclude that Adeimantus' diagnosis indeed applies to Glaucon. Glaucon's contempt for appearances does not correct but simply inverts the warp from which the human soul suffers in the cave of political culture. Although this warp is endemic to the political cave, the case of Glaucon reveals that neither is its cure to be found in the mere rejection of political culture. The soul must receive political culture (i.e., the culture of *politeia*) but not in the manner of a cavedweller. Is there any way for this to occur?

Although Socrates says that he "had something in mind to say" in answer to Glaucon's challenge, the addition of Adeimantus' speech lands Socrates in a state of genuine perplexity or *aporia* (cf. 362d1–2 and 367e6–368b4). Socrates realizes that a *logos* accounting for the superiority of justice is needed and yet that no further argument can benefit Glaucon as long as he remains in his present condition of synoptic incapacity. If anything, the operation of dialectical argument will inevitably deteriorate into *eristics* (as happened between Socrates and Thrasymachus) if the distinctions one makes fail to correspond to the proper articulations of the whole (454a1–9). If we are not merely to quarrel but are really "to get things sorted out" (*dialegesthai*), we must not lose sight of the forest for the trees. Yet this is precisely what happens to Glaucon. His contemptuous turning against political convention (and against appearance generally) resembles nothing else more than "the spinning of a shard" (521c5). The shard, or *ostrakon*, a fragment of smashed pottery, perfectly symbolizes Glaucon's condition. For his contemptuous disengagement from political culture leaves him an isolated piece of a shattered whole. As a shard, Glaucon cannot adequately contemplate the human good. Glaucon must develop a capacity for synopsis (appreciating himself and others as members of a greater whole) if he is to heal his own soul and to attain a position from which he can accurately discern the nature of human excellence. But if dialectic is ultimately needed to reveal the truth about justice and injustice and yet would degenerate into *eristics* if practiced at present, how is Socrates to proceed? The salvation of Glaucon's soul—the preservation and enhancement of his capacity for human excellence—evidently depends upon Socrates' success in a propaedeutic effort that differs from and yet must prepare for the actual practice of dialectic.

Socrates' response to the challenge posed by the speeches of Glaucon and Adeimantus is to postpone further attempts at dialectic. Instead, he proposes that his interlocutors join him in the nondialectical—one may even say, poetic (*poiômen*, 369c9)—exercise of making a city in speech. It is hardly coincidental, then, that one finds no form of the word *dialegesthai* in the text again until the opening of book 5, where it is spoken to denote the division of the city's women in accordance with the eidetic structure of the whole political community (see 454a4–d1). The absence of *dialegesthai* from the interlocutors' own conversation in books 2–4 mirrors the postponement of dialectic that Socrates requires of the citizens of his model city, which he eventually credits for making this city "completely opposite" to existing cities (497e5–498c4). The interlocutors' forbearance from dialectic in the course of founding the model city is complemented by their approval of certain controversial political institutions (censorship, the noble lie, and communism) which approval, as I shall suggest, helps to foster their synoptic capacities and thus to prepare for the beneficial practice of dialectic.

POSTPONING AND PROVIDING FOR DIALECTIC: THE SOCRATIC TURN TO POLITICS

Though Socrates' interlocutors want to see for themselves the power of justice in or on the human soul, they evidently do not appreciate sufficiently the difficulty of attaining an adequate view of the soul. To attempt such an inquiry is no slight matter. In Socrates' frank estimation, it requires a keen observer (368c7–8). So it would be futile for one who is "not at all sharp-sighted" (368d3–4) to try to investigate this question immediately. But if such a person, someone who was unable to distinguish certain small letters, were able to find elsewhere the same letters "bigger and in a bigger place," he might well consider it a godsend. Supposing that justice pertains not only to a single man but also to a "whole city" and that the city is bigger than a single man, Socrates suggests that his interlocutors behold a city as it comes into being in speech. For then their inquiry could proceed by "investigating the similarity of the larger in the *idea* of the smaller" (369a1–3).

Socrates' investigative strategy is puzzling. How can this strategy succeed, one wonders, except on the *assumption* that the two sets of letters are in fact the same? And how is this assumption to be verified if the inquirer has taken the trouble to consider the larger letters only because he cannot make out the smaller? This conundrum vitiates any attempt to construe Socrates' turn to politics as a *method* by which even the intellectually myopic can identify justice in the soul. The activity of making a city in speech is not an investigative methodology but rather a *therapeutic exercise*. Socratic politics are a calisthenic, not a crutch. They seek to foster, rather than to make unnecessary, the sharp-sightedness required for the success of subsequent research. If successful, the therapeutic exercise of making a city in speech will make it unnecessary to rely upon unsubstantiated parallels or correspondences. Specifically, the interlocutors' foundation of the model city will fortify their own capacities for synopsis, for seeing things as a whole. This result will, of course, be most evident in Glaucon (as we shall see), because his bold vision is at once the most penetrating and yet the least synoptic of any of Socrates' interlocutors.

As they undertake the exercise of founding a city in speech, the interlocutors agree that justice will be present in a "whole city" (*holês poleôs*, 368e2–3). But the precise requirements of civic wholeness are not immediately clear. The political community, by reason of serving the purposes of human living, necessarily embraces an abundance and multiplicity of human goods. But because we neither know what is the greatest of these goods nor have a basis upon which to choose reliably among the multiplicity of apparent goods, we cannot yet be sure we know when the city has achieved completeness or wholeness (thus *isôs*, 371e11). Being unable to discriminate among goods, one really has no alternative but to

welcome them all and then to try to determine in what manner and to what extent they might fit together. By making a city in speech, one is thus encouraged to consider the possibility of order among the multiplicity of human goods. Such an exercise cultivates the capacity for synopsis. So it is, I shall suggest, that the practices of Socrates' conversational community will heal Glaucon's soul, providing what the political culture of no existing city could provide.

Socratic Censorship and the Genesis of Political Order

Socrates and Adeimantus undertake the foundation of the first city, which Socrates describes as truthful (*alêthinê*, 372e7). He means that nothing here is concealed. In other words, there is in this city an unproblematic relationship between what appears and what really is. One reason for this is that the men and women of this first city hardly desire anything beyond the plain necessities that life itself demands. They eat and dress as simply as possible. They are industrious in their work, songful in prayer, and delighted in intercourse but wary of overpopulation, so as to avoid poverty and war (372a5–c1). We may say that in such circumstances, there resides truth and nothing but the truth. But we cannot say that the *whole truth* is present in this city. For Glaucon's peremptory rejection of the complacent lifestyle of its residents rebuts any interpretation that construes the "truthful" city to be wholly true to human nature—at least to human nature as we know it, which includes the very spiritedness epitomized here by Glaucon's reaction. It would be utopian in the most pejorative sense of the term to attempt to construct a city on the basis of the suppression of such spiritedness, or *thymos*. Such a city would indeed be "fit for pigs," rather than for human beings (372d4–5). A political community that is to be *wholly* truthful must somehow comprehend Glaucon as a member.

But what is it that the city must become in order to comprehend Glaucon as a member? The price of including spiritedness, at least in the short run, is the introduction of unnecessary desires. Glaucon desires what he calls "relish" (*opsou*, 372c2) as a supplement to the indispensable staples of human life. Lacking as yet any better understanding of the true relish of life, he insists upon the inclusion of the full array of goods and services commonly accepted as pertaining to an elegant lifestyle. Socrates accedes to Glaucon's demand because "nothing hinders it" (372e8). That is to say, nothing in the character of the city hinders it. Reflecting its founders' lack of wisdom, the city is in no position to exclude any good or service as long as its provision is supervised by some skilled professional. This city knows only one principle: one man, one art (370b4–6).⁴ Technical expertise thus holds a monopoly on authority in the first city. There is, consequently, no hierarchy or order among the myriad of consumer goods that the city permits. Like the

inflamed appetite it is obliged to admit, the city is itself limitless. It possesses as yet no principle according to which its order or even its own completion may be determined (371e9–11). In short, the attempt to supply Glaucon's demand for relish produces nothing more than a "promiscuous heap, stuffed and multitudinous" (373b3–4).

