THE WOMAN QUESTION IN PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*

MARY TOWNSEND

On the other hand, it is unlikely from the very outset that so interested a stance on our problem will be beneficial; the ascetic priest is hardly going to be the most apt defender of his ideal, for the same reason that a woman usually fails when she sets out to defend "woman as such"—not to mention that he will hardly be the most objective judge in this agitated controversy. Therefore—this much is already clear—it's more likely we'll have to help him adequately defend himself against us, rather than needing to fear that he'll handily disprove us.

Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals* III.11

"What," I said, "is the funniest thing you see among them? Or isn't it clear it's the women, naked, exercising in the *palaestra* together with the men, not only the young ones, but also the older ones right there, like the old men in gymnasiums, who though they're shriveled and not a pleasant sight, love to exercise still?"

Republic V.452a–b

Let's test it out, and see which of the sexes is worse: we say it's you, and you say it's us.

Aristophanes, *Women at the Thesmophoria* 801

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Introduction

The Woman Question

At the beginning of the 15th century, no one in Catholic Europe was reading Plato's *Republic*—because no one had a copy, let alone one in a language they could read. Though the works of Aristotle had long been a commonplace, all that was obtainable of Plato's books, whole and entire, was an imperfect handful.[1] Leonardo Bruni, in the vanguard of Italian humanists, was among the number determined to learn Greek and so mend the damage of so many years' absence of Plato's books in all their integrity from his tradition; he dedicated in the grand style his translation of the *Phaedo* to Pope Innocent VII in 1405. But Bruni refused outright to translate the *Republic*. In a letter to a friend he explains his reasoning: "There are many things [in it] repugnant to our customs; things which, for the sake of Plato's honor, it would be preferable to remain silent."[2] What could have made Bruni regard Plato's masterpiece as containing that which would damage Plato's reputation forever?

The *Republic*, as everyone knows, is a remarkable book; it possesses the strange power to repel one reader, just as much as it attracts another. It draws the reader over a remarkable variety of terrain in the pursuit of Justice in itself; it is, as has been justly remarked, rather like a modern novel, not unlike Joyce's *Ulysses* in its depth and breadth of subject: a self-contained aporetic argument on the question what is justice, a lengthy description of the details of several versions of the best and most just city, a plan for philosophic education and the nature of knowing and philosophy, a discussion of imperfect regimes, two separate critiques of the poets, and a remarkable closing myth of a living man's journey to the underworld—all conducted in the space of one evening's conversation. Among this tangle of arguments, the majority initiated by the request of Socrates' interlocutors, who wish to hear justice praised itself by itself, many have found its discussions of the best city to be of themselves grounds enough for polemic. Yet each generation chooses its personal

bête noir from among the many odd details, whether it be the strange division of profession among three tiers of differently bestowed souls, the abolition of private property among the ruling class known as the "guardians," or the final banishment of the poets from the city. In truth, Socrates' just city can hardly be said to be a *satisfying* thing to read about: while some decry the book for its communistic tendencies, others denounce it as reactionary.[3] But for Bruni and for many others, it is what Socrates has to say on the woman question—namely, what the role of women in the political community should be—that is peculiarly and perennially antagonizing.

In the fifth and central book of the *Republic*, at the request for more detail about his plans for women and children, Socrates announces that the argument will have to start over from the beginning. He opens with three distinct proposals, known in scholarly shorthand as the Three Waves, in honor of the waves of laughter Socrates anticipates they will be met with. The first proposal or Wave is that women should join with the men of the guardian class in all their pursuits, and do everything in common with them; Socrates adds they will even exercise together, that is, exercise naked. The Second Wave is even more amusing: the guardians will be carefully bred together, ostensibly by a lottery, but in fact the lottery will be rigged by the rulers, and children will be raised by all in ignorance of their parents, with state-run nursing pens. The Third and final Wave proclaims the rule of philosophers as kings: this above all, Socrates fears, threatens to drown him in not only laughter but ill-repute. While the outlandishness of the last proposal marks it in Socrates' words as perhaps no more than prayer, the first two run so sharply against long-standing custom, that all of Socrates' warnings are not enough to guard against a quick and strong rejection by the vast majority of readers. When the *Republic* was in fact translated by the Italian humanists, its first scholars either employed interpretive acrobatics to soften the blow of Socrates' plans for women, or simply chose to mistranslate the text—strategies, I will note, not unique to Italian humanists.[4]

Now, one might expect that in the 20th century, given its revolutions in customs with respect to women, that readers would be more in charity with at least some of Socrates' proposed changes; but such is not the case. Even apart from the 20th-century's preoccupation with injustice, power, and politics as hermeneutics, the *Republic* on its own engenders an intensity with respect to all questions of justice, both great and small. And so one admirable if potentially tedious plan of attack, given the numerous oddities of his laws, is to consider each detail of Socrates' civic construction in the light of whether any given law or arrangement would be perfectly and thoroughly just. Such is no less the case for the proposals of the First and Second Waves; and the question 20th- and 21st-century scholars most frequently ask is this: has Plato done justice to women? The sense remains that, no, Plato has not, not nearly

enough; the real variation in judgment arises over the extent to which the reader is willing to be magnanimous toward his imperfect efforts.[5]

But, as it is starting to be recognized more widely, the question as posed is not adequate to the complexity of Plato's writing.[6] To start with, it fails to call into question the nature of justice, forcing the reader to argue from a position that takes a knowledge of justice for granted, overlooking the telling phenomenon that most regimes consider their own laws superior to Socrates'. But worse, it encourages the reader to commit the awkward solecism of taking the words of Plato's characters for Plato's own views.[7] This done, the reader is free to manufacture without guilt a straightforward answer from out of all the conversational back-and-forth to their own preoccupations, without interesting themselves in the concerns of Socrates and his interlocutors. And so Socratic pedagogy no less than Socratic irony is left behind. But worst of all, such willfully short-sighted reading makes Plato appear deeply uninteresting as a thinker, someone obviously and easily superseded by better logic or a few tweaks to his admittedly hyperbolic arguments; and so a book that is a forest of images gets reduced to a theatrical stage-flat, something hardly worth picking up on its own in a moment of reading leisure. This artificial problem becomes multiplied when the so-called words of Plato are reported, in a game of scholarly telephone, amongst all other fields with an interest in receiving a few words on Plato's position on women and then moving on with their arguments—a situation ironically similar to the European Medievals arguing over their scraps, but much less forgivable. The loss is the more unnecessary, considering that to the unschooled reader who in all innocence picks up the work, its form immediately announces itself as a dramatic conversation; so much so that first-time readers will even confuse it for a stage-play, if rather an ambitious one.

Now, by the end of the 20th century, there was a rough consensus among scholars of philosophy, at least, that dialogic form was a key element in Plato's writing, and as such ought to be taken into account by anyone who wished to interpret any given one of his books. The minor problem remained, however, that there was no consensus on just how the form was to be taken into account.[8] Of course, to be sure, final consensus on such a matter is perhaps no less possible than desirable, any more than for all to approach, say, the metaphysical poets of the 17th century with precisely the same hermeneutics would be particularly rewarding. The problem for readers now, is not so much to pick one mode of approach, but to set the expectation of complexity and richness high enough for anyone who wishes to take up the interpretive task—not to mention to foster a high enough expectation on the reader's part of complexity, such that they would allow themselves to take pleasure in witnessing the puzzle. To be fully responsive to Plato's work, one must not only admit the standard that Plato's Socrates

insists upon, that every word of a single work play a crucial part of the whole, but also take up the practically impossible but nonetheless necessary task of entering fully into Plato's world-building: to locate each conversation in the light of the entirety of Plato's wide-ranging body of work, among all the conversations of Socrates and others, which contain as many fascinating commonalities as flat contradictions. This is particularly important when the subject is women, about whom many crucial hints are dropped throughout the dialogues, such as in the case of Socrates' claim to have learned rhetoric from the courtesan Aspasia in the *Menexenus*, or Socrates' likening his conversational art to that of his mother Phaenarete the midwife in the *Theaetetus*.[9]

Yet the difficulty remains, borne of the *au courant* faith in the power and universality of systematic accounts, how to reconcile ourselves in this day and age to the fact that Plato's work is not a system but a cosmos, whose competing accounts ultimately place the burden and the hope of dialectic on the part of the individual reader. Of the first importance, is to finally put to rest the awkward 19th-century narrative that insists on its own interest in historical development as the hermeneutic key to an alien body of work, in favor of the dramatic timing of the life of Socrates offered by Plato himself.[10] Though at first glance all this may seem all too Herculean a task, it's a standard that few writers of Plato's caliber would not expect as their right. Likewise, it provides a helpful reorientation to recall that Socratic Dialogue is a genre in its own right, wherein Socrates becomes written and rewritten in endless variation, not merely in the competing works of Xenophon but also in the versions Aeschines, Antisthenes, Eucleides, Aristippus, and Phaedo put forward as well.[11] And although allegory, *leitmotif*, and symbol certainly play a role in the dialogues, allegory alone, or the sense that the drama is after all a sort of clothing or window-dressing, or even a codified version of the arguments themselves, will not be enough. Plato's poetics are more three-dimensional than that which is on display in *Everyman* or *Pilgrim's Progress*. It need hardly be said that attention must be paid to the logic of the arguments; but no *less* attention can be given to the fact that all the arguments come from the mouths of as three-dimensional characters as any writer for the stage ever produced, themselves in turn carefully placed with absolute specificity within the historical, political, and religious situations of ancient Athens and the Greek world.[12]

Fortunately for us, the 20th century contains the seeds if not the fruits of such wide-ranging responsiveness: an attentiveness to language beyond the abstractly logical, a willingness to recognize the limitations of one's own historical and political position, and even an interest in the aporetic as such. Likewise it also has produced the first flowerings of a reasonably responsive tradition, begun by some few of Heidegger's students, who, taking up his call to return to the origins of Western philosophizing, found themselves ultimately more interested in Plato

and the Greeks at large, than in Heidegger's own work.[13] While Jacob Klein preferred to characterize the oddity of Plato's work as mimetic or dramatic, Leo Strauss insisted upon Socratic rhetoric; their work gave rise to such disparate readers and writers on the *Republic* as Eva Brann, Seth Benardete, and Stanley Rosen; the influence of these and others of their generation in turn has produced little short of diaspora.[14] And indeed, a sign of the affinity between Heidegger's counsel, if not his deeds, is that in recent times the continental tradition on its own, apart from this lineage, has evinced much interest and subtlety in approach to reading Plato, such as in the work of John Sallis or John Russon. But the most helpful thing achieved by what has become a tradition of many layers, is that it is a tradition, with the benefits of a continued conversation with high if not uniform standards—as long as we keep in mind the danger that all philosophy shares, and that Heidegger's life is a testament to, that when philosophers turn their eyes to the state, they risk taking up monstrosity as political wisdom, the very thing that the *Republic*, as I will discuss, can help us understand. We very much stand in need of an interest in Plato beyond the concerns of academic philosophy, and we need to marry our interest in sitting down to read his books with an appreciation of the complexity of his approach to the fundamental concerns of human life.

For though there is a reasonable expectation, for us at the beginning of the 21st century, that to speak of Plato's "doctrine of recollection" as (a) doctrine and (b) a doctrine of "Plato," is to be flat-footed indeed, there is no such expectation for what Plato writes about the women's law. Despite the fact that he has no less than two main characters turn their hands to it—the flip side of Socrates' own thoughts being what the Athenian Stranger has to say in the *Laws*—there is hardly any general recognition of the seriousness and depth to which Plato takes the woman question, no common report that would remind the reader that in the case of the women's law, Socratic irony is no less at work. Now: among the students of Leo Strauss, there are those that have attempted to understand the *Republic*'s laws for women in light of Socrates' penchant for irony, at least; Allan Bloom's version, though it is not the most respected, is perhaps the most frequently read, seeing that it lies at the back of his much-circulated translation. These accounts are the more useful, as Michael Kochin notes, because there simply aren't that many people trying to understand what Socrates says about women in terms of the *Republic* as a whole.[15] But the underlying trouble with Bloom's account, which Strauss' account shares, is the rhetorical need to demonstrate the fact that irony or drama is even at work at all in Socrates' conversations about the most just city. And so the parts about women become steps in the argument that demonstrate the overall flaws with the pursuit of justice without consequences (a phrase which of itself ought to alarm); Socrates' solution to the woman question has to be shown to be laughable in the sense of impossible or undesirable, so that the just city is safely found to be equally flawed. The momentum that this rhetorical need incites, the necessity to show the ultimate laughability,

and only the laughability, of Socrates' plans for women's rule and education, narrows the question to about one half of the story, one half the irony, and less than half the readership; for such defiant insistence on the risibility of the women's law has the further unhappy result, of casting the reputation of the seriousness of Socratic irony itself into doubt.

But we who begin with a sense of drama and irony do not require such a demonstration; rather, Socrates' irony, announced in a fit of pique by one of the evening's early combatants, is a constant feature not merely of the *Republic*, but of the whole of the life of this ever-fascinating fictional idol. At the heart of the *Republic* is an *aporia*, an open question: can human ills really be done away with, should philosophers become kings, as Socrates insists in his central and strangest of prophecies? Such a prophecy is just that: a prophecy, ironic insofar as it is the perfect paradox, attractive as it is terrifying, tempting as it is asymptotically impossible. Therefore, the question is not, *whether* the best city is fatally flawed—for after all, it is only thorough-going lovers of Plato who ever seriously considered putting philosophers in charge of a political community—but *why* Socrates allows it to possess its imperfections, indeed announces them even as he insists they will be necessary. Therefore, the question about Socrates' attempt at the women's law is not, whether it is imperfect; but just *why* is it, after all? What is the reason for all of Socrates' hesitations and caveats that he places around the women's law, why does he expect others to find it funny, and why does he still introduce it? Why does he go far beyond the requested elaboration of marriage and child-rearing, and insist that the women will rule and be educated alongside the men? Why does the unexpected subject of women in their own right lead to the entirely unexpected proposal of philosopher-kings? The task is not to save Plato's reputation by softening the strangeness and the humor of Socrates' proposals, but to understand why Plato is willing to risk his reputation by writing such things about women; his posterity stands equally at risk in the hands of those that still hold out for more perfect justice, and among those who find justice itself fatally flawed. I will note, that I take it to be a fundamental part of the interest we have, is the sense that there surely must be a stronger reason or temptation on Socrates' part, than that which is suggested by the 19th-century German classicist Carl Nohle, that the *only* reason Socrates introduced the First Wave was to provide breeding partners for the men.[16]

We stand still very much near the beginning of a flourishing attempt to call female human nature into question; and what could be more satisfying to lovers of philosophy, than to let what surely ought to be philosophically interesting, half of the human race, be acknowledged as such? While the irony present in the fact that "the woman question" is usually a question asked about the entirety of women by someone other than a woman herself should not be lost on us, it hardly obviates the question as such—as long as

it's asked as a living question, rather than as an excuse to consider the matter closed, or as an exercise in one's ignorance of one's own ignorance, as in the case of Freud.[17] I myself walk into these questions as one perhaps all too submerged in the world of Greek literature and philosophy. While the Greek language speaks of human beings and indeed all animals as of two sexes, male and female, the Greek world contains as much or more variation of human experience in this regard than our own, which is no small part of its perennial interest to all ages, even outside of questions about human men, human women, and their several loves. Indeed, in the world where Tiresias is a seer, and the voice of far-away Apollo is the very present lady known as the Pythia, our own mores can seem somewhat pedestrian. Part of the appeal of Heidegger's call to return to the Greeks has to be their help on what has become a thoroughly vexed set of questions. The scene at present is nothing less than circus-like, with some insisting on a nature so predictable and ironclad as to become unrecognizable to immediate human experience, while others announce that only when we consider Being as nothing more than Becoming, will we understand any of the particularities of our existence, our own selves remaining Cartesianly neutral under all our practices and rituals.[18] This, and all the while, the poets and the moneymakers heap peculiarly incoherent cartoons of what the male or female human being ought to look like, as in the current obsession with the color pink as somehow peculiarly girlish, the metaphysical no less than historical paucity of such a notion being, I hope, immediately obvious, despite its strange popularity.

The worth of Plato in all this is not that he presents a final answer to our current questions, but that a serious consideration of his work offers a way of reframing the dialectic that is of profound service, and not the least for its acknowledgment of the political context that necessarily underlies any such questioning. Likewise, Plato's book considers not merely women's role in the political community, but at the same time calls into question economic and class considerations as well, not to mention the human tendency to form itself or be formed into *genê*, in all the calculus of such interwovenness. Nor is Plato's work unresponsive to the possibility that body and soul find themselves at odds with respect to so-called gendered essence, as the body-swapping souls who trade one sex for another in the Myth of Er demonstrate; and I would ask the reader's patience, with my choice to speak of women as a race or *genos* unto themselves, and with the adoption for the sake of argument of the strategically essential terminology of my author. Though it's always a present temptation to become sick and tired, as Woolf records, of the very word "woman," the word itself nevertheless is phenomenologically forgiving, and has a weight on the tongue beyond mere definition.[19]

But all this being said, real philosophical questioning has to take place outside of answers, and so outside of our own convictions about what the best city

is, and just what the women's law ought to be: otherwise the reader falls into the very trap Plato is so often accused of participating in, as being all too limited by his time. Now, to those with both feet firmly in the tradition of Leo Strauss in particular, much of what follows may sound almost too novel, and beside the point; and to those who object to any engagement with Strauss' work as a matter of principle, it's always possible that portions may seem all too tired a rehearsal of that gentleman's maxims, despite any assurance on my part of a contrary opinion. Strauss' sense of Platonic writing is certainly worth careful attention, yet he remains to me a piece in a broader puzzle; the woman question is particularly well suited to drawing out the strengths and weaknesses of his accounts. I will note, that among many of those influenced by Strauss and by Bloom in particular, the *Republic* is supposed to show the reality of female human nature as different and distinct from that of the male; at best this tendency shows up in a recognition of the oddity of the argument that Socrates takes up, that men are better at everything; at worst, it funnels the reader into praise of the very customs Socrates announces he will critique. Female human nature remains an open question for me; and the *Republic* is marked by Socrates' strongly articulated insistence that no relevant natural difference obtains alongside the weakest possible examples he could have used. While the strangeness of his argument points us to a reconsideration of what, if anything, might be peculiar to the sex, the *Republic* as a work offers no stated argument that would help the reader with this question, for all that it sets the dialectical bar for what an adequate answer would have to address. And while other dialogues may offer tantalizing suggestions, the real problem with many of those who take up this account is that they are not particularly interested in taking up female human nature as a question to articulate, rather than as a point of order to insist upon; nor do more than a few evince much interest or concern in the fate of women and their desires themselves, outside of the bounds of conventional virtue. This is the more ironic, in that Plato's own interest and concern with the entirety of the sex have marked his books out as of peculiar interest to women across time and space; as I will discuss, he more than most philosophers has successfully raised women's interest in philosophy, just where the work of others has raised their peculiar ire, as in the case of Aristotle.

Plato's book places our desire to perfect the place of women in the human community in the context of this attempt's possible failure—and equally in the context of its desirability. This is not the less true, despite the laughter and repugnance of readers across time and space at the very notion that time-honored arrangements could even be alterable. He allows us to understand our desires alongside Socrates' own desires and prepossessions, in particular in the light of Socrates' fierce protectiveness for the practice of philosophy. Plato's thoughts about the woman question are deeply aporetic; and the interest and the benefit of his work, is that it helps these matters come fully into

question for as many who are interested in the truth of them. Only if we attend carefully enough to the question he raises, can we hope to make a fair beginning to our current attempt to answer them.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE ARGUMENTS

A quick look at what's to come and the structure of the whole: at the center of my argument is the section of the *Republic* known as the First Wave, the proposal that the best of the women share in all the tasks of the guardians, their education and as is later made explicit, their rule. This passage tends to be overlooked in favor of drawing out the absurdities of the marriage arrangements in the Second Wave; and many have striven to find it just as laughable as what follows it. But for each proposal, the quality of the humor involved is different; while the Second Wave reaches even slapstick, the humor of the Third involves a darker quality—since, as Glaucon notes, it will be met not only with laughter but with pitchforks (474a). The humor of the First Wave is particularly strange, since while Socrates seems rather in on the joke of the Second, to argue at length, as Socrates does, that common naked exercise for men and women is only funny because of our attachment to the customary—opens the possibility that the joke is on him.

1. While it's usually assumed that the first two Waves form a natural pair, I argue that the First and the Third Waves exhibit the deeper similarity, in action, subject, and dramatic function: while the Second Wave is Socrates' response to Adeimantus' specific request, both the First and Third Waves are Socrates' independent addition to the argument, and both concern the rule and education of a class of people not ordinarily given either, at the public expense. The precariousness of the political position of both groups under customary Greek laws, as Socrates alludes to with his image of philosophy as a maiden in distress in Book VI, will be central to my understanding of why and how Socrates attempts to ameliorate the position of both women and philosophy in Books V–VII. The factor that distinguishes Socrates' plans for women most of all is not merely education (which Aristotle argues for) or a share in the government as citizens (which the Athenian Stranger promotes in Plato's *Laws*), but that women will be trained as philosophers. I have found it particularly helpful to keep the competing plans for women that these other two lawgivers promote as background counterpoint; understanding what's distinct about Socrates' plan is extremely helpful for understanding just what is problematic about it.
2. Next, I point out that the crucial sticking point for 20th-century feminist interpretations of the First Wave, the fact that women will be taken as

weaker and men as stronger, is originally Glaucon's idea. Socrates takes it up into the fabric of his argument only after forcing Glaucon explicitly into *aporia* from which he requires a "miraculous rescue;" nor does this detail prevent Socrates' original plan for the education and rule of women from becoming part of the official law of the best city. Glaucon's reactions are a revealing picture of male reluctance to women's presence in the public sphere as potential competitors, and of what it would take to overcome this, both pedagogically and dialectically.

But though women arrive somewhat abruptly in the center of the argument in Book V, there is a complicated pattern of reference to the sex that takes place both before and after they are called out in the First Wave. The next two chapters deal with the narrative arc that is formed by the initial presence of women and their transformation into guardians. Before his accommodation to Glaucon, Socrates described the partnership of men and women as a "common hunt" (451d); in fact, there are several times that women and hunting are mentioned in the same breath in the evening's conversation.

3. First I discuss the nature of hunting in the *Republic*, with reference to hunting in other dialogues such as the *Lysis*, the *Sophist*, and the *Symposium*; the oddity that Socrates uses what is elsewhere a metaphor for philosophy driven by *eros* allows me to consider the competition between *thumos* and *eros* that is part of the fabric of the work. Hunting, with its intriguing combination of both of these qualities of the soul, reminds the reader that we can neither abstract philosophy from *eros* entirely, nor escape from *thumos* even in our pursuit of truth.
4. In the sequel, I use my findings about hunting to think through the connection between women and the hunt. Women, in customary Greek polities, were considered to have over-wild passions and thus were not tamable as citizens; the evening's conversation takes place during the festival of just such a woman, the Thracian hunting goddess Bendis. Socrates, while initially alluding to the untamedness of women's desire, changes his position in Book V when he argues that women can possess Socratic *areté* and thus be tamed. But his initial image of a hunting partnership shows the way in which he intends this taming to work: women are tamed as those who pursue philosophy, a philosophy though warlike nevertheless not without its desire for truth; and so the guardians remain in an important sense only partially tame. Rather than being a minor appendage to the argument, only necessary for breeding, women and their desires—rather than the desires of others for them—help make sense of the turn to philosophy in Book V.

The next group of arguments considers the lines of religious and political custom that are tripped by Socrates' proposal of common naked exercise, and his corresponding insistence that women will nevertheless be clothed in virtue.

