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THE PIETY OF THOUGHT IN PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*, BOOK 1

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In the opening sentence of the *Republic*, Socrates recounts his intention to combine the operations of piety and theoretical speculation. Nevertheless, many readers regard Cephalus' subsequent abandonment of rational inquiry to perform certain sacred rites as a definitive indication of Plato's opinion that piety and philosophy are fundamentally incompatible. I find this interpretation untenable inasmuch as it depends upon the misidentification of Cephalus as the dialogue's representative of piety. I suggest that the true nature and philosophical significance of piety are indicated instead in Socrates' conversation with Cephalus' son, Polemarchus. As this conversation unfolds, Polemarchus' pious inclinations culminate in a perception of the dearness of the unknown good. Inspired by this piety, Socrates and Polemarchus defend the conventional paragon Simonides and, at the same time, launch a truly philosophical inquiry into justice.

Plato's *Republic* is reputed to be one among a handful of the greatest works ever written on the theme of social justice and personal happiness. Yet if we should wish to verify this judgment, and to derive the benefit of its insight for ourselves, we would confront an extraordinary challenge in the complexity and sheer size of the work. This challenge might seem to outrun every endeavor, for the better acquainted one becomes with the *Republic*, the more time-consuming becomes the consideration of any given section of it. The pace of successive readings tends to slow. Eventually one opens the text only to ponder at length the significance of a single phrase or dramatic event. Such a meditation can be exquisitely pleasant. But what is there to prevent so closely focused a study from losing its bearings? How might the student keep from losing sight of the forest for the trees?

It would be incongruous, to say the least, were a professional academic to deny the relevance of this dilemma to the study of Plato's *Republic*. For it is the achievement of *synopsis* (the capacity to see simultaneously both the forest and the trees) that the *Republic* submits as evidence of a dialectical nature and thus as testimony of one's being qualified to undertake advanced studies in the first place (537b8–c7).¹ So it is incumbent upon every reader, when approaching this dialogue, to consider how the forester's dilemma might be resolved. Now, Socrates himself offers a key to the resolution of this dilemma in his remarks on the art of writing (*Phaedrus* 264c2–266c1). In a properly constructed composition, he maintains, one finds something like the integrity of a living body. Where such integrity obtains, the natural articulations or joints of a composition mark off segments that are intelligible precisely as parts of a whole. We may say, then, that the very divisions that call for detailed study also summon, at the same time, a recollection of the whole. By concentrating attention on such divisions, the student is able to think and to talk about the most minute textual details in a wholly nonreductive manner. Plato's Eleatic Stranger, expert

in the art of dialectic, invites us to call such divisions *eidetic* or *ponderable* parts in order to distinguish them from the mere pieces into which any whole may be thoughtlessly—or even methodically—broken (*Statesman* 262c8–263b11).

In such passages Plato encourages the practice of dialectical analysis upon his own writings. But on what basis may we undertake the dialectical task of dividing Plato's *Republic* into ponderable parts? Clearly, some grasp of the dialogue as a whole is required before one can reasonably venture upon such a division. But whence comes this division-initiating understanding of the whole? Surely, it cannot originate in a concentrated study of ponderable parts, for this begs the question of which parts are correctly identified as ponderable. Neither can it derive from blind trust in the judgment of more experienced students, for this begs the question of the basis of the more experienced student's understanding. The only escape from this impasse lies in the possibility that the understanding needed to guide the division of the dialogue into ponderable parts is somehow accessible even to the novice upon an initial reading of the entire work.² The contours of the very surface of the work might then be said to reveal its natural articulations. Leo Strauss put it well when he declared in the case of such a work that "the problem inherent in the surface of things, and only in the surface of things, is the heart of things" (1958, 13).

Plato employs his luminous poetic talent accordingly, to epitomize the profoundest themes of his philosophical compositions. One of his customary devices in this undertaking is the ethological mime, the representation of an action in which all pretense is stripped away and an interlocutor reveals himself both in character and in thought (see Klein 1965, 18). The first example of such a *mimēsis* in the *Republic* reaches a climax early in book 1, with the departure of Cephalus. The importance of Cephalus' departure is further highlighted by its conspicuous reversal of the dialogue's dramatic momentum. In the beginning, Socrates and Glaucon are together. These two are

soon joined by Polemarchus, Adeimantus, Niceratus, and some others. This ensemble then makes its way to Polemarchus' house, where await Lysias, Euthydemus, Thrasymachus, Charmantides, Cleitophon, and Cephalus, the father of Polemarchus. A conversation is presently launched concerning the nature of justice. Although this conversation continues into the early hours of the morning, not a single member of the congregation is said to depart, except for Cephalus. Cephalus abandons the inquiry in its infancy. The old man departs because, as he says, "the time is come when I must tend to the sacred things" (331d7).

Cephalus' departure surely stands as one of the most striking dramatic events in the dialogue. As such, it invites comparison with the violent eruption of Thrasymachus, who hurls himself at Socrates and Polemarchus "like a wild beast" (336b5–6). But the antagonism represented by Thrasymachus' outburst is composed in the course of the conversation. Socrates later states that he and Thrasymachus have become friends, though they were not even enemies before (498c6–d1). Cephalus' departure, on the other hand, is final. He never returns. So if even Thrasymachus (the sometime champion of might over right) can be reconciled to Socrates, it would seem that Cephalus' complete break with Socrates and the community of inquiry must portend an issue of considerable importance. Following the clue of Cephalus' parting words, we may infer that this issue somehow concerns the divergence of philosophical inquiry and attendance to "the sacred things." Cephalus' departure somehow manifests Plato's understanding of the tension that exists between the interrogatory motion characteristic of the philosophical life and the magisterial stability characteristic of revelation and fundamental law. Strauss characterizes this tension—the philosopher's "theologicopolitical predicament"—as nothing less than "the secret of the vitality of Western civilization" (1989, 270).³ Of course, one need not agree with Strauss's specific interpretation of the character of this tension to agree with his estimate of its vital importance. But any attempt to propose a different interpretation must account for precisely such testimony as is presented by Plato's rendition of the departure of Cephalus. We may begin to offer such an account by noting that Cephalus' schism constitutes the seismic epicenter of a passage bounded by the opening of the dialogue on one end and by the closing of Socrates' conversation with Polemarchus on the other.⁴ As we shall see, this passage must be considered in its entirety if we are to arrive at an accurate assessment of Plato's conception of the relationship between piety and philosophy.

THE DIVERGENCE OF PRAYERFUL REVERENCE AND SPECULATIVE SCRUTINY

Let us begin then at the beginning, for Cephalus' parting words are not the first indication in the

Republic of a concern for the relationship of piety and inquiry. In the dialogue's opening sentence, Socrates reports his own intention of combining these divergent operations. To appreciate the full significance of this remark, however, we must keep in mind that the *Republic* is, in form, a narrated dialogue—and a particular kind of narrated dialogue at that. Plato assigns the role of narrator in the *Republic* to Socrates. In this role, Socrates reports not only what he and others said and did on the preceding day but also what he thought then and what he thinks now, with the benefit of hindsight, of those words and deeds. So Plato puts Socrates forward as a uniquely authoritative commentator on the conversation reported in the *Republic*. Nevertheless, even in his narration Socrates leaves many things unexplained. For example, the occasion of his recapitulation of the previous day's doings is not itself described. Nor is there any indication of the existence (much less the identity) of any auditor or auditors. Socrates, to all appearances, is talking to himself. Of course, we readers are the intended audience—ultimately. But within the frame of the dialogue, Socrates addresses his rehearsal to no one but himself. The reader evidently is witness to an exercise in personal recollection, a soliloquy.⁵ Now a soliloquy is a speech spoken with a level of candor not to be expected in the public discourse of a prudent man. So Socrates' narrative remarks will be more directly indicative of his own views than much of what he reports having said in direct discourse with his interlocutors, whose dispositions might on occasion be expected to skew, to some extent, his choice of words.⁶ We are well advised, then, to consider carefully Socrates' opening statement of purpose: "Down I went yesterday into Piraeus with Glaucon, Ariston's son, both in order to pray to the goddess and at the same time because I wanted to see in what manner they would conduct the festival, inasmuch as this was the first time they were holding it" (327a1–3).

In this narrative opening, Socrates cites a thought-provoking linkage between the two reasons that draw him toward Piraeus. He descends "both in order to pray . . . and at the same time because [he] wanted to see" (*te . . . kai hama*).⁷ It is important that we understand the significance of this linkage correctly. For some might suppose that Socrates is interested in nothing more than "killing two birds with one stone," in the sense of indulging his personal intellectual curiosity (*theasasthai* 327a3, *theōrēsantes* 327b1) while merely appearing to satisfy certain social expectations concerning his acknowledgment of the goddess. But Socrates does not say that he intended to be seen praying; what he says is that he intended to pray (*proseuxomenos* 327a2). Nevertheless, many readers will be inclined to maintain that any show of devotion on Socrates' part must be construed as nothing more than the window dressing required if the philosopher is to escape persecution by an intolerant, closed society.⁸ On this interpretation, Socrates bows not to the goddess but merely to his own theologicopolitical predicament.

This interpretation deserves to be taken seriously, for the *Republic* certainly presents convincing evidence that Socrates rejects many points of theology popularized by Homer and Hesiod. There is also the matter of his claim to possess a personal *daimonion*, which undoubtedly overshot the boundaries of Greek religious convention (albeit in the manner of evidence of Socrates' acknowledgment of the existence and the providence of the divine). But these considerations by no means preclude the possibility that Socrates finds himself obliged to the graciousness of certain other divinities, not all of which were utterly unrecognized by the customary religion (see, e.g., *Phaedrus* 279b8–c3, *Republic* 451a4–5). Indeed, other factors besides the candor of his narrative remarks corroborate the sincerity of Socrates' avowed intention to pray to "the goddess." For the goddess in question is Bendis, as seems clear from the sequel (354a10–11).⁹ Bendis is the Thracian persona of Hekate (a.k.a. Artemis), leader of souls in the underworld and goddess of crossroads (Pauly-Wissowa 1937, 3:269; Brann 1967, 111, n.4; Burkert 1985, 171; Morgan 1990, 21). Such a goddess might well be reckoned a patroness of Socratic political philosophy, for in one of the most celebrated metaphors in all the works of Plato, Socrates likens the political realm to an underground abode, a cave, which he in turn compares to Hades (514a–15a5, 516c8–e7). Socrates "goes down" into Piraeus, just as Heracles went down into Hades to perform certain labors (Brann 1967, 3–6) and as the philosopher king is later said to go down into politics (540b5–6; see Dobbs 1985, 812–21). Socrates makes this descent with Glaucon, a young man who stands at a *moral crossroads*. Glaucon faces a choice between justice and injustice, a choice that will determine the course of his life and the salvation of his soul (347e2–7, 352d4–6, 621b8–c2; see Dobbs 1994).