Even Glaucon's final demand—for an expert militia—merely results in the further accretion of specialists recruited for the service of limitless appetite. It may be that the city needs such warriors, but what is there to keep these watchdogs from turning wolf and devouring their fellow citizens? The prospect of civil war, confronting the founders at the culmination of a protracted period of civic expansion, vividly indicates that the city's wholeness is not to be sought in the unrestricted increase of the goods and services that it includes. This wholeness evidently depends instead upon the establishment of a principled relationship among the city's diverse parts. The Greek word for a principled relationship or authoritative order of this sort is *politeia*. Absent a *politeia*, the city remains too miserable a thing (even in the throes of its great crisis) to hold Glaucon's attention; he expresses no interest in the search for a means to defend against the warriors' abuse of power. We may even surmise that Glaucon would find wolfish warriors (who are, at least, real men) more attractive than the sheeplike city. So it is Glaucon's brother, Adeimantus, who dutifully joins Socrates in seeking an education appropriate to civic guardians (376d4).

What is most remarkable about the ensuing discussion of education is its establishment of a *politeia* for the city. A *politeia* emerges as the founders censor the practice of technical expertise in order to ensure that the city's warriors' will become true and virtuous guardians (395c4–d6).⁵ Something beyond the founders' exhaustive and exhausting survey of artisans and consumers finally comes into sight in the polity, which arises only with the introduction of censorship. This censorship is conducted in accordance with certain theological *typoi* (outlines or impressions) that are formulated with a view both to the formation of politically hygienic opinions and to the truth. The poetic tales that violate these *typoi* incite politically dangerous self-indulgence and "are not true, either" (378c1). It is the proper business of the city's founders to know these *typoi* even if the task of filling them in must be turned over to poets willing to work within their limits (379a1–4). Socrates and Adeimantus identify four guidelines that are to characterize the tales told by the poets to the city's youth:

1. Divinity is the cause of only that which conspires for the good (380c8–9).
2. Particular divinities do not deceive us by altering their proper forms (*eidei*) and assuming alien ones (380d1–6, 383a3–5).
3. The realm of the divine Hades is not so terrifying as to warrant the choice of a shameful life over a noble death (386a6–c2, 387b5–6).
4. Heroes, if they are truly the progeny of divinities,

will not lose their heads in regard to grief, vengeance, levity, dishonesty, drink, sex, food, or money (387d4–392a2).

As Socrates reveals, the practice of censorship does not stem from any independent understanding of an order among the multiplicity of human goods (392a3–11). It derives, instead, from the founders' *subordination* of other claims to these elements (nay, these bare outlines) of the theology as they attempt to ensure the goodness of the city's guardians, which they take to be the most reliable safeguard of civic wholeness. Thus, Socrates and Adeimantus hold that even if there were to appear "a man enabled by wisdom to represent all things" (*hypo sophias . . . mimeisthai panta chrêmata*), he should be promptly escorted to the city's frontier and sent away; for such an expert would not "harmonize with our *politeia*" (397d10–398a7). Evidently, *politeia* (mentioned here explicitly for the first time in the dialogue) comes into sight only with the discovery of a principle of organization that outranks technical expertise. Yet surely it is paradoxical that Socrates would banish the very man he credits with wisdom. Granting that the mimetic expert (i.e., the all-wise and unsubordinated poet) would not "fit in," we may still wonder why it is the poet, rather than the *politeia*, that must go. Why, in other words, sacrifice wisdom for the sake of political order? And if the wisdom of expert proficiency is no longer sufficient to warrant citizenship in the model city, what takes its place? What is the nature of this new principle and how does it justify the exclusion of a wise man?

It is not easy to see that the statesman has authority over the poet, much less to identify the foundation of such authority. Yet the existence of such authority would imply that the statesman's recognition of theological guidelines—the only things that the founders as yet claim to understand—outranks the poet's wisdom concerning "all things."⁶ But in what sense, if any, is the statesman's knowledge superior to the poet's? As Socrates has formulated it, the comparison would seem to favor the poet. After all, the founders of the model city are said to recognize *outlines*; their knowledge is far from complete. The poet's wisdom, by contrast, touches upon all things. Hence its epic scope. Poetic mimesis thus appears as the natural rival of philosophy. For its reach over the totality of things is easily mistaken for comprehensive knowledge. But this seems to be Socrates' point: although mimetic expertise is exhaustive in its reach, it remains piecemeal in its comprehension. Despite its dazzling capacity for representing anything and everything (an arrogant king, an angry priest, a charming girl, an impertinent fool, a thunderous mob, etc.), the one thing merely mimetic expertise cannot imagine is the governing principle that prescribes the proper place of each of these beings and so provides definition to their community as a whole.

Socrates determines that the poet is properly subordinate to the statesman, despite the fact that the statesman's knowledge is much less exhaustive than

that of the poet, because the knowledge the statesman possesses is at least a knowledge of something whole, even if it is by no means finished or complete. Thus, Socrates distinguishes his own enterprise of making a model city from traditional poetry (which is antagonistic to philosophy) by expressly repudiating within his model city the mimetic pretension to exhaustive knowledge. Socrates thus selects as a benediction for his model city Hesiod's line "Half is more somehow than all" (*pantos*, 466c2–3; cf. Hesiod, *Works and Days* 40).⁷ Hesiod is deemed here to be really wise (*tôi ontî ên sophos*, 466c2)—to possess *real* wisdom, that is, as distinguished from the merely exhaustive (*pantodapon*, 398a1) technical wisdom of the mimetic expert. Real wisdom, which is comprehensive, discerns precisely what is indiscernible in "all." It is in regard to this defect that we may say that half is more somehow than all, for order and wholeness are lacking in a mere totality. For example, a division, disciplined and properly mustered, is more somehow than an entire army routed and scattered in the field. Half is more somehow than all because half, as a ratio, already measures—and thus somehow conveys—the significance of the whole. A random heap (as Socrates regards the feverish city to be) may well exhaust all that a city comprises, but it does so without being *in any way* able to comprehend it. As nothing more than an exhaustive survey of a totality, "all" fails to preserve or to account for the order of the whole.⁸

As a consequence of the founders' imposition of censorship, the model city has undergone an extraordinary change. Thanks to the founders' care in ensuring that its warriors receive an education conducive to civic harmony, the model city has acquired a principle of order. The presence of this *politeia* evidently makes the city sufficiently intriguing to draw Glaucon back into the conversation. Glaucon had stretched himself toward the satisfaction of overwrought, limitless, and fundamentally private appetites in his longing for something more than a merely porcine existence. Yet in so doing Glaucon runs the risk of alienating himself from any possible human community; thus he doubts that the expression "everyone" includes himself (*egô . . . kindyneuô ektos tôn pantôn*, 398c7–8). But when a *politeia* (which is likewise not to be found in the midst of a mere "all") does arise among the interlocutors, Glaucon is able to integrate himself into it. Specifically, he places his own musical know-how at Socrates' disposal in considering which harmonies and melodies are appropriate in the songs to be taught to the city's youth. Glaucon agrees with Socrates that harmony and rhythm must correspond to the words of a song and that these words must fall within the *typoi* already specified (398d4–10). The *politeia*, then, not the art of music, proves to be the founders' guide to what is truly harmonious or musical. Glaucon accordingly joins Socrates in purging all but the Dorian and Phrygian modes, which properly represent the steadfast endurance and measured sobriety characteristic of a really courageous or manly man (*ontos andreiou*,

399a6). The other modes, which from a technical standpoint are no less harmonious than these, are taken away because they are useless to a real man and thus do not harmonize with the city's *politeia*. Glaucon thus discovers that this own manliness, which had caused him to distrust social convention and to isolate himself from community, in fact "fits in" or harmonizes with the model city's *politeia*.