5. I first consider the question of the humor of this proposal in the light of just what would be customary for women at the time; rather than introducing something wholly unheard of, Socrates lifts from the laws of other polities as well as religious practice in order to form his own pedagogic practices. This provides the occasion to discuss the shifting sense of the role Greek women played in the life of the city among Greek scholars across time and space; despite the Enlightenment-borne sense that lack of public political standing is no place at all, women were thoroughly written into the life of the city in a profoundly interesting way, for all their private status. The desire to find women's departure from custom amusing is a perennial one, but reveals more about the one laughing, than the one being laughed at.
6. This being accomplished, I go deeper into the patterns of life available to Greek women, not merely the virtuous wives and daughters, but the priestesses and prostitutes as well, a subject of interest to anyone concerned with a phenomenological self-understanding of women themselves. Although the available life-world is rich, it nevertheless is politically insufficient: being wholly private allows women to ignore or even manipulate the public things of the city, and this is just the problem that Socrates is explicitly trying to fix.
7. The last step of this trio is to see the calculated appeal in Socrates' image of robes of virtue, which offers to solve the pressing concerns of women under customary law, of which the problem of men's *hubris* or rape looms as large as a lack of recognition of excellence and public acknowledgement of power; it allows women to be present in the public space while protected from the gaze of men by their own excellence. Ultimately, Socrates's plans present a sort of challenge: if and only if men are willing to regard the virtue of women as placing them above reproach and out of danger *even when they are naked*, only then can men and women can be partners in harmony. Socrates has constructed a women's law that is not without appeal for women themselves; as a consideration of the history of readership shows, many women across time and space have found Socrates' call to take up virtue in the soul and philosophy itself, to be strongly appealing, the 20th-century's antipathy being the exception rather than the rule.
8. Next comes an interlude wherein I consider the nature of the philosophizing in the *Republic*, the sort that Socrates wishes to put in charge of the state. This philosophizing, with its insistence on pure being, complete truth, and sight of the Good itself, is born out of Socrates' desire to make philosophy look respectable in the eyes of public opinion, and his real anger at the desperate position of philosophy under customary laws. Socrates' proposal of philosophers who act as kings is the perfect revenge of the man who was suborned into the evening's discussion; his action shows the desirability

of perfect knowledge of what is good for humans ruling the state, even as it shows the temptation of lovers of philosophy to consider themselves as most eminently qualified to rule. To love truth is, in a real sense, to wish for it to have the victory; despite Socrates' insistence that philosophers are only qualified because they do not want worldly power, the practice of philosophy itself possesses tyrannical desire enough—and a sign of this hubris is Socrates' willingness to destroy the fabric of ordinary human life in his attempt to give the best of the citizens fully over to the practice. In an important sense, Socrates' proposal and its aftermath show us the limits of political philosophy, and the temptation it holds to become ideology, even as he founds the discipline.[20]

9. Once the limits and the appeal of the central proposal are on the table, the problems with the First and Second Waves can be properly considered. There are two sides to the question that Socrates' strange plans dramatize: the problem of women's own desires alongside the desires that others have for them, and the problems that follow the restructuring of women's customary role as guardians of the household and biological role as mothers within the polis. To consider the problems of the household, I discuss Aristotle's criticism of the *Republic*'s plans for women. Aristotle's objection is not to Socrates' claims about women's natural abilities, but to what doing justice to those abilities does to arrangements for child-rearing and taking care of the private lives of the family, which Socrates' plans jeopardize to an absurd extreme—his guardians are put as infants in what amounts to state-run orphanages. Socrates is willing to destroy the family and remove parents from children, precisely because he gets carried away with his plans for philosophy to have the best of everything in the best city—which includes the best female students, unencumbered by traditional familial and civic responsibilities. Such a move points to the necessary but often unobserved link between granting women full citizenship and the concomitant need for restructuring the family and the household, with all its attendant problems. Third-wave feminism struggles with this balance without always recognizing the depth of the political problem; Plato's thought makes a crucial contribution to this discussion.

Epilogue: A return to the question of Socratic irony concludes the whole, wherein I discuss the appeal no less than the problems of Socrates' plans for women. His prophecy, as a political measure, offers neither a final solution to the problem of philosophy in civic life, nor to that of women in the polity. But it does offer the reader a way of thinking through the questions involved, even as it inspires them to consider taking up excellence and philosophy for themselves. While the temptation of citizens is to find women no less laughable than the practice of philosophy, reading Plato's book is one of our best hopes

for schooling ourselves out of either absurdity. And so I commend the reader to consider this particular book, as something that will lead them back to their own reading of the *Republic*. While the reader may find plenty to quarrel with among the specifics of my own reading, as is inevitable and even desirable, my hope is to enlarge the sense of what Platonic dialogue is and does when it turns to the Woman Question.

NOTES

1. See James Hankins, "Plato in the Middle Ages" in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. J. Strayer, vol. IX (New York: Scribner and Sons, 1987), 694–704. Hankins lists what was available in Latin in Europe, beyond a sort of disseminated Neo-Platonic ethos, as two partial versions of the *Timaeus*, and some *testimonia* found in Cicero, in St. Augustine, and in other works of Latin philosophy; Henricus Aristippus in the 12th century made translations of the *Phaedo* and *Meno*, but they were "nearly unintelligible" and hard to come by; William of Moerbeke in the later 13th century made a partial translation of the *Parmenides* including Proclus' commentary on it, and this completes the list (*Plato in the Italian Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 4, 43). Hankins theorizes that the relatively slow dissemination of Plato in Europe ultimately made his work the more beloved, by giving readers time to slowly adapt to his heterodoxies; he notes that though the medieval Byzantines possessed all of Plato's works, his philosophy never became widely influential, and argues that the very availability of Plato, and so an immediate knowledge of all his quirks as an author, made him harder for them to accept ("Plato in the Middle Ages," 3, 14–16). By contrast, Abraham Melamed notes that the late medieval Jewish translators of Averroes' very strong support of Socrates' plans for women in his commentary on the *Republic*, made no textual alterations of his position at all ("Maimonides on Women: Formless Matter or Potential Prophet?" in *Perspectives on Jewish Thought and Mysticism*, eds. Alfred L. Ivry, Elliot R. Wolfsun, and Allan Arkush (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998), 116).

2. See Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, 66, 126–139, 49. For an overview of the history of scholarship of the *Republic* since 1870, see Natalie Bluestone Harris, *Women and the Ideal Society: Plato's Republic and Modern Myths of Gender* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), 23–73.

3. See Melissa Lane's discussion of this phenomenon in *Plato's Progeny: How Plato and Socrates Still Captivate the Modern Mind* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), 109–119. Claudia Baracchi has a particularly fine sense of how the *Republic's* presence and absence sits embedded in the history of the reading and thinking world (*Of Myth, Life, and War* in *Plato's* Republic (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), 1–2).

4. Natalie Bluestone Harris provides a stunning overview of not only cross-grained interpretation, but willful mistranslation of Socrates' thoughts on the woman question from 1870 to 1987 in *Women and the Ideal Society*, 23–73. Elena Duvergès

Blair records a phenomenon with scholarship on the *Laws* that I find analogous, where some scholars find women a frequent topic of discussion in the work, while others dismiss the references to women as minor, tangential, and infrequent (*Plato's Dialectic on Woman* (London: Routledge, 2012), 175, 161, 179, cited in the text as PDW); the mere possibility of such strong disagreement on what is after all an issue easily resolved by reference to the text is telling.

5. Often cited are: Gregory Vlastos, "Is Plato a Feminist?" in *Feminist Interpretations of Plato*, ed. Nancy Tuana (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 11–24; Julia Annas, "Plato's *Republic* and Feminism," *Philosophy* 51 (1976): 307–21; and Natalie Harris Bluestone's discussion in *Women and the Ideal Society*, 75–154. Elizabeth V. Spelman speaks of "the sad irony in the description of Plato as the first feminist philosopher" in "Hairy Cobblers and Philosopher Queens" (*Feminist Interpretations of Plato*), 88. Susan Okin's still popular *Women in Western Political Thought*, reprinted in 2013, is likewise patronizing even in its attempts to praise (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 15–72. These essays usually form the basis of investigation into other dialogues, as seen in Cynthia Freeman's discussion of the *Timaeus*, even as she tries to incorporate character and dialogue form into her reading ("Schemes and Scenes in Reading the Timaeus," in *Feminist Reflections on the History of Philosophy*, Lilli Alanen and Charlotte Witt, eds. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2002), 33–50).

6. As both Elena Blair and Michael S. Kochin have noted; see Blair, PDW, 3; and Kochin, *Gender and Rhetoric in Plato's Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 37n1, cited in the text as GRPT. Stella Sandford also makes this observation in *Plato and Sex* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 6.

7. For a consideration of such awkwardness, which has certainly been avoided by many readers before the 20th century, see the essays collected by Gerald Press, ed., *Who Speaks for Plato?* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000). Deborah Nails provides a keen and thoughtful summary of analytic and literary approaches in *Agora, Academy, and the Practice of Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1995), 36–43. Also worth considering is Hankins' discussion of the wide variety among the modes of interpretation of any text which were *au courant* in Europe when Plato started being read again there (*Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, 18–26).

8. See Gerald Press, "The State of the Question in the Study of Plato," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 34 (1996): 507–532; for a 2006 look-in, see Danielle Allan, "Platonic Quandaries: Recent Scholarship on Plato," *Annual Review of Political Science* 9: (June 2006): 127–141; and Ivor Ludlam's 2014 summation (*Plato's* Republic *as a Philosophical Drama on Being Well* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014), 4–8).

9. Elena Blair undertook the project of looking at all the references to women in Plato, in order to "integrate" all the dialogues into an account that is a "coherent theory" and a "coherent whole;" her attempt is a heroic one, but frustratingly alien at its core to the back-and-forth of Platonic dialectic (PDW, 9, 199). The Eleatic Stranger, the Athenian Stranger, Timaeus, and Socrates are all different people, and they all have their own views on women, just as they have their own set of metaphysical and political concerns.

10. See Catherine Zuckert's discussion of Socratic chronology in *Plato's Philosophers: The Coherence of the Dialogues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 1–19.

11. See Charles H. Kahn's discussion of the other Socratics in *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1–35. Kahn notes that the Emperor Julian was a reader of Phaedo's work, which was extremely popular in antiquity (Ibid., 10).

12. S. Halliwell is an eloquent voice on the need for this context in Book V in particular in his commentary (Republic: *Book V* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1993), 9); he also has a very fine sense of the living, almost cinematic quality of the drama, strongly present in the opening scenes of Book V (Ibid., 2–3).

13. For a discussion of Strauss' Heideggerian roots, see Richard Velkley's *Heidegger, Strauss*, *and the Premises of Philosophy: On Original Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 6.

14. Jacob Klein remarks: "…answers can be given in a written text by the very action it presents. That is what usually happens in Platonic dialogues and what constitutes their dramatic or mimetic quality" (*A Commentary on Plato's* Meno (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 17); while Strauss has it: "The most perfect product of Socratic rhetoric is the dialogue" (*On Tyranny* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 26). Seth Benardete, *Socrates' Second Sailing: On Plato's* Republic (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), cited in the text as SSS; Eva Brann, "The Music of the Republic" (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2011); Stanley Rosen, *Plato's* Republic: *A Study* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), cited in the text as PRS; Allan Bloom, "Interpretive Essay," in *The* Republic *of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 307–436, cited in the text as IE; and Bloom's "Response to Hall," *Political Theory* 5, no. 3 (1977): 315–30. For an interesting perspective on Bloom's visibility, see George Klosko's expressed worries in 1986 ("The 'Straussian' Interpretation of Plato's *Republic*" (*History of Political Thought*, vol. VII no. 2 1986): 275–293).

15. Michael Kochin, GRPT, 37; as Blair notes however, he never speaks directly to the question of the relation of the First Wave to the *Republic* (PDW, 70); rather, he spends more time with the *Laws*.

16. Bluestone Harris (*Women and the Ideal Society*, 41). After all, even education is hardly a requirement for such. This argument, interestingly, is alive and well in oral tradition. Bluestone Harris notes that Bloom appears to agree with Nohle (ibid., 49).

17. See David Halperin's discussion of Freud in "Why is Diotima a Woman?" (*100 Years of Homosexuality: And Other Essays on Greek Love* (Oxford: Routledge, 2010), 149).

18. As Stella Sandford notes, Joseph Ratzinger himself has shown up to this debate (*Plato and Sex*, 39–40).

19. See Johanna Hedva's eloquent defense and reclamation of the word as describing all that which is held to be incomplete or even ill: "Sick Woman Theory," *Mask Magazine*, January 2016; http://www.maskmagazine.com/not-again/struggle/sick-woman-theory; accessed July 1, 2015. For Woolf's lament, see *A Room of One's Own* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1929), 109.

20. Stanley Rosen describes this tendency of philosophy as an "internal disharmony" where it at once desires to rule and yet not to rule; I am indebted to his willingness to include the temptations and flaws of philosophy, no less than that of justice, in his account of the *Republic* as a whole (PRS, 166).

Chapter 1

The Action of the Argument

What are the circumstances that lead to the discussion of women, from 451c to 457c, the section known as the First Wave, at the beginning of Book V of the *Republic*? Why do women make a figure in the argument all of a sudden? Women, ladies, the female sex as a topic of conversation, fill up less than half a book of the *Republic*'s ten; though to be sure, this is one of the few times in the Platonic corpus that they are discussed as a *genos*. The task is to investigate why the women come into Book V, and just what they are doing there; it's a real question why women come into the conversation at all, and why in these particular ways; how the reader becomes aware of the *genos* is crucial. I will argue that we have to uncover and take seriously the action of the First Wave—not just what is spoken of among Socrates and his interlocutors, but what is done and accomplished by the agreements and conclusions of the argument, both narratively and symbolically. The proposal of the First Wave is Socrates' independent addition to the topics of conversation requested by Glaucon and Adeimantus; Socrates makes the conversation focus on women in their own right, by giving them rule and education. Socrates' action is to pull the women into the city proper: to pull the female sex into the guardian class, into a public political role, and into the public space that the conversation brings into being. This remarkable accomplishment is second only to the identical action he achieves for philosophy, which had no official role prior to Book V, but now is given the rulership and its own version of schooling; Socrates' action with respect to women and philosophy is the same. Only by considering the questions surrounding philosophy's rule, can the oddities of Socrates' laws for women be understood. The parallelism, however, rests not on the similarities between philosophy and some abstract "feminine," but on the political position of each under customary laws.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN COMMON, OF COURSE

First off, the task is to orient oneself in the landscape of the *Republic*, among the many revolutions in the structure of its argument before Book V. The story so far: Socrates narrates an evening's conversation that went particularly far into the night; Socrates' initial sally at Cephalus (331c) sets the topic on justice; Cephalus departs, Polemarchus becomes a partner with Socrates, Thrasymachus blushes, and Book I ends in dramatic failure to discover what justice is after all (354b); the topic is reoriented by Glaucon to ask what perfect justice is by itself (358b–d); Socrates proposes to respond to this by constructing a city in speech wherein the soul will be writ large (369a); a truthful city is constructed from which Glaucon revolts (372c); a fevered city is then constructed (372e) and correspondingly purged (399e); it will be ruled by guardians whose naturally philosophic temperament is represented by the strange criterion of their doglike response to what they are acquainted with (376a). Justice is discovered in the city as minding one's own business (432b); this is a mirage of the true internal justice of the soul, which is the condition of proper order between the rational, spirited, and desirous parts (443c). All seems fair and orderly, and Socrates announces he will next discuss the regimes that fall short of this most just arrangement (449a).

But this is where Adeimantus interrupts: he demands that Socrates not cheat them of an entire section of the argument (449c), and that Socrates explain his earlier remark (423e) about wives and children being like the things of friends in common (449c). Socrates hems and haws, warns that a new discussion of the polity has been unleashed (450a), fears lest he make a mistake or not be believed (450c–d), throws up his hands, and makes three escalating proposals: that women be educated with the men and share in all tasks in common (451d); that the best will only couple with the best (459d) and children be reared in common in ignorance of their parents (457d); and that kings be philosophers or philosophers kings (473d). This last proposal sits at roughly the mathematical center of the book. Again, each section in turn is known as the First, Second, and the Third Wave, among those who require a shorthand way of referring to each; they are named as such because Socrates speaks of the laughter that will meet the last, like an overwhelming wave (473c). Here, in these three proposals, as figures in the first and second of the group, women come most obviously on the scene. This is where most readers think of women as playing a role in the story of the night, as part of the strange interlude where philosophy is crowned. Until then, the *genos* as such is not at the forefront of the company's mind.

But why aren't women everywhere and present from the beginning? Socrates proposed to construct a tolerably realistic city: women live in cities, whatever they may be doing there. But at first, Socrates leaves them out: in

the most necessary, truthful city, the first to be constructed, what is most necessary are four or five ἄνδρες, four or five *men*, isolated practitioners of arts (369d), who though they are to watch out for the dangers of too many children, possess no way of getting them; such necessity, in this arrangement, is only sufficient for one generation.[1] Socrates has his necessary city contain neither made dishes (ὄψον) nor women; while made dishes are not necessary to cities, women are, and it's an amusing oversight in the very act of trying to think a city down to its most necessary parts.[2] But this is not an uncommon oversight: both the Athenian Stranger in the *Laws*, Socrates' Platonic lawgiving rival, and Aristotle himself note the tendency to overlook the importance of women in the polity.[3] Despite the Eleatic Stranger's insistence on the importance of marriages, the question of women in their own right is left behind.[4]

Socrates is not simply unaware of the strangeness of a necessary city without women. He is much concerned with the relation between child-bearing, at least, and how the city survives in the next generation: he makes the failure to produce good offspring, or any at all, or at the right time, the cause of the decay from aristocracy to timocracy (546a–d). Socrates makes the argument that the best city will need not just any women, but the best women possible (456e). These remarks show at least an appreciation of the necessity of child-bearing and the benefits of laws concerning women that is more like his lawgiving counterparts. The question then becomes, why did Socrates conceal the women initially? This concealment makes their later entrances more pointed.

When next the fevered city is founded with its couches and hunters, the courtesans and nurses arrive alongside craftsmen for women's adornment (γυναικεῖον κόσμον, 373c); missing are matrons and virgins, the sort of ladies that produce legitimate heirs. This omission, and the professions that do come in with other luxuries, as well as the activity of hunting, will be important later on. But for now, it is enough to observe that despite being noticed upon arrival, women certainly don't play an official or public role in the fevered city, and they don't receive any direct conversational attention. They are, at this point, equivalent with luxuries.

When Socrates makes his passing remark about women and children in Book IV, it is in keeping with his initial laissez-faire attitude. Here's the scenario: Socrates has finished up describing the poetry and gymnastic that will compromise the guardian's education (412b); he mentions that those ruling will be chosen from the best of those who have received that education (414b); he recommends the noble lie of gold, silver, and bronze souls (414d–415d). Adeimantus interrupts at the beginning of Book IV to ask whether the guardians, lacking private property, are really happy (419a). Socrates dismisses this concern, while winding up to his declaration that the city is complete; this latter point takes place only seven Stephanus pages later (427c), after which it will be time to seek out what justice is. But before this, as part of a chain of

recommendations, such that the city be kept small (423b), and a reminder that the rulers will come from any class as long as they have serious ability (423d), Socrates describes one big thing, or rather one sufficient thing that guardians must guard to keep corruption from creeping into the city: education, and upbringing or nursing (παιδείαν καὶ τροφήν). "Because if, by being well educated, they become decent men (ἄνδρες), they'll easily see about all these things, as well as all the other things we're now leaving out, the possessing of women, marriages, the procreation of children (παιδοποίαν), that all these things ought to be done as much as possible according to the proverb 'the things of friends are in common'" (423e–424a).[5] Adeimantus responds, "That would be the most correct (ορθότατα) way" (424a).

Now, as Adeimantus later says, this is a trivial or paltry (φαύλως) remark (449c). It is indeed a throwaway line, but Adeimantus at the time does not register his recognition of this inadequacy, and agrees without marked hesitation. Indeed, it's not to be expected that Adeimantus, however grave a young man, would notice the customary oversight of women that characterizes the laws of most cities. Glaucon for his part doesn't interrupt, though he is the most likely person to correct his brother during the evening. What is striking is Socrates' hypothetical remark: *if* through education the guardians become moderate or measured (μέτριοι), *only in that case* will they see the right thing to do about women and children. But a few pages earlier, Socrates raised doubt about the education described being the best; he warns Glaucon not to be so sure the guardians have truly received the best education (416b). Should the guardians be well educated they would know how to regulate the women, but we just learned that they will not fully be: and so we can't count on guardians educated by music and gymnastic to arrange the women's law well. The guardians would be in the same state as Adeimantus and the rest of lawgivers who remain uneducated. Only Socrates recognizes the difficulty at this point, as the irony of his hypothetical remark shows. Ultimately, the triviality of the provision of "women and children in common" leaves the reader with little that is visible about the women's law; just as in Book II, women don't play a public role, and are mentioned in the manner of possession (κτῆσιν). After this, the conversation departs from the female sex and children, and all is quiet on this front for the remainder of Book IV, until Adeimantus interrupts again at the beginning of Book V (449b).

POLEMARCHUS' SILENT QUESTION; GLAUCON & ADEIMANTUS' PUBLIC REQUEST

What, then, puts Adeimantus up in arms about Socrates' earlier statement? His friend, Polemarchus, with whom he went to Bendis' festival, and who is sitting

near him, stretches out his hand and takes hold his cloak, draws him near, and whispers in his ear something, the content of which is lost to the company (449b); the only thing Socrates, our narrator, overhears from Polemarchus is, "Will we let him go, then, or what will we do?" (449b) Appropriately, Polemarchus introduces the private sex while remaining largely unseen himself. But whatever his actual remarks, he manages to kindle in his companion Adeimantus some spirited interest in the question: Adeimantus declares he will not let Socrates go on this one (449b), and Socrates describes himself as being arrested (450a). Many have noted the parallelisms between this moment and the opening, and the better humility and justice with which Polemarchus tugs at Adeimantus, than when he first ordered Socrates to be waylaid; the difference being his being persuaded by Socrates, that it is never just to harm anyone.[6] Instead of lordly force, Polemarchus turns his hand to dialectical scrutiny, noting the absence of something crucial, and has the courage to say so, at least to his friend; as one who later turns his way of life toward philosophy as Socrates notes in the *Phaedrus* (257b), it's appropriate that his thoughtful act be responsible for the recovery of this crucial but overlooked subject, which in turn transforms into the introduction of philosophy. Once the question of Socrates' remark is raised, in fact, everyone sees the problem: though while Adeimantus remarks that they've all been waiting to hear what Socrates would say about women and children in common, and that it makes all the difference for a city (449d), it's not clear that the audience fully caught the oversight until it was pointed out, or would have done anything about it. Ultimately, the company owes the return to the subject to Polemarchus.

Polemarchus' own concerns aren't given voice; but the concerns of Plato's brothers are roughly similar. They want to know about child-making and early childhood education, with Adeimantus stressing the former and Glaucon the latter; they are interested in the time between birth and formal education, where the lives of women and children intersect. Neither mentions property or possession explicitly, and as they ask about the *manner* in which women and children will be in common, their wording changes to "commonality" or "community" (κοινωνία), a move which Socrates will exploit. The whole company, Thrasymachus included, participates in a vote to enjoin that Socrates respond. He is very hesitant, casts doubt on the possibility and desirability of what he will recommend (450c), does reverence (προσκυνῶ) to Adrasteia, but goes ahead and promises to speak.[7]

But Socrates does not make good on this political bargain until later: the Second Wave, from 457c to 471e, begins like this: "All these women belong to all these men in common, and no woman is to live privately with any man. And the children, in their turn, will be in common, and neither will a parent know its offspring, nor a child his parent" (457c–457d). Here is the community of wives that so shocked Leonardo Bruni in the 15th century, and

Lactantius, an advisor to the emperor Constantine, in the 4th, who describes this passage as "nothing but nonstop sex and adultery."[8] Likewise, it is the commonality that Marx claims, somewhat disingenuously, in the *Communist Manifesto*, has always existed, since the bourgeois have always treated women as mere instruments of production, and so as common property in actual fact, as the pervasiveness of adultery shows; therefore it is no great step to the commonality Marx himself proposes.[9] Socrates' version uses the language of various people in common to other people, though it seems that the men are in common to the women as much as the reverse. The irony is that such the commonality is at the mercy of the lottery, which in turn is at the mercy not of chance but of the rulers' discretion, an odd way to matchmake, to be sure; outside of breeding age and outside the age-based prohibitions against some but not all incestuous relations, however, all go to any. While there are not many details about early childhood education after all, what details of nursing or "raising by hand" (τροφεία) there are shared; even the question of literal nursing is something over which male and female officials preside.[10] All of these arrangements are ostensibly designed to promote the least privacy and greatest sense of commonality between its participants, to make them as much as possible say "my own" about the same things (462c); possession in general is bad, and the possession of wives all too propertarian (453d). Despite displaying many of the racy details that the audience may well have feared Socrates was alluding to, the Second Wave is a fair answer to what Adeimantus and Glaucon requested.[11]

The First Wave, however, is something different entirely. It lies outside of the stated request, and outside of the time of life where women and children are customarily almost indistinguishable. Instead of the women themselves being in common, Socrates proposes there that the female guardians "guard the things the males guard along with them and hunt together, and do the rest in common" (451d). Socrates transforms the language of "in common" and the ambiguous "commonality" to a situation where the *pursuits* are the things in common, pursuits which are practiced by the males and females alike. This meaning of commonality is reiterated in the midst of the Second Wave, where Socrates reminds us that education and guarding of the other citizens will also be in common (466c–d). Now, while Socrates' new proposal of commonality, which amounts to a partnership, immediately becomes contentious, Socrates manages to conclude at the end of the section that they will assign the same education to male and female guardians (456b), and that the female guardians will "take a common part in war and the rest of the city's guarding" (457a). In his final formulation, Socrates describes what has been accomplished: "May we then assert that we are escaping one wave, as it were, in telling about the women's law, so that we aren't entirely swept away when we lay it down that our guardians, men and women, must share all pursuits in common (457b)?"

This specific law, one of the very few things named as such in the entire city in speech, is the true substance of what Socrates accomplishes in the First Wave. It is not equality, as many gloss it; as I will argue later, the one thing he has not done is make them equal.[12]

Rather, what Socrates describes is a commonality involving a practical partnership, based on common life together, centered around the education of men and women together, which is how the guardians are ultimately tested, tried, and found worthy of rule. Now, of course Socrates' interesting additions and asides that qualify and shape this basic principle can't be left out: there will be common naked exercise, and the women will be clothed in virtue rather than robes, and I will consider all these caveats in turn. But the central, straightforward law in the First Wave, the constitutional measure as it were, grants women rule and education; it may be a questionable honor to be a law in the city in speech, but a law it is. Given the *Republic*'s ceaseless concern with just who should rule and just how they should be educated, these measures place women right in the middle of these pressing questions. Not only do the measures give a certain number of women public political standing, they also make women a public topic of conversation in their own right, apart from their necessary role in child-making and the rest.