Moreover, if Bendis does represent some aspect of the true divinity (the one necessary and eternal being, recognized by philosophers of every era), Socrates' prayers to the goddess would naturally express and comport with his own acknowledgment of mankind's finitude and contingency. An appreciation of the limits of the human condition is crucial to the understanding of Socrates. Socratic wisdom is not divine wisdom. Yet Socrates also holds that human beings are capable of partaking in the heavenly spark of divine intelligence (e.g., 590c8–d6). For Socrates, then, the human condition is twofold in nature. Consequently, a pair of prerequisites must be satisfied for a human being truly to know himself: each of us must acknowledge the gulf separating himself from the divine and, at the same time, honor his own capacity for divine intelligence by developing it to its highest peak of excellence. Such self-knowledge would expose the mortification of ascetics and the pride of intellectuals as inadequate and merely piecemeal responses to the human condition. For what the human condition calls for is *both* reverential *and* intellectual endeavor, not merely severally or alternately but *at the same time*. So Socrates' twofold intention—both to pray and at the same time to

see—is indicative of the character of an ordinate and (I hazard to say) just response to the essential human calling. Of course, it remains to be seen whether and how far such a response is practicable.

What, then, are the prospects for the satisfactory realization of Socrates' intention? It seems evident that the operations of reason and reverence may collide. Piety is as demanding in its call for commitment as critical judgment is in its requirement for detachment. Each would appear ultimately to exclude the other. If we take into consideration the conversation occasioned by Socrates' descent into Piraeus, we find that Cephalus' abandonment of Socrates' inquiry into justice—at the very moment that inquiry appears to intrude upon his service to the divine—dramatizes this conflict and suggests the *possibility* that piety and rational inquiry are fundamentally incompatible. This possibility shades increasingly into a certainty as one looks upon Cephalus as the embodiment of genuine piety. If Cephalus does stand for piety, then one might well conclude that it is simply impossible for the same person to do justice to both aspects of the human condition (Strauss 1989, 269–70).

But it is by no means clear that this is Socrates' view, or Plato's. Certainly, one cannot leave unexamined the possibility that it is Socrates, rather than Cephalus, who practices genuine piety. In fact, Socrates' disclosure of intent in the narrative opening of the *Republic* corroborates the public testimony he offers later at his trial on the charge of impiety. In this testimony, Socrates answers the Athenians' notorious indictment by portraying his customary cross-examination of fellow citizens as a service to god. He explains, however, that this pious service involves, at the same time, a scrutinization (*elēxōn*) of the divine oracle itself (*Apology* 21b1–23c1). In other words, Socrates interprets his divinely sanctioned vocation as one that requires a combination of piety and rational scrutiny.¹⁰ Plato's illumination in the *Republic* of the quality by virtue of which Socrates can achieve this combination will succeed, however, only if certain pretenders to the status of reverence and reasonableness are first unmasked. This, to state the matter concisely, is the guiding purpose informing his composition of Socrates' conversation with Cephalus.

THE EXPOSURE OF RATIONALISM IN CEPHALUS' FALSE PIETY

As Socrates and Glaucon head homeward from the sacred processions, they are intercepted by Polemarchus' servant. Polemarchus and Adeimantus arrive presently and prevail upon Glaucon and Socrates to go to Polemarchus' house. There Socrates meets with Polemarchus' father, Cephalus, who has just come from performing some sacred rite himself. Cephalus greets Socrates warmly. Pleading his own inability to make the journey up to the city, Cephalus urges Socrates to come to the Piraeus more frequently.

Socrates says he delights in conversing with his elders, for it permits him to inquire about the path that he, too, may have to travel one day. So he asks Cephalus, "Is it a hard time of life or what?" Cephalus' answer is heartening. This old man discounts the many complaints one ordinarily hears from old men. Their nostalgia for the faculties and pleasures of youth is especially mistaken, according to Cephalus. As against such complaints, Cephalus notes that even the tragedian Sophocles, high priest of the Dionysian celebration of eros, regards the dwindling of sexual appetite as a liberation from a raging tyrant. To mourn such a liberation is absurd. The complaints and the troubles of the aged must be blamed, then, not on old age but on bad ways (329d2–6). After all, if it were old age itself that caused such trouble, Cephalus reasons, he would suffer from such difficulties as much as the next man.

Socrates marvels at Cephalus' saying this and desires to hear more. He notes provocatively that many would be likely to dismiss Cephalus' testimony altogether; they would credit his brave words to the possession of wealth. Cephalus concedes that wealth is important, though not so important as the multitude may suppose. By way of explanation, he recounts a saying of the illustrious Themistocles. It seems that a certain "Seriphian detractor"—a man embittered by his own obscurity, which he blames on the political insignificance of his native city—once insisted that it was only thanks to Themistocles' being an Athenian that he had achieved glory. In reply, Themistocles acknowledged that if he too had been a Seriphian, he would never have become renowned; but neither would this detractor ever have become renowned, even if he had been an Athenian! Cephalus thus suggests an analogy between his own conception of great wealth and Themistocles' conception of great politics. Cephalus no more regards wealth as an assurance that one will possess the greatest good than Themistocles so regarded citizenship in a great polity. Socrates surmises that Cephalus has inherited his wealth, because he does not seem in what he is saying to be overly fond of money (330b8–c1). Those who earn their own wealth, in contrast to those who are given it, resemble parents or poets. The latter cherish their children or poems not only insofar as these are good or serviceable (*kata tēn chreian*) but also because they are their own (330c3–6). Socrates thus remarks on the absence in Cephalus of a vehement (*sphodra*) love of his own. It seems then that the Themistocles analogy may run deeper than Cephalus had intended, for, as we know, Themistocles betrayed his own country, showing himself in the end to be indifferent as between the equally serviceable political communities of Athens and Persia. Cephalus, we may say, is similarly indifferent as to the source of his wealth, provided only that it proves to be of service to him. The precise character of Cephalus' understanding of the serviceability of wealth remains, then, to be considered. So far, Cephalus has suggested that wealth is some sort of prerequisite to the enjoyment of happiness.

One wonders in what sense wealth is prerequisite to happiness. In Cephalus' case, the relationship between wealth and citizenship exceeds the analogical and approaches the literal, for as a resident alien, or metic, Cephalus is not eligible to participate in the politics of Athens. For all practical purposes, Cephalus' wealth *is* his country.¹¹ But to Socrates, who proclaims that he never left Athens except to fight in her defense and who suggestively adverts to the riches of his own *ten-thousand-fold* poverty, Cephalus' likening of wealth to citizenship must appear questionable. So Socrates invites Cephalus to name what it is that he takes to be the "greatest good he has enjoyed from his abundant wealth" (330d2–3). Cephalus declares that thanks to his wealth he has not been forced "to cheat or to deceive anyone, or to depart for that next place in fear, on account of owing some sacrifices to god or money to a man" (331b1–4). Of course, Cephalus stipulates that wealth does not provide this benefit for just any man but only for one who is decent and orderly (*tōi epieikei kai kosmiōi*). Couched in this qualification, Cephalus' evaluation of wealth might seem innocuous enough. One is almost tempted to equate it with Aristotle's appraisal of wealth as the "necessary equipment" of a happy life (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1101a14–16). But we must tread carefully here, for Cephalus values great wealth not as an instrument employed in the exercise of an already confirmed disposition to virtue but rather as a necessary means to confirm such a disposition in the first place. Its possession provides insulation from circumstances that Cephalus assumes will drive any man to crime. But for Aristotle it is precisely character that keeps a decent man "in character." As it happens the decency stipulated by Cephalus is not a matter of character (*ēthos*) in the strict sense at all. Instead, it is in his own words merely a *tropos*, that is, an inclination or tendency (see 329d3–4). Wealth, according to Cephalus, is the functional equivalent of character.