The presence of *politeia* enables Glaucon to contemplate the purified city as a whole and so as something clearly different from the city of luxuriance. In the city of luxuriance, there was nothing to integrate or to inform the diffusiveness of Glaucon's longing for something more than the life of a pig; nor was there anything to delimit the city's own indeterminacy and incompleteness. Glaucon's erotic longing was scattered into a mob of inflamed and limitless desires. Though the purgation of the model city deprives Glaucon of the vicarious satisfaction of his feverish desires (see, e.g., 404b4–e6), it nevertheless informs, reconstructs, and thus holds the prospect of satisfying Glaucon's fundamental eroticism. Plato, the consummate dramatic artist, here delineates a genuine development of character in Glaucon. Only if we keep in mind the distinction between eros and limitless desire, however, will we see that Glaucon's new and surprising sobermindedness (399e7) truly is "in character." Socrates indicates the relevance of this distinction for our consideration of Glaucon by likening the human soul to another "Glaucon," namely, the mythical sea Glaucon, whose original nature is hardly visible because of the mutilations of the waves and the accretions of shells and seaweed (611c7–d7). Inflamed and limitless desires are the mutilations and accretions which presently obscure the original nature of eros. In its unperverted nature, eros is a quickening of the soul responsive to evidence of the beauty of cosmic order and, consequently, is itself measured and musical (403a7–8). It is an erotic quickening of this sort, provoked by the presence of *politeia*, that leads Glaucon to overcome his isolation and to join the others in "being sober-minded." Indeed, Glaucon's membership in the polity of inquiry, including his participation in the purge of the city, is more truly an expression of eros than is his most extreme ultimatum demanding the satisfaction of limitless desire.

There is surely, then, no "abstraction from eros" in the present passage. What occurs is better understood as a first step toward healing or recomposing the mutilation of eros, a mutilation that poses a formidable impediment to the development of Glaucon's capacity for synopsis.⁹ The model city's *politeia*, which emerges with the founders' institution of censorship, facilitates the reassembly of the scattered fragments of Glaucon's eros. As a result, Glaucon now recognizes the real man as a member of the model city and thus as belonging to a genuine *politeia*, rather than as a maverick proudly freebooting the thralls of Leviathan. Glaucon realizes that he belongs among the city's founders as a member of the polity of inquiry. Gone, then, are the qualms concerning his

inclusion among the others. Instead, we find Glaucon swearing repeatedly in consternation at the discovery of the limits of his capacity to perform his share of the founders' work (400a4, c6)!

Socratic censorship gives form and integrity to the political community primarily by determining what is fitting for the formation of warriors into true civic guardians. Censorship thus counters the danger of civil war, harmonizing the city and adumbrating its integral wholeness. Glaucon's reflection upon Socratic censorship induces a psychic reformation congenial to, but not yet sufficient for, synopsis. Synopsis requires more than a sense of belonging or a recognition of membership. Even among members, there is still the danger that *partisanship* will undermine synopsis. So before entrusting the statesmanly responsibilities of political office to the best of the warriors, Socrates will suggest that they must first pass certain tests designed to challenge their judgment and their power to resist temptations to place partisan interest ahead of the common good. It is likewise not enough that Socrates has overcome the isolation of Glaucon. Although Glaucon now acknowledges his incorporation as a member of the polity of inquiry, he must still be induced to care for the good of this polity in a nonpartisan way. We shall see that the noble lie, which Socrates contrives to address the need for nonpartisan rulers in his model city, will also help to prepare these rulers—and Glaucon himself—for the practice of dialectic.

Nonpartisanship and the Noble Lie

Anything incapable of sustaining itself is not a whole but is merely a part of something else. To be wholly complete, then, the model city must possess the dynamic capacity to sustain itself. So the founders must be discerning recruiters of trustworthy rulers, who must themselves be discerning recruiters of trustworthy rulers. If the city's rulers should allow partisan considerations to bias their judgment in recruiting their successors, they would undermine their city and subvert the common good. Socrates accordingly notes that guardians in the complete sense of the term (*teleous phylakas*) will do their job not out of a concern limited to the interest of some particular part of the city but rather with a view to the good of the city as a whole (428c11–d7). A complete or perfect guardian, in other words, must possess a capacity for nonpartisan synopsis. So the founders must select as rulers those among the guardians who demonstrate this capacity. But who among the guardians can be said to possess a capacity for synopsis? Evidently no one, for Socrates says that he will only *sketch* an answer to this question in the initial foundation of his city; the precise selection of the most perfect guardians will be undertaken later (414a5–7, 503b4–5). Socrates' sketch—his first, rough cut at the task of civic recruitment—merely outlines the trials that are intended to reveal who among the guardians is most reliable in his care for the city.

Socrates would refuse to entrust the city to any

candidate who is inclined to be forgetful of his responsibilities, to despair at setbacks, to shrink from terrors, or to be seduced by pleasures. He designs the guardians' trials accordingly, to pose precisely these temptations. Nevertheless, Socrates acknowledges one source of temptation for which he does not construct a test. He recognizes that in addition to other dangers, his cadets are liable to "being robbed" of their convictions by speech (*logos*, 413b6). Yet the examination he designs to test for this possibility involves not words but deeds (*erga*, 413c5–d2).¹⁰ In such a case, one searches in vain for an unobtrusive measure. Of course the definitive trial of one's liability to corruption by speech would involve exposure to an expert rhetorician or dialectician. But the administration of a trial by *logos* would interfere with the proper development of the very trait it is designed to reveal. It is in order to avoid compromising the proper development of his guardians that Socrates eschews dialectical examination. Socrates expressly credits this postponement of dialectic as the feature that makes the model city "altogether opposite" (*pan tounantion*) to any other (497e5–498b3).

Although Socrates' warriors are in other ways tested "as gold is in fire" (413e1–2, 503a5–6), their prudently enforced innocence with respect to dialectic indicates that they are not yet perfect guardians in the most precise sense. Premature practice of dialectic would threaten to undermine the wholesome development of the guardians' nature (538a9–539d7). Nevertheless, these guardians cannot attain completeness—nor can their philosophical nature achieve its fruition—apart from the practice of dialectic (532a1–2). So the founders' postponement of dialectic may be said to highlight the gap between the rulers initially recruited "in outline" and the most precise guardians, the philosopher kings, who are later said to be the proper rulers of the model city (503b4–5). Being in need (*en deonti*, 414b8–9) of something to bridge this gap, Socrates introduces the *noble lie*. It is the lie's function, in other words, to establish the continuity of these developmental stages in the maturation of the perfect civic guardian. Thus, the lie aims first and foremost to propagate complete guardians, not to propagandize the nonphilosophical masses. With this prospect in view, Socrates declares that he will undertake to persuade "first and foremost the rulers themselves" (*malista . . . prôton*, 414c1–d3).¹¹

Socrates' lie, though admittedly a deception, is not meant to swindle. Before describing his own lie, Socrates reminds his interlocutors of the lies (*tôn pseudôn*) they had discussed earlier in connection with the guardians' elementary education (414b9). These lies were seen as providing a foundation for human education (376e2–377a7). Socrates' lie is meant to be "one of those lies." As such, Socrates indicates, his lie is a "lie in words," not a "lie in the soul." A lie in the soul, he observes, causes one to be deceived about what really is; as a result, such a lie induces *amathia*, that is, a condition of soul adverse to learning (*peri ta onta . . . amathê einai*, 382b2–3). But a lie in words uses falsehood as a medium of education

and so actually enhances the soul's capacity for learning.¹² The lie in words is useful when we are ignorant of the whole truth or when those with whom one speaks are too immature or are otherwise indisposed to assimilate the truth directly (382c6–d3). Such a lie is by no means alien to the truth. On the contrary, Socrates indicates a metaphysical linkage between the lie in words and the truth, remarking that the false and the true represent two aspects of singular *eidos* of words used in the education of youth (376e6–11). Socrates thus envisions a singular and yet twofold eidetic structure, which integrates certain false and true logoi. The singularity of Socrates' *eidos* of words may be said to represent the essential continuity of moments in the unfolding of human education. Such an *eidos* serves as the precondition for the experience of learning. Hence, the appearance of fundamental opposition between truth and falsehood may be recognized as merely an illusion that results whenever one assumes a standpoint outside the province of human learning.