Now, not all who read the *Republic* are fully convinced that Socrates intends to grant education and rule to the women in the final analysis; this question is complicated by the demotion of the majority of those who receive the philosophic education to guardian-auxiliaries, should they fail to be worthy of rule.[13] But apart from the questions of who is weaker and who is stronger, which I will address in the following chapter, it's clear from the references to the women's law in the later books that this law maintains in full force, insofar as the city in speech holds true. As I just noted, the affirmation of women's rule and education recurs in the Second Wave (466c). After this, there are three more references to the women's law, one each in Books VI, VII, and VIII respectively; following that, women return to cameo status for Books IX and X. Now, in Book VI, having just proved that it is possible and desirable for philosophers to be put in charge of the city, Socrates returns to the language of the possession or acquisition of women; this as well as mating and the way of appointing the rulers are the distasteful subjects he had wished to avoid, but was forced into it; otherwise the argument would have slipped by them all like a veiled woman (502d–503b). At this point, he says that the subject of women and children is finished, and they must continue on with the subject of the rulers' education. All is quiet on the subject of women through this discussion, leading many to assume women have been left behind entirely. But at the very end of Book VII, in the final summation of the ruler's education and the process by which they prove themselves worthy of rule, Glaucon remarks that Socrates has

described beautiful ruling men, like statues. Socrates responds: "'And ruling women (τὰς ἀρχούσας), too, Glaucon,' I said. 'Do not think that any of what I have said about men is *more* than what I have said about women, as many as are born among them with sufficient natures (540c).'" Socrates could not have been more clear: the reader is not to assume that women were not part of the entire previous discussion, despite his silence; and despite the caveat of sufficiency, sufficiency is just the standard he has been setting for the men all the while. He also makes explicit that rule is part of this commonality, and not just education: "ruling women" is as strong a phrase as any he utters on the women's law.

Finally, a few lines later at the beginning of VIII, Socrates summarizes the argument again, and says that "women are to be common, children common, and all education (κοινὰς μὲν γυναῖκας, κοινοὺς δὲ παῖδας εἶναι καὶ πᾶσαν παιδείαν)," and "in like manner the pursuits of men and women in war and in peace are common" and their kings are "those among them who have proved best in philosophy and war" (543a). Here, the commonality is complete: no one is in common, but all are common: and from this common pool comes the rulers. Between the ruling women in VII, and the common education a few lines down in VIII, both of the key elements from the First Wave are preserved in the concluding moments of the best city in speech.

Now, to be sure, it looks like there will be but few philosophers (503b), if even more than one, that come from the system of education; and indeed, the city in speech may ultimately produce no legitimate philosophers at all.[14] But whatever the ultimate status of the city in speech as a model, or its relation to true philosophy, the legislation for women's rule and education remain there in force. Whether or not anyone could qualify to rule such a city, two genera, the male and the female, form the basis of the graceful fiction that someone *could* pass from mere auxiliary to proper ruler. As I'll discuss in the following chapter, if the mathematics of Glaucon's statement holds, that "many women are better than many men at many things" (455d), to be part of a pool where the testing is fair is no small matter.

Aristotle, as a reader of the *Republic*, is critical of many of Socrates' omissions, such as leaving the education of the lower classes unmanaged, and the household management of the guardians undetermined; but he considers that the education of women remains in force as law: "He certainly thinks that the women ought to share in the education of the guardians, and to fight by their side."[15] He also makes an oblique reference to their rule, when on the subject of Spartan women, who as he claimed, ruled their men in many things: "But what difference does it make whether women rule, or the rulers are ruled by women? The result is the same."[16] Aristotle on the whole is not in favor of women's rule; yet his pique at Socrates' proposal reminds the reader that Socrates did in fact come out and say it. Now, there is one

detail among all of Socrates' statements that peeks out, his reference to the acquisition of women at 502d, amongst Book VI's impassioned discussion of true erotic philosophy (499c); the parallel trio of possession, begetting, and rulers clearly alludes to each of the three waves in turn. But Socrates gives the reason for his reluctance to speak of such subjects: "because I knew that the utterly true way (ἡ παντελῶς ἀληθής, 502d) would provoke envy and would be hard to engender." The utter truth and law of Socrates' plans for women in the first is their rule and education; well might he conceal the full brunt of such a law as often as he can, particularly from Adeimantus, who is no friend of women in general. All in all, there is good evidence from the text of the *Republic* itself that the education as well as the rule of women remains in force in the city in speech.

THE ACTION OF SOCRATES IS TO DRAW THE WOMEN IN

Once the truth of the women's law in the First Wave is recognized, then the similarities between the First and Third Waves start to stack up. A discussion of women and children was demanded and expected, but only dealt with a third of the proposals; instead, Socrates introduces what was on no one's mind, and far from anyone's thoughts, except for his: the rule and education of women, and the rule and education of philosophers. Socrates has gone beyond the bounds of his agreement twice.[17] Now, generally the topical similarity between the First and Second Waves, namely, the presence of women in whatever capacity, is enough for readers to treat them as a pair. But the First and Third Waves are united by being both Socrates' independent addition; they also deal with exactly the same pursuits. Socrates notes that he fears a similar reaction to both projects, the laughter and envy they will incite; but there is also a potentially similar reaction on the part of the subjects of his plans themselves. While Socrates does spend time detailing the probable reaction of those who wish to spend their time philosophizing to the request that they rule the state, he is silent on the reaction of the best of the women to their new position. But the Athenian Stranger, who likewise intends for the women to be educated and given some of the tasks of public governance, is vocal about what the women might say in return:

> For how will you, without being absurd in deed (ἔργῳ), put your hand to compelling the women to take meat and drink, open to sight? There is nothing more difficult than this for this *genos* to be patient with; for they are accustomed to a life robed and shady, and when led into the light by strength, all of them stretching and straining, they will pull the other way, overpowering (κρατήσει) the lawgiver by far. (781c–d)

This passage is a fascinating cross-reference to the First Wave in the *Republic*; the general subject is a law specific to women of themselves, but the Stranger describes the women as living robed, the opposite of Socrates' disrobed guardiennes (457a). The Stranger gives a fascination characterization of the deed or action of the lawgiver, the *ergon*, when he attempts to give laws to women. He is trying to drag them into the public gaze, and it will not be easy: it will require compulsion, and that compulsion will use violent force (βίᾳ). In fact, despite the lawgiver's strong work, the sex will actually overpower (κρατήσει) him in the end. The parallelism is clear: in the *Republic*, Socrates is committing a similar deed: he is bringing women into the public realm, and indeed the gaze of others; in fact even more radically than the Stranger, since he takes away their clothes; likewise of his own accord he turns the gaze of the conversation upon them. The verb of Socrates' action, if you will, is this pulling the sex into view, where once in view they take up their new pursuits. But while the Athenian Stranger insists that force will be required, and force will be met with force in his attempt to draw the entire *genos* in, Socrates conceals the tension and the drama of his own action. He makes his task the easier, perhaps, by only planning to pull in as many women will be interested in his plans for higher education. Aristotle notes that it was said that Lycurgus of Sparta "wanted to bring the women under his laws, but they resisted, and he gave up the attempt" (*Politics* II.9, 1270a7).

Socrates does speak of compulsion and force in the *Republic* in a different context, however: the compulsion required to force the philosophers to care for the city as guardians (519c–520b), and the force that will be required to turn their gaze up to the light, and up out of the cave (515e)—in fact, the acknowledged compulsion and force associated with the conjunction of philosophy and kingship, namely, the Third Wave.

The parallelism between the shape of this force in the *Republic* and that from the *Laws* is striking: both the potential philosopher and the woman are being brought into light; whereas the light for the women is the city, and the light for the philosopher is the intelligible realm. But the law draws both into the city, and in this particular pair of images, their resistance is on display. Socrates' action with respect to women and philosophy in Book V has the same shape, and something like a similar order of difficulty.

PHILOSOPHY IS DRAWN INTO THE CITY AND PUBLIC

But some clarification about the subject of the Third Wave is required. What does Socrates really bring into the city and the argument with his third proposal? His initial, infamous speech is this:

> "Unless," I said, "either the philosophers rule as kings in the city, or those now called kings and princes legitimately and sufficiently philosophize, and political power and philosophy fall in together, while the many natures now driven to either apart from the other are by necessity excluded, there is no end to evils for cities, my dear Glaucon, nor I think for the human *genos* (ἀνθρωπίνῳ γένει); nor will the regime we have now described in speech ever be born, insofar as possible, and see the light of the sun." (473c–d)

As I noted before, this statement is roughly at the center of the book; there is no doubt that whatever the reader takes away from the evening's conversation, this paradoxical statement, which Glaucon notes will cause many to take off their cloaks and rush at Socrates, weapons in hand (474a), is at the heart of the what one ought to be attentive to. What does this moment do in terms of the action of the argument?

I discussed above how the interruption at the beginning of Book V sets off a complicated situation that imitates the beginning of the *Republic*; though the subtle differences are significant, the fact that it is a new beginning with a new foundation is undeniable: Socrates warns that they have "unleashed a whole new discussion of the regime, as if from the beginning" (450a). And this is what he does end up doing: he is not content to simply discuss the Second Wave and be finished, or even dash through the three waves and move on to the degenerate regimes. Instead, Books V through VII describe once more, and in new detail, the nature of philosophy, the nature of who will study it, what sorts of things are intelligible to it, and how those with appropriate natures will study it. Glaucon refers to this long discussion as "a still finer city than the one before" (543d). But doesn't this simply revise old ground? Was philosophy already alive and well in Books II–IV? In Book II, the guardian dogs are described as philosophic in a certain limited sense, in that they are friends with what they are acquainted and enemies to that of which they are ignorant, but this is not all one would wish for philosophy in its full bloom; how would they ever come to know that of which they were ignorant, if they could only bark at it from afar?[18] By contrast, the philosophizing described in Books V–VII looks at first glance more like it: the glorious "ascent to what *is* which we shall truly affirm to be philosophy" (521c), being in the presence of the dazzling brilliance of the intelligible realm (518b). Whatever the reader thinks of this particular vision of philosophy, one can't deny that it has initial appeal; it's this vision of philosophy that the Third Wave has made possible, and that the question about women and children in turn provided the opening for. As Socrates' reference to the light of the sun in his speech in the Third Wave makes clear, this sunlit vision of philosophy is where he's headed from the very beginning. In a strong sense, Socrates has brought philosophy in very truth into the city; and not to sit on the sidelines, but to rule. Many things

are to be concealed from the citizens, but not that they are to be ruled by a philosopher; Socrates does not hide that the philosopher may have extremely otherworldly concerns (517d). Socrates' action in the Third Wave is to bring philosophy into the city to rule publicly.

Now, readers of the *Republic*, even among those with an eye toward Socratic irony, are by no means of one accord as to the truth, goodness, and beauty of philosophy as it is described in V–VII, or for that matter, its relation to Socrates' ultimate views; and this is fitting, since—with the exception of the students of philosophy described in the *Republic*, who all come to know the same things—rival lovers can hardly be in complete harmony with one another, as Socrates remarks in Book VII (521b). But one does not have to agree on what philosophy's root and crown is, to be grateful for the occasion to discuss the beloved. Whatever the nature of philosophy is as it is discussed in Books V–VII, and its relation to Socrates' own activity; whether Socratic philosophy by rights spends most of its time with heavenly eidê, or even, to announce the dialectical opposite, is at heart a political philosophy, or some third thing, no one can deny that philosophy and philosophers become the focus of the text once the waves in Book V take place, and that the extended discussion of these matters has the potential to be revelatory about at least some of philosophy's aims, loves, and hates. It's only fair at this point to anticipate my own view. Strauss, in *The City and Man*, stresses the distorting power of justice without regard for consequences on both the nature and role of women, as well as the nature of philosophy; and to be in ignorance of this powerful human temptation is to court disaster.[19] But I would lay this additional charge, that philosophy has its own overweening desires: a native tendency to not only to yearn for, but also feel itself masterfully illuminated by the dazzling brilliance of perfect knowing; a sign of this is its impatience with willful ignorance.[20] This tendency is exemplified by Socrates' spirited and reckless (παρακινδυνευτικῶς, 497e) defense of true erotic philosophy (499b) against the way it's ordinarily practiced (497a). Philosophy, in a certain mode, has the power to distort the human things as much as the desire for perfect justice does. Philosophy and justice each possess something like a love of mastery that in certain lights is not dissimilar; this sharpens the comedy implied in the marriage of the two. I will address the nature of the philosophy laid out in V–VII and its relation to the city in chapter 9.

But to move forward at this point, what is needed is the most basic appreciation of the role of philosophy in the latter half of the *Republic*: the sense that it comes out of hiding for good or for ill. This appreciation makes the following questions pressing: how can a question about women and children give birth to a massive discussion about the nature of philosophy? How can it have this power? And why does Socrates choose the First Wave to begin this transformation? What is the relation between the First and Third

Waves, such that the First Wave inaugurates the progression to the third and central wave?

The most canonical and popular explication of this conjunction has to do with the question of possibility, raised by Socrates at the outset of his new beginning (450d): under what circumstances could the city in speech be realized? The argument goes like this: at first it appears that the women's law and the new plans for breeding and rearing children will make their city possible; but with the introduction of the Third Wave, Socrates manages to collapse the question of possibility into the question of whether or not the philosopher could really get put in charge of the city, or whether a race of kings could really be raised up in genuine philosophy (473a–b).[21] The First and Second Waves no longer seem necessary for the realization of the city in speech; and they seem to fall to the wayside of the argument.[22] The Third Wave is pushed as far as it can go, and the plan might work even if there is but one philosopher and he natural-born, but it seems that even the difficulties involved in beginning the rule of philosophy in the first place are insuperable; they require an army to carry out the carrying off of everyone over the age of ten (541a).[23] The city is after all impossible; there can be no cessation of evils for mankind; the Second and First Waves are also impossible, because they are against nature, and they in turn independently make the city in speech impossible to realize.[24] The three Waves are united as impossibilities, and the comedy of the First and Second Waves is a foretaste and a signal of the comedy of the Third.[25]

Now, when the reader has come to witness the reality and force of Socratic irony, a fixture of his character constantly alluded to and on the minds of his interlocutors, to argue that the just city is possible or desirable without qualification hardly seems a serious pursuit—particularly given its practical call for implicit mass exile or murder.[26] Nor does Socrates require us to recognize this from his reputation for irony alone: he calls the attention of his interlocutors many, many times that this account is not the full or final one of justice or philosophy, which would require a "longer road"; only those rather better educated will be able to follow it out (504a–e). That Plato means for us to recognize the deep problems involved in understanding the nature of justice and philosophy, when they arrive under the constraints of a conversation inaugurated by Glaucon and Adeimantus' demand for perfect justice in itself, without regard for consequences, and no less under the constraints put on philosophy when it must transform itself into the only true ruler of the state and that which makes justice possible, is undeniable. Such constraints shape the nature of the response: only when consequences are waived, and only when philosophy coldly reasons to the conditions of its rule, do things like the mass exile of adult citizens make any sense. In some sense, it is impossible and not even desirable that philosophy should rule in this way, and here is

the crucial step: the Second and First Waves are likewise presented, both in their position in the argument and in their content, as at the very least, raising the eyebrows of serious men.[27] There is something ironic here too, and in order for the account to be complete, all possibilities must be investigated; even the possibility that the rule and education of women is itself in some sense impossible and undesirable. But, as I noted in the Introduction, once the question is taken up *whether* these proposals are impossible, the force of the inquiry has to turn to the question *why* they are impossible. Why specifically? Perhaps the possibility in each case is not the same. In Leo Strauss' interpretation, the first two waves are sort of vestigial impossibilities, impossible for roughly the same reason, a sign of the oddity of the Third Wave; but they don't speak to its impossibility directly.[28] It is the logic of justice without regard for consequences that causes the distortion: Strauss insists that "the just city . . . holds no attraction for anyone except for such lovers of justice as are willing to destroy the family."[29] The *Republic* illuminates the weakness of philosophy in its thumotic guise, but the waves do not display any problem with philosophy as such.

But over the course of this chapter, I have been detailing a very different pattern of relations between the waves. Instead of the first two forming a pair, with the third the outlier, the Second Wave is the outlier, the expected result of the previous conversation, while the First and Third are the outlandish introductions of Socrates to an increasingly unrecognizable city. The action of the First and Third Waves are the same; each of them deals with the rule of those who are otherwise dishonored by the city, women, and philosophy respectively; each is potentially the recipient of lawgiving compulsion in order to change their customary state. Most of all, both stand in danger of being laughed at; and this is what Socrates claims his laws will fix. In order to investigate just what is troubling about the introduction of women as rulers and learners in the just city, it must be likewise be called into question, just what is problematic about philosophy's rule and state-sponsored education: the two problems are linked, and can't be justly considered without each other. Socrates' attempt to solve the open question of the place of women in political community, can only be understood when it is recognized that his solution to the place of philosophy in political life is equally problematic; when the nature of philosophy is called into question no less than the nature of philosophy.

Likewise, it's important to make distinctions about the nature of "possibility," a term which tends to become sedimented in arguments of this sort. Clearly the sort of possibility involved is not simply bare conceivability, as in talk of possible worlds—this would collapse the difference between a city and a city in speech.[30] Nor do it really mean, practical political laws, since for these are required more practical lawgivers, which certainly describes

the Athenian Stranger and/or Aristotle, who prefer the rule of divine law and the gentleman respectively.[31] Strauss uses impossibility to mean, "against nature," and this is roughly what is under consideration: is it against nature for women to rule as educated philosophers, or even take up final authority in public?[32] But the trouble is, that nature is more plain in the case of a stone falling to the earth than in human nature, because humans can be taught habits and customs, which are known to differ.[33] Aristotle records his frustration with the unnaturalness of the Second Wave in the *Politics*; but as I noted, he recommends the education of women himself, and does not speak against its possibility either in his critique of the *Republic* or in his own provisions.[34] And a glance at current constitutional measures in our own polity would show something not unlike possibility. Finally, if it were only the logic of pure justice that would enact such a measure, then we wouldn't expect Aristotle and the Stranger to condone rule and/or education—and yet, they do. The only problem is, and this is just what the *Republic* can help us with, what political difficulties does this measure trigger? Why might Socrates' act that draws women into the public sphere, seem as desirable as the truly knowledgeable rule of philosophy, and why might it nevertheless reveal the limitations of civic life and human happiness?

SOCRATES' OWN DESCRIPTION OF HIS ACTION

Over and above the similarities in action and subject between the First and Third Waves, there is also Socrates' strange habit of referring to all three of these arguments in Book V as something related to a woman or womanly things. Just before he begins his discussion of the waves, Socrates remarks that since now the mannish or manly (ἀνδρεῖον) drama of the preceding books has been completely finished—that is, the discussion of music and gymnastic as the best education, and justice as the health of the soul when each part, reason, thumos, and desire, mind their own business and listen to reason, have been finished—it is appropriate to turn the ladylike (γυναικεῖον) drama in turn (451c). This adjective (γυναικεῖον) has a range of meanings, from "ladylike," or "womanly" in a good sense, to "womanish" or "effeminate" in the bad. Socrates uses the word to decry the practice still in use among Greek, male soldiers of stripping the corpses of the fallen after a battle, a practice he paints as a womanish custom unworthy of his male and female guardians (469d); I will note that however the reader would wish to gloss this word here, "feminine" is hardly the right word for tearing valuables away from the dead in a bloody field. All in all, to speak of the womanish drama is quite an interesting comparison: in some sense the whole of the next few books, which talk largely of philosophy and

philosophers, are supposed to constitute this womanish drama. Likewise, in the passage I referred to above, Socrates speaks of the whole argument which the waves begin, on down to the end of the entire new philosophic education, as an argument which would otherwise "have slipped past us, as in a veil (503a)," that is, in customary clothing of women. Like the female *genos* in the *Laws*, she is trying to get away. Socrates is describing his previous reluctance to speak of these things, but he attributes it to the subject matter itself rather than his own desire. Indeed, the three waves are figured here together as the opposite action to Socrates' for the First and Third: instead of Socrates pulling, the argument is pulling away. Although Socrates points to his reluctance to speak of these matters, he was nevertheless so convinced of the connection he would not speak of the middle question, without also making the matter of the first two public. Twice now, Socrates is thinking of the woman question and the rule of philosophy in his mind as one total argument.

Now, Socrates speaks on a few occasions comparing different sorts of dramas: in the *Apology*, he speaks scornfully of those who would parade their families on stage, in order to escape a harsh sentence: the men who enact these pitiable scenes are no different from women (35b). In the *Theaetetus*, too, Socrates notes that while the midwives have their drama, Socrates' own drama or act is better, since it deals with souls (*Theaetetus* 150a). In each of these passages is that there is some distinction between a manly and womanly drama; in the first instance, Socrates distances himself from it entirely; in the second, he appropriates the art and turns it toward a different kind of victim; in the *Republic*, considering the *gynaikeion* drama contains some of the most beautiful descriptions of philosophical activity in the corpus, I think it's fair to assume he is not speaking *simply* pejoratively of his act. In fact, for once, the female drama takes pride of place.

But in the *Republic*, who or what is Socrates dramatizing? In Book VI, Socrates gives us a piteous scene to behold after all. There, he speaks of philosophy as an orphaned virgin, unwed and abandoned by her friends (495c); she is at the mercy of any suitor who notices her, even if it should be a little bald blacksmith. Here is pathos indeed, at the customary position of women, which certainly does not allow them much choice in suitors, that is, scope for their desires. The idea is, that just like women, philosophy does not get to pick its lovers under the customary arrangements, and is left, all too dangerously, to be pursued by anyone, many of whom are simply unworthy, cranks and scoundrels no less than the balding blacksmith. Socrates points out that the customary arrangements for both women and philosophy leave much to be desired—in much the same respect. In this image, Socrates depends on the reader's sympathy for both.[35]

THE MOTIVE FOR SOCRATES' ACTION

But Socrates is nevertheless aware that his actions in Book V will hardly evoke sympathy as the primary reaction: in the passage where the argument would otherwise have been veiled, he admits the invidiousness or capacity to arouse jealousy in these topics (502d). Indeed, few things arouse more jealousy than the question of who should rule: when Socrates first brings up the question of who should rule, he exclaims, "'By Zeus,' I said, 'it's no trivial matter we've called down as a curse on ourselves (374e).'" In Book VI he names the subject of women as similarly problematic. But here he also admits that perhaps it was not wise of him to attempt to avoid it; that it wasn't wise of him to keep the argument hidden. Now, recall that in Book IV, Socrates remarked that it was only those who had become measured by good education who would know what to do about the women's law (423e); here in Book VI too, knowledge is the condition to speak about the women's law—except the ultimately wise thing to do in this scenario is to speak up for the rule and education of women and philosophy. In an important sense, it is wisdom that pulls women and philosophy into the city—not their desire to be there, or at any interlocutor's request, even against the probable reaction of the audience. In one sense, the reader may well ask, under what condition is such a choice wise? Socrates' wisdom is caught in an act of—what? Injustice? Hubris? The act goes beyond mere injustice; it's not unjust to go against desire, because the justice Socrates has called into being doesn't care about what people desire; professions in the city are assigned according to aptitude, not desire. Likewise, those born with a nature that separates them from their original class in the city will have to change; whether or not they wish to go.[36] The Three Waves are no less a perfect example of philosophy minding everyone's own business.[37] Why does philosophy consider it appropriate to put itself in charge? And why does it drag the women along with it?

Socrates' decision, wise or unwise, to bring women and philosophy into the city corroborates my earlier contention that it would be false to paint philosophy as entirely unwilling to rule. His action is a reminder and a signal that under certain circumstances, a human being in the grips of philosophy is quite willing and eager to do what it thinks best, and damn the torpedoes. Indeed, his action at the beginning of Book I runs parallel to this: although Socrates was brought to Cephalus' house in a playful display of force, no one compelled him to bring up the question of what justice is. It's a playful revenge, the willful introduction of the kind of conversation only the philosopher and his friends hold dear, to an otherwise social occasion.[38] Conversely, plenty of people find the idea that philosophy should rule strangely attractive, even if they themselves are only distant admirers of it; there is the natural sense that

wisdom ought to prevail over ignorance in political matters.[39] This is illustrated by the change displayed in Socrates' interlocutors at the beginning of Book V: while Socrates' introduction of the topic of justice went against the grain of Cephalus' wishes, Glaucon, Adeimantus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus are very eager to have Socrates speak to the woman question. When Socrates begins to speak of the Good, Glaucon says, "don't even leave the slightest thing behind" (509c).[40] Socrates' interlocutors have caught the fever of philosophical conversation; they're not even unwilling to listen when the strange subject of philosopher-kings arises. They're happy to find a way to keep Socrates talking. Not only does philosophy wish to rule, it is capable of persuading some people that it ought to do so.

Likewise, the idea that women should share in the rule is actually quite attractive, at least to women. It seems naïve to consider any human being without some desire to rule; if the Wife of Bath can be trusted to speak for the sex, women's desire to rule is their ruling desire.[41] Again, Aristotle too is aware of this purported tendency of the sex.[42] And what of education? Socrates eventually puts together a plan where all the best of the youth will be enjoined to be educated in philosophy; this seems to be something not undesirable for those who want the best for philosophy. And the goods of education likewise prove to have drawing force for women, as articulated by the best; one recalls George Eliot's and Virginia Woolf's expressions of this desire, in *The Mill on the Floss* and *A Room of One's Own* respectively, as bitter as it is keen.

Despite, therefore, the Platonic dramatization of the unwillingness of philosophers to rule, and the resistance that women will make to stepping into the public eye, there is an opposing trend, a natural if private dialectical opposition, if you will, to such public disavowal. The task becomes the harder, for these two sides have to be put together, in order to make sense of the whole. Socrates' laws and actions have to be understood in light of the inner tension between the desire to rule, and the desire to remain outside of the cares of public position.[43]

PHILOSOPHY IS NO LADY

Now, I should note the real danger that any discussion of the similarities of women and philosophy has, of becoming a matter of more or less vague tropes. Of course, any talk about likenesses has this danger, but it is particularly annoying, perhaps, when the subject is woman, who attracts likenesses as moths to flame. Philosophy, of course, is not outside of this realm of temptation either. How then to remember to ground the discussion in what is trustworthy? Speaking in terms of action goes a long way, but this can't be all.