Once this has come to light, Socrates admiration for Cephalus gives way to thinly veiled irony.¹² Nevertheless, Cephalus' words and deeds continue to demonstrate that he is a man very much concerned (one might even say preoccupied) with ultimate or eschatological matters. This does not, of course, establish his piety or righteousness. On the contrary, the aged Cephalus experiences what may be described as a servile, rather than a reverential, fear of the gods. It is only due to anxiety at the prospect of retribution in the afterlife for his crimes in his present life that the anerotic Cephalus even takes notice of the gods: "Know well, Socrates, that when one is gripped by the thought that his end is near, he is possessed by fear and concern for things that never occupied him before. The stories, which he used to ridicule, about what goes on in Hades—that the man committing injustice here must pay the penalty there—now torment his soul for fear they might be true" (330d4–e2). (A truly erotic soul, however, would not require the prick of such anxiety to seek the divine [see, e.g., *Phaedrus* 248d2–249e4].) Of

course, Cephalus is uncertain whether his newfound interest in sacred matters is a function of some special perspective vouchsafed the aged by virtue of their proximity to death or is merely a function of the infirmities of old age (330d7–e5). But he does acknowledge that he finds security in assuming the worst as regards the eschatological facts of life. Cephalus compares what he has to lose if he mistakenly disregards the warnings of traditional theology with the value of the money required to carry out the customary, propitiatory oblations. He decides to sacrifice his superfluous wealth, which he takes to be all except enough to leave his heirs a little more than what his own spendthrift father left him after wasting a good portion of the family inheritance (330b6–7). In other words, Cephalus makes his gamble on the same terms as the famous wager, which, we may be assured, Pascal contrived to demonstrate the untenability of the rationalist criticism of piety, rather than to induce genuine faith (Pascal 1986, §418 and §110). Hence, Cephalus' turn to religious ceremony is hardly pious in itself; it is merely indicative of a certain talent for calculation that is pressed into the service of anxiety concerning the afterlife. It follows that Cephalus is better understood as a representative of rationalism—which holds that rational calculation suffices for the resolution of all questions of human affairs—than as the spokesman for piety.¹³

Of course, there can be no question but that Cephalus embodies the mercenary tendency that the vulgarization of Orphic writings and religious practice had taken in his time (see, e.g., 363c3–365a3, 365d7–e6). In this sense, one may speak with some propriety of Cephalus as representative of a *decadent* piety. But traditional piety in its decadence is by no means to be confused with traditional piety in its prime (see, e.g., Morgan 1990, 108–14). Hence, I suggest that Cephalus' divine service bears roughly the same relation to traditional Greek piety that Macy's Christmas parade bears to the pilgrimage of the Three Wise Men. To be sure, Cephalus' departure from the conversation indicates the incompatibility of a decadent piety with Socratic philosophy, but it in no way settles the question whether or not Socratic philosophy is at odds with uncorrupted piety. Therefore, if, as Bloom says, "Socrates must induce Cephalus to leave the scene because Cephalus is beyond reason" (1991, 312), we must add that it is not due to piety that Cephalus is beyond reason. We may grant that Cephalus leaves because he is beyond reason, but he is beyond reason only because there is something unreasonable in being a rationalist.

In the course of answering Socrates' question concerning the greatest good that derives from his possession of great wealth, Cephalus had occasion to imply that it is unjust to cheat or lie to any man or to fail to render to gods or men the sacrifices or things they are owed (331b2–3). Picking up on this suggestion, Socrates now asks whether we should pronounce "the opposite of these things, namely the truth and the rendering back of what one has received from another, to be justice or righteousness

itself; or should we say that it is just in some cases and unjust in others to do these very same things? (331c1–5). Cephalus does not respond. He has not taken the trouble to formulate definitively his understanding of righteousness, whether in relation to other human beings or to the gods. What he has is a rule of thumb. But Socrates pursues the inquiry. He proposes a thought experiment that may help Cephalus to sort out the essential from the merely accidental characteristics of acts of justice. Socrates supposes that everyone (*pas* 331c5) would agree that it would not be just or right to return a borrowed weapon to its owner, if the owner were to demand it in a fit of madness. Cephalus acknowledges, in response, that Socrates speaks correctly (331d1). Hence, there can be no question but that Cephalus correctly judges the force of Socrates' counterexample. The most we can say is that Cephalus fails to follow up this correct judgment with an attempt to formulate more adequately his understanding of justice itself.

Cephalus, in other words, is complacent in the face of the manifest inadequacy of the definition that Socrates has cobbled out of his rule of thumb. But this is neither irrational nor contrary to expectation. The fact of the matter is that Cephalus correctly judges the test case. (Of course, this is no great claim, since Socrates is willing to assume that it is true of everyone. We shall consider Polemarchus' taking exception with this momentarily.) In other words, Cephalus rightly perceives that the situation described by Socrates does not properly fall under the jurisdiction of his rule of thumb. But a genuine refutation would require that Socrates devise a case in which Cephalus *errs* either in applying or in failing to apply his rule of thumb. Socrates does not do this. Logically (but only logically), then, Socrates and Cephalus are quits. Polemarchus steps in at this point, oddly enough, to defend his father's rule of thumb *as if it were a definition* (*horos* 331d2–5). Polemarchus' initiative provides Cephalus with an opening to depart. The old man speaks of handing the argument down to the assembled company (*hymín*, 331d6). But Polemarchus persists in taking matters into his own hands: "Then am I not the heir of what is yours?" (*egō*, cf. *toutoisin* 330b6). Cephalus laughs at his son's enthusiasm, uttering something like, "It's all yours, such as it is" (*Pany ge* 331d9), as he departs to attend to the sacrifices.

The palpable contrast between Cephalus' appreciation of the force of Socrates' counterexample and his son's zeal to defend the indefensible suggests that the shortcoming of Cephalus, anyway, is hardly one of rationality. Moreover, as we have already noted, Socrates does not refute Cephalus. What Socrates does accomplish in their exchange is to reveal with perfect clarity the nature of Cephalus' temperament. This revelation is a critical step in the disclosure of Plato's understanding of the relationship of piety and philosophy, for Cephalus represents a common vulgarization and misunderstanding of piety. As long as Cephalus stands as a representative of piety, the relationship of piety and philosophy will be miscon-

strued. Plato corrects this misunderstanding through his ethological mime, in which he strips away Cephalus' pretense to piety and reveals that Cephalus' turn to religious ceremony is thoroughly mercenary, not reverent. Hence, we may conclude that Cephalus' departure from the dialogue in no way dramatizes the incompatibility of reason and piety. If anything, his departure is indicative of the divergence of rationalism from the virtue of reasonableness. Rationalism, thus understood, is an obstruction to the mutual opening of reason and reverence. With the departure of rationalism, this obstacle is removed.

THE PLACE OF REVERENCE IN POLEMARCHUS' TURN TO PHILOSOPHY

Cephalus, as already noted, does not attempt to universalize his rule of thumb. But Polemarchus rushes in where his father is too shrewd to tread. Polemarchus holds that his father's formulation does provide an adequate definition of justice, "at least if we are to be persuaded by [or to obey] Simonides" (331d5). Polemarchus thus acknowledges a requirement (*chrē*) to defer to Simonides. Socrates by no means disputes this requirement; he grants that Simonides is a man of wisdom *and* godliness (331e6). So he invites Polemarchus to identify "what it is you suppose that Simonides said correctly in speaking about justice" (331e1–2). Polemarchus thinks Simonides speaks not just correctly but nobly (*kalōs*) when he states that justice is rendering to each what is owed (331e3–4). We must note, however, that what Polemarchus espouses here is an unwarrantedly literal-minded interpretation of the poet. By the term "what is owed," Polemarchus evidently assumes that Simonides means exactly what another has lent him. Hence, Polemarchus deems superfluous the question of the mental capacity of the man in Socrates' thought experiment, the relevance of which even his father had appreciated. On this basis, he holds that his father's rule of thumb may be enforced over the entire range of just actions. Polemarchus maintains that it is just and right, regardless of circumstances, to return a borrowed weapon to its original owner, because such a weapon is plainly owed to its owner and because justice consists in returning what is owed.

But before we go too far in disparaging Polemarchus' literal-minded veneration of Simonides, we must pause to ponder the significance of the manner of Socrates' questioning. Socrates asks no more of the young man than to declare what it is that he supposes Simonides says correctly. In other words, Socrates does not impose upon his interlocutor the Cartesian burden of proving beyond all possible doubt the truth of what Simonides says. Socrates thus avoids calling the wisdom of Simonides into question (see Adam 1902, 1:13; Bloom 1991, 316). But the significance of this insulation of Simonides from the rigors of

Socratic elenchus is commonly mistaken. Many readers see in it no more than the tact (and perhaps the tactic) of a philosopher who prudently camouflages his own awareness of the shortcomings of a conventional paragon, which an intellectually inferior interlocutor is supposedly incapable of appreciating. Such a view, however, assumes more than an inequality between the interlocutors; it posits a discontinuity between what Socrates knows in this matter and what lies within the capacity of Polemarchus to understand. It presumes that Polemarchus is unable to learn what Socrates can already discern. (The reader may wish to consider the extent to which this view implies a certain dogmatization of the essentially negative character of Socratic wisdom.) As an alternative to this view, I would simply suggest that Socrates' respectful treatment of Simonides is informed by his appreciation of the possibility that Simonides might well be right and by his collateral desire to help Polemarchus to acquire a similarly thoughtful appreciation. In other words, I am suggesting that Socrates reads Simonides in the way we have undertaken to read Plato. Socrates' mode of questioning Polemarchus encourages the lad's confidence in the poet's wisdom and, at the same time, calls upon him to exercise his critical abilities in identifying the formulation that best expresses this wisdom. We should note that Socrates endorses such a combination of conviction and discrimination throughout this dialogue on justice. He holds that this combination will ensure that inquirers will be, as he puts it, "both judges and advocates at the same time" (348b3–4). Socrates' locution, "both judges and advocates at the same time," recapitulates the linkage of the divergent operations of piety and reason, advocacy and criticism, which was suggested in the dialogue's opening sentence. But it is Socrates' own conduct in the inquiry that most strikingly dramatizes the correlation of these divergent operations, for he steadfastly advocates the cause of justice as *sacred* (368b7–c2) even as he conducts a searching investigation of its nature and goodness.¹⁴ It is no surprise, then, that Socrates proceeds as he does in his questioning of Polemarchus. He summons Polemarchus to be both an advocate and a discriminating judge of Simonides. By responding as Socrates directs, Polemarchus becomes a full participant in Socratic inquiry.

So rather than ridiculing Polemarchus' literal-minded veneration of Simonides, Socrates attempts to encourage its development. He indicates that the phrase "to each what is owed" cannot be meant literally, for no one would say that a borrowed item is to be returned to *anyone whatsoever*, should its owner make such a demand when out of his mind (331e3–4). Socrates' nudge opens Polemarchus' eyes. It must mean "something else, by Zeus," Polemarchus now realizes, "for [Simonides] thinks that it is owed to friends to accomplish good and nothing bad" (332a9–10). Polemarchus reasons that if something bad results from returning a weapon to a friend who is out of his mind, it cannot be right to have returned what

one has borrowed. Polemarchus' devotion to friends works as a lever to dislodge him from the grip of a narrowly literal and unwarrantedly dogmatic interpretation of Simonides. Interestingly, his recollection of friendly solidarity has made it possible for him to exercise critical thought. Polemarchus now judges that it is the poet's statement on friendship—that it is owed to friends to accomplish good and nothing bad—that is his most important dictum. Consequently, the lad abandons his literal interpretation of "what is owed" without in the least abandoning Simonides. Polemarchus merely exercises the prerogative of interpreting Simonides out of Simonides, just as the classical formula for sound exegesis recommends. If attention to the whole of an authoritative body of writings demonstrates more respect for an author than does mere proof-texting, we may say that Socrates has already succeeded in bringing about an improvement in the quality of reverence Polemarchus is prepared to show Simonides.