It is with the prospect of just such learning in mind, however, that Socrates describes his lie as noble (*gennaion*, 414b9). Socrates' word *gennaion* may be translated more precisely as "generous," provided we understand this in what lexicographers call its archaic sense, namely, as something both abundantly beneficent and true bred. The beneficence of this noble lie resides in its contribution to the education of perfect civic guardians. This contribution comes by means of a specific misrepresentation concerning the character of the citizens' breeding. And in this regard, the adjective *gennaion* is again well chosen. For it signifies the venerable pedigree as well as the specific theme of autochthonic tales such as the one Socrates contrives in the present passage. Thus, Socrates notes that his lie is "nothing novel, but a Phoenician thing." The allusion may be meant to recall the Phoenician Cadmus, who founded Thebes with the aid of warriors allegedly sprung from the earth; it may refer, at the same time, to the *Phoenix*-like recurrence across time and place of such autochthonic tales. It may refer, in recalling this same Phoenix, to the specific feat of assembling a living whole out of elements as diffuse as ashes or dust. In any case, Socrates' description of the lie as *gennaion* and Phoenician prepares for its detailed formulation, which not only recapitulates the Theban claim of autochthony but in some sense represents the best or truest-bred example of such a falsehood or myth. Specifically, Socrates will undertake to persuade his citizens, and especially his rulers, that what they imagine (*edokoun*, 414d5) to be their rearing and education is only a dream: "I shall attempt to persuade first the rulers themselves and the warriors, and after them the rest of the city, that all these things that they imagined they suffered and had happen to them in our rearing and education were as dreams. While in truth they were at that time being formed and reared within the earth underground . . . and when their fashioning was finally completed, the earth, being their mother, delivered them up" (414d4–6).

But why would anyone attempt to persuade someone that he is dreaming, except to cause him, in some sense of the word, to awaken? Such an awakening is, of course, just what one needs if he is to aspire to a higher plane of intellectual perception. The ramifications of this aspiration are implicit in Socrates' notion of the nature of dreaming; Socrates understands dreaming as a condition in which one believes that a likeness is not a likeness but the thing itself (476c4–8). We may infer that the awakening that Socrates intends to encourage would involve the rulers' ceasing to mistake what they imagine education to be for what education really is. Socrates notes that the citizens imagine their rearing and education to be something that they suffer and that happens to them (*paschein te kai gignesthai peri autous*, 414d5–6); in short, they underestimate the importance of their own contribution in becoming educated. Socrates does not explain why human beings (particularly those who live in well-governed polities) tend to think of their own development as something that happens on the perimeter of their selves, rather than stemming more naturally from their innermost being. We may surmise, however, that the influence of political institutions leaves human beings a little awestruck. (Perhaps this is why Adeimantus takes it for granted that the city is "bigger" than a single man, while Socrates merely raises the question of their relative greatness [368e5–6].) Recognizing this problem, we may say that what is needed, particularly in good polities, is a means of keeping human beings from supposing that their own human nature is nothing but raw material molded by the conventions of an all-powerful culture. The myth of autochthony answers this need in a surprisingly direct manner. In Socrates' rendition, the finished character of mature human beings is presented as the exclusive work of nature and nature's god (415a4–7). Thus, in "the remainder of the myth" (*to loipon tou mythou*), Socrates states that it is a divinity that forms the citizens, a divinity who mixes gold in the genesis of those sufficient to rule, silver in the auxiliaries, and iron and bronze in the farmers and the city's other artisans (415a1–7). On this account, civic nurture plays *no role at all*. Socrates' lie represents the apotheosis of nature, I suggest, in order to combat tendencies toward the apotheosis of the state.

Clearly, it is false to assert that nature in the fullest sense of the word is restricted to genesis or nativity.¹³ Any account that presents human nativity as equivalent to human maturity is a lie. Nevertheless, Socrates' lie performs a needed service. It keeps the founders from becoming victims, so to speak, of their own success. For the founder's remarkable achievement in rearing their spirited and philosophical guardians will prove to be counterproductive if it leaves the impression that the statesman's dictate is the essential factor in human development. Rulers especially must be disabused of any such notion. Socrates accordingly offers the noble lie as a means of awakening first and foremost the rulers themselves from the dream (or perhaps better, the dogmatic

slumber) of conventionalism. Of course, one may object that this account of the noble lie is somewhat overwrought. For it may be expected that philosophically inclined rulers will on their own be "first and foremost" to see through the illusion of conventionalism. This is true, but it does not go far enough. Socrates goes further. For he predicts that the philosophical youngster will not only see through the illusion of conventionalism but will turn from conventionalism to its opposite (*paranomios . . . ek nomimou*, 539a3). Socrates divines that such a youngster will leave off honoring the ancestral traditions he was taught to honor by his political community once he gains so much as a glimpse of what is (538a9–10). Under the stress of an intellectual scrutiny that would reveal the shortcomings of any civic institution, a philosophical soul might well cleave to a more pristine idea of good and evil that can be practiced in any human community. The essential natures of other qualities will likewise be misconstrued as purely abstract principles or patterns, which would only be sullied by contact with whatever comes into being. From this pristine perspective it appears that nothing that comes into being (*ta gignomena*) could ever contribute anything to our understanding of what truly is. Souls inclined to stretch toward such an understanding would develop contempt for *ta gignomena*, including the institutions of their native land. The disillusionment of conventionalism in this way ends in antinomianism if not in outright criminality. In one blow, the city is deprived of properly solicitous rulers and the philosopher (subsequently identified as the perfect guardian) is rendered incapable of the cosmic synopsis prerequisite to his maturation in dialectic.

Antinomianism invites a form of partisanship that we may distinguish from familial or kinship-based partisanship; this form of partisanship is indeed a hazard inherent in the philosophical soul. Socrates indicates that once the philosophical nature catches sight of all time and all being, human life will hardly seem any big thing (486a8–10). The winged souls of philosophic natures "hasten to spend their time always aloft and are unwilling to do what pertains to human beings" (517c8–9). This bias in favor of the class interest of those concerned exclusively with the things "aloft" is indicative of what we may call a *hyperian* partisanship. Socrates' concern for the lack of steadfastness in the philosophical nature thus invites a question: Do the winged souls of philosophers truly soar, or are they merely flighty? The superciliousness of the protophilosopher does not sort well with the generosity characteristic of the truly erotic soul. For the latter "always yearns for the whole and for all things both divine and human" (486a5–7, emphasis mine; see also 402a7–d5). If the philosophical nature is not stabilized by a proper nurture and education, its native intellectual keenness will distort its judgment concerning the cosmic as well as the civic polity and ultimately tear it away even from philosophy (491b7–9). The noble lie guards against antinomianism and hyperian partisanship by sidestepping altogether the precariousness of an all-too-easily disillusioned conventionalism.

The myth of autochthony motivates loyalty to *politeia* in a manner that avoids the counterproductive ascription of sovereignty to political convention. The sheer *earthiness* of the lie's account of human development helps to keep the feet of Socrates' immature philosophers planted firmly on the ground.