The fact that the subject of women and children introduces that of philosophy has not gone unnoticed by those who read and write on the *Republic*. But it tends to be explained away in terms of likeness between philosophy and the feminine as such, though not always explored very far, perhaps because of the danger I've identified. Indeed, it's not an unfamiliar idea to picture philosophy, or truth itself as a lady: such disparate souls as Boethius and Nietzsche have done; while the latter's lady is all cruelty, the former's is perhaps too kind.[44] Kierkegaard has perhaps the most elegant expression of this often-remarked similarity: while our goal, the phenomenon, "as such always is of the *foeminini generis*," yet in philosophy these days "one sometimes hears too much of the jingling of spurs and the voice of the master."[45] And surely the feminine as a symbolically leavening force to, for instance, thumotic excess, is a useful notion to keep around.

But the main problem with this that I see, is that on the narrative level, which ought to be where readers begin, Socrates has not drawn the feminine into the city—he has drawn actual women. His constitutional measures, image-laden though they are, invoke women in the flesh. A sign of this difference is that the feminine is indifferent where it is drawn; whereas the women will be twisting and turning to get away. Of course the symbolic level has to be important in any interpretation of a Platonic dialogue; and obviously in *some* sense, Socrates has introduced the female in contrast to the male. But what's the feminine? Suggestions on the table are gentleness, musicality, and *eros* plain and simple;[46] but the images from the *Republic* I've discussed, have so far have only presented women as hidden or in light, clothed or unclothed. The trouble is that in the pages of Plato, neither gentleness nor musicality are ever mentioned in connection to women in the First Wave or indeed the *Republic* as a whole; rather Socrates claims that the male thumotic guardian can be well trained in them in II–IV (375d, 410c); this is very much a part of the masculine drama. Instead, in both of the times Socrates explicitly compares philosophy to a woman, the passage where philosophy is the beleaguered orphan maiden, and the time he grows angry upon seeing Philosophy spattered in mud by her accusers (536c), the image depends not on some named feminine quality, but the frailty of the political position that philosophy and human woman share, in questions of reputation, scope for *eros*, and the risk of ridicule.[47] In the First Wave of the *Republic*, women do not stand for *eros* insofar as we desire them, but they themselves are given scope for their desires, as signified by Socrates' purposefully uncomfortable provision that women will ride horses, the Platonic counter-leitmotif for *eros*, to the *thumos* of hounds (452c).[48] They will share in all the tasks of the guardians insofar as they take up the common hunt (451d, 466d); instead of being the object of pursuit, they themselves will pursue. The similarities between women and philosophy begin on the literal level, and to begin the inquiry on

this level will prove to be a useful restraint to the temptation to image-make. Among all of what follows, in my examination of the prescriptions and caveats that flesh out Socrates' action with respect to women—the question of weaker and stronger, the question of naked exercise and robes of virtue, the question of laughter, the nature of a life lived in private, let us begin with the political difficulties shared by women in the flesh, and human philosophers.

NOTES

1. Leo Strauss, CM, 96. Recently, Marina McCoy argues that the city of pigs or "sows" is rejected by Glaucon on account of its being "too feminine" for his taste ("The City of Sows and Sexual Differentiation in Plato's *Republic*," in *Plato's Animals*, ed. Jeremy Bell and Michael Naas (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 149–160). She reasons from the presence of children to the presence of women, but this is made ambiguous by the text's silence on the necessity of women to the polis. "Meeting their end as old men (γηραιοὶ)" is quite explicit (372d); the ones "resting sweetly together" on the mats sit together in male fellowship. Elena Blair also notes to the total absence of women "in the elemental city" (*Plato's Dialectic*, 78). It's worth noting that even the weavers in the necessary city are supposed to be men, though in Athens, customarily weaving was done by the women of the house; see Sian Lewis, *The Athenian Woman: an iconographic handbook* (London: Routledge, 2002), 75.

McCoy's contention that the city of sows is meant to mimic the Thesmophoria is interesting, though there are several discrepancies (pigs are not the sole purview of the Thesmophoria even though they play a large role at that festival, and the leaves at the Thesmophoria are not Socrates' myrtle and yew but an anaphrodisiac). My main quarrel is that the atmosphere of the Thesmophoria is considered to be a peculiarly uncanny, wild sort of night, one that men look on with awe and fear as the wild disruption of tame society, rather than the idyllically peaceful city of sows. (See Robert Gould, "Law, Custom and Myth: Aspects of the Social Position of Women in Classical Athens," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 100, Centenary Issue (1980): 51; and Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 240.) One might say, given the possibility of connection, that Socrates is rewriting an uncanny women-centered night of mourning in fear of pre-agricultural life, as a peaceful, male-only presentation of early-stage agricultural life. Glaucon, who would probably not know the details of the Thesmophoria, as even Aristophanes is hazy on the details (Burkert, 242), certainly is rejecting a narrow vision of communal life, but not a specifically female or womanly one, as the immediate inclusion of women among the luxuries of life shows.

2. Seth Benardete, SSS, 113.

3. *Laws* 781a; *Politics* I.13.

4. *Statesman*, 310aff.

5. All translations of the *Republic* and the *Laws* will be my own as well as the translations of this book's epigrams in Greek. For the German epigram, my thanks to Judith Gruber.

6. Carl Page's rehabilitation of Polemarchus' reputation in "The Unjust Treatment of Polemarchus" helps explain the key role Polemarchus plays here, no less than his turn to philosophy, which many have found otherwise puzzling (*History of Philosophy Quarterly* (1990): 261).

7. Adrasteia is either an epithet of Nemesis, or the nymph who nursed Zeus at his mother Rhea's request (*Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.v. "Nemesis"); for the nymph, see Pseudo-Apollodorus' 1st-century compendium of mythology, the *Bibliotheke*, I.1.6.

8. Hankins, 150.

9. Karl Marx, *Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 263.

10. Aristotle at *Politics* VII.17, 1336a4–20, and particularly the Athenian Stranger in the *Laws* 788a–794c, have many more specific recommendations for this time of life than Socrates.

11. Page has it: "The issue addressed in the Second Wave is the one foremost in the minds of his interlocutors" ("The Truth about Lies in Plato's *Republic*," 26).

12. See Strauss, CM, 127.

13. The demotion is hinted at 503b, and carried out at 543a. Bloom has it: "it is highly improbable that any women will even be considered for membership in the higher classes" (IE, 383); Benardete remarks, "that [women] are on the whole weaker than men should entail that in a sex-blind test for admission into the city, most would not pass . . . ." (SSS, 113); and Rosen claims that the women fall away from the argument altogether (PRS, 186).

14. See Benardete, SSS, 181; and Rosen, PRS, 210.

15. *Politics* II.6, 1264b36.

16. *Politics* II.9, 1269b30.

17. Contra Elena Duvergès Blair, who argues that the first two waves alike are *not* a kind of digression or addition, but are each a necessary logical addendum to finally put to rest any doubts about the city/soul analogy begun in Book II (PDW, 69–93). My main objection to her proposed resolution to the apparent "inconsistency" of the "supposed digression" (PDW, 84) of the introduction of the first two waves, is that if Socrates considered these as a necessary supplement to his argument, he would have introduced the matter himself; not to mention explicitly naming this as the reason, instead of taking refuge in talk of "swarms" that have been unleashed "as if from the beginning" (450aff). Nor are Polemarchus' and Adeimantus' objections based on this connection. Her evidence for her explanation is based on allusions made to the analogy in the Second Wave, and I'd agree that the Second Wave is indeed concerned with the difficulties in the analogy; there are no such references in the First Wave, however. Blair takes note of the sheer variety of the language of Socrates' caveats, introductory remarks, and hesitations, but does not speak to the way his images set the section off; for instance, she considers the structural demarcation of the "female drama" to be "merely literary" (PDW, 97). Blair's work is ingenious and highly observant, and the range of her scholarship is impressive and invaluable (any reader who wishes to see at once the full range of 20th-century opinions on women in Plato should turn to her book); but in general she is simply too wedded to her own hermeneutic axe of rescuing Plato by finding the "logical consistency" of his works, integrating them

all into a "consistent whole" (PDW, 9). Her argument for the *reason* why women are introduced, which she admits is a "subtext" to begin with, is not persuasive, though I do appreciate her strong sense that a reason is needed. My argument begins where she leaves off, with the connection between the first two waves and the question of philosopher-kings (Ibid., 79, 93).

18. Strauss, CM, 109; Rosen, PRS, 167; Benardete, SSS, 57.
19. Strauss, CM, 127.
20. See Rosen, PRS, 229.
21. Strauss, CM, 122–23.
22. Strauss, CM, 122; Page, "Polemarchus," 262.
23. Strauss, CM, 126; Rosen, PRS, 391.
24. Strauss, CM,127.
25. Bloom, IE, 380–3.
26. Rosen dramatizes this well: "For example, one can raise questions about the possibility of the city, one can ask the question whether it's just to the philosopher to make him to rule, and so on. You know, there are all kinds of details of this sort. Killing everybody over the age of ten, right? I mean, that sounds like Pol Pot. Does Plato say in the text: 'that's obviously terrible.' No, of course not. You have to ask yourself whether that's a reasonable thing to do in order to establish a just city" ("Plato, Strauss, and Political Philosophy: An Interview with Stanley Rosen," *Diotima* II, no. 1 (Spring 2001): http://college.holycross.edu/diotima/n1v2/rosen.htm (accessed April 15, 2015).
27. Mary Nichols, *Socrates and the Political Community* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987), 106.
28. Strauss argues that the first two waves abstract from the body, but this is the action of justice, which distorts the erotic nature of philosophy so that it can appear in the *Republic* as it does (CM, 128). In fact, as far as I can tell, there's no essential reason why philosophy couldn't rule in the city, and arrange things for the best, for Strauss—only the accidental problem of the impossibility of convincing warriors to back the wise.
29. Strauss, CM, 127.
30. James Ross's divisions in his "Merely Metaphysical Possibility" are useful for investigating these distinctions (in *The Science of Being as Being: Metaphysical Investigations*; ed. Gregory T. Doolan (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 157–8).
31. Rosen remarks that Aristotle solves this problem by having gentlemen rule (*PRS*, 393). In the *Laws*, the master of the city is the god who is the master of rational men (713a; see also Strauss, *Argument and Action of Plato's* Laws, 57.)
32. Strauss: "The just city is then impossible. . . .The just city is against nature because the equality of the sexes and absolute communism are against nature" (CM, 127).
33. As in Aristotle's example, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II.1.
34. Aristotle *Politics* II.5–6.
35. Although I admire Luce Irigaray's sense of the need for a law specific to women, and the distortion practiced upon our understanding of women by the logos of the male *genos*, I don't share her sense that Plato is historically to blame for this

distortion, or that he as an author is incapable of representing poetically or understanding philosophically women in their own right. Plato's books aren't wresting wisdom away from women to give to feckless boys, any more than they are an attempt to found an inelegantly universal male discourse; rather, as I will make the case for, the *Republic* in particular is an attempt to begin a philosophical genealogy for women themselves.

36. Strauss, CM, 113.

37. Strauss, *Xenophon's Socratic Discourse: An Interpretation of the* Oeconomicus (South Bend, IL: St. Augustine's Press, 1998), 93.

38. Rosen, PRS, 9.

39. Rosen, PRS, 229.

40. Benardete, SSS*,* 110.

41. Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Tale," *Canterbury Tales*, lines 1037–1042.

42. *Politics* II.9, 1296b13–1270a14.

43. Again, I am indebted to Stanley Rosen for the articulation of this point: "Philosophy itself is marked by an inner disharmony between the desire to rule and the desire not to rule" (*PRS*, 166).

44. Nietzsche infamously asks, "Supposing truth were a woman—what then?" in *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Modern Library, 1992), 192; Boethius rhapsodizes, "Thus as I eyed her with unblinking gaze, I recognized . . . my nurse Philosophy" in *Consolations of Philosophy*, trans. P.G. Walsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), I.3.3.

45. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony, with Continual Reference to Socrates*, trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 9.

46. Bloom's answer is that it is the introduction of the feminine as the antidote to the overly warlike, masculine persona that makes poetic sense of the First Wave's introduction of the Third (IE, 384); Benardete has it: "Woman comes in too late. She represents all that the two educations have failed to achieve, but otherwise, the *Republic* is closed to her" (SSS, 114); Rosen says: "The structure of the argument in Books Five through Seven shows that what we would call today the epistemological and ontological discussion of the middle books emerges directly from the claim that some women are by nature potential philosophers" (*PRS*, 305). But for him, this is a sign of abstraction from the body; earlier, he locates the poetic relation of these two parts with *eros* in general, not specifically with women: "the transition from sex to philosophy is easy to see" (*PRS*, 167). See also Arlene Saxonhouse: "In the same way that masculinity is the opposite of femininity, so too is (masculine) politics the opposite of (feminine) philosophy" ("The Philosopher and the Female," 83).

47. Benardete alone has something to say about the similar political situation; but for him, philosophy is even weaker politically than women (SSS, 113).

48. Page, "Truth about Lies," 6.

Chapter 2

The Drama of Glaucon's Aporia

The conversation of the *Republic* is full of humor, liveliness, grand dispositions, spirited objections, and cavalier dismissals, but after the dramatics of Book I, there's no head-to-head argumentation of the same ferocity—until the First Wave. In the middle of the argument, Socrates announces that Glaucon is contradicting himself, and that some sort of miraculous rescue must be sought, if the argument is going to continue. Considering that the evening's conversation is one of the more friendly discussions in the Platonic corpus, it's quite a dramatic moment: Socrates lets Glaucon stew in a very public and pointed way. Now, many readers have dissected the logic of the section; for a particularly thorough version, I point the reader to Elena Duvergès Blair's work.[1] I will note that for readers in various traditions over time, who do not share any particular agreement on the nature of argument as such, it has nevertheless not been particularly controversial to say that the *logic* of Socrates' argument for the possibility for and goodness of women to take up the profession for which they are suited, arguing not from justice or from skill but from nature, is sound.[2] Indeed, the reader finds Socrates at his most Aristotelian, insisting that they be precise about the ways in which they speak of similarity and difference—the very distinctions Socrates often devilishly conflates in order to commit dialectical murder. It's the very soundness of the passage that tends to force those looking for dramatic significance to turn to Socrates' examples, which are indeed amusing and often just plain strange, such as the implicit comparison of the difference between the sexes to the difference between a man with hair and a man without it, not to mention the notorious question of common naked exercise.

But what really gives life to the passage is Glaucon's reaction to each argument, example, and exhortation, which displays his strong reluctance to the idea that women share a nature with men. The drama or plot, if you will,

of the section is how Socrates and Glaucon get to the moment of contradiction, why Glaucon admits his ignorance, and how Socrates gets the argument to continue. What prompts Glaucon to this instance of mulishness, and why does Socrates make such a big deal out of it? What saves the argument and allows it to continue? My interpretation will hinge on Glaucon's initial caveat that they "take the women as weaker and men as stronger" (451e): though ignored at first by Socrates, this phrase becomes the ground on which the education and rule of female guardians is built, and it is the miraculous rescue to the argument which Socrates says is required. By adopting this caveat of Glaucon's into his argument, Socrates manages to secure rule and education for women despite Glaucon's serious hesitation; the action of his argument remains the same. But his dramatization of Glaucon's reluctance provides a valuable service to the reader, for it puts on display even a decently generous man's reluctance to admit that women could share in the same tasks as the men. Plato's writing is not only an argument that women should share the rule with men, but a witness to the difficulty in getting someone to agree to it.

THE CENTRAL APORIA

The argument of the First Wave goes like this: Socrates first lays out his plan for what the commonality between the male and female guardians should be: just as hunting dogs are used for all tasks, male and female alike, so also should the male and female guardians share in all the tasks together. But if they do this, then the women will have to have the same education as the men. Noticing Glaucon's hesitation ("On the basis of what you say, it's likely," 452a6), Socrates sets up the strongest objection in order to do away with it: if education is common, then male and female guardians will have to exercise together without clothes. Socrates notes while this did not used to be Greek practice, customs change; Glaucon is struck, and listens readily to Socrates' exhortations to ignore the wits. Socrates then announces there will be a debate, to which both wits and serious folk are invited: does female human nature (φύσις ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη ἡ θήλεια, 453a) have all, some, or nothing in common with the male? Socrates then has a disputatious or eristical opponent lead Glaucon through the next steps: female human nature is completely different, but "how are you not contradicting yourself" seeing that, if everyone is to mind their own business in accordance with their nature, there's no way men and women could have the same education. This contradiction is the official indictment of their argument (453e). "What apology can you make for this, you wondrous man?" Socrates asks (453c); Glaucon says it is not easy to find one on the spur of the moment; Socrates says they will simply have to hope for a dolphin or some other "difficult to procure" (ἄπορον) savior

(453d). This aporia and the necessity of an aporetic savior is the dramatic center of the argument; the arithmetical one comes a little later, when Socrates notes they've been chasing the argument the wrong way, too "manfully and eristically" (454b5) by names alone, without dialectical distinctions. Socrates then says that the sameness and difference they are considering is fitness for profession or pursuit (ἐπιτηδεύματα, also "training," "habit"), he asserts that men are better than women at every pursuit and every capacity, to which Glaucon, though remarking that "many women are better than many men at many things (455d)," agrees firmly. Essentially, because men excel at every pursuit, there's no pursuit special to women by nature; and so there must be no difference in nature between the sexes, other than men's superiority. Once this is done, the argument quickly concludes: some women are athletic, musical, philosophic, and spirited, if as a *genos* they are weaker; there's nothing better for the best city than the best men and women, which is produced by the best education; since the measure is both possible and best, Socrates lays it down as a law (457b). After this, all is smooth sailing; even though Glaucon remarks that the Third Wave, the proposal of philosopher-kings, will provoke strong and even violent reaction from those who hear of it, Glaucon himself is eager to hear more details.

In the First Wave, Socrates insists that the man who laughs at women exercising naked for the sake of the best "knows not at what he laughs or what he does (457b)"; but in the passage, it is Glaucon himself whose foibles are on display; indeed, Glaucon is on the spot as accused criminal, as the language of apology and indictment shows. Glaucon was laughing before the argument began, blithely promising not to be a hard-hearted, distrustful, or ill-willed interlocutor (450d); yet once the First Wave starts, his polite but shocked sudden caesuras, and the cartwheels Socrates turns in response, manifest conversational stubbornness enough. Twice elsewhere Glaucon finds himself in a dialectically similar difficulty, as when he can't name the nature that unites gentleness and fierceness in the initial discussion of the rulers as guardian hounds (375e), or when he fails to notice that spirit is distinct from desire in the discussion of the tripartite soul (439e); but both of these times Socrates was quite gentle with him. Now, Glaucon is a notably gallant interlocutor: gracious, thoughtful, willing to concede a point; all ears whenever the subject of beauty comes up (402a, 476c, 540c); he himself announces his willingness to answer more harmoniously (ἐμμελέστερόν) than another (474a). But in the First Wave, Glaucon—though still gracious in his embarrassment ("but I shall beg you, and I do beg you, to interpret the argument on our behalf" at 453c)—is a stubborn interlocutor enough. Indeed, in his distress at his own aporia, Glaucon speaks of the subject in question as one "not easy to digest" (453d). To be sure, it's a sign of Glaucon's good nature that he doesn't resent how hard Socrates is pushing him: at first, Glaucon adopts the weak

subterfuge that it's not easy to come up with an answer on the spur of the moment (453c); all too weak, since that's the accepted risk of any conversation with Socrates. Socrates later makes him pay, noting that their now discredited opponent might say it was difficult to answer on the spot, which Glaucon answers, as if with gritted teeth, "he would say that" (455a). It's a real question why Socrates is going to all this trouble; he is the reason why the argument is drawn out at such length, the reason why he interrupts himself to give a lesson on dialectic; it's Socrates who places this controversial hurdle between himself and his argument for philosopher-kings. In the center of the First Wave, Socrates makes it unclear what, if anything, will come next in the argument; whether they will have to stop the whole evening's work and go home.

But Glaucon is the interlocutor on the woman question for good reason. Adeimantus has far stronger opinions on the female *genos*: he came out very strongly against the sexual foibles of the goddesses and gods in Book II, with a "by Zeus!" at Hera's erotic trickery, and the binding of Aphrodite and Ares (390c). Later in Book II, Socrates gets his concurrence to ban the imitation of wives who nag their husbands (395d). In Book VIII, Adeimantus responds to Socrates' description of the downfall of the aristocratic man at the hands of his son, by means of the many complaints of his wife, with his own addition of, "Many [complaints] indeed, and just like them"; the "them" being the *genos* in question (549e). It seems Socrates has touched a chord here, and the angry speech of women at their husband's alleged misrule is something that Adeimantus particularly objects to. As I argued in chapter 1, it may be in part a concern about the sexual freedom involved in wives in common that influences him to raise the woman question again in Book V. At any rate, the mere instance of his agreeing so heartily to Socrates' strong criticism of the relative freedom between men and women in a democracy (563b) would be enough to disqualify him from the conclusions Socrates ends up making in the First Wave. If the education and rule of women is going to be argued for at all, then it has to happen while Socrates is talking to someone other than Adeimantus.

THE WAR FOR RULERSHIP

What initially causes Glaucon's reluctance, and what resolves it? In Socrates' opening sally, he offers Glaucon two scenarios:

> Do we suppose that the females of the guardian dogs must guard the things the males guard along with them and hunt with them, and do the rest in common; or must they watch the house as though they were rendered powerless through

> the bearing and rearing of the puppies, while the males toil and have all the care of the flock bestowed upon them? (451d)

As in Book II, the rulers are as hounds who guard the flock of citizens. The first option grants the female guardians a pretty large domain: they will guard together and hunt together (συμφυλάττειν and συνθηρεύειν), with the male guardians. As I pointed out in chapter 1, this is the moment where Socrates shifts from the earlier language of being in common as a thing held (κοινῇ), to both sexes doing something *else* in common together, which opens the possibility for the partnership entailed in common guarding and hunting. Socrates gives all the positive rhetorical weight to this first option; it's cast as the sensible one. The second option which follows is put in too extreme terms to be probable: or must they stay indoors as though they were incapacitated (ἀδυνάτους, powerless). Socrates appeals to the practical-minded owner of hunting dogs: no person who spends his time carefully training litter after litter of dogs for hunting would consider that as a serious option. Needless to say, both male and female dogs are customarily used for hunting, since it's hard enough to find a good hunting dog as it is; in Xenophon's *On Hunting* 7.5, he makes a list of recommended names for dogs of both sexes, including both the male and female version of "Guard," Phulax and Phrura.[3] I will note that hunting as a pursuit ought to be a striking addition to the earlier tasks of the ruling dogs; I will consider why and for what purpose Socrates makes this strange addition in chapter 3. But on a practical level, the argument has a calculated rhetorical appeal: Glaucon himself is an owner of hunting dogs, as the reader learns in the Second Wave (459a), and familiar with this aspect of the business. Socrates lays a tempting trap when he makes the male dogs in the second option bear all the burden and "work and have all the care of the flock"; who would want to bear all the burden, if you put it like that? Socrates appeals to a sense of injustice at such an unfair arrangement. Socrates makes a strong case for the first option of common guarding and common hunting for Glaucon to agree to.

But Glaucon still finds it necessary to qualify Socrates' proposal: "'Everything in common,' he said, 'except that we use the females as weaker, the males as stronger'" (κοινῇ, ἔφη, πάντα· πλὴν ὡς ἀσθενεστέραις χρώμεθα, τοῖς δὲ ὡς ἰσχυροτέροις, 451e). Retreating to the language of "*in* common," Glaucon strikes out independently with a big qualification to Socrates' long, carefully set up alternatives. The vocabulary of strength and weakness Glaucon uses is quite specific: women have the less public face, while men are the fiercer. Indeed, particularly in the case of the quality of *astheneia*, the language is more of human beings within political life, as Adeimantus uses it to describe the weakness and poverty sneered at in better men, in contrast to the acclaim that the strong and unjust men receive (364a). Such

weakness would seem to possess an element of that incapacity that Socrates dismisses; and weakness in half of the ruling class is a troubling incapacity.

But Socrates does not address Glaucon's qualification to his opening statement. He responds with a sidestep: "Is it possible to use any animal for the same things if you don't render it the same education?" He keeps Glaucon's verb "to use" (χρῆσθαί), casting the guardians as things to be possessed by the argument; he keeps this locution for the next step as well. But by his conclusion, he has changed the verb to "to render" (ἀποδοτέον), as in Simonides' contention that we must render to each other what the other is due (331e). After this change, Socrates does not recur to "using" the guardians, but keeps "render"; this makes the assignment of education less a matter of utility and something more like justice; Socrates too now is implicitly speaking of humans.[3] But though Socrates transforms Glaucon's use of utility, he ignores Glaucon' qualification of weaker and stronger; in turn, he abandons his initial metaphor of guarding together and hunting together as dogs. Socrates ends this first section by concluding that women must also be given music and gymnastic, without taking the argument back to specific shared pursuits; again, Glaucon, without his concerns addressed, agrees only reluctantly even to this less robust version of commonality (452a5).