As we have noted, this refinement in Polemarchus' reverence follows upon his own recollection of friendly solidarity. A hearty concern for that which is dear (*to philon*) is characteristic of the psychic capacity that Socrates terms spiritedness (*thymos*).¹⁵ Polemarchus, whose name evokes the fiery spirit of a warlord, momentarily overlooked the special claims of friendship when he formulated his argument for the justice of returning deposits always and everywhere. He quite naturally swears an oath as he recovers himself and corrects this oversight. Polemarchus' vehemence combines anger for the past affront to friendship and zeal for its present correction. Socrates invites Polemarchus to complete the formulation of his understanding of Simonides' saying concerning justice, now that he has the special claims of friendship clearly in mind. "What about enemies," Socrates asks, "are we to render whatever it is that happens to be owed to them?" (332b5) "By all means," Polemarchus replies, "we are to render to them exactly what is owed, which I take to be the very thing that suits [*prosēkei*] an enemy from an enemy, namely something bad [*kakon*]" (332b6–8). So, according to Polemarchus' revised interpretation: (1) Simonides' phrase "what is owed" is best understood not literally but rather analogically, as the *suitable* or *the fitting* and (2) the suitable or fitting in the case of enemies is something *bad*. Polemarchus thus proposes that what Simonides means by justice is rendering something good to friends and something bad to enemies.

It may be inferred from Polemarchus' oath ("by Zeus!") that he has his heart—that is, his *thymos*—set on this definition of justice. It appears that Polemarchus' most heartfelt desire is to uphold and to do right by the distinctive status of friends. Socrates must nevertheless subject this understanding of justice to a searching examination if there is to be any further refinement of Polemarchus' piety. Such an examination calls for great delicacy, to say the least. Socrates conducts this examination in three steps, the outlines of which may be briefly indicated in anticipation of more detailed discussion below. First, be-

cause *thymos* is invincible (375a11–b1, 440d1–3), one cannot oppose its present orientation directly. Instead, Socrates seeks to disengage the spiritedness with which Polemarchus embraces the notion that justice consists in a sovereign power of distributing boons and blows. Socrates accomplishes this disengagement by showing Polemarchus that such a conception diminishes the excellence of justice and calls into question the goodness of loyalty to friends (332c5–334b7). Second, Socrates elicits a new recognition on Polemarchus' part of the dearness of the unknown good.¹⁶ This recognition results in a remarkable reorientation of Polemarchus' spiritedness. Socrates achieves this reorientation by showing Polemarchus that the true friend is the good, even when this good is not yet apparent as such (334b7–335a5). The acknowledgment of the dearness of the unknown good, I shall suggest, constitutes genuine piety or reverence. Because this acknowledgment is informed by a recognition of the *dearness* (as distinguished from a *putative knowledge*) of the good, it establishes in the soul a robust loyalty to the authority of the good, which is resistant to the venal or hubristic tendency to declare oneself instead as autonomous.¹⁷ Third, and finally, Socrates argues that the good is never a cause of corruption or harm. It follows from this that the determination to do damage or harm to anyone must involve turning one's back on the good—a manifest act of disloyalty toward the true friend! Socrates thus demonstrates, in terms that *thymos* itself will find persuasive, that justice involves a steady orientation toward the good and so cannot involve the determination to harm anyone.

The Disengagement of Polemarchus' Spiritedness

Socrates now commences in earnest his examination of Polemarchus' conception of Simonides' understanding of justice. "By Zeus!" he demands, with some spiritedness now of his own, "What would Simonides say if someone asked. . . ?" (332c5–8). Judging from the thrust of Socrates' subsequent questioning, we may surmise that this oath represents a didactic expression of vexation at the feebleness of Polemarchus' present appreciation of justice. For Socrates immediately elicits Polemarchus' agreement that arts other than justice, each within its own domain, have the capacity to render what is fitting and due. Consequently, one is left to wonder just what, if anything, is rendered by the art of justice—and to whom (332d2–3). Polemarchus follows the line of questioning perfectly well. He maintains that justice consists in benefiting friends and damaging or harming enemies. But this is an unsatisfactory answer and does nothing to elevate the importance of justice, for the things fittingly assigned by other arts may also be understood, more generally, as goods and bads. When Socrates asks, "Who, then, has the most power to accomplish good for ailing friends and bad for enemies as regards disease and health?" Polemarchus sees the point. He accordingly ignores the claim of the just man and names the physician

instead. Similarly, when the question is repeated, now concerning voyagers facing danger at sea, Polemarchus again ignores the righteous and instead nominates the helmsman as the one most able to render good and bad.

Searching, then, for the arena in which justice might come into its own, Socrates challenges Polemarchus to say where it is that the righteous will prove to have "the greatest power to benefit friends and to damage enemies" (332e3–4). Polemarchus answers that it is "in the conduct of war and in alliances" (332e5). But evidently not (as Socrates recalls on the basis of Polemarchus' previous admissions) when we are sick or at sea (332e6–10).¹⁸ Polemarchus admits Socrates' point. Socrates then moves to broaden the perspective of the young "warlord," for Polemarchus so far has failed to mention the usefulness of justice in peacetime. Socrates alludes to this possibility and Polemarchus quickly responds that justice is indeed useful in peacetime, particularly in partnerships (332e11–333a14). But again, when Socrates invites Polemarchus to choose between the expert and the just man as the more useful and better partner in each of several transactions, his young interlocutor chooses the expert in every case. Polemarchus would prefer the collaboration of an expert draughtsplayer when positioning draughts, a mason when laying bricks, and a harpist when playing the harp. In all these cases we may say that Polemarchus rates virtuosity above virtue.

Yet there is one situation in which it is the just man who seems to Polemarchus to be the better partner—in partnerships where there is money dealing. But this turns out to be too broad an endorsement even for Polemarchus, for he admits, under pressure from Socrates, that if the partners are to use the money (say, to buy or to sell a horse in common), then someone who has technical knowledge (in this case, about horses) would be a better partner than the just man (333b11–c2). It is only when money is not put to use but merely needs to be kept safe that the just man is the better partner. Socrates summarizes the discussion, employing images that together represent the comprehensive human experience of war and peace: justice comes into its own "when there is need to guard shield and lyre and no need to use them; but when there is need to use them, it is the art of the infantryman and the musician that are of use" (333d6–9). Socrates thus presents the work of guarding or preservation as the least glorious, the least worthwhile, of human activities. Polemarchus is moved to agree that justice is useless for useful things and useful only for useless things. Socrates turns to his young interlocutor and remarks "Justice, then, my friend, would not be worth taking seriously at all" (333e1–2).

Socrates addresses Polemarchus as his friend (*ō phile*), while examining the notion that justice consists in benefiting friends and harming enemies. He thus invites us to ponder what good thing it is that he is accomplishing for this dear young man. Of course, many readers have doubted that Socrates is convey-

ing any benefit at all. After all, Socrates has just led Polemarchus to a fallacious conclusion; his denigration of justice clearly exceeds anything required by the logic of the argument. We agree. Socrates' disparagement of justice is, in every sense of the word, gratuitous. Certainly, nothing in the work of guarding or preservation requires such a disparagement. If anything, the notion of justice as safeguard or preservative implies an enormously attractive role for this virtue, as subsequent discussions in the *Republic* will elaborate. *Justice Saves* is by no means a slogan incapable of stirring the blood. But Socrates plays this down for the present, precisely because it is his concern to settle, rather than to stir, Polemarchus' blood. In so doing, Socrates accomplishes something very much of benefit to his friend. And the benefit is indeed gratuitous, that is, a true gift. For, as Socrates notes, Polemarchus' definition of justice—benefiting friends and harming enemies—is typical of the frame of mind of "some rich man who supposes that he has the power to do big things" (336a6–7). (It was Polemarchus, we recall, who at first threatened to use force to compel Socrates to remain in the Piraeus. In that threat, Polemarchus placed himself beyond the influence of reason; he refused even to listen to Socrates' attempts at persuasion. The only thing to which he would give way was even greater power [327c9].) Dazzled by the power to accomplish "big things," a youth such as Polemarchus will grow oblivious to the need to learn *the good things*. If such a youth is ever to begin to consider what is good, he must first be disengaged from his attachment to what he currently regards as big or great. So we may say that in Polemarchus' case, at least, Socrates' familiar use of the analogy between virtue and the arts does not merely serve to emphasize the role of intellect in what is ordinarily called moral virtue. The prosaic implications of this analogy serve, even more importantly, as an antidote to the charm that power holds over our understanding of human excellence.

Socrates invites Polemarchus to consider further the expert craftsmen in whose likeness he has been modeling the just man. It is noteworthy that in the course of this consideration Socrates never speaks of this expert in the professional form of address. For example, instead of referring to the physician (*iatros*) as such (as Polemarchus had done, 332d12), Socrates speaks of "the one who is cleverest at guarding against illness as well as engendering it unnoticed" (*noson . . . phylaxasthai kai lathein houtos deinotatos empoiēsas*, 333e6–7). The circumlocution draws attention to the possibility that true professionalism, embodied in the physician properly so-called, is not to be identified with moral neutrality or mere dynamic bivalence. It must be admitted, however, that even if it is not morally neutral in its essential act, *technē* does remain peculiarly liable to exploitation for alarmingly divergent purposes. It is with a view to this liability, I would suggest, that Socrates introduces to the discussion the term *deinos*, which means "terribly (or, perhaps, terrifyingly) clever," in order to characterize the disposition of one who exploits the equivocal or

bivalent potentialities of technical expertise. For the professional, like the clever man, plies a craft; but unlike the clever man, he never permits his craft to degenerate into mere craftiness. Socrates' strategy is to show Polemarchus that this attribute of cleverness or *deinotēs*, with which the lad's current conception of justice is contaminated, is not merely useless but is vicious in itself and repugnant to genuine friendship.