Of course, the political value of the noble lie is self-evident. By playing down the role of civic nurture in favor of the role of autochthonic nativity, the lie ensures that citizens will feel bound to the motherland more closely than could be effected by any notion of convention or social contract. The lie transforms conventional justice into an obligation of piety, fortifying a sense of belonging rather than merely appealing to a merely instrumental and reciprocal obligation. In deference to the divinely sanctioned and natural authority of functional diversity, the rulers "will in no way show mercy if their own offspring is born with an admixture of bronze or iron; instead, they will render the honor appropriate to the child's nature and push it away to the craftsmen and farmers" (415b6–c2). Blood, as we say, is thicker than water; but earth is thicker than either. So the rulers place the interests of their motherland ahead of their own partisan attachment to kith and kin when determining the occupational assignments of their fellow citizens; as a consequence, they will better safeguard the divisions within the city that underlie and fortify its integrity as a whole. It is no coincidence, then, that the task of civic recruitment (which calls for nothing less than this whole-illuminating division of parts) is enjoined as the rulers' "first and foremost" responsibility (*prōton kai malista*, 415b3–4). This formulation echoes Socrates' emphasis on persuading first and foremost the rulers themselves of the noble lie. For the sorting out of human and occupational diversity fortifies the city's constitutional integrity and, at the same time, adumbrates the work of dialectic—and so foreshadows Socrates' judgment that consummate civic guardians need to be philosophers (503b4–5). Even as the lie promotes its immediate political purpose, it is also helping to prepare philosophical and spirited youths for the exercise of dialectic.

Bred on the noble lie, Socrates' philosophical rulers will spurn the cloud-worshipping idolatry of Aristophanes' antinomian intellectuals. Inasmuch as the noble lie helps advance the appreciation of the cosmic significance of *ta gignomena*, it helps to stabilize the intellectual facility characteristic of philosophical natures. Because the founders will not countenance the alienation of the city's most promising youngsters from *ta gignomena*, the intellectual advance of these youngsters will more likely culminate in a comprehensive grasp of the cosmos as a whole. On the basis of this cosmic synopsis, they will be able to undertake the dialectical examination of their own upbringing and ancestral beliefs—including the noble lie itself—without becoming careless or contemptuous of their city's institutions or their fellow citizens. Thus Socrates' choice of words is precise when he says that it is as "nurselings" (*trophimoi*, 520d6), that is, as

beneficiaries of the city's nurture, that his philosophically inclined youngsters will see that they are not a class apart but are themselves members of a cosmic polity, a polity that transcends yet comprehends the civic polity.

Glaucon *andrioiotatos*, most manly and courageous always and everywhere, finds the noble lie appealing because its underlying message is that one need not kowtow to *nomos* to be loyal to *politeia*. The lie counters the tendency of well-reared human beings to become captivated by good *nomoi*. The thralls of *nomos* will never acquire a truly mature human excellence even under the most salutary conditions; if given the chance, they would choose to be tyrants (619b7–d1). Glaucon and the best of the youths of the model city will see the falseness of the lie. Yet they will also see its nobility—its generosity in providing or preserving a way to the truth. Once Glaucon sees that a lie—a thing far different from the pristine truth—can serve an essential educational purpose, he can begin to overcome his feelings of contempt for appearances. He, and the city's philosophical youth, can begin to recognize the counterproductive immaturity of their own hyperian zeal for proceeding directly or immediately to the truth *auto kath' hautō*. Glaucon's support of the noble lie represents a growing appreciation of the importance of images and appearances—and even falsehoods—for the seeker of truth. Glaucon and other philosophical youth are likely, as a result, to take a less haughty view of the human beings who occupy the realm of appearances. This more moderate approach is prerequisite to Glaucon's own transcendence of hyperian partisanship. It is necessary, moreover, if he is ever to acquire a mature righteousness or human excellence.

As we have seen, Socrates devises his noble lie because his city requires rulers whose judgment is nonpartisan. The lie helps philosophical rulers to cultivate a capacity for synopsis no more distorted by concern for the "things aloft" than for kith and kin. But, before Socrates is willing to regard the foundation of his model city as complete, he addresses one more obstacle—perhaps the most difficult and surely the most intimate obstacle—to the beneficial practice of dialectic. This obstacle derives from the peculiar sense of isolation that we feel in our own bodies.

Socratic Communism and the Battle against Erotic Idiosyncrasy

With the completion of the guardians' education in music and gymnastics and with the additional safeguard of the noble lie, one might think that the foundation of the model city would be complete. But Socrates warns Glaucon that one must still be on guard lest the auxiliaries, who are meant to be the city's watchdogs, turn wolf and attack the flock (416a2–b4). The education that has been given to these men aims to provide them with the most important safeguard (416b1–c4). But Socrates observes that "someone intelligent would say that, in

addition to this education, one must provide them with dwellings and such other substance as will not stop them from being the best possible guardians" (416c5–d1). Socrates accordingly proposes that the guardians shall possess "no private substance whatever, unless it is entirely necessary" (416d5–6). What is necessary for guardians is different, of course, from what is necessary for farmers. Private ownership of land is for farmers an instrument of membership in the polity. The possession of such property encourages efficient agricultural cultivation and thus ensures that farmers will not cease being farmers (417a6–7). But Socrates' warriors are to be civic guardians, not farmers. While the private ownership of boots, toothbrushes, and other such necessities might fit perfectly well into the guardian's role in the civic *politeia*, the possession of private estates, houses, and money would only be a hindrance to the warriors' distinctive work of caring for the city as a whole and so must be proscribed. In the model city, property (that which is one's own) consists in nothing else than the equipment appropriate for performing one's part in the *politeia*.

Although Glaucon endorses Socrates' proposal, his brother Adeimantus ventures a criticism. We have not heard from Adeimantus since he joined Socrates in banning insubordinate poets from the city. Now it is apparent that Adeimantus has some unresolved difficulties with synopsis. Adeimantus wonders how Socrates would defend himself if someone were to charge that he had denied happiness to his guardians, the very men "whose city it is in truth," inasmuch as they are not permitted to possess great and beautiful houses or to have the opportunity of private sacrifices to the gods or because they cannot embark upon trips abroad in private or make presents to girlfriends (419a1–420a8).¹⁴ The problem, according to Adeimantus, is that the guardians are more like foreign mercenaries than the rulers of any recognizable city. This is a telling criticism, at least as far as Adeimantus himself is concerned. For in the course of its formulation, Adeimantus reveals his own presumption that the city belongs to its rulers. He has forgotten that the truth about *politeia* is quite the reverse: it is not the city that belongs as private property to the guardians but the guardians who, along with the other citizens, belong as members to the city. Adeimantus needs to be reminded of his responsibilities as a member of the team of interlocutors founding the model city. For the work of answering such indictments, Socrates indicates, is not Socrates' private burden (as Adeimantus had suggested) but is rather a task shared in common with his cofounders (cf. 419a2 and 420b1). Adeimantus' fretting over the lack of private gratifications suggests that he, at least, has not yet benefited sufficiently from Socrates' *propaideia*.

Adeimantus' problem is that he is not attending to the model city as a whole. His concern for the role of private indulgence in the constitution of individual happiness stands in the way of his successful practice of synopsis. So Socrates, in response, reminds him

that the founders' task is not to seek the exceptional happiness of any tribe within the city but rather to consider how it is that the city itself may be, as much as possible, a whole (*holê*, 420b5–8; *holên*, 421b6). It is in such a city (i.e., a whole city, *holês poleôs*) that the interlocutors had thought they might find justice (368e3, 420b8–9). The political institutions of the model city serve the discovery of justice by constituting the civic community as a whole. This purpose, as Socrates reminds Adeimantus, must be kept clearly in mind if one is properly to appreciate the founders' communistic proposals.