As his maneuvers display, Socrates has already noticed Glaucon's difficulties with his initial framing of the proposal; his introduction of the test case of naked exercise seems to be aimed at this hesitation. Such a test case is part of the familiar argumentative strategy, that if one can refute the strongest objection possible, then the rest is relatively easy; one also looks the more magnanimous for having introduced it oneself.[4] Glaucon responds well to this strategy: he is very willing to believe in the change of customs over time ("very much so indeed," 452e). But even with a full agreement that naked exercise could be for the good, along with the weight of his set of exhortations to be serious, to consider experience, and to look to the good as a target, Socrates doesn't go straight from here to asking Glaucon again directly if the women should be educated and rule. Instead, he sets up the conceit of the disputatious opponent, ostensibly to keep the argumentation all aboveboard; but it also serves the purpose of bringing Glaucon's objections out in the open. Glaucon is eager to give his full support to the opponent's leading question "Is there any way that a woman isn't completely different from a man with respect to nature?" answering quickly, "But in what way *don't* they differ?" (453b) Socrates-as-opponent has changed the ground of the question: he gets Glaucon to agree to the complete difference between a man (ἀνήρ) and a woman (γυνή); while Socrates began his argument with the words that are used for the male and female of an animal species (θῆλυς and ἄρσην), he now makes it perfectly clear they are talking about people.

Glaucon voices his strongest sense about the difference in nature between the human sexes when he is considering them as properly human actors, animals who live in cities. Much has been made of the characterization of the guardians as animals by the three instances of *thêlus* and *ársen* in the First Wave; but it's not until the Second Wave that the guardians become inhuman to the point of herdlike.[5] Dogs, by contrast, can be trained, which is the distinction that the argument from profession turns on. Socrates makes it clear the question turns on what female *human* nature (φύσις ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη ἡ θήλεια) can share in common with the nature of the male *genos*. Do women share all, some, or nothing in common with men? Glaucon's first reaction is to leap in with the amusingly hyperbolic equivalent of "nothing": hyperbolic, since if that were so, we would be discussing two entirely separate species, rather than two parts of the same one. This is why the language of *genos* which Socrates and Glaucon often employ in this section, is such a revealing way to speak about the race of men and the race of women: should men be wholly distinct from women, each would be a separate species, rather than two sides of the animal with the logos.[6] In the former case, common education would not make much sense.

Why does Glaucon want to say that men and women have completely distinct natures? Even in the third and next section, Glaucon still offers only weak agreement when he is asked once more directly if men and women share the same nature for guardianship of the city ("so it appears," 456a), though a few lines earlier, he once again shows willingness to educate them, even more willingness than in the first section ("that's entirely certain," 456b). Although he was hesitant, Glaucon did initially agree that common education seemed to be made necessary (452a). Always on the lookout for hard work—he speaks of early childhood education as a particularly strenuous labor (450c), and describes the seven liberal arts as "a prodigious undertaking" (531c)—Glaucon is nevertheless willing to share out the hard work of education with women. In fact, Glaucon is more willing to share education, than to let men and women share a nature.

Socrates introduces the disputatious opponent as one who will battle against himself and Glaucon; it's in an atmosphere of war, and indeed, as over the question of whether women's nature allows them to participate in war (435e), that Glaucon decides to enter the fray; his eristical sin is this hyperbole of difference. In a reverse, it's in the name of dialectic, rather than the needless verbal battle of eristic, that Socrates shuts Glaucon down, pointing out they've been pursuing the question all too manfully (ἀνδρείως, 454b). Manliness lends itself to eristic; eristic is specifically awakened by the question of female human nature. Socrates can hardly be clearer: passion is at stake in this question, and specifically male passion, on behalf of the male sex. It's this specific impulse that Socrates shames by drawing out Glaucon's aporia.

Socrates marks this question out as a debate or wrangle (ἀμφιβήτησις, 452e); in the *Republic*, he puts it on the same footing as the wrangle over whether or not a thing can be or not be at the same time in the same respect (437a), as well as whether the good is pleasure or something different (505d); both such conversations productive of incessant back-and-forth, neither side willing to budge.[7] But in the case of the woman question, why does nature become the battleground? Why does Glaucon want to be a wholly distinct sort of thing from the female *genos*? The elephant in the room is the question of rule: both a political rule, and then a sort of metaphysical rule or superiority, if you will.[8] Socrates has introduced the female *genos*, in his initial description of their commonality with men, as a kind that will share in the guardianship of the city. He describes that partnership relatively tamely, confining himself in the First Wave to repeatedly stating that they will share *all* duties; but implicit in this all is the guardianship or governorship—since after all, that is what the guardians are supposed to be *for*, and is the justification for their tailored education. Later, of course, Socrates confirms that he is thinking of female rulers (τὰς ἀρκούσας, 540c); but for now he leaves this implicit in his "all." This is the telling contrast: for imagine how contentious the argument would have been, if Socrates had led with that! Now, the question of who should rule is in and of itself one that naturally invites intense interest, even excitement; the fascination with this question underlies much of the dramatic tension in the *Republic* as a whole.[9] Though Glaucon is willing to say definitely that the souls of male and female doctors are the same (454d), when asked if men and women share the same nature for guardianship of the city, he only offers "so it appears" (456a); rule is a more tense question than skill. Glaucon is hardly willing to share rule with some other *anthropos* in the first place; he's already quite interested in the power that injustice seems to promise, as he reveals in his speech in Book II. How much the less would he wish to share rule with an entirely different *genos*! Glaucon later speaks contentedly of Socrates' solution: "you speak the truth; the one *genos* is overpowered by the other in all by far, so to speak" (455d). The question of political rule is only satisfied by the categorical triumph of the one sex over the other.

But before the reader leaps to blame Glaucon, it must be noted that he is no rare representative of humanity in being touched by these concerns; he merits no peculiar blame for the impulse to jockey it out. In fact, if James Adam is correct that Socrates intends to identify the eristical opponent with the rest of the audience at 453e, it's possible that signs of visible restlessness have become apparent in some of those present as Socrates presents his case for female human nature.[10] But as can't be stressed enough, the problem is mutual: the truth is that in conversations like these, one need merely consult the sex of the speaker to see which *genos* will obtain the mastery in speech.

For an ancient example of women's desire to claim superiority, consider the Chorus Leader's final speech in Aristophanes' *Women at the Thesmophoria*: "It's pretty clear that we [we women] are far superior to you, and I've got a way to prove it. Let's take a test to see which one is worse. We say it's you and you say it's us. Let's examine the issue by pairing the names of each man and each woman one on one."[11] Such rivalry is funny because it's true; contention in such matters is a human problem; this is no less true when a concession is rhetorically desirable. Once Glaucon has been caught out, Socrates remarks that this and many other things are why he feared to discuss the women's law (453d); Socrates is well aware of what the question of rule and the question of what female human nature has the power to do. When Glaucon ruefully admits that speaking of these matters is not easy to digest or stomach (ἐυκόλῳ, 453d), his description is apt—and admirably honest. A wondrous rescue is required; it will need to be wondrous, because opinions about male and female nature are deeply held, perhaps more so than any other common opinion about nature; and more than opinions about, for instance, the weather, they have immediate political ramifications and reflections. Even the question of the abolition of private property, though it certainly received a strong objection from Adeimantus, did not become contentious in the way that this one does. Socrates describes their predicament as like being in a great ocean; and they are indeed in the soup.

Although some readers have questioned why this early hint of dialectic, the crown of the guardian's education, arises in the midst of this particular discussion, I would argue that the question is quite properly dialectical.[12] The woman question arises in the political context, for we wish to know who should rule whom; and as everyone knows, such a conversational goal seriously distorts the way we go about answering. The question of rule then attempts to justify itself by some principle outside of political, the natural, the metaphysical, even the ethical. The only trouble is that it's not a question of nature, strictly speaking; for we are not asking what animals do, but what political animals ought to do. A wrangle indeed! The only way to pursue it is dialectic, in which the options are the nothing in common, the everything in common, or the something (453a); but the problem is, neither the nothing nor the everything will do. As Glaucon's hyperbole reminds us, the none is impossible; and as Socrates admits, the all is impossible because of childbirth. This lands us in the middle of a tangle where we know there must be some similarity and some difference—yet precisely in what way remains to be determined. By his invocation of the practice of dialectic, Socrates sets the measure of how to take a longer road to the truth, and this is Plato's real dialectical contribution to what it would take to set about inquiring into the woman question in earnest.[13] But Socrates himself is present in the conversation in order to obtain Glaucon's persuasion, and for himself to reach his

desired presentation of the notion of philosopher-kings. Dialectic alone will get us out of the pickle of the woman question; but Socrates instead looks to what dolphins can do.

THE RESCUE

What then is the rescuing agent? Many are tempted to consider Socrates' example of the difference between a bald man and the hairy one as the weak basis on which the argument is allowed to continue.[14] But although the example is absurd, in the chain of reasoning it's merely an example of the sort of difference that would not be relevant for training; any trivial example would do. The more serious question asked in this transition, in the form of the relevant *if* to the *then*, which is never answered, is whether there's any difference between men and women other than that one gives birth and the other mounts, that would be relevant for the present question of training, skill, and commonality.[15] If no one can show otherwise, they will proceed. Socrates now recovers the cadence of their discussion, returning to the imaginary opponent once more: "'Come now,' we'll say to him, 'distinguish (ἀποκρίνου, separate, make a distinction, 455b).'" But instead of distinguishing, Socrates denies the need for distinction except in degree:

> Therefore, my friend, there is no pursuit, among those who keep a city together (διοικούντων), that is *of* a woman because of being a woman (γυνή), or *of* a man because of being a man (ἀνήρ); but the natures are scattered around in both the animals alike; and a woman has a share in all pursuits according to nature, and a man in all of them, but in all of them a woman is weaker than a man. (455d–e)

To this Glaucon replies, "by all means," or "certainly (πάνυ γε)"; Glaucon has recovered his equanimity. Socrates has solved the dialectical problem not by distinguishing any careful mixture of same and other, but by denying any political otherness—*and* the crucial addition of what he earlier ignored, Glaucon's initial expressed caveat to Socrates' original plan for complete partnership. What rescues the argument is Glaucon's principle of the relative strength of men; and again, after this moment, the argument sails on easily to its conclusion, that the guardians do all in common. Socrates knew what was needed to make the argument continue; Socrates delays a simple adoption of Glaucon's phrase in order to display the root of Glaucon's hesitation. Glaucon's principle is the dolphin Socrates was looking for: in the story of Herodotus that Socrates alludes to, the singer Arion is sailing to Tarentum when the ship's company decides to steal his money and throw him off the boat; he begs for a last performance, and when he leaps into the sea, a

dolphin is there to rescue him from death (*Histories*, 1.23–24). Arion is saved from human strength by a friendly animal; Socrates saves Glaucon by making strength take the highest importance. Dolphins, one of the few species capable of laughter, save us from our human problems; the wrangle where all humans are invested in the promotion of their own sex, is solved not by some careful compromise, but by the final victory of one over the other.

But though Glaucon participates in this universally human foible, he possesses magnanimity, certainly a rare enough quality. First of all, unlike Adeimantus, he is not immune to the charms of erotic playfulness, even when the fair sex is involved, as when later in Book V he enjoins the reward of kisses for those excelling in war, be they male or female (468c)—this, even though Socrates only mentioned boys and youths (468b). Notice that he responds with the harsher principle when Socrates is being more generous in the opening description of the common hunt (451d); but later he himself is more generous where Socrates, denying women's hegemony in weaving and baking, is more extreme (455d). Although Glaucon becomes fully comfortable only when men are safely stronger, his sense of how this plays out is pretty liberal; not everyone is willing to contend that many women excel many men in not some but many things, as he does at 455d—the word "many" repeated three times. Glaucon agrees readily to the notion that some women are musical and others not, some medical, some athletic, some spirited and some not (455e–566a); he even agrees solidly at 456a ("these things are also the case") that some women are philosophic, while others hate it (μισόσοφος). Glaucon is youthful, spirited, and erotic; and he is capable of manly generosity, even when hard pressed.

By contrast, the extreme version of this kind of scaling between men and women displays an amusingly hyperbolic harshness. As Virginia Woolf draws the character, the attacked professor in question opines that, on the whole, the strongest woman undergraduate is inferior to the weakest male undergraduate.[16] Some readers of the *Republic* take Woolf's version to be essentially equivalent to Glaucon's version, and that the difference in degree of strength described would be enough to leave all women to fall short in ability.[17] Now, a difference in degree could make this situation obtain, albeit that the women would have to fall short by a large enough amount; but if the amount is relatively small, then there's no inconsistency between the universal principle of greater strength on the one hand, and the common sight of stronger women. Most importantly for Socrates' plans for the conversation, Glaucon himself believes he is being consistent; adequately generous in accordance with his observations, but still reserving the highest place for the best of the men.[18] In this combination of disparate opinions, Glaucon presents an interesting combination of liberality and protectionism, one that is perhaps more common among humanity, than views more consistent, and thus extreme.

THE SKILLS OF WEAVING AND BAKING

But the examples Socrates uses to prove the superiority of the male sex are suspicious. Again, the language of human beings, not animals, is at work here:

> Do you know of anything cared for (μελετώμενον) by human beings, in which the *genos* of men (ἄνδρων) does not fare better in all these things than the *genos* of women (γυναικῶν)? Or shall we make a big speech of it, talking about weaving and the doctoring of bread for sacrifices and of boiled things, in which it clearly seems the *genos* is womanish (γυναικεῖον), and where being the worse is most ridiculous of all? (455c)

Among all the things that Socrates could have chosen to assert men's potential superior capacity, he could hardly have picked more awkward examples.[19] The narrow version of cooking he describes is a thankless task, requiring much watching of the pot and little skill; such tasks offer hardly much room to triumph in. In weaving there is rather more at stake; it rises to the level of artistry and even beauty—Socrates names it as one of the tasks that is full of good grace (401a)—and is, of course, a task not only customarily assigned to women, but also supposed to be representative of their special excellence. Xenophon's Socrates mentions the weaving of cloaks as one of the most important tasks of a wife in the *Oikonomikos*; in Cretan law a woman who was being divorced was entitled to at least half the share of the woven things she had made while married.[20] On the religious order, Athena, of course, is the patroness of weaving, and is known to be touchy about those claiming superiority in the art. Athena is the recipient of particularly beautifully woven *peplos* at the Panathenaia, Athens' most important religious festival; this task employed certain priestesses and maidens, and took months.[21] It's the figures on this sacred *peplos* that Socrates wishes to redraw in his taming of the city's fevers in Book II (378c); around the time of the Bendidea, the robe's weaving might be well in earnest.[22] The word Socrates uses here for weaving, ὑφαντικήν, in verb form can also mean "to contrive," "plan," or "invent"; Athena possesses this quality paradigmatically.[23] As I will discuss in chapter 6, Plato's Athenian Stranger ascribes this contrivance or cunning to the *genos* of women as a whole; though indeed he waffles on the point whether it is from custom or nature.[24] Socrates usurps not only the customary household excellence of women, but also that which they were accused of being naturally excellent at as well—at the expense of the jealously guarded purview of the goddess of wisdom.

The trouble with this argument is that Socrates ultimately aims to contend that women don't differ in their nature from men, but he does it by using the examples that most of all are supposed to represent that difference in nature; to speak to women's weakness he picks the weakest examples on offer.

Easier examples of men's superior strength would be to claim that they're better at war, or at lifting heavy objects; but this is precisely what he does not do. Socrates says that the skills of weaving and cooking are where women's being the worse is most ridiculous of all (455d): this is Socrates' only use of the adjective καταγέλαστος, ridiculous or absurd, in the whole Wave, as opposed to the less forceful and more commonly used forms of γελάω/γέλοιος, laughable or funny; the "kata" adds a sense of greater force or derision. This distinction is often made by Plato's characters: in the *Theaetetus*: the Thracian girl finds Thales' tendency to fall into wells an occasion for mockery and himself laughable (ἀποσκῶψαι, 174a; γέλωτα, 174c), while the many find the philosopher's disdain for ancestry absurd (καταγελᾶται, 175b); the laughter which the many has for the philosopher is harsher than that of the "gracefully witty" Thracian (174c). Likewise, Aristophanes in the *Symposium* remarks that when making his speech in praise of *eros*, he's not worried about saying something merely laughable (γελοῖα), since that is in the jurisdiction of his muse, but rather that he might say something ridiculous (καταγέλαστα, 189b). Socrates makes use of the stronger term several times in the *Republic*: in Book X, he announces that the fate of the unjust man is in the end to be absurd (613d); in Book VII, he fears that the philosopher returning to the cave will be found ridiculous (518b). The notion that men beat women at weaving and baking is the funniest claim in the section; more funny, please note, than that women should exercise naked with the men merely (γελοιότατον, 452a). It's not only hilarious that men would be better at women at weaving, it's absurd.

But the final absurdity to Socrates' adoption of Glaucon's principle is that it excludes the possibility that women would excel men at child-making (παιδοποιία).[25] Paul Shorey, in his translation of the *Republic*, cites a passage here from George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, where an old bachelor professes similar opinions to Socrates: "I tell you there isn't a thing under the sun that needs to be done at all but what a man can do better than women, unless it's bearing children, and they do that in a poor makeshift way."[26] This unmarried one is stating the claim more honestly than the married man Socrates; the joke is that this is where the hubris of wishing to triumph completely over the sex would lead. Socrates is wiser than this, at least for now, though he will have to deal with child-bearing eventually; it's not something any lawgiver can afford to ignore, though it's questionable whether there's much to be done. Socrates will, however, introduce in his second proposal in Book V laws that circumscribe both child-bearing and child-rearing as much as possible; these laws share the humor represented here; in fact they are on the whole much more amusing. Men as well as women officiate over a common breastfeeding pen, both sexes alike put in charge of who is producing enough milk and who isn't—a hilarious scenario, as well as a highly impractical one.[27] This species

of impracticality, however, is as likely to happen as old bachelors being much better at giving birth; perhaps more so, as current customs reflect.[28] In any case, once Socrates adopts Glaucon's principle, he is forced into an untenable position, one that bodes ill for his further lawgiving. To be sure, since child-making is not a skill, Socrates' argument still stands as read; but it remains as a gaping hole in the argument, part of the absurdity that follows when a human being is abstractly designated by profession alone.

At this point in the First Wave, men's triumph is complete, with no alloy: women must relinquish their superiority at weaving and baking and anything else, in order to be introduced into the city as rulers and learners. In chapter 1 I argued that Socrates draws women out of customary privacy into the public life of the city; when Socrates recasts the question of what he must prove to be able to continue the argument, he says they must show that there is no pursuit relevant to the housekeeping (διοίκησιν) of a city that is private (ἴδιον) to a woman (455b). With his adoption of Glaucon's principle, Socrates puts the private realm of women directly in line for elimination.

All this puts women in a very strange metaphysical position, no less strange than their resulting political one; it demotes them even as it raises them. Their situation is not that of women whose goodness is finally acknowledged as justice might demand; rather, they have been given the status of lesser *men*, people who possess all the qualities of men but in a lesser degree. This is not a comfortable rearrangement: it creates a continuum of natures that puts everyone on a kind of number line of degree of strength—individual human men will possess, as if by divine accident, all the qualities that will serve to conquer any given skill.[29] It seems that Glaucon's spirited desire to rule considers itself superior even in realms where public, spirited virtues may not be applicable; and being very young, Glaucon's musicality, as well as his spiritedness, might suggest to him that he is the whole human being, rather than its male counterpart. Although many readers consider the First Wave to set up the "equality of the sexes," on this analysis, Socrates has done anything but that.[30] In a democracy, Socrates later notes, there is freedom and *isonomia*, equality of law, women with men and men with women (563b); here, rather, Socrates has set up a partnership based on common work and competition for excellence—with the saving grace that men will triumph in the end.

Now, many take the absurdity of Socrates' examples to point to the notion that there is, after all, some natural difference between the sexes, one that would, presumably, make a difference after all in pursuit and profession. But while Socrates' amusing examples certainly point to the *possibility* of such, to leap ahead to this conclusion is to go about the division in a rather over-bold fashion—to practice what is, after all, the hallmark not of dialectic but of eristic. While weaving and child-making open the door for further distinction-making, they do not on their own offer much help in sussing out

whatever difference they point to; as I pointed out in the previous chapter, this dialogue simply does not give the reader much help in this regard, since the claim here is that there's no relevant difference at all. Likewise, it's worth noting that a rhetorical appeal to difference, in turn, can become another way to seek victory of one over the other sex; each sex happily considering their own qualities, safely isolated from the other, as privately triumphant. Weaving is certainly a pointed reference, but do we really want to take up baking as the hallmark of feminine triumph? Furthermore, in the earlier, thumos-driven books, Socrates argues at length that the male guardians must be both gentle and fierce (375e), gracefully musical and athletic (401a–e, 411b–c); likewise in the First Wave, he insists that some women are athletic, spirited, musical, and philosophical (456a)—the full range of human qualities is present in women and demanded as united in the guardian soul. This is, of course, one of the reasons why to qualify for the position is so difficult, considering that the soul must be balanced in this way. Now, reader take note: Socrates never makes any connection between gentleness and musicality as female qualities, because, as I will argue in the next chapter, women were customarily regarded as something quite other than gentle or tame; Socrates' appeal to the womanish (γυναικεῖον) invokes something quite different from musicality or gentleness—but rather a legendary fierceness. Indeed, in the earlier books, the accusation is that the female sex is rather too moved by *eros* (395e). Nor is it fair to say that the body has been abstracted from or "desexed": the bodies are to be exercising, and it's fundamental to Socrates' plans that the best are to mate with the best; female athleticism with the right training is not an abstraction from the female body, but its perfection.[31] One of the beauties of the education in the *Republic* is that the body is always given its due, though it can be temporarily escaped; even with all their philosophizing, the guardians still have their gymnastic, and the body as helper (540a, 498b). One might say instead that they are de-gendered, for their qualitative role has become universal and one.

Socrates' rhetorical problem in the First Wave is that admitting some difference, whether in quality, embodiment, or what Aristotle calls *oikeia pathe*, would mean that there was something men *qua* men could not fully share, and thus could not be best in.[32] The annihilation of difference provides the ground for a more complete besting of women than even customary law allows. The irony is that to have men triumph *qua* men if not qua male threatens Socrates' insistence elsewhere that there simply must be a balance between music and gymnastic, softness and strength in the soul (548c); and indeed, that the musical is to be in ascendance (591d). To tilt the argument toward men's thumotic triumph is to give maleness a rhetorical victory, despite the absence of a metaphysical one. Crucially, Socrates is always tempting us with the vision of the whole human being, a very specific kind of androgyny of the soul, not

expressed as final categorical fiat but constantly reimagined in different ways (think of the strange monster/lion/human soul at 588c); the soul looks for the perfect balance as a tuning between elements, not as a hash of ambiguity, but by a balance of two achieved by a third, in all the specificity of an organic human body.[33] To be the whole human being in this way is indeed tempting; Glaucon's behavior suggests that the path to such wholeness is fraught.

Glaucon's human need to remain strongest in the public sphere distorts dialectic's power to discern the truth: and Socrates' acceptance of his argument, in the end, does more to display this truth, than to give the reader any final word on human nature. Indeed, even the example of bald men and hairy men reflects this potential for distortion no less. The anxiety surrounding men who lack hair is a constant theme in the *Republic*: it's present in the attention Socrates pays to the old men in the palaestra, who are so ugly to look at naked; Glaucon finds them disturbing to behold (452b). Likewise, Socrates describes the improper suitor of philosophy as like "a short bald blacksmith" (495e). Such anxiety reflects the anxiety of the audience: why *would* men without hair appear as a separate, lesser *genos* than the fully hairy, unless our peculiarly human anxiety to remain impossibly young and beautiful had got the better of us? I noted above that Glaucon's other dialectical struggles, to see that spirit unites the qualities of gentleness and fierceness, and to distinguish between spirit and desire, likewise presented him as full of difficulties when it comes to making fine distinction about human nature, whether noticing difference or finding common ground between opposites. Elsewhere, Socrates provides the crucial missing link; but here, he takes up Glaucon's own faulty reasoning—and follows it out to its absurd conclusion.

But the biggest weakness in Socrates' adoption of Glaucon's principle, however, or perhaps its strongest irony, is that women as weaker men is a compromise that few can stomach, except for Glaucon. Few if any readers of the *Republic* believe justice has been done to nature with the compromise of relative strength and its many exceptions. It doesn't satisfy Woolf's professor, who would deny that any particular woman could do better than any particular man at anything; likewise those who agree with him are forced to turn to irony to transform Glaucon's magnanimous version into something stronger. On the other hand, feminist readers of the *Republic* consider the principle of relative strength to be reason enough to disqualify Plato from their friendship. This is true even though the *nomos*, in America at least, is still influenced by Second Wave liberal feminism, which differs from Socrates in that it often requires that women be *equally* strong men—and often stronger.[34] Nor do Third-wave feminists, who set out to have a more subtle grasp of these matters, or for that matter, feminists interested in sexual difference, frequently find much to interest them in the *Republic*; they prefer the erotic dialogues of *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, if only to find a more pleasant place to quarrel.[35] In

fact, Socrates' compromise *satisfies* only his interlocutor and his own need to keep the argument going. Upon examination, it lays the seeds for dialectical revolution in all its readers, no matter what sort of cherished opinions they come with to the text.