Socrates poses several leading questions and suggests a literary parallel, which together move Polemarchus to reject anything tainted by cleverness. Socrates induces Polemarchus to agree that (1) the most clever at striking a blow in battle is also the one to guard against such blows, (2) whoever is clever at guarding against illness is also most clever at causing illness unnoticed, and (3) the good camp guard is also the very man to steal what belongs to the enemy (333e3–334a4). Polemarchus is compelled by these admissions to conclude that the *deinos* guard—and so the just man, in accordance with his current conception of virtue—is essentially a clever thief (334a5–10)! Socrates then blames Homer for teaching Polemarchus this lesson. Homer, Socrates notes, is especially fond of Odysseus' grandfather, a man named Autolykos (roughly, "Lone Wolf"). In the words of the poet, this Lone Wolf "surpassed all mankind in thievery and in oath-swearing" (334b2–3; cf. *Odyssey* 19.394–95). What it means to surpass all mankind in thievery is plain enough, but how one wins such distinction "in oath-swearing" calls for an explanation. Stanford surmises that Autolykos excelled all mankind "by cleverly framing his oaths so as to leave loopholes for advantageous evasions later" (1958, 2:332). As a devotee of Hermes (from whom our word *hermeneutics* derives), Autolykos was able to exploit verbal equivocation and so was able always to get the better end of promises and bargains (*Odyssey* 19.396–98). Thus, in view of Polemarchus' preceding admissions concerning the bivalent potentialities of technical expertise and so of the righteous man himself, Socrates quite reasonably offers Homer's praise of Autolykos as a fitting epigram of Polemarchus' appreciation of justice.

But if the elevation of Autolykean cleverness to the status of righteousness is what his argument comes to, Polemarchus wants no part of it. "No, by Zeus," he swears, "though I, at least, no longer know what it is I meant" (334b7). This vehement rejection of Socrates' imputation indicates that Polemarchus would prefer to renounce his own claim to know what justice is rather than to endorse as just the cleverness characteristic of Autolykos. Surprisingly, Polemarchus is unmoved even by Socrates' stipulation that such cleverness be employed "to benefit friends and to harm enemies" (334b3–5). One might have expected this stipulation to have made all the difference to Polemarchus. There can be only one reason why it does not. The practice of Autolykean cleverness must itself be at odds with the good of friendly solidarity. Polemarchus evidently notices that Autolykos, the Lone Wolf, remains essentially a loner regardless of who happens to benefit from his

cleverness. Socrates' delicacy of expression has paid off; Polemarchus has come to see the terror signified by the term *deinos*. Indifference to the good, wherever it surfaces, makes us strangers even to those who are otherwise dearest to us.

Of course, in defense of cleverness, someone might assert that the versatility of *technē* implies the absence of a *telos* or goal proper to the art as art and so authorizes the clever man's willingness to ply his craft for evil as well as good ends. But this is mistaken. The versatility of the arts—which indeed renders them liable to such exploitation—simply reflects the importance of what the Greeks called *kairos* (the due measure, appropriate instrument, opportune time, etc.) in human affairs. The possession of *technē* entails an ability to address the exigencies of any occasion. Owing to the diversity of circumstances, an action that at one time promotes a particular purpose will at another time thwart it. There is, therefore, a necessary versatility in the capacity that the technical expert commands. For example, a physician will be equipped both to feed (a cold) and to starve (a fever); this versatility is properly exercised in the interest of promoting the intrinsic end of medicine, namely, health. The clever man exploits this versatility, however, not in pursuit of health but rather to further some extrinsic end. For example, "the one who is cleverest at guarding against illness as well as engendering it unnoticed" might take steps to starve his political opponent and to feed his favored candidate. Such an outcome might be thought to be attractive to a man like Polemarchus, who takes devotion to friends so seriously. But there is no reason to suppose that someone who is indifferent to the good of his own art is going to be any more attentive to the good upon which his "friendships" can be distinguished from merely arbitrary or chance associations. Polemarchus rejects cleverness, then, because he senses that it is at odds with the foundation of genuine friendship even though Socrates has stipulated that such cleverness is to be employed for the benefit of friends and the harm of enemies.

Moreover, at the same time that he heartily repudiates cleverness, Polemarchus reveals his new openness to self-examination. "No, by Zeus," he declares, "though I, at least, no longer know what it is I meant; yet it still seems to me that justice consists of benefiting friends and damaging enemies" (334b7–9). We may say that this remarkable statement, taken as a whole, indicates (1) that Polemarchus now recognizes that his opinion is an opinion, not knowledge; (2) that he is astonished at this recognition and so has genuinely learned something in coming to it; and (3) that his *thymos* is now oriented toward upholding or enforcing this recognition.

Polemarchus Acknowledges the Dearness of an Unknown Good

Polemarchus knows now that he does not know what justice is. He admits, nevertheless, that justice still

seems (*dokei*) to him to consist in benefiting friends and harming enemies. So *Polemarchus* has changed, even if what seems or appears to him has remained the same; he is now in a position to examine rather than merely to insist upon this opinion. Measured by Socratic standards, this is a most significant development. Socrates' response is to launch *Polemarchus* upon the examination of this opinion. He asks whether *Polemarchus* means by friends "those who seem to each to be good or those who really are good, whether they seem to be or not" (334c1–3). *Polemarchus* conjectures that one "befriends those whom he believes [*hēgētai*] to be good" (334c4). *Polemarchus*' word *hēgētai* implies rather more than a mere perception, which could be derivative from preexisting affinities: *hēgētai* designates instead a *leading* belief, thus compactly conveying *Polemarchus*' conjecture that it is one's belief concerning the good that is the *hegemonic* factor in determining his affinities, rather than vice versa. Such a hegemony is in fact essential to the independence of *thymos*, to its very existence as something more than the love of one's own. For if our belief concerning the good were exclusively beholden to what is nearest and dearest, our capacity for friendship could never transcend our cultural circumstances. Were this true, a social science informed by the doctrine of cultural relativism could eradicate any need for philosophy. But a truly hegemonic belief concerning the good, the only kind of belief worthy of *thymos*, cannot take its marching orders from what is currently familiar. Instead, as we shall see, it must be informed by an acknowledgment of the dearness of an *unknown* good.

Socrates next asks *Polemarchus* whether human beings err in their beliefs concerning the good, such that in their view many seem good who really are not good and many others do not seem good who really are (334c6–8). *Polemarchus* acknowledges that human beings do err in this way (*hamartanousin* 334c9). Socrates notes that it would then be just, on *Polemarchus*' account of justice, to harm the innocent. But there is no way (*mēdamōs* 334d7), *Polemarchus* declares, that he will brook such an enormity. Rather than affirm so transparent an injustice, *Polemarchus* vehemently denounces as burdensome and wicked (*ponēros* 334d7–8) any account of friendship, including his own, that is open to such an implication. In the case of a conflict, *Polemarchus* will side with what is right, rather than with what is his own. Granting that it is not right to harm the innocent, Socrates still wonders what is right. So he inquires, "Is it right, then, to harm the unjust and to benefit the just?" (334d9–10). *Polemarchus* answers that this appears to be nobler (*kalliōn*) than the converse. But, as Socrates proceeds to point out, this new formulation renders friendship completely irrelevant to the consideration of justice, contrary to what *Simonides* had said (334d12–e4). In other words, Socrates appeals to the authority of *Simonides* here in order to remind *Polemarchus* that one cannot utterly disregard friendship in the course of doing right. *Polemarchus*' task is to uphold the relevance of friendly solidarity in the

consideration of justice without permitting it to become a source of corruption. *Polemarchus* sees perfectly well, now, what must be done; he must qualify the role of perception in the determination of what is dear. For the sake of friendship, *Polemarchus* is prepared to move beyond the limits of perception. He urges Socrates to join him in changing (*metathōmetha* 334e5) what they had posited as the friend.

Socrates and *Polemarchus* had been supposing that it is the seeming good that is dear. *Polemarchus* proposes that they now define as *philon* that which both seems and really is good (*Ton dokounta te . . . kai ton onta chrēston*, 334e10). He infers that the apparent good—if it is not also really good—is only apparently, though not really, dear (334e10–335a2). By the same token, we may say that the really good—if it is not also apparently good—is really, though not apparently, dear. Socrates seizes the latter inference, noting that "on this account the good will be dear, as is fitting" (335a3). Socrates thus indicates that *Polemarchus*' new position brings to light the immediacy of the connection between what is really good and what is really dear. What is fitting has, on this basis, also become apparent: namely, that one's acknowledgment of what is dear is not exclusively a function of current perception. Following Socrates, we may suggest that the most important consequence of *Polemarchus*' reformulation of the definition of the *philon* is not its obvious indication that the good must be perceived for it to appear to be dear but rather its subtle implication of the real dearness of a good that is not yet apparent as such. It is on this basis, we may surmise, that Socrates now speaks of a good that is not simply *chrēston* but *agathos* (335a3, cf. 334c4, 334e10). The verbal distinction—the contrast between these terms—indicates that the *true friend* is a good distinctively beyond what we presently recognize as useful (*chreia*) to us.

This insight permits *Polemarchus* to uphold the relevance of friendly solidarity to justice and, at the same time to resist its decomposition into nepotism. *Polemarchus* thus succeeds because he has found a true friend in the good. Put somewhat differently, *Polemarchus* finds that if he is to honor friendship as he deems fit, he must attend more to the existence of a sovereign good than to his own possession of a sovereign power. This finding, I suggest, marks the dawn of genuine piety or reverence in the soul of *Polemarchus*. *Polemarchus*' devotion to the cause of friendship does not require that he know the good, only that he acknowledge the dearness of the good he does not know. Now, this discovery by no means implies that *Polemarchus* does not have *more* to learn. In fact, he does, for in his first attempt to demonstrate his friendly solidarity with what is *really* good, *Polemarchus* agrees with the proposition that "it is just to benefit the friend precisely because he really is good [*agathon onta*], and to harm the enemy precisely because he really is bad [*kakon onta*]" (335a9–10). Thus it still remains for *Polemarchus* to learn that the determination to harm *anyone* will tend to alienate him from the true friend, rather than drawing him closer to it.