Adeimantus accepts Socrates' reminder (421c7). He agrees with Socrates that the most beautiful sign of civic improvement—the noblest limit of civic enlargement—is the achievement and maintenance of political wholeness or integrity. The interlocutors agree, moreover, that if the guardians' education and rearing (“the one great, or rather sufficient, thing”) is safeguarded, the guardians themselves will be equipped to discern all that is further required for the city to reach the fullness of its growth. These further requirements are left undetailed for the time being. Yet they too must be comprehended by any synoptic view of the civic *politeia*. Thus Socrates makes a passing reference to these requirements, noting simply that the possession of women, matings, and procreation should all be arranged to conform as closely as possible to the proverb “friends' affairs are common” (*koina ta philôn*, 423e5–424a2). Socrates postpones the elaboration of this proposal for good reason. Not only will the details of such a proposal stir up a hornet's nest of opposition, but its elaboration as a whole will involve the very dialectical examination (*dielesthai*, 449d3–450a2; *dialegesthai*, 454a4–d1) that he has been so carefully postponing. The three waves of book 5, which Socrates and his interlocutors will confront and eventually survive, are illustrative of the dangers that anyone engaged in a trial by dialectic necessarily faces. But Socrates must still doubt whether his interlocutors are sufficiently prepared to take the risks involved in such a dialectical examination (450d8–451b8). Adeimantus' anxiety concerning private indulgence suggests, as much as anything, that more preparation is needed. It is as a final stage in his dialectical *propaideia*, we may infer, that Socrates offers this muted foreshadowing of the communization of family life.

Like the other controversial political institutions that we have already considered, Socrates' connubial communism—just so far as it is developed through the completion of the foundation (*ôikismenê*, 427c6–d1) of the model city—contributes to the fortification of the interlocutors' capacity for synopsis. (In recognition of the distinction between this propaedeutic and the actual practice of dialectic, I reserve discussion of the barnyard analogies and the other features of connubial communism as detailed in book 5 for another occasion, when the whole matter of the reintroduction of dialectical examination may be appropriately considered.) So we must concentrate our investigation here upon the only clue concerning the

character of Socrates' connubial communism that is provided prior to the completion of the city's foundation, namely that the possession of women, matings, and procreation should be arranged to conform as closely as possible to the proverb “friends' affairs are common.” We should begin by noting that Socrates introduces his endorsement of this proverb—and its surprising application to sexual mating and procreation—as a counter to the tendency toward self-indulgence and self-centeredness, which is implicit in the indictment brought by Adeimantus.

Beside the more spirited and hyperian sources of alienation or partisanship already mentioned—which seem to be at the root of Glaucon's characteristic difficulties—each of us is continuously confronted by that most tangible reminder of human separateness: his or her own body. As is clear from the differences between the truthful city and the feverish city, Adeimantus is temperamentally much more solicitous of the human body and its natural requirements than is his brother. Indeed, for the mass of human beings, the indisputable separateness of the human body and the exclusivity of individual sensory impressions suffice to demonstrate that the body is radically private. Narrowly focussing upon the indulgence of the bodily senses, human beings become even more credulous of assertions that our bodies and what we do with them are nothing but “our own affair.” (Perhaps it is for this reason that Plato makes the conversation reported in the *Republic* occur as an alternative activity to the feast and all-night orgy taking place concurrently in the Piraeus. The interlocutors' “being moderate” both in speech and in deed necessarily precedes their consideration of the significance of the body.) Now the claim of individualistic self-indulgence is especially compelling in the most physically intimate relationship of all, the sexual mating of man and woman. Yet if mankind is even more a coupling animal than a political animal, it would seem that the opportunity for synopsis in connection with the connubial *politeia* presents itself ahead of all others. If one fails to achieve synopsis in this matter, it is quite unlikely that he or she will do much better in the case of civic or cosmic synopsis. So Socrates has good reason to speak in earnest when he proposes that sexual matters be arranged to accord with the proverb “friends' affairs are common”. For nowhere are the problematic status of the separateness of our bodies or the obstacle this poses to the achievement of synopsis more evident than in connection with sexual matters.

There is, of course, nothing quite like sex—and not merely in terms of intensity of pleasure. For other bodily appetites yield to perfectly appropriate private satisfactions. Consider, for example, the appetite of hunger. There is no breach of civic membership, nor is there anything partisan, when a guardian ingests and thus privatizes the moderate ration of food that he eats. The exclusive ingestion and assimilation of this food is precisely what should take place if the guardian is to be a guardian. In fact, Socrates makes a point of endorsing the Homeric practice of award-

ing the best cut of meat as a prize to the best warrior. Such an award is especially fitting, Socrates says, because the best warriors thus derive both honor and an increase in strength at the same time (468c10–d6). This remarkable combination of results is possible because the purpose served by hunger is to facilitate the strength or health of one's own body. Food, which exists to satisfy hunger, can be used for the purpose for which it exists only by being made private. In this regard, sex is rather more complicated. Of course, the pleasure obtained in the satisfaction of sexual appetite is as exclusively private as any other sensory impression. Nevertheless, the chief purpose of sexual intercourse is procreation; and the work of procreation is by no means a private or exclusively individual affair. In procreation, the intercourse of two (the Greeks called this intercourse "being-together" or *synousia*) is needed to generate a one. The coming into being of any single human body, whether male or female, presupposes the *synousia* of male and female. We may go so far as to say that it is impossible to understand the body apart from its role in a connubial partnership. For the elemental fact of sexual differentiation and complementarity is unintelligible in any other way. We shall never appreciate the body rightly if we consider it reductively, as nothing but an idiosyncratic bundle of nerves. If, instead of such reductionism, one grasps the body as a whole—and this is perhaps the primordial instance of synopsis—one cannot fail to observe that the body is naturally either male or female and thus the natural complement of a body of the opposite sex. The *synousia* of male and female thus constitutes a whole toward which each is erotically drawn. Yet sexual individualism treats the body as if it were nothing but an instrument of sensation. Erotic idiosyncrasy thus undermines the intelligibility of the body and obscures the synopsis of the connubial partnership as a whole. The sexual differentiation of the human body—its inflection into virile male and fertile female—suggests that at its most fundamental the human body is not simply "one's own affair"; the body is a sign and at the same time the instrument of a determinate and whole-seeking *erôs*, rather than of a limitless and merely self-indulgent appetite. Hence, we may say that the assertion of a purely private prerogative in sexual matters is indicative of the failure synoptically to grasp the connubial significance of the sexual character of the human body. Though we do not yet know the precise details of Socrates' reformed *nomos* for sexual mating, we may expect that it will be intended to combat self-centeredness by encouraging more attention to the connubial significance, as distinguished from the physiological separateness, of the human body.