GLAUCON'S NOTION OF STRENGTH

Although the words Glaucon uses to describe men's strength and women's weakness (σθένος and ἰσχυρός) are fairly nuanced, in his response to Socrates' declaration of men's superiority, the words he uses reveal much of his underlying logic: "As you say, it's true that the one class is dominated in virtually everything, as you say, by the other" (455d). The verb translated as "dominate" is the verb κρατέω, which means to overpower by physical force, to take something by storm, to take it openly in all might.[36] For Glaucon, physical strength is what allows men to triumph in an obvious, open way. Socrates' own language is by contrast neutral: the phrase he uses for comparison is merely διαφερόντως ἔχει, fare differently, and so by ironic circumlocution, they are pre-eminent. That Glaucon would consider this kind of strength as an inescapable and ruling criterion for skill (τέχνη), the intellectual virtue in question, is a classic mistake.[37] I noted above that although Socrates insists women will participate in war, Glaucon hesitates over this too; Glaucon's preference for physical strength in battle is perhaps one source of this reluctance.[38] Glaucon is never given the chance to respond directly to the question of warfare in the First Wave; it's always lumped in with something else more palatable.

Many readers of the *Republic* are puzzled by Socrates' insistence on women's participation in war, which Aristotle notes is central to his proposal (*Politics* II.6, 1264b38); it's worth noting that the Athenian Stranger is very eloquent on the folly of *not* training women for warfare; he specifically recommends that women train with the heavy arms of the hoplite.[39] Socrates argues for women's participation in war both before and after the introduction of Glaucon's principle; at the least, it seems that Socrates doesn't need to alter women's participation in war, despite the fluctuation in the notions of strength. Indeed, as seen in the contrast between Athena and Ares, the notion that brute strength is not *simply* primary in war was a notion written into Greek *nomos*.[40] To Glaucon, at any rate, to have *kratos* is what makes the one sex stronger than the other; to have *kratos* is to have the victory, and thus be qualified to rule. This is consistent with his fascination for the power (δύναμις) of the real man, in his speech in praise of injustice in Book II.[41] This preference could also play a role in his difficulty which I discussed above, that he saw fierceness and gentleness as irreconcilable qualities (376a); it's a common mistake

to consider these qualities as the presence or absence of the *kratos* version of strength.[42] If this is a pattern in his character, then it makes sense why he would conclude that women are weaker simply, because physical strength triumphs over every characteristic; this kind of strength is all the difference one need claim. This is why he can believe that men simply are stronger and better at all *technai*, however obviously absurd the examples; for Glaucon, strength as *kratos* decides the contest of *technai*; again, a youthful mistake forgivable as youthful, as long as one eventually learns the difference.[43]

In the last few paragraphs of the First Wave, Socrates makes a comment that shows he possesses a more subtle notion of the nature of weakness: "but the lighter parts of these tasks," he says, "must be given to the women rather than the men, because of the weakness of the sex" (457a). "Lighter" as most translate it here, is ἐλαφρός; its first-order meaning is, lightness in weight. Socrates himself, however, uses it to describe the delicacy and fineness of movement that the philosophic dogs in Book II must have, in addition to the strength of *iskuros*, if they will guard the city well.[44] If we take Socrates' connection in Book V between weakness (here ἀσθένειαν, so, lack of public countenance) and nimbleness to be correct, he would be saying nothing that would not make sense to our less *kratos*-informed sense of the qualities of women—except he would be paying a compliment, rather than being comfortably patronizing, as Glaucon must hear it. This kind of weakness is a strength, but of a different order than what is encompassed by *kratos*. Weakness is acknowledged to be strong by Socrates and Glaucon when no one's strength is being challenged; Socrates includes it as a weakness to subversively acknowledge the strength-in-weakness in women that he just outlawed. In this way, he is putting a specifically different quality of women to work in his guardians, without publicly saying so.[45] This lightness, a quality which in Book II helps the pursuit of what the guardians catch sight of, is also an allusion to the hunting that Socrates laid down for his men and women at the beginning of the argument, the very thing he had to abandon in the face of Glaucon's principle. The reference to *elaphros* is a quiet way of describing the partnership of men and women in the same way as Socrates did before. Socrates also takes care to have the last word on strength and weakness in the Myth of Er: ἀσθένεια and ἰσχύς, if not quite *iskuros*, are two of the things that he recommends we reconsider at greater length, so that we are better capable of distinguishing the worthwhile life from the worthless (618d); the cross-reference is clear: better dialectic would do a better job of distinguishing these matters, and this is what Socrates recommends to his audience.

If Socrates had been talking to someone other than Glaucon, would this aspect of Kallipolis' constitution be different? Does Socrates have to essentially contract his plans for Glaucon's sake, or is he still following his basic outline? Let's consider the different scenarios. Socrates shows he is aware

of some sort of difference between men and women, and the difference such difference is said to make in terms of skill: could he publicly assert difference and still have all the constitutional measures he wants? It would certainly have been easy in one respect to have the women mind their own business and run the households, an alternative that holds a certain political stability; it's also a possibility to assert difference and still share out some of the rule, as in the case of the Athenian Stranger. Now, Socrates speaks against the customarily private realm of women, insofar as he speaks against private property and private households; indeed, he wishes to deny, at least for the guardians, that such prosecution of *to idion*, that which is one's own, has any political goods for rulers. As many have recognized, it is part of Socrates' plan for the guardians to make them as much like one whole organism as possible, as little as possible to be able to say "my own" (462a–d). This is possible when, among other things, he eliminates any private ownness from the guardians' life, whether by naked exercising, barrack housing, or the absence of knowledge of parentage. On the other hand, Socrates is known for claiming that the virtue of a man and a woman is the same, that both the management of the household and the city require the same things, justice and moderation, and that indeed, insofar as a woman is strong (ἰσχυρός), she does not differ from a man insofar as he is strong (*Meno* 72d–73c). While Socrates does speak disparagingly of both the womanish and the over-boldness of over-manliness, he is no friend to difference in the formal sense. In any case, it's worth noting that if he still secretly agreed with Glaucon, and considered that men were ultimately the stronger, he might as well have just agreed with Glaucon in the first place. Crucially, Socrates makes no mention of difference in weakness or strength when he gives a recapitulation of his best polity to his interlocutors in the *Timaeus* (18c).[46]

Glaucon's logos is still a fairly appropriate alternative for Kallipolis; in denying the harder case of difference, it easily denies *to idion*, and secures commonality, which goes along with that part of Socrates' aims. But, if what I've been saying about Glaucon's logos is true, there was something that Socrates was going to say about the commonality of men and women in the common hunt—but he deferred it. If Glaucon's principle does work decently well in Kallipolis, there's not a reason to start the idea of a longer road, and allude to the common hunt. It's not impossible, for instance, that Socrates might have abandoned a situation where men and women share the rule as beings all in the same category without hierarchy of degree, as equally capable—and still public—human beings. Certainly Glaucon's desire to rule is the more dramatically displayed as it stands. Moreover, the dramatic breakdown and rescue does put the desire to be best on the table, and, as I argued earlier, in a way that makes readers still on the hunt for further justice want still more. The truth is, few humans are truly satisfied with equality,

in whatever guise; most are in the same position as Glaucon: they'd take superiority if they could. This version of the story shows more about the war between the sexes than if Socrates had been able to carry out his plans without intervention. Socrates' solution, by combining his plans for a radically public life with Glaucon's desire to be safely stronger, provides an effective way for the argument to continue, one which is nevertheless revealing of the tensions involved.

NOTES

1. PDW, 94–131.

2. Blair notes that the logical consistency of the passage was never seriously in doubt until this brief spate of time beginning in 1970, which uses the strategy of observing the weakness of the examples rather than argument (PDW, 94); she correctly notices, as I'll later discuss, that the argument does not appeal to justice for the shift in women's role (PDW, 95). See Drew Hyland's discussion of the soundness of the logic in "Plato's Three Waves and the Question of Utopia" *Interpretation* 18 (1990): 91–109. While Sandford and Annas quarrel with the lack of argument for the principle that women are weaker (Sandford, *Plato and Sex*, 4; Annas, "*Plato's* Republic *and Feminism*," 4), I'll note that this Glauconian interpolation is the very thing my interpretation accounts for.

3. In the literature, this use of the verb "χράομαι," that humans be *used* as animals, is a common argument for the dehumanizing way Socrates treats the guardians at this point (see Saxonhouse, "Comedy in Callipolis," 898); but Socrates moves away from this language quickly.

4. Drew Hyland notes that this is the only time Socrates uses this respectable argumentative strategy in the *Republic* ("Plato's Waves," 94).

5. Aristotle begins his discussion in *Metaphysics* X of the precise difference between women and men using "γυναῖκα and ἀνδρές," but moves to "θῆλυς and ἄρσην" (X.9). Just like Socrates, Aristotle employs animal terms for sex to discuss the nature of the human animal; the difference being, that Aristotle speaks entirely out of political context, and so it is relatively easy for him to argue for species coherence.

6. Stella Sandford is right to point out that something other than the modern notion of "sex" as the bare bodily attribute of difference is work at this passage (*Plato and Sex*, 11–40); I share her sense of the troubling artificiality of the specifically modern notion of the "sex/gender" distinction, not to mention the worth of the project of using the Greeks to uncover the oddities of modernity in general (Ibid., 1–10). I'll note that my occasional usage of the 18th-century phrase "the sex" is a way of speaking of *genos* in English. Sandford's contention, however, that what *genos* implies in ordinary Greek usage is "different in every respect" does not seem quite right (Ibid., 30); rather, a sense of marked *opposition* is present, but as similar in being opposed sorts of groups fighting on the same battlefield; united in this tendency to warfare by being *anthropoi* both sides alike, as is witness to in Socrates' insistence that the ills of the *human* genos will not cease without philosophy (473c). This is why even

the eristical opponent describes the difference as "very great" (πάμπολυ) instead of "completely." Glaucon's naïve response ("but in what way do they not differ?") is part of his peculiarly poor sense of difference as such.

7. Socrates points out, however, that the contents of the Second Wave are hardly a wrangle, if they are possible and good (457d); while he thinks it's easier to prove the possibility and goodness of the First Wave, it remains more of a wrangle.

8. This quality of jockeying is what Virginia Woolf attempts to describe in *A Room of One's Own* as some "protest against some infringement of his power to believe in himself" (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929), 35.

9. Page speaks of this question as that which clouds the judgment in "The Unnamed Fifth: *Republic* 369d," *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy* 21, no. 1 (1993): 13.

10. James Adam, *The* Republic *of Plato*, vol. I, ed. James Adam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902), 285).

11. Aristophanes, *Women at the Thesmophoria*, in *Aristophanes III*, ed. and trans. Jeffrey Henderson, Loeb Classical Library 179 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), lines 799–804. Although de Beauvoir considers there to be no essential reason for such warfare, it's increasingly harder to continue to maintain, in the decades intervening since she wrote, a hope for any real alleviation of this human desire for such (*Second Sex,* 754).

12. Rosen notes that it's odd for dialectic to arrive in the First Wave, rather than in the company of the forms; he notes that Socrates does not use *diaresis* here but something like inductive reasoning (PRS, 176–7).

13. This is what Irigaray misses in Plato but also what she is trying to get at, when she contends that Western civilization has never yet adequately given thought or articulation to sexual difference, and that we must begin, even as a kind of salvation (*The Ethics of Sexual Difference* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 5–19). There's an irony present in her acceptance of the Enlightenment inheritance of reading Plato as a unified theory or treatise, that allows her to miss this aporia as stated.

14. Strauss, CM, 117; Bloom, IE, 382–3; Rosen, PRS, 181; Saxonhouse, "The Philosopher and the Female," 71.

15. Karl Marx speaks of bearing and mounting as the first division of labor; because he is against division of labor in general, his contempt for even these basic distinctions between male and female is amusingly consistent (*German Ideology,* in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 159). Some commentators find Socrates' description of these differences to *both* be a reference to sexual position (Saxonhouse, "Philosopher and the Female," 896), though only the second verb justifies this.

16. *A Room of One's Own*, 37.

17. Bloom is also less magnanimous than Glaucon, remarking it is "highly improbable that any women will even be considered for membership in the higher classes" (IE, 383); Benardete says "that [women] are on the whole weaker than men should entail that in a sex-blind test for admission into the city, most would not pass" (SSS, 113); see also David Levy's recent affirmation of such mathematics (*Eros and Socratic Political Philosophy*, 17).

18. Rosen has a better gloss of Glaucon's sense of how these two principles work together: "the point is not the perfect equality of men and women but the capacity of women to compete with men for any job at all" (PRS, 180).

19. Saxonhouse probably pushes this argument the furthest; she contends that "equality" is achieved in the argument by a reduction of human beings to animals ("Comedy in Callipolis," 896); though at this point, the argument is from skill, which animals do not archetypically possess. But pressing her point further: she claims that "Socrates in part captures the humor of the notion [of equality] by making men look to the animal kingdom for the model of sexual equality"; she ridicules the notion that the situation Socrates describes is anything other than a notion wholly "alien to Greek thought" (896). She does allow that people look slightly more "equal" when considered as animals, but only in the respect that, since animals are fundamentally bestial, humans are debased by the comparison into equally bestial creatures (898); she indicates her predilection for strong natural difference between the sexes, describing Socrates' action in the First Wave as unjust because of this (888). Her argument seems to be something like, so little is equality a real possibility for humans that Socrates dramatizes this by appealing to a realm with even less equality (898). But this assumes that the animal realm is a Hobbesian nightmare—it anthropomorphizes the animal kingdom, essentially. Such natural differences, should indeed they come from nature, would be *more* apparent, not less, if the guardians were really being treated as merely animals by Socrates. Furthermore, were the notion that aptitudes were scattered across the sexes so wholly alien to Greek thought, Glaucon, already starving for honor in this twist of the conversation, would certainly have rejected it; but as I have pointed out, he responds with surprising generosity.

20. Xenophon *Oikonomikos* vii.35–6; Lewis, *The Athenian Woman*, 75.

21. Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 141, 232. See also Hector's suggestion that the Trojans propitiate Athena with a πέπλος at *Iliad* VI.269–79. Shorey suggests the conection between Socrates' peplos and Athena's (*Republic* I, 198).

22. The Bendideia is in early June, and the Panathenaia in July/August; the Panathenaia arrives not too long after the Bendidea; see Zdravko Planinc*, Homer Through Plato: Poetry and Philosophy in the Cosmological Dialogues* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 28. See also Dillon, GW, 58.

23. As Burkert reasons, Athena's many spheres of influence are united by a sort of civilizing force, dependent on "the just division of roles among women, craftsmen, and warriors" (*Greek Religion*, 141).

24. For custom, see *Laws*, 781c; for nature, 781a.

25. Strauss points out that this claim of superior strength in everything leaves out child-bearing (CM, 116). Saxonhouse argues from this, rather than from weaving or other arts, that Socrates has ignored women's nature or φύσις, and thus their excellence or ἀρετή; for her, childbirth is central to her understanding of femininity as a poetic trope ("The Philosopher and the Female," 71).

26. George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (London: Zodiac Press, 1952), 229. The quotation is from the 21st chapter.

27. A modern example of this kind of attempt can be seen in the early 20th century, when male doctors attempted to "perfect" nursing by introducing such practices as scouring the nipples with sandpaper before the birth of the child: see the work of midwife Ina May Gaskin, *Ina May's Guide to Breastfeeding* (New York: Random House, 2011), 258–76.

28. The documentary *The Business of Being Born* describes this phenomenon well; in the early 20th century, male doctors attempted to get the practice of female

midwives banned (dir. Abby Epstein (Burbank, California): New Line Home Entertainment, 2008). The idea is that doctors, with their modern intelligence, improve and triumph over feminine instinct and private custom. Again, the joke is not merely that it's ridiculous to do this, but also that plenty of people are actually tempted so to do.

29. Bloom, for instance, would claim the best soul possesses both masculine and feminine qualities (IE, 384); but he seems fairly certain that men would possess both best (IE, 383). For the interpretation that Socrates re-writes women as men, see Saxenhouse, "Philosopher and Female," 83.

30. Strauss, CM, 127; Benardete, SSS, 115; and Saxonhouse, "Comedy in Callipolis," 896.

31. For the notion of "desexed" see Rosen, PRS, 186; Nichols, review of *Women in Political Thought*, 246–7; Saxonhouse, "Philosopher and Female," 75; and McCoy, "City of Sows," 157; in chapter 9 I discuss the question of child-bearing at length. Mary Nichols describes this dialectic as abstracting from the body (*Socrates and the Political Community*, 106), which in turn treats the body as without *telos* and endlessly manipulable, which would indeed be a problem; but Socrates hasn't precisely abstracted from the body. Instead, he returns the body to the pre-political as a basis for denying the rhetorical strength of nature, ironically enough. Nichols' attempt to describe what goods a *telos* based on difference might have is heroine-esque; but her account is caught by the notion that the female loves its own *more*, rather than according to its kind (104), and so remains trapped in questions of degree; for more on this, see chapter 6.

32. Rosen considers women to be "divided in their own nature," and asks us to consider that it may be an injustice against them to have been born women at all (PRS, 178). It seems that he still considers women to be essentially men, but with one superadded problem. He also contends that the *Republic* as a whole is a "masculine daydream" (PRS, 186); Nichols makes similar claims: she finds that "the *Republic* attacks the womanly," and that "the city of the *Republic* is stripped of any element peculiar to women"; the *Symposium* by contrast is the feminine dialogue (review of *Women in Western Political Thought*, by Susan Okin, *Political Science Reviewer* 13 (1987): 246–7). For *oikeia pathe* ("residential emotions"?), see *Metaphysics* X.9, 1058b22.

33. This is the sort of competition between twoness that, to give the lady her due, Camille Paglia speaks to the need for; though to be sure, Socrates' version is less fancifully Nietzschean—and recognizes the presence and need for the governing third. Paglia speaks to the problem of androgyny without internal tension and balance in *Sexual Personae* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 489. Julia Kristeva's notion that the self finds self-knowledge and maturity in the choice of *one* sex over all, and her critique of the aimlessness of the androgyne is intriguing (*Tales of Love* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 71), though I'll note that the aimlessness she describes does not seem descriptive of the ethos of, for instance, David Bowie, androgyne without parallel. Socrates is not suggesting we attempt to be the whole human being by insisting we really are both; but that even within being quite definitely male or female, we seek the full range of human qualities. Stella Sandford's work is particularly helpful here: she argues that it's precisely because the Greek language lacked the modern sex/gender distinction, that Socrates is able to argue that an individual human being could possess a balance of all human qualities (*Plato and Sex*, 21).

34. There is a tendency to regard any natural difference other than the one Socrates names as "natural inequality," a revealing phrase which equates difference with *political* "inequity"; see Julia Annas, "Plato's *Republic* and Feminism," 316; and Natalie Harris Bluestone, *Women and the Ideal Society*, 9. Writer bell hooks is eloquent on the narrowness of this vision of equality with men on the part of Second Wave white liberal middle-class feminism (by which is meant, powerful men, rather than the large number of men without the respect, wealth, and security of the ruling class), and the underlying desire for power or "class privilege" that this demand for equality represents (*Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1984), 18–19, 68–9). In Alain Badiou's odd and occasionally interesting mash-up of the *Republic*, he rewrites the First Wave without the notion of men's relative strength, instead having his Socrates affirm women's relative strength or "resiliency" at the behest of an additional female interlocutor, though he leaves out Glaucon's initial hesitation (*Plato's* Republic (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 157).

35. For instance, consider Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, 57–100; and Luce Irigaray, "Sorcerer Love: A Reading of Plato's *Symposium*, Diotima's Speech," in *Feminist Interpretations of Plato*, 181–96; also Nancy Tuana and William Cowling, "The Presence and Absence of the Feminine in Plato's Philosophy," ibid., 243–69. Likewise David Halperin's popular essay, "Why is Diotima a Woman," in *100 Years of Homosexuality: And Other Essays on Greek Love* (Oxford: Routledge, 2010), 118–211. Irigaray spends time with the *Republic* in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, though she remains much farther from the text than in her reading of Diotima's speech; while she provides the text of the First Wave, she focuses on the imagery of Book VII's cave and the images of knowledge (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 243–365.

36. This is the same kind of strength that Thrasymachus considers to be the best part of justice; his definition at 338c1 reads "τὸ δίκαιον οὐκ ἄλλο ἢ τὸ τοῦ κρείτονος συμφέρον"; justice is nothing other than the advantage of the stronger.

37. Strength and skill each have their proponents, and are represented as perennial opponents: the story of Ares and Hephaestus in *Republic* 390c is an example of skill beating strength; Hera's grudging retreat from Zeus in *Iliad* I.560–583 is an example of strength giving serious pause to skill or craft. I will note, that Socrates' reference to "bodies suited to their task" is usefully paired with Aristotle's contention that animals with a finer or softer sense of touch are the more intelligent (*De Anima* II.9).

38. Glaucon also shows reluctance to admit women into the front lines in Socrates' longer exposition of common warfare in the Second (471d); the question of possibility distracts him and Socrates from settling it directly.

39. *Laws* 805a; for heavy arms, see 794d; the Stranger makes his case in part from the fact that he knows of women who excel at horseback, the bow, and other arms, in the vicinity of the Black Sea (804e). Stephen Berg remarks that Socrates does not mean us to take seriously his contention that women should participate in war ("The 'Woman Drama,'" 60); but it seems that Socrates' insistence on this point is shared even by his more prudent law-giving counterpart, with rather better reason. See Kochin's point about the difference between aggressive war and protective war, GR, 71.

40. Strauss considers strength a difference "most relative to fighting" (CM, 118) but he later observes that the guardians, in being characterized by philosophy and war, are akin to Athena, the virgin goddess who was not born from a womb, and

thus not part of the cycle of civic domesticity (CM, 112). Burkert explains that while Ares is the god of war properly speaking, he represents a rougher, more force-driven approach, while Athena "cultivates the war-dance, tactics, and discipline" (141). As the Athenian Stranger implies by his ready faith in women who cultivate the bow (804e), it's not difficult to notice that the arts for which Paris is derided as unmanly, are easily enough practiced by women; the point is, Greek warfare *already* contains the need for several sorts of arts.

41. "someone with the power to do [injustice] and who was a man in truth," 359b.

42. Consider Anne Eliot's difficulty when she attempts to argue against "the too common idea of spirit and gentleness being incompatible with one another" (Jane Austen, *Persuasion*, Modern Library Edition (New York: Random House, 1995), 124). Glaucon agrees that strength is necessary for the rulers, but with a "by Zeus!" says it won't be easy to keep such men from harming the citizens. There seems the possibility that gentleness has the potential to undermine strength for him; Socrates leaves out gentleness in his final description of the nature required, saying only that they need to be fast, strong, and spirited.

43. Rosen (PRS, 182) and Hyland (93) stress that the principle is only about physical strength, while Bloom (IE, 383) and Benardete (*SSS*, 113) see it as a metaphor for the mind as well.

44. 375a5. These are the only two instances of it in the *Republic*. It also appears at *Phaedrus* 256b, to describe the light and winged state of the soul who, with the help of philosophy, lives well on earth and has wings after death.

45. While Benardete remarks that "woman comes too late" into the *Republic* (SSS, 114), that the quality of ἐλαφρός is already present in Book II suggests otherwise.

46. Socrates' language of attunement at Timaeus 18c is a striking but quite different way of speaking to the balance of forces. I will note, that any attempt to parse what Plato's character Timaeus has to say on the nature of the woman question simply has to be understood in light of his character as an astronomer who has made a study of "the nature of the whole" (27a). This is the crucial first step that many, despite valiant efforts to understand the dialogues as a corpus, fail, as in the heroic but ultimately too rigidly analytical attempt of Elena Blair (PDW, 132–51). An opening question has to be something like, why is Timaeus admired by Socrates, yet ends up producing a very different account of women's nature? See Zuckert, 14, 422.

Chapter 3

The Conflict of Thumos and Eros in the Hunt

In the First Wave, Socrates initially described the partnership between his male and female guardians as a common hunt (συνθερεύειν, 451d). Although Glaucon's objections derailed the conversation off into another direction, Socrates returns to the image in the Second Wave, again making the common hunt the activity that is representative of the male and female partnership, where they will rule and be educated together (466d). If Glaucon's addition to the women's law is the principle that men be taken as stronger and women weaker, one of Socrates' most striking counter-contributions is this description of partnership-as-hunt—and yet it's certainly an odd thing for Socrates to mention. Although hunting is a familiar Platonic symbol for the work of philosophy, from the *Symposium* to the *Sophist*, it's not clear why it shows up at the beginning of Book V of the *Republic*; one does not think of philosophy in the *Republic* as associated with the hunt, rather if anything, with the practice of war.

In what follows, I will examine Socrates' description of the common hunt for his male and female guardians, in the light of his description of hunting as of one of the things that joins his city-building project after Glaucon has rejected the "city of pigs," as one of the ream of activities present in the newly feverish city which are "*not* in the city because of the necessary" (373b). Hunting as a Platonic trope has to be distinguished from the question of war and its ends; such distinction allows the reader to consider the extent to which hunting can be pinned down as an erotic venture. Even in the *Republic*, Socrates allows *eros*, that notorious aspect of soul as often praised as it is derided, to play a part in his vision of philosophy at its height, and the hunt is a strong addition to other more obvious references to this pernicious yet loveable human quality. I will argue that the presence of the hunt is an early herald of new status of philosophy in Book V, and a foretaste of what

Socrates later makes explicit, that women will participate in the philosophic education alongside the men.