Polemarchus Learns That the Righteous Do No Harm

As matters stand, Polemarchus supports what may be called the homeopathic conception of justice—that it is right to do good things for the friend (who is good) and to do bad things to the enemy (who is bad). His recollection of the dearness of the true good has rekindled his commitment to uphold and to honor above all the distinction between friend and foe. Because it parallels this distinction by rendering good to the good and bad to the bad, the homeopathic conception of justice appears to Polemarchus to be elegantly or beautifully formulated (*kalōs legesthai* 335b1). But Socrates wonders if it is the part of a just man to harm any human being whatsoever (335b2–3). Polemarchus replies, “Well, of course. One is obliged [*dei*] to harm those, anyway, who are both wicked and enemies” (335b4–5). Polemarchus believes that the righteous are *bound* to harm the truly wicked, for if they were not to do so they would fail to uphold the distinctiveness of the good. Polemarchus supposes that we demonstrate our allegiance to the good by treating those who are good in as different a way as possible from those who are bad. To shrink from doing bad things to bad men seems a failure of nerve in distinguishing the good from the bad.

It is reasonable of Polemarchus to insist upon the importance of maintaining distinctions. There is indeed something disorderly, shameful, and even ugly in the failure to make proper distinctions, and especially distinctions between good and evil. Moreover, we may grant that good and evil are opposites, as are benefit and harm. But it is at this point that we must reconsider the nobility and the reasonableness of moral homeopathy. Is moral homeopathy truly *kalon*—is it even successful—in upholding, and illuminating, the fundamental opposition of good and evil? Or is it the part of a just man never to harm any human being whatsoever? Now Socrates may well agree with Polemarchus that the noble or beautiful somehow glorifies and illuminates the distinctiveness of the good. But he clearly departs from Polemarchus' view by denying that the *kalon* consists in anything like a homeopathic operation. Socrates argues, for example, that the result will not be *kalon* if a statue painter assigns the finest color, purple, to the finest part of the body, the eyes (420c4–d5). If the statue painter were to guide his actions by this homeopathic pattern, it would turn out that the statue's eyes “do not show themselves as eyes at all.” Though we might commend the sincerity of this statue painter, who simply wishes to honor what is fine by anointing the finest part of the body with the finest color, we must make no mistake about the seriousness of his shortcoming, for his homeopathic aesthetic obscures rather than illuminates the eye—the very organ in which beauty and nobility in the body is most evident.

Polemarchus, along with the statue painter of Socrates' example, may be faulted for committing the error of *moralism*. Moralism asserts itself in a certain

preoccupation with rewarding good and punishing evil, which causes one to pay insufficient regard to the ontological significance of the thing that is subject to these judgments. So when Socrates asks whether it is the part of a just man to harm or to do damage to any human being whatsoever (*hontinoun anthrōpōn*), it happens that Polemarchus omits any mention of *anthropos*—of human being—in his affirmative response (335b2–5). Polemarchus, of course, believes that a homeopathic assignment of benefit and harm is the just and ordinate response to the presence of good and bad. But the grammatical ellipsis indicates that Polemarchus does not properly appreciate the ontological implications of such an undertaking. Polemarchus has not yet faced up to the fact that it is a human being, and not evil itself, that is damaged by homeopathic justice.

As Socrates hastens to point out, however, it is a real being who is made worse when real harm is done; this worsening of a real being involves a diminution in virtue or excellence (*aretēn* 335b6–c3). Polemarchus proves to be receptive to Socrates' reminder of the general ontological significance of doing harm: “That must be,” he replies (335b12). Socrates now addresses Polemarchus as his comrade or collaborator (*ō hetaire* 335c1). Together they maintain that when human beings are harmed it is as human beings (i.e., in respect of human excellence) that they are diminished. The comrades dismiss other notions of harm, which are, of course, conceivable but are nevertheless not telling in the present instance, because such notions fail to reach the ontological underpinnings of right and wrong. In commencing a search for these underpinnings, we must remember that the deprivation of contingent goods may not constitute a harm at all. Socrates later notes, for example, that sickness actually proved to be a boon to another of his comrades, Theages (496b6–c3). Owing to their circumstantial nature, the presence or absence of such contingent goods in any given pattern of distribution does not truly shed light upon the *fundamental opposition* between good and bad. But Polemarchus believes that it pertains to justice to uphold this opposition. So justice cannot be a merely contingent human good, it *must* be essential to what we mean by human excellence (335c4–5).¹⁹ Once Polemarchus has acknowledged this, he leaves the distribution of boons and blows to others and joins Socrates in the search for this essential, and not merely contingent, human excellence.

Polemarchus' rejection of cleverness has by now radically altered his conception of art. Thus, we find in the present passage that he understands musicianship and horsemanship as professional qualities rather than as exploitable crafts or powers (335c9–13). Polemarchus has learned to concentrate on the essential act of a *technē* as distinguished from its divergent potentialities.²⁰ He no longer desires to acquire such an equivocal *dynamis*, for he has come to understand that friendly solidarity is in no way enhanced by the exercise of power in this sense. To be loyal to the true friend, which is the good, one must uphold its

fundamental opposition to what is bad. But one can uphold this opposition only by admitting that it is impossible for justice to cause harm or damage to any human being. Justice cannot consist in a power whereby one even alternates good and bad. If justice could ever cause harm, then it would follow that the essential human excellence could cause its own diminution. In that case, the human good would cause the human bad. But if the good were *ever* to cause the bad, good and bad would be only conditionally and not fundamentally opposed to one another. In order to guard against this implication, Polemarchus embraces without the slightest reservation the proposition that justice never works harm (335d13).

It follows that if goodness never causes harm, one can do harm only by parting or turning oneself away from the good. Polemarchus' thymotic passion for friendly solidarity (and thus for upholding the opposition between good and bad) can only be satisfied, then, if he is himself turned steadily toward the good. Informed by this insight, Polemarchus' spiritedness will henceforth become the perfect ally of philosophy, permitting nothing to distract him from the good. Spiritedness must be so allied in order to escape distraction by the juvenile desire "to settle a score." Socrates will later allude to the undistracted attention to the good as the greatest study (*to megiston mathēma*) and the one most appropriate for the philosopher (504e4–505b4). So we may infer that only philosophy will satisfy and correctly order the thymotic longings of Polemarchus' soul. But we must also note that philosophy can only be pursued if one first recants the childish notion that it is ever just to harm anyone.

Socrates finally invites Polemarchus to become his partner in defense of Simonides (and other wise and blessed men) by fighting anyone who holds that such men deem it right to harm anyone (335e7–10). Although the argument indicates that Simonides could not have meant that it is right to harm anyone, it has of course not settled what he *did* mean. Socrates and Polemarchus thus become partners in defense of a good they do not themselves possess or know. Their acknowledgment of the dearness of this unknown good is not only evidence of Polemarchus' piety, it also comports perfectly with the continuing conduct of philosophical inquiry. Plato will not wait long before giving his reader an example of the Socratic–Polemarchean partnership in combat, in which the harmony of piety and philosophy is made perfectly clear.

POLEMARCHUS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE REMAINDER OF THE DIALOGUE

Considering Polemarchus' ripening into a representative of true piety, it is only appropriate that his important contributions to the subsequent movement of the dialogue are conveyed in a most modest and quiet manner. We should take notice of these contri-

butions by way of completing our discussion of his role in the *Republic*.

Polemarchus appears twice more in the dialogue. We hear from him again very soon, in the course of Socrates' conversation with Thrasymachus. In the midst of the first half of this conversation, Plato introduces a brief interlude in which Polemarchus confronts his dramatic foil, Cleitophon. The point of this confrontation, I suggest, is to show the reader that Polemarchus is not at all like Cleitophon. One might say that the confrontation between Cleitophon and Polemarchus in this passage supplies the best index of Socrates' success in his pedagogical undertaking with Polemarchus;²¹ for rather than turning out to be like Cleitophon, Polemarchus proves to be diametrically opposed to him. Yet the comparison of the two young men is inevitable. They both represent tendencies characteristic of the broader political community. Polemarchus, we recall, attempts to impose the force of democratic numbers in the dialogue's opening enactment of the arrest of the philosopher (327c7–14). And Cleitophon advocates the purest form of legal positivism proposed in the dialogue. Cleitophon goes further in this respect than even Thrasymachus; for Cleitophon holds that when Thrasymachus says that might makes right, what he means to say is that right is anything the politically dominant class *believes* to be to its own advantage (340b6–8). But this clever loophole, which could have insulated Thrasymachus' position from Socrates' refutation, would also make philosophical inquiry impossible and unnecessary. Philosophy is possible or necessary only if one first recognizes the importance—nay, the dearness—of what he does not know. But there is clearly no room for such piety in Cleitophon's world. Cleitophon's perceptionism enthrones every man as measure and absolute ruler of his own private cosmos. Cleitophon's anxiety to escape refutation leads him to annihilate the possibility of recognizing his own ignorance and, along with it, the possibility of ever learning anything. But Polemarchus, in the course of his conversation with Socrates, has come to appreciate the dearness of the unknown good. He could only do this, as we have seen, by first recognizing the limitations of perception, the inadequacy of the seeming good. So it is inevitable that Polemarchus will find himself at loggerheads with Cleitophon, for whom the seeming good is a jealous god. Yet it does no harm to Cleitophon—and in fact it positively benefits Thrasymachus—when Polemarchus testifies that Thrasymachus did not say that justice is whatever seems to be advantageous to the mighty (340a1–b9). By speaking out and revealing his own sympathies, Polemarchus makes it more difficult for the crowd-pleasing rhetorician to adopt Cleitophon's loophole. In this sense, Polemarchus plays an important role in making it possible for Thrasymachus and Socrates eventually to become friends. Had Thrasymachus followed Cleitophon's impious tack, undermining the very possibility of philosophy, he could never have become Socrates' friend and might very well be regarded as

his enemy (498c6–d1). This, then, is how Polemarchus first answers Socrates' call to do battle in partnership with him. He is Socrates' true ally in upholding the possibility of philosophy and in waging a battle from which everyone might benefit.