The assertion of individual prerogative in sexual matters obstructs the achievement of a synoptic view of the human body and so obscures the *politeia* that properly obtains in all the relations (not just the sexual ones) between man and woman. In short, erotic idiosyncrasy undermines any prospect for friendship between men and women. Connubial

communism may be necessary, from Socrates' perspective, because there are not sufficient safeguards against erotic idiosyncrasy in the sexual matings undertaken currently in the context of private family life. Exclusivity in the mutual espousal of man and woman may be understood as pointing toward connubial synopsis, but only if one is already so inclined. For someone differently inclined (e.g., toward somatic self-centeredness and erotic idiosyncrasy), marital exclusivity alone will not counter the prejudice that sex exists for the sake of individual satisfaction. Of course, the most congenial institution for the erotic individualist is the "singles bar." In a world in which such an institution had itself become normative, the paradoxical proposal of sexual exclusivity might well encourage a reconsideration of connubial synopsis.¹⁵ But as far as Socrates and his interlocutors are concerned, sexual exclusivity remains the norm, and the privacy of family life conforms itself all too easily to erotic idiosyncrasy. Inasmuch as erotic idiosyncrasy undermines the achievement of connubial synopsis, there is little doubt but that it will also corrupt and disable the soul's capacity for grasping as a whole any superordinate community of which man and woman are a part. Socrates' assault on this form of individualism thus aims to orient his interlocutors toward the wholeness of the connubial partnership and any other partnerships, such as the political community, to which the connubial partnership belongs. As long as the connubial significance of the human body is neglected, the dialectical examination of questions such as whether the just or the unjust are happier will only endanger the excellence of the human soul. In the interest of preparing for such an exercise of dialectic, however, Socrates would have us replace individualism in our understanding of sexual matters with an emphasis on sexual community. His strategy is evidently successful, at least to this extent: when Adeimantus formulates his second thoughts on the question of connubial communism and the rest of the women's drama, he speaks synoptically of Socrates' stealing a "whole *eidos* of argument" and expresses his view that "the whole community of women and children makes the whole difference to a *politeia* coming into being rightly or not" (449c2, 449d3–6).

CONCLUSION

Glaucon is in a precarious position, as we meet him in the opening of Plato's *Republic*. His native inclination is skewed toward justice but he is, nevertheless, fascinated by injustice. Perturbed by the inconclusiveness of Socrates' response to Thrasymachus' defense of the unjust life, Glaucon resolves to place his own native decency in jeopardy in order to acquire a mature human excellence. Spurning the conventionalism of Thrasymachus, Glaucon argues that a real man—the true individual, who feels himself in no way beholden to the political community—will find injustice naturally superior to justice. This, at least

as Glaucon sees it, is the argument that must be answered if any of us is to choose justice for its own sake, rather than merely being forced by circumstances to accept justice as the price paid to avoid suffering injustice. He accordingly challenges Socrates to show the superiority of justice in a single soul, apart from all that a reputation for justice might convey.

But as Adeimantus suggests, our souls have been distorted by the influence of traditional patterns of childrearing. As a consequence of this distortion we are not in a condition to make the sovereign choice that Glaucon assumes as his prerogative. What is lacking in our souls, moreover, cannot be supplied by the mere addition of further argument. Adeimantus indicates that the soul "turned wholly to appearances" suffers from a distorted view of the question of justice and injustice; a soul thus twisted will always find that injustice is superior to justice, no matter the argument. So this psychic distortion must be corrected before the bearing of any further argument upon the choice between justice and injustice can be determined. Nor will the deformity of a soul turned wholly to appearances be remedied by turning exclusively toward "what is." Such a turn (like the one attempted by Glaucon at the opening of book 2) does not correct but merely inverts the warp of the distorted soul. What is needed, instead, is for the soul to develop an ability to comprehend as a whole both what is and what appears. Socrates expressly identifies such a whole as "the most beautiful" kind of good (358a1-3). The comprehension of *this* good would entail the synoptic capacity that Socrates declares to be prerequisite to the beneficial practice of dialectical argument.

In order to facilitate the development of this necessary synopsis and to forestall any further fruitless or even counterproductive dialectic concerning justice, Socrates proposes that his interlocutors join him in making a model city. Socrates' political proposals are not meant, then, as a blueprint for public policy; nor is it their principal intention to critique or to parody political idealism. Each of the city's controversial institutions contributes to the remediation of psychic distortion and fosters the soul's capacity for synopsis.

Censorship fosters an appreciation of *membership*. The feverish desires of the inflamed city represent the diffusiveness of the individual soul's longing in a condition anterior to the achievement of constitutional synopsis. The civic polity itself emerges only with the introduction of censorship. Glaucon, who regarded his individual self as "apart from everyone," discovers to his own surprise that he is growing more sober-minded as he affirms the principles of Socratic censorship. Thanks to this censorship, Glaucon comes to see himself as a part of the whole rather than apart from all. It bears repeating that Socrates' proposal for censorship is not a call to arms against the freedom of speech and expression found in presently existing political communities. To respond to such a call would only distract us from the point of

Socrates' exercise. Socrates' discussion of censorship is not meant as a public policy proposal but as therapy for better comprehending constitutional polity as a whole.

But synopsis requires more than an appreciation of membership, for membership still allows for the possibility of *partisanship*. Socrates contrives his noble lie to counter partisan tendencies, "especially [among] the rulers themselves," that inordinately bias judgment either in favor of kith and kin or "the things aloft." The noble lie—a medicinal lie in words, as opposed to the hateful lie in the soul—helps the rulers to perform their task of civic recruitment in a wholesome (i.e., a whole-revealing and whole-preserving) manner. It also provides a medium essential for continuity in the procession of philosophical education. Apart from the integration of this learning experience, even well habituated youngsters will end in repudiating the very persons and customs that sustained their first experiences of education and will turn tyrant at the first opportunity. The lie is thus the linchpin that holds together the city of warriors with the beautiful city of philosopher kings. It underlies and holds the key to the integrity of Socrates' model city through the major stages of its development.

Socratic communism addresses certain tendencies toward self-indulgent individualism, which are rooted in the separateness of one's own body. The inappropriateness of private possession of lands, houses, and money by civic guardians is indicated first of all. Although such things are needed by farmers and householders in the course of performing their civic role, these possessions would only distract civic guardians from their proper jobs. But communism culminates, for Socrates, in an assault upon *erotic idiosyncrasy*. The self-centeredness of erotic idiosyncrasy is countered by Socrates' application of the proverb "friends' affairs are common." Above all, the intelligibility of the human body itself depends upon an appreciation of its connubial significance in procreation. To attain this perspective we must, of course, transcend the reductive perspective that views the body as nothing but an individual bundle of nerves. Bodily sensation, we may grant, is exclusive and hardly communicable. But the body itself, which bears unimpeachable evidence of the complementarity of male and female, is only mistakenly regarded as a private affair. The objective of Socratic communism is to counter this mistaken tendency and to illuminate the connubial (and thus the civic and even the cosmic) significance of the body. The tendency to treat the human body as idiosyncratic renders the body unintelligible and poses an impediment to connubial, civic, and cosmic synopsis. Once again the point of Socrates' correction of the distorted view is neither to promote nor to discourage social change but rather to foster the synopsis prerequisite to the deliberate and reasoned adoption of a polity in one's soul.

The investigative strategy of Plato's *Republic* suggests that it is prudent, before choosing a polity for one's soul, to get some experience by establishing a

polity for something less precious—for example, a city in speech. The foundation of the model city thus serves the purpose of fostering the interlocutors' synoptic capacity as a prerequisite of their mature choice of life. Is it fitting, then, to maintain that Socrates' polity is the best city? If the function of the political community is to assist persons in achieving virtue, then it seems that it could count as such—though it never see the light of day. The existence or possibility of this city is irrelevant and can be seen to be so once one has understood what its true purpose is.

Notes

1. Citations in this essay to the *Platonis opera* (Plato 1900–1907) follow the customary Stephanus notation. Unless indicated otherwise, all citations are to the *Republic*. The translations are my own.

2. Thus I am in agreement with Strauss when he notes that in interpreting Plato "one cannot take seriously enough the law of logographic necessity. Nothing is accidental in a Platonic dialogue; everything is necessary at the place where it occurs" (1964, 60). It should be understood that "everything" includes the dramatic action as well as the arguments of the dialogue. Those who ignore dramatic evidence in their haste to dissect "Plato's" arguments labor in vain. But I also agree with Klein that "we [readers] are one of the elements of the dialogue and perhaps the most important one" (1965, 9). In this sense, the completion (i.e., the perfection) of the work intended by Plato is always up to us and so is never quite beyond the reach of chance. Consequently I would say that freedom and necessity are in perfect balance whenever learning takes place through the medium of a Platonic dialogue and the author's intention is thus fulfilled.