Hunting as a trope, of course, is not thought of in conjunction with the *Republic* in general, and hardly in association with the First Wave in particular. It tends to be thought of as what casts the guardians as *merely* dogs.[1] Dogs are certainly a limited metaphor for what we might ask of philosophical nature: but hunting adds the fascinating element of *eros* to an otherwise spirited endeavor, and as such, it has the potential to explain the drawing power of the philosophy described in the so-called theoretical books of our work. Now, rather than muddy the waters with 20th-century accounts of hunting, such as Ortega y Gasset or even Michael Pollan, aside from Plato himself I will follow Plato's contemporary and fellow lover of Socrates, Xenophon, author of *On Horses and Hounds* and *On Hunting*. Now, of course, Xenophon is an author with his own ends and rhetorical purposes distinct from Plato; hunting for him is the activity leading to good citizenship, and is a natural antidote to sophistry (*On Hunting*, 13). But as vivid description of historical practice, and sound advice for the actual practice of hunting with dogs, Xenophon's work is attested to by no less an authority than Vicki Hearne, horse and dog trainer and essayist *par excellence*; as such, Xenophon's descriptions are an invaluable addition to what otherwise threatens to devolve into sophistical image-juggling, particularly ill-suited for a discussion of the hunt.[2]

Now, any discussion of hunting as a trope in the Platonic corpus calls into question with peculiar force the current battleground among the *philoplatones* (φιλοπλάτωνες), that is, the lovers of Plato, whether *eros*, *thumos*, or reason itself—the three parts of the soul Socrates dramatically implicates in *Republic* IV as the elements involved in his definition of justice within the soul—which one among them is really to be preferred. Indeed, each part has its partisans. In the *Republic*, of course, Socrates concludes that each part ought to mind its own business: Reason is to be in charge, with the desires (of which *eros* is on the level of desire for food and drink) are at the bottom, while *thumos* or spirit is second in command, enforcing the commands of reason and keeping close watch on the pesky desires lest they break out of order. But in the corpus as a whole, the question becomes more complicated. Those who have read the *Symposium* have also witnessed Socrates' avowed preference for Eros, crowned as king of desires, as the motive force for the philosophic life, as well as for knowing itself. Plato's cosmos forces us to consider radically different images of the same thing; and to learn from the shape of the whole.

The debate as it stands has fallen into something of a dialectical dead-end, by making the argument a choice or a stand for one abstracted part of the soul or the other; and certainly such contrasts help draw out the dangers and difficulties for the lover of any one piece. But to simply to prefer or argue for one or the other is to mistake the elements for the cosmos—not to mention

failing to ask the question whether any one part can be said to be fully distinct at all. In what follows, I will use hunting as a prime example of how Socrates' triad of the just soul is a useful tool, but ultimately still an *instrument* to help us parse a moment; not a way to categorize something once and for all. (Indeed, it is only fair to alert the reader, who may even be innocent of such warfare, that I consider neither *eros* nor *thumos* to be a good without qualification—nor either guilty until proven innocent.) Hunting is a peculiarly good case where both elements are clearly implicated by Plato in the character of its activity as a whole. Investigating the trope of hunting allows us to be thoughtful about the ways these two qualities can be present in one whole human activity, and how careful balance can produce something like a worthy metaphor for the philosophy we would wish to practice—as well as marking out the dangers of what we might nevertheless fall into.

THE HUNTING GUARDIANS

Socrates opens the First Wave with the following:

> Do we suppose that the females of the guardian dogs must guard the things the males guard along with them and hunt with them, and do the rest in common; or must they watch the house as though they were rendered powerless through the bearing and rearing of the puppies, while the males toil and have all the care of the flock bestowed upon them? (451d)

Socrates is not wrong to say that we are in a familiar argumentative position: he's asking us to recall his infamous image from Book II, which describes the rulers as dogs guarding the city, that is, as guardians (375a). There, the dog was the animal whose temperament set the standard for what was desired for the rulers (375e). Possessing at once the qualities of gentleness (πρᾴους) and fierceness (ἄγριοι), they were friendly protectors of the city, philosophic insofar as they could be tame with those whom they dwell with and rough or wild (χαλεπαίνει) to the strange, all of which Socrates identifies as a kind of love of learning (φιλομαθὲς, 376b). Although Glaucon at first saw no way to reconcile the qualities of gentleness and fierceness, Socrates announces that the nature of the dog *qua* spirited rescues them from this contradiction (375d–e). As noted previously, the guardians in Books II–IV are philosophic in a specific and partial sense. While to love that which is well-known and with what one dwells—even, as Socrates notes, if they have never done one a kindness (376a)—is no small feat, considering the prickliness of certain truths. Yet likewise to bark at that which is unknown and strange is no one's idea of philosophy in its highest flowering.[3] This dog-like state is weighted

heavily toward the *thumos*, and the work of the education of music and gymnastic is to balance and temper this quality (400e–401d; 416d).

In Socrates' new description in Book V, the guardians are still herding a flock; it's still their job to be domestic, and tied to their sheep citizens. Hunting, however, is a new addition to their duties; it seems to have the potential to be more than just a synonym for guarding. Nor is this the only time in Book V that Socrates speaks of men and women hunting in common; as I noted in chapter 2, there is a kind of summary of women's political participation in the Second Wave, where Socrates reminds that the men and women will guard together and hunt together as dogs (466d). This conclusion comes before the subject moves on to warfare in general and away from women specifically; Socrates' references to hunting, in fact, bookend the women's law. I noted in the previous chapter, however, that hunting doesn't form part of the substance of the argument: Socrates abandons talk of hunting as soon as Glaucon pronounces his caveat of weaker and stronger (451d). But the fact that Socrates brings hunting back in his conclusion, making sure he ultimately gets Glaucon's assent to it—his strongest assent to women's rule in the book—suggests that hunting has importance to Socrates' thinking on the subject. Hunting certainly sets a high bar as a model for the political partnership of men and women: the choice of hunting companions is more difficult than that of companions for a feast; there's more scope for freedom in the choice, more than in that of the shipmate or messmate. Why does Socrates bring hunting up, drop it, then bring it up again?

Hunting is a familiar Platonic trope, known to us as associated with *eros* and philosophy in the dialogues *Symposium* (203b) and the *Sophist* (218d ff.) respectively; because of this, it's tempting to leap ahead to some symbolic meaning in the dialogue at hand. I wish to move slowly, however, to tease out the precise threads of meaning. First of all, what does Socrates intend to prescribe, on the most literal level, by including hunting as an activity or sport for the guardians? In other dialogues, hunting is much more abstract; but here in the *Republic*, it begins as a human activity, one among many that Socrates and his interlocutors institute for the citizens in Book II. What role or place does Socrates give hunting in his city?

A first thought on hunting might be that it is the kind of thing done to sustain life, the pastime of the countrified: something needful for continued existence. On this reasoning, hunting would seem to be something fittingly practiced in the most necessary city Socrates describes in Book II, where the citizens appear as practically animals themselves—the city Glaucon famously describes as one fit only for pigs (372d). But instead, hunting is the first proper activity Socrates introduces into Glaucon's feverish city, along with couches and pastry chefs, poets, and courtesans. In fact, Socrates offers a specific account of what unites this list of desiderata: they are "*not* in the

city because of necessity" (373b). The position of hunting as first in the list is emblematic of this change: the transition from the merely necessary and thus limited existence, to that human state which consciously attempts to mark its freedom from such limitations.[4] Socrates, therefore, is describing a very particular kind of hunting: the kind practiced in leisure, the desirable leisure humans attain once necessity can be for the moment put off. This kind of hunting is the sort of thing done in proper style by those who can afford the accoutrements, with horses and hounds; it's likely how Glaucon himself practices the sport—we learn in the Second Wave that Glaucon has "hunting dogs and countless fighting birds" at home (459a). This is also the sort of hunting the gentlemanly Athenian Stranger speaks of as the only and best kind for all men who wish to cultivate courage (*Laws* 824a); likewise it is the sort on which Xenophon spends most of his time in *On Hunting*, recommending the practice to those who would become good citizens possessed of every virtue (*On Hunting*, 1.18, 13.17). But although Socrates' hunting is leisurely, he doesn't give it any specific civic purpose as Xenophon and the Athenian Stranger do; instead, he groups it with things done for private recreation. In any case, such leisurely hunting takes place in a private spot: not the domestic privacy of one's own (τό ἴδιον), but an isolated (ἐρήμος) locale, a lonely, desolate sort of place; a place privative of cities. Consider Euripides: "Oh for the joy of a fawn [who escapes the hunt] into the blessed lonely (ἐρημίαις) forest" (*Bacchae* 866–73). For the citizens of the fevered city in speech, such leisurely, private hunting would have to involve going beyond the walls of the city, into the countryside, leaving the other citizens behind.

THE ART OF HUNTING AND THE ART OF WAR

Here I must make an important distinction: in Plato's writings, war and hunting are often closely associated, and this association might seem in conflict with hunting as a free, private pastime. For instance, in the *Sophist*, when the Eleatic Stranger defines war as the forcible hunting of tame men, this description tempts even the mild Theaetetus to say, "Beautiful!" (222c). Likewise, the Athenian Stranger speaks of war as a variety of hunting, the land-animal kind; both of these Platonic genealogies preempt Aristotle's strikingly similar account in the *Politics*.[5] Are hunting and war the same kind of activity, with hunting merely as the more private but no less savage genus? When war and hunting are tied together in this way, they appear largely thumotic; they are associated with the triumph of the catch, or the will to victory, and a subtle bloodlust merely heightens the savagery; indeed, justice seems to make no part of any of it. Is this the significance of hunting in the *Republic*? Indeed, in Book V, Socrates turns from the image of the common hunt between men

and women to their common participation in warfare (466e). The question of the relation between hunting and war forces us to examine our notions of the relation between *eros* and *thumos*, the very relationship that the *Republic*'s entire conversation turns on.

To consider the question justly, attention must be paid to what Socrates says about the relation of hunting and war, in contrast to his two nameless and/or cityless counterparts. In the *Symposium*, Socrates reports what he claims to have learned about the erotic art from Diotima; there, Eros is described as a *deinos* hunter:

> But on his father's side he is a schemer after the beautiful and the good; he is brave, impetuous, and high-strung, a *deinos* hunter, always weaving snares, resourceful in his pursuit of intelligence, a lover of wisdom all his life, *deinos* with enchantments, potions, and sophistics. (*Symposium* 203d)

Eros' peculiar character is finely drawn: a picture emerges of a desirous, wily, scheming sort of thing. Now, that Eros himself is emblematically a hunter is a strong reason to consider that the art of hunting must possess some erotic quality, and so distinct from simply the warmonger. On the other hand, it's possible that Eros is a hunter because he wants victory over the beloved as hunters do, which may indeed appear to turn the tide back to *thumos*.[6] But paradox aside, this description does tilt the balance toward hunting as first and foremost an erotic art; it's an art practiced in secret, rather than in the openness preferred by spirit.[7] It appears to be a solitary activity: the child of Resource and Poverty does not require a panoply of equipment and attendants, but shoeless and homeless, he schemes alone (203d). The *Symposium*, of course, is an erotic dialogue *par excellence*; it's fitting that what transpires is colored in favor of *eros*, and so, it's fitting that hunting appears there in erotic guise. But the *Symposium* is not the only place Socrates speaks of hunting in this light. In the *Lysis*, where friendship is discussed not in isolation from *eros*, Socrates wishes to convince his interlocutor Hippothales not to compose poems on victorious love before he has won the beloved. "Anyone who is wise in the erotic art (τὰ ἐρωτικά)," Socrates remarks, "takes care not to drive away the beloved in this way . . . for what would we think of a hunter who would scare away his quarry in hunting and make it harder to catch?"[8] Not much, is the response; by appealing to the good hunter as a model, Socrates persuades his interlocutor to practice the erotic art more carefully, and to delay, downplay, even demote the thumotic victory (205e–206c). The victory is certainly desired in the midst of the activity, but it can't be allowed to lead the hunt; the good hunter moves more carefully, and it is this which is properly the erotic art—that is, the art Socrates claims to know something about (*Phaedrus* 257a). Xenophon gives similar advice for the literal and not

just metaphorical practice of hunting: "When it comes to tracking the hare, let him not be too zealous. To do everything possible to effect a quick capture shows perseverance, but it is not hunting" (VI.8).

What Socrates says about hunting makes a strong contrast to what other major Platonic characters profess. What does it mean that in Plato's dialogues, hunting appears sometimes as primarily a thumotic activity, and sometimes as the epitome of Eros and the erotic art itself? We can at least say this: it's remarkable that the activity of hunting can have two guises at all. Nor can we say, given the evidence, that hunting is *either* thumotic or erotic merely; potentially, it appears to have elements of both. In contrast to the two Strangers, Socrates stresses its erotic aspect on certain key occasions; moreover, the *thumos*' love of victory is turned to the fulfillment of *eros*' desire; in Socrates' version of hunting, *eros* is in charge: it is the ruler of the *thumos*. While Diotima speaks of Eros as that wishes to have what it loves exist *for it* forever, those who love wisdom are caught between knowledge and ignorance, without final capture of the latter (204b); the hunt in this guise is eternal.

THE WAR BETWEEN THUMOS AND EROS

But what of hunting in the *Republic*? What guise does Socrates give it here, erotic or thumotic, beauty-loving or victory-loving? Let's consider how Socrates relates hunting to war as a way of opening up the question. In Book II, war arrives in the feverish city not too long after the multitudes of hunters, couches, jewelry, and poets (373b, 373e); this echoes the pattern we noticed in Book V, where war also arrives after hunting (451d, 452a). Again, Socrates' gleeful multiplication of the professions of the fevered city marks the change from living an animal life bound by necessity, to a recognizably human life marked by the desire to negate that necessity as a sign of our freedom.[9] We begin, as Glaucon describes it, as natural possessors of *pleonexia*, that is, the human desire for more (359c); this "more," he remarks, is what we "chase" or pursue (διώκειν); we hunt for more.[10] This *pleonexia* finds us dissatisfied with what we already have, and so effects the transition from pigs to fever. In fact, *eros* itself is only recognizable as *eros* when it is emancipated from mere want; the fevered city gives birth to *eros* as such.[11] Once this movement from the piggish city to the fevered one is made, war that involves the pageantry of the *thumos* is available, as expressive of the desire for more land and more possessions (373e). But Socrates speaks of war first as part of the most necessary city: it is a danger, alongside poverty, to be watchful of (373c). Again, hunting is the very first activity that Socrates brings in as something in the city not from necessity; war, by contrast, is represented as actually

necessary.[12] Now, the question of the nature and merit of war is notoriously difficult, and indeed, Socrates announces he will postpone it (373e); indeed, it has been observed that war is never said to be bad without qualification in the dialogues.[13] But here, hunting's nature is less vexed: in Socrates' description, hunting keeps company with the playfulness of peace, pastry chefs and courtesans, appealing food as well as appealing ladies; hunting accompanies more sophisticated desire. We know from the Second Wave that Glaucon is primed to consider hunting as representative of this sort of graceful pastime among his other citified habits. It's striking, then, that Socrates makes sure that hunting begins the list of new professions at 357a: he means for Glaucon the hunter to be satisfied that the new city will really give scope to his spirited and erotic longings.[14] It's a clever Socratic move: hunting topically appeals to Glaucon's expressed concern about the availability of meat, but also speaks to the underlying desire for life on a more civilized plane. Hunting on this logic appears to be about more than meat; it offers something more like the range of desire for its own sake. An initial appeal to the activity of professional warfare, by contrast, would not speak as directly to the *eros* of this appeal. Even in the *Republic*, it seems, Socrates makes use of the private, erotic aspects of hunting that he speaks of in the *Symposium* and *Lysis*.

It is the common cant, however, that the *Republic* is no erotic dialogue; *eros* is ignored, vilified, and abstracted from as much as possible.[15] Now, this distinction is certainly dialectically useful; but we should not let it obscure the finer points of Platonic imagery and action. After all, there are places where *eros* receives attention enough, notably Book VI, and in particular, Socrates explicitly attempts to make use of the erotic attraction of the male and female guardians for each other (468c). But is the hunt of the *Republic* an erotic hunt? After all, in Book VIII, the timocratic man, that lover of *thumos* beyond what is fitting, also loves gymnastics and hunting (549a); likewise, hunting is a representative activity of the student who loves hard work of the body and not the soul (535d); and so it seems hunting is present in its thumotic guise. But the fascinating thing is, hunting is not as obviously thumotic in the *Republic* as one would expect. Socrates never explicitly makes hunting and war part of the same genus, as the two other Platonic main characters do not hesitate to do. It will form a part of the male and female guardians' activities, alongside battle and guarding (466d), but Socrates does not make the link between hunting and war explicit; although indeed, it might have potentially helped bolster his argument for their participation in war. Xenophon makes it clear that, just as hunting is a task shared by dogs of both sexes, humans likewise of both sexes are practitioners: "For all men who have loved hunting have been good: and not men only, but those women also to whom the goddess has given this blessing, Atalanta and Procris and others like them (XIII.18)."

In contrast to Xenophon, Glaucon accedes more readily to women in war than women in the hunt; when Glaucon appends the further law that the successful warrior has the right to kiss who he pleases, boy or girl, during the campaign, he adds the women to this though Socrates only spoke of boys and youths (468b–c). He also ratifies Socrates' images of the honor the good men and women receive in war as "beautiful" (468e). In striking contrast, Glaucon announces his initial hesitation immediately after Socrates brings up common hunting; this is the moment at which he agrees that everything be in common, but taking the women as weaker (551e). It's not hard to imagine that the notion of women's participation in an activity for which he has special affection, might activate his natural allegiance to his own sex that much more. But in any case, the most telling evidence for the strange lack of hunting's obvious connection to spiritedness, is that it's not used as an illustration of the nature of the guardian dogs in Book II, though it would have been easy enough to do so. Fighting, by contrast, is: the dogs have strength to outfight what they apprehend (375a). Something is clearly changing when Socrates adds hunting to the mix in Book V, and bookends the women's law with this activity.

First, let's consider the question in terms of temperament, since that's why the metaphor of dogs was wanted in the first place. As Socrates had it, the activity of guarding required the balance of gentleness and fierceness of spirit (375e). Does hunting require the same temperament as guarding, or something different? In the case of dogs, the answer is clear: far from being temperamentally analogous, Xenophon recommends only certain specific breeds for hunting dogs.[16] Herd dogs, those who are excellent at guarding, must be content to stay in one place and limit their imagination to the expanse of the flock, and be friends to the known and enemies of the unknown. Hunting dogs, on the other hand, must have a certain taste and desire for the unknown as such; they have to range forward, always on the lookout for new courses the prey might take, and be keen to follow them out to the end.[17] As Xenophon has it,

> They will go forward with joy and ardor, disentangling the various tracks, double or triple—springing forward now beside, now across the same ones—tracks interlaced or circular, straight or crooked, close or scattered, clear or obscure, running past one another with tails wagging, ears dropped and eyes flashing. (VI.15)

Rather than bark at the unknown, they must want to chase after it. Nor does it seem like mere hunger that moves the hunting dog; after all, as companions of humans, they don't often eat what they seek. Even for Xenophon's hunting dogs, the meat is the nominal or originating end, but the chase itself becomes the true *telos*; he recommends letting the young dogs break up the hare but not eat it; when older they will refuse to eat it of themselves (VII.11).

What of hunting as a human activity? Is there any analogy between dogs and humans? Seth Benardete remarks that for the Eleatic Stranger, hunting appears to collapse the difference between humans and animals: human hunters are as beasts fighting beasts.[18] But what of Socrates' hunting guardians? We might ask the question like this: do Socrates' leisurely human hunters hunt for the meat of it? This formulation contains this error: it lumps the hunting of humans in with the merely necessary, or contends that the pastime camouflages the savage urge. The humor this question provokes, however, displays that the *mere* equation of humans and animal bloodlust strikes one as lacking some essential difference. Now, the practice of war may tempt human beings to consider each other as no more than beasts or even insects, as the Eleatic Stranger seems to intimate, with his insistence between the similarity of the general and the louse-catcher (*Sophist* 227b); though it's worth noting that Hegel argued for the opposite effect of a serious fight to the death.[19] But whatever the dialectical power or weakness of war, the good hunter—if only because his prey *begins* at a distance—becomes aware that his prey may elude him. He even must admit that the animal might have the potential to outwit his best stratagems; in this hunting logic, animals become as human, not the other way around. Socrates promotes this human logic even in war: he insists in Book V that Greeks should treat the bodies of fellow Greeks, at least, with respect (469b–470b). Does this logic hold for Socrates' description of hunting in Book II? The fact is, Socrates gives hunting a place of honor, and takes care to separate it from war; if we take his account seriously, that hunting is *not* a manifestation of the necessary, animal-like city, then hunting in the city in speech is a peculiarly human activity, and potentially more representative of human freedom than the practice of war. When hunting is the activity of leisure in a fevered city, human hunters have no need to eat what they catch; human hunters, as much as dogs or more, delight in the chase for its own sake. Its practitioners likewise require a taste for the unknown, to leave the city and enter wilder climes, merely for the pleasure of it. This characterization begins to sound like more than *thumos* is required for the ideal human hunter; only *eros* loves what is not yet one's own (*Symposium* 204a). Whatever the true relation between hunting and war, it appears to suit Socrates to represent it as primarily *humanly* erotic, even in a conversation where desire is often cast as the enemy.[20]

Now: should we admit the presence of *eros* in hunting, it has the potential to explain something important—the familiar use of the hunt as an image for philosophy. Socrates is fond of this conjunction: he speaks of hunting the beings at 66b in the *Phaedo*, hunting opinions in the *Phaedrus* at 262c, hunting the good in the *Philebus* at 20d, hunting for knowledge in the *Statesman* at 264a, and for knowledge as well at many points in the *Theaetetus* (198a, 199e, 200a). These instances are a partial catalogue of the verb θηράω/θηρεύω; likewise κυνηγέτης / κυνηγετικὸς (hunter, hunting) appear at *Euthyphro* 13a-b and

Laches 194b; Socrates also uses διώκειν, the first-order meaning of which is to hunt or chase, but is used metaphorically for pursuit or seeking. Nor is hunting just any metaphor for philosophy, but as we saw, it's an image of Socrates' own way of doing the work of philosophy—an image of one aspect of the erotic art. From what we've learned of hunting, why is it an appropriate image for philosophy in one of its guises? If hunting is an expression of activity beyond the necessary, something that transcends the merely animal, it is a peculiarly human way of taking the necessary activity *as* something done in the freedom of a chosen activity for leisure, a way of being *playful* about desire. Hunting as such is a sort of chthonic canonization of desire for its own sake: and anything that holds up desire as loveable for its own sake begins to sound like a worthy candidate for a metaphor for philosophy. In Diotima's language, one wishes the desired thing to be to or for you forever (205a); but lovers of wisdom must be willing to admit they stand in lack of godlike omniscience (204b).

Now, again, hunting as an actual practice of ordinary human beings often appears as a primarily thumotic activity; as I noted, Socrates also uses it to describe the timocratic man's predilections (549a). Agamemnon is an excellent example of a hunter who falls to this side; it was his boast that he could beat the hunting goddess Artemis at her game that led to her peculiarly harsh revenge, the sacrifice of his daughter Iphigeneia, before his pursuit of the Trojan War could go forward.[21] Xenophon has this to say on the subject: to see a hare "tracked, found, pursued, and caught" is so joyful (ἐπίχαρί) a thing to watch, it makes a man forget his heart's desire (ἐρῴη, V.33). Consider this: that hunting is often the pastime of the overly thumotic man because it *does* make one forgetful of *eros*; and so the soul is over-balanced in that way. Perhaps the difference between Xenophon's *On Hunting* and Plato on hunting is, Socrates recommends the practice of philosophy, imagined as a hunt, as the path to the love of wisdom where the goal may or may not be achieved; while Xenophon recommends the practice of hunting, imagined as philosophic, which sets one firmly on the path of wisdom and good citizenship.[22] This would explain the crucial pedagogic difference between the two: Xenophon considers that hunting as an activity is peculiarly suited to foment *philoponía*, love of work itself (I.7, I.12, VI.2); while Socrates specifically considers it as a sound practical measure, that can nevertheless cultivate the *thumos* too awkwardly if given pride of place (535d, 549a). And so, it is in the midst of an awareness of the dangers of thumotic hunting, that Socrates brings himself to insist nevertheless that the *good* hunter is a model for one wise in erotics, as in the *Lysis* (205a). The human model is the hunter who cares less for the number of what he has bagged, than to be once more in the chase itself.

Perhaps the reason why Socrates, in contrast to the Eleatic Stranger and Aristotle, doesn't conflate hunting and war, is that to do so would blur the lines between dialectic and eristic—the warlike pursuit of victory in

speech—which would threaten the good name of philosophy, which Socrates is of course anxious not do. Socrates characterizes eristic as over-manly and warlike in contrast to dialectic in the First Wave at 454a; in Book VII, describing the tendency of the young to fall into contradiction, he remarks "in this way the whole of philosophy comes into disrepute" (539c). And so, among lovers of Plato, the danger and the irony of dismissing one part of the soul, is that we have fallen into a hunting problem; and let our own pursuit of truth fall into an Agamemnon-like wish for triumph of some one idea, at the expense of whatever part of the soul happens to earn our particular ire.[23]

THE BEAUTY OF THE HUNT

In Book V, when Socrates adds hunting to the duties of the guardians at the beginning of the First Wave, he is doing something remarkable. He is requiring that the temperament of the guardians be different from what he initially described in Book II: their temperament will now contain an element of *eros*. This widens the possibilities for what they can be taught, and it adds a duty that is at odds with their civic responsibilities. In short, with his addition of hunting, Socrates is signaling a change he will soon make explicit: the Third Wave or Socratic proposal that the guardians will philosophize, and rule as philosophers (473d). Now, as I argued in chapter 1, the relation between the guardian class and legitimate philosophers is problematic; it looks as there will be but few philosophers coming from this educational system (503b), if even more than one; in fact, the city in speech may produce no legitimate philosophers at all, even if a legitimate philosopher would be required to rule it well.[24] But the graceful fiction is that in *this* city, somehow, the constitution will produce philosophers who rule; an initial exploration of this graceful fiction is required in order to ultimately reveal the underlying tension.[25] Socrates' reference to hunting is an early sign of what the guardians will be seeking for, the shape of their new activity.