The next and last time we hear of Polemarchus in the *Republic* is at the opening of book 5. His contribution to the conversation in this passage is muted but is, nevertheless, enormously significant, for it is with hardly more than a whisper that Polemarchus moves Adeimantus and the entire inquiry out of the theoretical doldrums. Taking his cue from Polemarchus, Adeimantus articulates their common concern (*hemeis* 449d1, *tithete* 450a4), speaking at considerable length of Socrates' faintheartedness (*aporrhathymein* 449c2) and injustice in "stealing a whole *eidos* of the account" of the city-in-speech. So it is Polemarchus who propels Adeimantus and the others to put a stop to Socrates' fainthearted speculation concerning the forms of bad constitution. As a consequence, Socrates is compelled to return to the more arduous task of completing the articulation of his model city. From this nearly inaudible yet decisive intervention of Polemarchus there develops the "digression" of books 5–7, in which Socrates and his interlocutors renew their pursuit of philosophy and the good with an unprecedented seriousness.

CONCLUSION

Socrates goes down into Piraeus with Glaucon both to pray and at the same time to see. I have suggested that the desire to reconcile reason and piety, which is manifest in this twofold intention, is a just and fitting response to what is perhaps the most vital feature of the human condition. As Socrates maintains, human beings are contingent creatures who nevertheless possess the ability to share somehow in the noetic activity characteristic of the divine. I have acknowledged that the departure of Cephalus, who abandons inquiry in order to attend to certain sacred rites, induces us to consider the tension between piety and reason. But I have also suggested that the textual passage centered on this focal event reveals that it is not Cephalus but Polemarchus who, together with Socrates, deserves to be regarded as the dialogue's exemplar of piety.

The textual evidence suggests that Socrates intends to unmask Cephalus as a representative of rationalism rather than piety. Following this evidence, I maintain that we must reject the widespread notion that Cephalus' departure constitutes Plato's dramatic indication of the fundamental incompatibility of philosophy and piety. Instead, we would do better to conclude that Cephalus' departure dramatizes the incompatibility of Socratic philosophy and rationalism. Because rationalism is also hostile to genuine piety, Cephalus must take his leave before true piety can be introduced and reconciled with Socratic philosophy.

I have argued that it is Polemarchus whose devel-

opment dramatizes the character of genuine piety. Polemarchus enters into the conversation advocating a blind faith in the authority of the wise man, Simonides, as a basis upon which to decide the question of justice. But Socrates ripens and fortifies this piety by bidding Polemarchus to consider "what it is you say that Simonides said correctly in speaking about justice." It might seem that such a question could not be seriously intended to initiate a philosophical inquiry because it takes for granted that in some sense Simonides is right. This assumption, I agree, is by no means beyond all possible doubt. But the analysis I have offered suggests that it is precisely the piety—or "bias," if one insists—of this form of question that underlies the love of wisdom. Piety, thus understood, keeps philosophical inquiry steadily concentrated upon the good, undistracted by other considerations.

I have suggested, by the conduct of this inquiry, that one can best approach the study of Plato in the same way. In order to learn from even the closest study of small passages of Plato, the reader must hold dear what he does not know. The reader must be supremely attentive (we might even say reverential) toward the text. This requires respect for the text's structural articulation and for the dramatic context of every argument. With this reverential approach, one recognizes that logical ambiguity may serve as an impeccable conveyance of significance; that silences may speak eloquently; and that blunders that "would shame an intelligent high school boy" may become for the attentive reader critical pointers to an underlying, coherent teaching. The authority of logic is not thereby rejected. Instead, the reader assumes the responsibility to remain alert enough to supply the suppressed premise of an enthymeme. Piecemeal logical analysis is thus transcended in the direction of the holistic consideration of logographic necessity. Such a transcendence sustains the virtues of reason as against the shortsightedness of rationalism. In this way, moreover, the student of Plato adopts Socrates' recommendation to become both judge and advocate at the same time. On the other hand, I would suggest that the more perfectly neutral inquiry "Is Plato right or wrong?" will inevitably distract one's inquiry from the good merely in order to settle a score with an author. Instead of serving as a portal to the good, the author becomes in this case the principal object (and hence, inevitably, an obstacle) to what was intended as a philosophical investigation.

I have argued that Polemarchus' spiritedness is initially inclined toward such score settling. Polemarchus passionately strives to achieve the most rigorous possible discrimination between friend and foe and thus hits upon the notion that to do right one must benefit friends and harm enemies. This notion in turn tends to provoke a dreadful appetite for the power to dispense benefit and harm. Socrates opposes this appetite, first, by disengaging Polemarchus' enthusiasm for this notion of justice. He does this by showing that its practice implies a status for justice that is inglorious and which, moreover, casts doubt upon

the goodness of friendly solidarity. Socrates then helps Polemarchus to identify the proper object of his heart's desire in the true good, even when the good is not yet apparent as such. I maintain that Polemarchus' acknowledgment of the dearness of the unknown good constitutes the definitive indication of genuine piety in the conversations of book 1. Because only the disposition to hold dear what one does not yet know can keep one mindful of the need to learn, we may say that piety in this sense is indeed a docility of soul, not in the mistaken current sense of intellectual passivity but in the original sense of *docilitas*, or "learning readiness." Such docility, moreover, is the polar opposite of the hubristic resistance to learning, or *amathia*, which is the culprit so often obstructing philosophical inquiry in Plato's dialogues. With Polemarchus' recognition of the dearness of the unknown good, his spiritedness is set squarely to the task of upholding the opposition between good and bad. It remains only for Socrates to persuade Polemarchus that this opposition cannot be maintained unless justice is oriented steadily toward the good; as a consequence, Polemarchus learns that the just man cannot seek to harm anyone.

Thanks to Socrates' examination of Polemarchus, we are better able to appreciate the character of piety or reverence. Typically, this quality is mistaken as a merely submissive or passive deference to higher authority. But it is more properly understood as an acknowledgment of the dearness of (and hence as a receptivity to) the unknown good. Such receptiveness is manifest not in blind faith but in a questioning that is searching even as it anticipates the truth or goodness of the thing questioned. Piety in this sense is characteristic of one who is at the same time both judge and advocate, and yet neither skeptic nor dogmatist. I thus conclude that it is Socratic piety (and not its diametric opposite, Cartesian doubt) that is the disposition most congenial to the love of wisdom. Piety, we may say, is not merely necessary to thwart the persecution of philosophers. Piety is essential to the pursuit of philosophy.

Notes

1. Citations in this essay to the *Platonis Opera* (Oxford, 1900–1907) supply the standard Stephanus divisions of page, section, and line. Unless indicated otherwise, all references are to the *Republic*. The translations are my own.

2. Of course, to say that this understanding is *accessible* is not to say that any particular student will in fact gain access to it; but it is good pedagogical practice never to lose sight of this possibility.

3. See also Strauss 1965, 1–31 idem 1979.

4. As it happens, Stephanus divides this passage into 44 sections (327a–336a), with Cephalus making his departure in the last line (331d9) of the twenty second section. The eidetic standing of this collection of 44 sections may be better appreciated if one notes that it already comprises a sufficiently diverse assemblage of interlocutors to reflect something of the character of the *Republic* as a whole. Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Socrates may be said to correspond to the three classes (money-maker, warrior, and philosopher) of Socrates' model city and thus may be said to anticipate the problem of the

wholeness of its *politeia* and perhaps of *politeiai* in general. Euben is right to observe that the triplet of Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus does *not* correspond to the threefold structure of the model city (1990, 248). Thrasymachus, after all, is not a philosopher. Of course, neither Euben's observation nor my claim concerning the significance of the passage upon which I propose to focus is meant to imply that Thrasymachus is unimportant. On the contrary, I would suggest that his presence in book 1 poses the important problem of philosophy's need to incorporate rhetoric while at the same time separating itself from sophistry. But one cannot talk of everything at once: if we try, we shall find ourselves impaled upon the "forest" horn of the forester's dilemma and reduced to the formulation of cocktail-party generalizations. The challenge is to find a way to think and talk about the details nonreductively, that is, while preserving their relationship to the whole.

5. I am thus inclined (with Brann 1967, 88, 113) to view the narration of the *Republic* as an example of the Pythagoreanism of Plato's Socrates. Pythagoreans sought to cultivate a capacity for just this sort of recollection. According to the testimony of Iamblichus, "a Pythagorean man does not arise from his bed before he has recollected what happened yesterday" (*Life of Pythagoras* 163.20, cited in Brann 1967, 113). This recollection would be a private exercise. Hence, Socrates' narration of Plato's *Republic* may be likened to a dramatic soliloquy. Nevertheless, one might wish to maintain that Socrates does have a circle of auditors who listen to his rehearsal of the conversation of the *Republic*, as seems suggested by a possible (though by no means necessary) interpretation of the opening scene of the *Timaeus*. There is, however, no evidence internal to the *Republic* to support such an interpretation.

6. An example from the present passage will suffice to illustrate this point. Socrates expresses personal admiration (*egō agastheis*) for Cephalus in a narrative gloss, when the latter reckons that a good way of life is more important to personal happiness than the capacity to enjoy sexual pleasures (329d7). I take it, then, that we may understand this admiration as sincere, if provisional. On the other hand, it is in direct discourse with Cephalus himself that Socrates describes as *pangkalōs* (i.e., beautiful in every respect) Cephalus' view that money is chiefly useful in making it unnecessary to commit injustice (331c1). Hence, I am inclined to take this evaluation with the proverbial grain of salt. In fact, Socrates' pretentiously exhaustive word *pangkalōs* might be understood as insinuating that in some decisive respect Cephalus' notion is quite the opposite of beautiful. The sequel, as we shall see, confirms this insinuation. Such is the character of Socratic irony.