3. In Plato's *Laches*, Socrates explores the bearing of courage on the character and the pursuit of human excellence. For further discussion of this dialogue, see Dobbs 1986.

4. The definition of what exactly constitutes *one* job is, for the time being, deduced from the singularity of a given art. Later, the founders find that the two arts of music and gymnastics constitute *one pair* appropriately assigned to those who are to undertake the job of civic guard (411e4). It follows that *technê* no longer provides a sufficient indication of singularity of occupation. The founders' recognition of the integrity of this pair of arts thus represents a preliminary achievement of synopsis. Nevertheless, a certain unwitting dogmatism, which implicitly assumes that certain jobs or practices are *unintegrable*, has led even careful students of the *Republic* to maintain that Socrates' proposal for a philosopher king "rejects in its very formulation the principle of one man, one job" upon which the model city is based (see, e.g., Benardete 1989, 180). If nothing else, Socrates' appreciation of the *questionable-ness* of what constitutes *one* or makes for integrity (524e2–525a5) should give us pause before dismissing the integrity of the philosopher king on such simplistic grounds, as Strauss, for example, rightly perceives (1964, 101). For an interpretation that attempts to make the case for the integrity of Socrates' philosopher kings, see Dobbs 1985b.

5. Socrates thus notes that it is not only mimetic experts or insubordinate poets who are to be censored. Eventually, every craftsman is supervised to determine who is best able to follow the track of beauty and goodness of form; only those with this ability are permitted to remain in the city (401c4–d3). Others will be ejected, notwithstanding their specialization. Although the pastry chef, the relish maker, and the courtesan were quite welcome and appropriate in the city of luxury, all these specialists must now be purged. For their products and services contribute nothing to the education of the warrior youth, which is necessary if the city is to possess a

politeia. We may say that the rule one man, one job or art still prevails. But the meaning of oneness or integrity is enlarged beyond the mere consideration of specialization. Integrity of craft (and even integrity of function) is determined by harmonization with the *politeia* of the model city.

6. The truly epic pretentiousness of the mimetic expert is clear enough in the text before us. But for further testimonials, consider the whole of Plato's *Ion* and, in particular, the following speech of Niceratus from Xenophon's *Symposium*: "You are aware, of course, that the supremely wise Homer has made poems on nearly every human subject. So anyone of you who wishes to become a skilled householder, politician, or general—or to be like Achilles, Ajax, Nestor, or Odysseus—should attend to me because I know all these things!" (4.6). (My thanks to J. Budziszewski for calling my attention to this passage and for many helpful remarks on an earlier draft of this essay.)

7. The true significance of Socrates' citation of this line has eluded readers, I suspect, because Hesiod is taken to be asserting that "the half is more somehow than the whole." Such a rendering is linguistically tenable, yet it yields no sense. For there is, I maintain, *no way* that half is more than the whole. I suggest that in interpreting Hesiod's dictum, we instead take our bearings from the distinction between piecemeal exhaustiveness and comprehensive understanding, which I argue is crucial to Socrates' discussion of censorship. Then we may see that Hesiod's word *pantos* should be rendered as "all" rather than as "whole." Half is indeed "more somehow than all" in that a mere totality lacks the order already adumbrated in the recognition of half. By approaching the interpretation of this line in this way, I maintain, the reader is able both to make sense of Hesiod and to appreciate the appropriateness of Socrates' citation.

8. Thus I hold that the synopsis implicit in recognizing that "half is more somehow than all" does not require that one first come to know *all* the beings. The kind of reasoning that contemporary psychologists and philosophers of science identify as "pattern recognition" entails the possibility of cosmic synopsis apart from an exhaustive survey of all cases (see, e.g., Hanson 1965, 85–92). Hence, I cannot agree with the Speusippean interpretation of "cosmic synopsis" cited by Brann (1967, 116) and followed by many other scholars.

9. Compare Strauss's observation that "The *Republic* could unqualifiedly abstract from *erôs* only if it could abstract from philosophy" (1964, 112).

10. Adam overlooks the significance of Socrates' exclusive reliance upon works or deeds (*erga*, 413c8) in conducting his tests. Hence, he considers it "a curious fact that Plato's *klopê* [the loss of true opinion by theft, including theft by speech] still leaves a loophole by which vicious poetry may creep in again. On the general question, Plato does well to insist on the educational value of temptation; the theory and practice of modern times recognizes it in connection with *bia* [force], but experience too often shows that *klopê* and *goêteia* [wizardry] mean playing with fire" (1902, 1:191–92). Of course Adam is quite right "on the general question." Experience does show that such things mean playing with fire, as Socrates clearly agrees (537e1–539d7). It is for precisely this reason, I contend, that Socrates restricts the testing of his warriors to works (*erga*), not words.

11. So it is by no means Socrates' leading concern to dupe farmers and artisans (and nonphilosophers generally) into servile obedience. Yet one finds that the vast majority of commentators on this passage (citing them by name would serve no useful purpose) vainly invoke anachronistic political sensibilities to denounce Socrates' lie as a propagandistic outrage. Strauss, Bloom, and others influenced by their interpretation, must be considered separately, however. For they at least do not assume the superiority of the modern sensibility (Bloom 1991, 93–94; Strauss 1964, 102). On the contrary, they go so far as to endorse the lie. But they do so exclusively on grounds that the need for propaganda is inescapable. So their account, too, ignores the pedagogical relevance of the lie for the rulers themselves. As Strauss sees it, political order will always depend upon deception, inas-

much as the multitude is necessarily unphilosophical and therefore unwilling to consent to be governed by the truth. Thus he writes, "It is therefore with special regard to the ruled . . . that Socrates introduces at this point the noble lie" (1964, 102). It is on the authority of this interpretation, we may surmise, that Bloom, in his translation of the *Republic*, tones down Socrates' express statement that it is *first and foremost the rulers themselves* who are to be persuaded. (Bloom's rendering of *malista* as "in the best case" [414c1] sounds hopeful rather than emphatic. Moreover, he elides the intensifying pronoun *autous*, which Socrates repeatedly employs [414c1, d2] to stress that it is the rulers *themselves* who are the principal target of the deception. Bloom's rendering of this key passage thus tends to overstate the tension between truth and the political community and between philosophy and the citizenship of the best ruler). Voegelin, by contrast, deserves credit for taking seriously Socrates' indication that it is the rulers themselves who are to be persuaded by the lie (1957, 104–8). This is not to say, however, that what Voegelin takes to be lesson of the lie is exactly what Socrates had in mind.

12. For Socrates it is this contrast between being deceived and being swindled that is fundamental. Some lies are medicinal in contributing to the soul's healing and recovery of a capacity for learning, others are poisonous in inducing a condition of soul antithetical to the experience of learning. This opposition, not the over-parsed distinction of lie and myth, is most critical from Socrates' point of view. In fact, Socrates twice refers to the noble lie expressly as a *mythos* (415a2, c8).

13. For a discussion of the importance of this distinction for classic natural right, see Dobbs 1994.

14. Adeimantus' criticism is indicative of a synoptic deficiency, so it should not be confused with Aristotle's contention that Socrates deprives the guardians of happiness in his own interest (*Politics* 1264b15–17). The crucial difference—a difference that elevates Aristotle's treatment of the *Republic* far above the critical assessment it has typically received from its commentators—is that Aristotle's critique issues from a truly synoptic appreciation of Socrates' undertaking in the *Republic*. For further discussion, see Dobbs 1985a, 29–34.

15. Compare Harry Neumann's observation: "Only in Socratic communities would happy marriage be more erotic

than adultery. . . . Thus Socrates in Plato's *Republic* advocates a policy which publicly forbids normal marriage and family life" (1973, 452).

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