7. Socrates employs this *te . . . kai hama* formulation throughout the *Republic* to indicate the pairing of things that might well be regarded as irreconcilable. He remarks that the discovery of such a pairing naturally awakens dialectical thought (524e2–5). Sometimes, however, the "longer path" of dialectic is postponed and a provisional understanding is accepted merely by hypothesis (as indicated, for example, at 436d4–437a9). For a discussion of the pedagogical significance of this postponement of dialectic and its importance for the interpretation of the political institutions of Socrates' model city, see Dobbs 1994.

8. The case that Socrates' conventional religious practice is more than window dressing is made by Lloyd-Jones, among others, who notes that in late fifth-century Athens many educated people realized "that the traditional beliefs and observances were by no means incompatible with a more sophisticated kind of theism; belief in a god or gods that had been defined by the doctrines of philosophy could easily go together with the maintenance of the ancient worship" (1983, 134).

9. Adam points out that in Attic literature the phrase *the goddess* regularly denotes Athena (1902, 1:62). Nevertheless, he rightly considers evidence internal to the *Republic* to be more compelling than regular Attic usage in interpreting this phrase; this internal evidence suggests an identification of Socrates' goddess with Bendis. I agree with this assessment,

but venture further to say that it would be mistaken to substitute terms, reading *Bendis* instead of *the goddess* in hope of improving upon Socrates' use of an ambiguous phrase. It is more prudent to keep open the possibility that the ambiguity implicit in Socrates' speaking of "the goddess" is meaningful precisely as such. While the future participle *proseuxomenos* plainly indicates Socrates' intention to pray, his ambiguous diction in the case of the intended recipient of these prayers (Socrates himself never uses the name *Bendis*) indicate that he does not mean to pray to *Bendis qua Bendis*. Such ambiguity may be the most economical means of conveying the complexity of Socrates' recognition of this cult as reflecting an aspect of some unknown, though necessary, god. This would also explain why it appears that "Plato apparently regards the content of prayers as more important than to whom they are addressed (Jackson 1971, 34).

10. Of course, some readers are inclined to dismiss Socrates' testimony as ironic. But a careful review of the text will find no warrant for such a dismissal in this case. In the passage typically cited as evidence of his ironic intent, Socrates is commenting on the difficulty of persuading his fellow citizens of the importance of persisting in his cross-examinations. "If I say that it is impossible for me to keep quiet because this is to disobey the god, you will not be persuaded by me, on grounds that I am being ironic" (*hōs eirōneuomenōi*, 37e5–38a1). It should be noted, however, that the *hōs*-plus-participle construction, which Socrates employs in the final clause of this sentence, is used in Greek to give the reason or purpose of someone other than the speaker *without implying* that it is also the speaker's understanding of the situation (see Goodwin, *Greek Grammar* §1574). Hence, there is no reason to construe Socrates' statement as an admission that he is being ironic; his statement merely affirms that others will suppose that he is. Perhaps many in the democratic jury will doubt Socrates' veracity in this matter because they are not themselves inclined to take the oracle at Delphi (or the voice of any other *daimōn*) very seriously but confide instead exclusively in their own autonomous will. So it happens that Meletus, the poet, succeeds in his indictment of impiety against Socrates only with the support of Anytus, the democratic politician. The democracy naturally treats complicity in the rearing of oligarchs as the functional equivalent of impiety.

11. Morgan makes an intriguing point, noting that inasmuch as he is a metic, Cephalus resembles the human soul, which also is a sojourner "living temporarily in the world of history, politics and moral conduct, . . . always anticipating its future and the possibility of permanent citizenship among the divine" (1990, 100). I think this suggestion is even more pertinent to Cephalus' son, Polemarchus, who is also a metic but whose anticipation of the destiny of his soul is not marred by his father's anxieties.

12. See n. 6.

13. The term *rationalism* is of course a modern coinage. Ancient authors described this tendency in a more frankly pejorative manner, as a manifestation of *hybris* or recklessness. Such value-laden language testifies to the clarity of the divergence, in the view of these authors, between what we call rationalism and the true virtue of reasonableness. Dobbs (1987) and Saxonhouse (1988) may be consulted for further discussion of the ancient appreciation of the discrepancy between the virtue of reasonableness and the recklessness of rationalism. It is my intention here to present Socrates as a positive case in point, for Socrates' examination of Polemarchus, which is remarkably deferential to the authority of Simonides, remains a model of reasonableness, though it certainly would not pass Cartesian muster. As I shall suggest, Socrates' conversation with Polemarchus thus reveals that piety is more congenial to philosophy than is radical doubt.

14. In his attempt to argue that the sacred is not a concern for the philosopher but only for the city, Benardete fails to take account of the significance of this linkage of advocacy and criticism (1989, 82–83). Specifically, he faults Glaucon (who recalls Socrates' acknowledgment of a "sacred task to help justice," 368b7–c2, 427e1–2) for failing to appreciate the

distinction between searching for justice and helping justice. But it is reasonable for Glaucon to combine these concerns; by yoking the tasks of searching and helping, he faithfully executes Socrates' intention that they be "judges and advocates at the same time" (348b3–4). Although there is much to admire in Benardete's book, I maintain that we will never adequately appreciate the philosophical significance of Socrates' undertaking in the *Republic* until we acknowledge the importance of his pairing of piety and reason, advocacy and criticism.

15. *Thymos*, as Aristotle explains it, is the power of soul whereby we love or hold something dear (*philoumen*); it is indomitable and prerequisite to a capacity for rule and for independence (see *Politics* 1327b18–1328a16; cf. Plato, *Republic* 374a12–b2). Zuckert writes pithily that "Socrates identified *thymos*, or spiritedness, as the psychic origin of distinctively political action. . . . [In Socrates view,] political order does not arise directly from one's own desires or [even from] the means best calculated to realize those desires but rather in reaction to the excessive desires of others" (1988, 2–4). Socrates treats *thymos* thematically, though incompletely, in book 4 of the *Republic* (437a4–10, 439e2–441d4). An adequate consideration of the classic understanding of *thymos*, the seat of the emotions of love, anger, and indignation (to say nothing of the spirit of independence and self-sacrifice), would require a careful study of these and other passages.

16. Strauss notices that Hamlet's famous soliloquy illustrates the tendency of *thymos* to shift from "the justified indignation about injustice . . . into the unjustified indignation about unrequited love. This is perhaps the deepest secret of spiritedness and therefore at least one of the deepest secrets of the *Republic*" (1989, 168). To this remarkably incisive comment I would like merely to append the observation that in some sense the opposite of unrequited love is the discovery of an unknown friend. Such a discovery, which Polemarchus is about to make with Socrates' assistance, will naturally counter the thymotic tendency toward unjustified indignation. Moderation is thus nourished by Socratic piety.

17. Piety in this sense is utterly alien to the conduct of Euthyphro, the pseudospokesman for piety in the Platonic dialogue named after him, for Euthyphro plunders his cultic expertise to claim for himself the very prerogatives of divinity (see Strauss 1989, 197–98). Readers interested in the relationship between the *Euthyphro* and the *Republic* should also observe that Euthyphro's final definition (that piety consists in commercial transactions with the gods, 14c4–15b3) would lend credence to Cephalus' decadent piety. Socrates' refutation of this final definition, then, would likewise undermine Cephalus' position. But Socrates' refutation, which annuls Euthyphro's designation of self-serving commerce as the attendance (*therapeia*) that is due the gods, leaves open the possibility that some other relationship of attendance—non-commercial but as yet unspecified—might well constitute the true character of piety (see *Euthyphro* 13a1–2). It seems to me that Polemarchus' acknowledgment of the dearth of the unknown good qualifies as this other kind of attendance. Thus, the *Euthyphro* may be said to culminate in the refutation of Cephalus and the anticipation of Polemarchus. We may expect, then, that the *Republic* will involve a further elaboration of the consideration of piety initiated by Plato in the *Euthyphro*.

18. Justice may yet regain its prominence in the case that one is both sick and at sea at the same time, for then an appeal would have to be made to some third man beyond the physician and the helmsman to determine which of their possibly conflicting prescriptions to follow. Because of the familiarity with seasickness typical of a seafaring people like the Greeks, we may surmise that this implication is not entirely foreign to Socrates' intention in the choice of his examples.

19. Failure to consider this point has led many readers to the erroneous conclusion that it is foolish of Polemarchus to suppose that justice exhausts what we mean by human excellence. Of course, certain conceptions of justice are less than exhaustive of human excellence; some conceptions are

even at odds with it. Justice understood as the imposition of arithmetic equality in external goods, for example, might well subvert the excellent endeavors of some of the more talented members of society. But such conceptions of justice are blunted by the incongruity of their concern for contingent goods and so cannot penetrate to the depth that Socrates' argument requires. Polemarchus, then, follows the train of Socrates' argument better than many of his critics, for once one is required to consider the issue ontologically, it may be necessary as well (*kai tout' anangkē* 335c5), as Polemarchus agrees, to accept righteousness as the good essential to human being. Moreover, if it is true that the central books of the *Republic* vindicate the righteousness of philosophy, then Polemarchus' formal identification of *dikaiosynē* and human excellence will prove to be robust enough to withstand the rigors of the highest intellectual peaks of the *Republic*.

20. Failure to perceive this development in Polemarchus has led many readers to complain of the inconsistency between the treatment of arts in the present passage and the Autolykean account offered only a few pages earlier. But Polemarchus has consistently viewed the arts from the perspective of justice, as he understands it. As his understanding of justice undergoes change, so does his view of the arts. There is no glaring oversight here, as some readers imagine, but only a good example of human learning.

21. If one wishes to go outside the *Republic* for confirmation, there is of course Socrates' remark in the *Phaedrus*, affirming that "Polemarchus has turned toward philosophy" (*Phaedrus* 257b3-4).

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