Now, Socrates never outlines the practice in full practical detail as a human activity, since after all, he doesn't think it's that helpful. But both times Socrates refers to it in reference to the guardians, it is to describe the partnership of men and women, figured as hounds (451d, 466d); as a description of what *dogs* do, it is a sign of difference from what's previously been promised. Socrates remarked at the beginning of Book V that the question of women and children required him to start the argument over again completely, "from the very beginning" (450a); his new plans involve philosopher-kings ruling the city, and men and women will train for this task together. His brief references to hunting are a foretaste of the culmination of his new plans. While the problematic fact that hunting

appears at times either erotic or thumotic likewise displays the guardians' own struggles with these often competing aspects of soul, recognizing the hunting quality of the guardians is a useful way of thinking through what *eros* is nevertheless present in the guardians' philosophizing; nor, as I will next discuss, is this the only time the guardians are represented as in pursuit. But for now, what has been gained is a sense of the change from the philosophic dogs in Book II to the philosopher-kings of Book V: their duties and temperament have been enlarged to include hunting, and hunting provides a crucial bridge between dogs that merely bark at the unknown, and dogs that actively seek it out—and human beings who would one day practice dialectic, together.

NOTES

1. Rosen, PRS, 195, 172.

2. Hearne notes her debt to Xenophon in "Tracking Dogs, Sensitive Horses, and the Traces of Speech" in *Adam's Task: Calling Animals by Name* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2007), 84.

3. Contra Strauss, CM, 111. Consider Page: "The goodness of Polemarchian friendship is also the reason why the dogs that bark at those whom they do not know are nevertheless called noble" ("Polemarchus," 261).

4. In what follows, I am much indebted to Carl Page's interpretation of the important transition from most necessary to fevered city; he argues that the fevered city is a "more adequate and indeed, more serious, portrayal of the phenomena of human life" than the overly austere most necessary city ("The Truth about Lies in Plato's *Republic*," 7, 3–8).

5. *Laws* VII, 823b–824a. Aristotle posits that the skill of warfare includes that of hunting, casting war as the hunt of men who, like wild beasts, will not submit (*Politics* I.8, 1256b23). The switch from the initial ἄγριος to τὰ θηρία, a more humanly wild sort of beast, is suggestive.

6. For the difficulties involved in any clean division between *thumos* and *eros*, as presented in the psychology of the *Republic*, see Ronna Burger, "The Thumotic and Erotic Soul: Seth Benardete on Platonic Psychology," *Interpretation* 32, no. 1 (2005): 57–74.

7. As Aristotle describes it at *Ethics* VII.6, 1149b15.

8. *Lysis*, 206a.

9. Page points the reader to Bloom, who has it that the precondition for virtue is the "emancipation of desire" (IE, 347).

10. Page has it: "The human negation of the given is comprehensive, totalizing, and thus intrinsically prone to the vice of *pleonexia*, of wanting more than is sufficient" ("Unnamed Fifth," 9).

11. As Page describes it, the fevered city "acknowledges the forces of spirit, imagination, and erotic desire" (Unnamed Fifth," 8); it seems that mere want and

aggression become something more recognizably human when this transition is accomplished.

12. In this I differ from Page's interpretation; he stresses that war is an expression of *pleonexia* coeval with the "more civilized and noble inflections of indefinite desire" ("Unnamed Fifth," 9). But what to make of Socrates' connection of war to the necessary city, but not of hunting? Of course, hunting obviously has its Paleolithic inflection which Socrates is pointedly ignoring; but the difference is striking. One possibility is that hunting satisfies *pleonexia* on a higher order than war; Socrates suppresses the Paleolithic presence of hunting because he wants to stress to Glaucon, for pedagogical reasons, the primacy of hunting over war and so the primacy of *eros*.

13. I.M. Crombie, *An Examination of Plato's Volumes* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), i, 182.

14. Page's reading is all the more noteworthy for his rare acknowledgement that Glaucon's character contains both these aspects in a manner specific to Glaucon.

15. Strauss, CM, 111; Rosen, ("The Role of Eros in Plato's Republic," *Review of Metaphysics* 18, no. 3 (1965): 453).

16. *On Hunting* III.1; IX, X.1.

17. See also Vicki Hearne's discussion of the special virtues and temperament needed for a hunting dog ("Tracking Dogs," 80–90).

18. See *Plato's* Laws*: The Discovery of Being* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 228.

19. Hegel describes this moment of recognition as the result of a fight to the death in *Phenomenology of the Spirit* §178–196; whereas the fighter reaches this moment *after* the fight if at all, the good hunt *begins* with this recognition.

20. Benardete calls hunting a placeholder for *eros* in the *Laws* (*Plato's* Laws, 226).

21. Aeschylus tells this well at *Agamemnon* 183–257.

22. The final paragraphs of *On Hunting* abound with the real benefits the hunter will obtain; some of this is dramatic and/or rhetorical flourish, but Xenophon consistently maintains hunting's utility in improving one's wisdom, as well as the ability to speak and act beautifully (XIII.10–18; I.18).

23. In this awkward camp I would put David Levy's blame of *eros* for its so-called irrational tendencies, which demands that he cast the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*' accounts of *eros* as consistent with the *Republic*'s, rather than intriguingly opposed (*Eros and Socratic Political Philosophy*, 151ff). Although Eros, which he considers in Socrates' accounts of it, to be reasonably parsed by the English phrase "romantic love" (1n1), may be a sort of stepping stone to aspects of better wisdom (111), it leaves one with only questionable knowledge of self and of justice (108–111), and ultimately leads to irrational beliefs (such as the "religious" sort (42)); it is itself an "unphilosophic" experience (151). Despite the frequent repetition that love, that is, romantic love which contains a temptation toward the sexual, can sometimes be helpful in certain transitional ways, it remains attached to a "corrupt and brutal pursuit of sexual pleasure" (109), and can only be cured by the chastity that philosophy encourages (Ibid.). And so, his account's ultimate rejection of *eros* stubbornly conceived of as *merely* love to begin with, is nevertheless reminiscent of a sort of Augustinian ire against man's temptation to fall away from heavenly thought into earthly loves,

and stands as an essentially religious rejection of the partial goods of *eros*, a sort of *Secretum Secretorum* for the modern age. The temptation to reject a partial good absolutely is something that even Socrates during the course of the *Republic*'s blame of *eros*, cannot bring himself completely to do, as seen in his willingness to speak of "true eros for true erotic philosophy" (499d).

24. Socrates dodges the question at 497a–d; on this point see Benardete, SSS, 181; and Rosen, PRS, 210.

25. Strauss has it that is it "required" that the "fiction of the possibility of the just city be maintained" (CM, 129).

Chapter 4

Taming the Hunting Women

The *Republic* is not thought of as a Platonic dialogue associated with hunting, any more than it is considered among the dialogues concerned with *eros*, that ever-fascinating quality of soul; yet when one begins to look around, hunting has an intriguing place and a role in the evening's narrative, one that goes far beyond merely being the symbol of the partnership of the male and female guardians in Book V. The troops of hunters who join the newly feverish city in speech in Book II, join alongside the first women who are explicitly mentioned in that inventive construction, the courtesans and the nurses (373a–c); also, the definition of justice is introduced in Book IV as the result of a kind of playful hunt (432b), while even the Good itself is spoken of as the object of pursuit (505d). The dramatic occasion for the evening's conversation is the visit to the festival of the Thracian hunting goddess Bendis; in fact, hunting and women quite frequently show up together in the course of the conversation—Atalanta, the famous huntress and athlete whom Xenophon calls "the greatest match (γάμων) of her age," makes a cameo in the Myth of Er.[1] Now, hunting is well-known as a Platonic image of desire-driven, erotic philosophy; in the previous chapter, I discussed how despite the favored role played by the *thumos* in the dialogue, hunting nevertheless is a reminder of what Socrates calls "true erotic philosophy" (499b) in the *Republic*. In what follows, I will argue that the hunt represents a vital aspect of Socrates' overall project for philosophy in the work as a whole, as well as a key trope in his thoughts about the women's law.

With the opening moments of the dialogue christened by the raucous festival of the hunting goddess Bendis in the port town of Piraeus, women appear more often than not in the *Republic* in their notoriously intemperate guise. The common Greek report, contrary to the received wisdom of our last few centuries, was that the female sex was rather more properly intemperate,

the polite Greek way of saying rather more lustful, than the male, of which state of affairs Socrates' emendations to Homer make frequent reference. The problem with all this is, that women's over-wild passions make them only dubiously tamable as citizens; Socrates' initial attempts at lawgiving reflect this, for women are absent from the first version of the city in speech, the "most necessary" version, and arrive as part of the luxuries and accommodations in the second, more "feverish" incarnation. But while the feverish city receives Socratic medicine for temperance, courage, and justice, women receive no special law, despite continual reference to their intemperance. Now, when Socrates is rounding off the laws for this version, he does briefly let drop that women will be held in common as the things of friends are (423e), a trivial remark as Adeimantus later notes (449c); for to be held in common by others precisely does not solve the problem of the untamed inner constitution of women themselves.

When a question about this business of "in common" arises, Socrates remarks he will have to start the conversation again, from the beginning, and well might he have to; his reply sets up women in the guardian class and rewrites the guardians as the pursuers of philosophy. The notion of justice, law, and education as the taming, gentling force to men's savagery and wildness is a frequent contrast in the *Republic*; by demanding that the best of the women be educated and come to have *areté*, Socrates likewise attempts to tame the previously untamed *genos* of women—an attempt not previously made by Greek law, with any real success.[2] Socrates' lawgiving certainly possesses ambition. But the trouble is, the hallmark of women's inclusion in Socratic *areté* is their partnership in the common hunt, an activity that only becomes part of the guardians' education when female guardians come on the scene, and is a sign of Socrates' plans for the guardians' new education in philosophy. To tame as hunters is only ambiguously to tame; rather, it is a sign of *eros* redirected. In his image of men and women hunting together, Socrates figures guardians who will pursue the truth and the Good; rather than being some appendage to the argument, women and their desires are what make sense of the turn to philosophy in Book V.

BENDIS, THE INTEMPERATE ARTEMIS

The Thracian goddess Bendis is the motive force for Socrates and Glaucon's visit to the Piraeus in early summer; as such, she may be fairly called the patroness of the dialogue. This should be a familiar Platonic construction: there is often some tantalizing mythological reference at the beginning of a work in this way; the *Theages*, for instance, is conducted in the portico of Zeus the Savior, where Theages admits his desire to be a god, while the

Phaedo opens with the tribute Athens pays to the Minotaur of the famous labyrinth, where Socrates produces a maze of speeches about the soul. Likewise, considering that Atalanta, herself a follower of Bendis' Grecian counterpart Artemis, is seen to choose the life of an athletic man in the Myth of Er (620b), which forms the tail end of the evening, it seems that lady huntresses bookend the work; the lady hunting guardians in the central Book V complete the trio. Bendis, however, has historically been a less obvious patron to the *Republic*'s readers, and so she has been unjustly left out of most previous deliberations about the work as whole, perhaps because her special attributes as an erotic huntress seem outwardly so at odds with our own dialogue's more political content. Much has been made of the newness of her festival, which indeed is significant, but this has been stressed at the expense of her specific mythological character, and what that character opens up for us in Plato's dramatic representation.

Who was Bendis? She was one of the most important deities worshipped by Thrace, a nation considered by the Athenians to be rather rural, as well as rather lusty; Herodotus reports that they let their young women couple with whom they will.[3] Plato provides us with a representative example of lusty Thracian women in the *Republic*, Book X: in the Myth of Er, Orpheus wishes to be a swan, out his hatred of the female *genos*; traditionally, the death of Orpheus was brought about by the women of Thrace who were angry that his music had drawn their men away from them.[4] The Athenians were in general fascinated with the Thracians; they were also quite interested in securing the Thracians' political alliance; Thrace was, in fact, the most well-known of foreign nations to the Athenians, a sort of Other and Same at once, not unlike, perhaps, Britain's sense of colonial India as other and yet one's own.[5] In the Thracian-and-Athenian cult of Bendis in Athens, the huntress Bendis was worshipped as of the moon; she is pictured in Thracian and Attic religious art wearing a fox skin cap and carrying two spears, accompanied by dogs or deer.[6] The Greeks, in their practice of analogizing between their own deities and foreign ones, known as *interpretatio Graeca*, considered her as a kind of Artemis; this is how Herodotus describes Bendis, remarking that the Thracians worshipped only Ares, Dionysius, and Artemis.[7] The Athenians constructed Bendis' new temple on the same hill as that of Artemis Mounichia; Artemis' priestesses considered her as part of their spiritual purview, and Athens granted its legal and moral support.[8]

Bendis, however, is different from Artemis in certain key respects; for one, she was certainly not chaste. In Athenian iconography, a free Thracian woman was a symbol of a wild, warlike, lusty female, while Artemis was the standard-bearer for the maidenhood of young girls.[9] The Athenians, of course, in their cheerful pantheism, saw no holy contradiction with these two ladies sharing a hill. Indeed, the properly Greek Artemis used to resemble

Bendis' earthier aspect; she is one of the oldest of the gods the Greeks worshipped in the classical period. Walter Burkert has this to say: "Artemis . . . is honored in a very ancient way where the hunter hangs the horns and skin of his prey on a tree or else on special, club-shaped pillars. Without doubt, customs of this kind, as well as the very idea of a Mistress of the Animals, go back to the Paleolithic."[10] By contrast, Artemis' virginity was of much more recent introduction.[11] In any case, both Artemis and Bendis were said to be keepers of the wild beasts, and in charge of the judicious destruction of the beasts by hunters; they are both by nature not town dwellers, who rather live in the wild, the privacy of the ἐρήμος (lonely, isolated) forest. As Homer has it, "Artemis of the wilderness, lady of wild beasts . . . Zeus has made you a lion among women . . . you hunt down the ravening beasts in the mountains and deer of the wilds."[12] It's possible that part of Bendis' appeal to the Athenians would be her resonance with the earlier, lustier, and fertile version of the goddess they were used to worshipping; Artemis' temple at Brauron, to where some Athenian girls made pilgrimages to mark the end of girlhood, has a connection with the wilder worship of the Piraeus' Artemis Mounichia.[13] Instead of representing something wholly foreign, Bendis offers something of nostalgia for the wild that the urbane Athenians might feel the lack of.

It's this sort of goddess whom Socrates goes to see, as seen in the famous opening line of the *Republic*: "I went down yesterday into the Piraeus with Glaucon son of Ariston to offer prayers to the goddess (Κατέβην χθὲς εἰς Πειραιᾶ μετὰ Γλαύκωνος τοῦ Ἀρίστωνος προσευξόμενός τε τῇ θεῷ, 327a)." The prayers to Bendis are a central motive for Socrates' presence: they are the first reason he gives; this detail is separated from his downward action only by the presence of Glaucon's name. It's only after speaking of his prayers that he mentions his interest in viewing the Thracian and Athenian processions. Furthermore only after he and Glaucon have both prayed and beheld (προσευξάμενοι δὲ καὶ θεωρήσαντες, 327b), do they depart from the town. Although it has been argued otherwise elsewhere, I take this to mean that Socrates' homage to Bendis is at least as strong as his desire to behold the novelty of the worship.[14] I also suspect that too much weight has been given to Athens' first Bendidea as novelty, and therefore as a sign of moral or political decay. The Greeks' notions of what was sacred were deeply rooted in their polytheism, which gives honor to many different kinds of divinity. As Robert Garland describes in *Introducing New Gods*, the nature of that polytheism, whether as expressed in a democratic constitution or not, was such that aspects of gods and goddesses were constantly going in and out of favor; the entrance of a new deity or cult, or the neglect of an old one, was an ordinary occurrence in the life of a city; indeed, perhaps the danger is for what Garland describes as "the heavy burden of choice [polytheism] imposes upon its subscribers" to be what appears decadent to the monotheistic observer.[15]

Furthermore, Bendis was already known to Athens before the first Athenian Bendidea; the reader witnesses only her official introduction in the *Republic*, the civic benediction of an already-felt presence.[16] It's not the addition alone, therefore, that can be a sign of decay; it's the specific character of what is newly being honored that would make the change be for better or worse. While, as Garland points out, changes in religious practices are always a feast for political rhetoric, a truly problematic religious novelty for the Athenians, for instance, would be if they were to stop giving the most honor to Athena and give it to Poseidon instead; indeed, the rise of Athena's worship tells the real tale of religious innovation in Athens.[17] This being said, there's still something potentially decadent about the urbane, citified among the Athenians being excited to worship the wilder, tantalizingly more erotic Bendis: for us, it would be the sort of willful worship of the chthonic by the hopelessly citified that is a particularly tired form of romanticism; but this is not democratic Athens' problem. In any case, such a festival dedicated to erotic hunting might well be one at which we discover Socrates, the friend of *eros*, in prayer; it also makes sense that his erotic and spirited young friend, Glaucon, who hunts, might be willing to accompany him.

Garland describes the introduction of a new deity as "a moment of supreme tension and drama in the life of the community."[18] It is this kind of highly charged focus on the goddess' attributes and prerogatives as differently arranged and desirable that sets the dramatic atmosphere at the beginning of the *Republic*; it's the atmosphere of a wild hunt, where horse races with torches will take place as the evening grows wilder. While it has been well established that Polemarchus' playful use of force drags Socrates off to Cephalus' house, we can now add this contrast: Socrates is forced away from a celebration of the hunt that takes place outside of Athens proper, in order to participate in the neighborly, civic duty of paying a visit to Cephalus.[19] When, half an hour later, Socrates revolts from the etiquette of conversation, doing the business of philosophy almost rudely, and asks his compulsory host what justice really is, it's not too much of a stretch to imagine that the wilder activities of the earlier evening may have contributed to his rebellious mood. Indeed, it's worth noting that Socrates' revolt here is an instance of what I spoke of in chapter 1, the impatience often evinced by lovers of philosophy at the plodding of the obtuse; or in Cephalus' specific case, at the sharp contrast between the urbane satisfaction of the arms dealer Cephalus with his comfortable old age despite his lingering dread of the future, and the poverty of his notions of justice, which center in paying off the gods (331b); the atmosphere of rather lawless revelry gives Socrates a cover for pushing the conversation past the bounds of politeness.

In any case, the contrast of wildness to tame, city to forest and mountain, first introduced by Socrates' attendance at the festival of Bendis, remains in force throughout the dialogue; it marks the contrast between the dogs who are

tame with their friends and harsh to their enemies (375c); music tames while too much gymnastics leaves one too savage (ἄγριον, 410d). In a crude sense, it stands as the contrast between injustice and justice; and the question of how to educate men who are tame never departs.

The earliest and most obvious representative of the wild, in the form of the wild beast, is of course Thrasymachus, whose dramatic interruption occurs only another half hour into the evening. Thrasymachus is more than merely spirited, if Glaucon is our representative of spirit; Thrasymachus is properly wild: "twisting himself up like a wild beast (θηρίον), he hurled himself upon us as if to tear us apart" (336b). Thrasymachus gleefully attempts to sport with all the careful civic pieties about justice with his bold account of justice as the advantage of the stronger; his wildness is an assertion of the strength of the law of the jungle: that the laws of cities are nothing but the law of the jungle. Thrasymachus' account willfully considers civic strength as merely wild. He is contemptuous of those who are merely sheep (343b–c), and accuses Socrates of needing the services of a nursemaid (343a), that profession which wild animals need none of. Unfortunately for his account and for his wish for repute (338a), Thrasymachus is capable of blushing (350d); he couldn't sustain his wildness. Socrates exploits his hidden appreciation of skill and even excellence, and so can effect something that has the appearance of taming.[20] Socrates describes the change as the taming or gentling of Thrasymachus, and claims he has stopped being savage (354a); Glaucon offers more suspicion of the change, describing Thrasymachus' putative taming as if Socrates had charmed a snake (358b). In fact, Thrasymachus is not gentled until he participates by voting in the request for Socrates to say more about women and children in Book V; only then is he a member of the dialogic city.[21]

The action of Socrates in Book I is more like a victory than a true taming.[22] Socrates hasn't said enough to make Thrasymachus ready to leave the house, but he has pinned him in a corner. Recall that Artemis is the goddess in charge of wild beasts: her choice decides when to kill them, or when to spare them; in truth, Socrates has run Thrasymachus to earth, though he spares his life. Thrasymachus marks the irony of Socrates' description of the action with his final sarcastic remark of Book I: "let this have been your hearth welcome at the Bendidea" (354a); it's ironic that at Bendis' wild festival, Socrates celebrates by pretending to tame Thrasymachus; he's done the opposite of what is expected, and what he claims to have done he has not. Indeed, Socrates evinces his own strength by this action; not all of the arguments he uses fight fair.[23]

But Thrasymachus is not the only wild beast to make an appearance; in many ways, the question of what to do about wildness is the question of the *Republic*. Wildness is one of Socrates' ways of speaking about the problem of injustice; not that wildness *is* injustice, but it represents something like

the state of man without education. Socrates is always trying to find the education that will make his guardians gentle or tame; his guardian dogs in Book II succeed partially because they will only be savage to strangers, and not to the citizens; music will be a primary agent of their gentling (410d). Socrates' concern over the dangers of *eros* is connected with the difficulties of wildness; in the prelude to his discussion of the perfectly unjust tyrant in Book IX, he speaks of the "terrible, wild (ἄγριον), lawless form of desires present in each person (572b)." Indeed, the difficulty involved in taming Thrasymachus reminds us that the possibility of taming men at all is an open Platonic question; Socrates is in general more sanguine than the Eleatic Stranger, who questions whether man can be said to be the tame animal at all (*Sophist* 222b). But wildness as a force has its different inflections; the problem of wildness runs deeper than its manifestation as injustice. The wildness of the beasts that the hunt pursues is more radical a quality than what rebels, outlaws, or invading foreigners possess; the truly wild do not pay the city the compliment of organized attack. One thinks of Gilgamesh's companion Enkidu, who ran with the beasts until specifically tempted by beer and a lady courtesan to finally try out for the first time the ancient city of Babylon.[24] Such wildness is indifferent to civic concerns; and the problem is that this remains always a human possibility, even for humans who dwell within the city. Thrasymachus, by contrast, blushed in part because he was not indifferent to men's opinion; Socrates' image of him as wild beast is putting it a little strong. In *Republic* I, where wild Thrasymachus manifests his capacity for shame and Socrates displays his overmastering strength, the problem of wildness is particularly vexed; to gain the status of a dog with philosophic qualities, in this light, is rather a favorable working position.

COURTESANS, HUNTERS, AND THE PURIFICATION OF THE FEVERED CITY

All in all it seems that the patroness of the dialogue Bendis has a natural connection to Book I, both symbolically and narratively; nor does the connection stop there. Not much narrative time passes between Socrates' prayers at the hunting festival, and his inclusion of hunters in the feverish version of the city; in Book II, Socrates is bringing the hunters *back*, not introducing them out of context for the first time. Now, in order to see the force of the presence of hunters in the second version of the city in speech, some backstory is required. After the theatrics of Book I, Glaucon and Adeimantus famously insist Socrates has not at all proved the superiority of justice to injustice, as he claimed; they demand that he truly persuade them of this, by showing what justice is in and of itself, without regard for reward or punishment. They

help the argument along by making speeches in praise of the life of injustice, the better to set the problem for Socrates to solve; Glaucon in particular is concerned that our native *pleonexia*, our innate desire for more, will lead to injustice. It is in response to these concerns that Socrates sets out to construct a city in speech, wherein justice will appear the more clearly on the large scale.

But when Socrates first sets out to construct a city in speech, he begins by constructing a comically limited "most necessary" city, consisting of "four or five men (ἀνδρῶν, 369d)"; he plays up the poverty of such a city, waxing poetic about the idyllic simplicity of the feast of nuts and berries that his agriculture-based menfolk will dine on, seated on the ground heaped well with rushes, in pleasant fellowship with one another.[25] Glaucon does what Socrates has set him up for: he revolts from this sort of living, calling it a city fit only for pigs; he demands they construct a city more recognizable to those of us who are used to the fruits of civilization, with couches and tables to eat at like people do. While Socrates points out that such a city will be full of indigestion, "feverish" with its new luxuries, he nevertheless commends Glaucon for his interruption, noting that here after all, injustice and justice itself will be easier to spot. In his discussion of this crucial transition, Carl Page writes that only in such a city does our *eros* look possible to satisfy or even possible: "The fevered city is manifestly a more adequate portrayal of the phenomena of civilized political life, because it acknowledges the forces of spirit, imagination, and erotic desire."[26] In Glaucon's revealing image, it is pigs that live the life of necessity: beasts who are neither fully wild nor fully human; a city of pigs, in this light, looks all too tame: the men there were simply gentle animals, equally without savagery or urbanity, eating vegetables both wild and cultivated (372d). It would be tempting to consider man's movement from the natural realm to the civilized realm as a strict, even progression from black to white, but Plato paints a more complicated picture: cities in their fevered flourishing display more of man's original wildness than the relative poverty of purely agricultural life; cities with couches and relishes appear as an attempt to give life to our desire without end as much as they give the form of gentleness to it.[27]

In the previous chapter, I discussed Socrates' qualifier to his list of the new professions that will form the next incarnation of the city in speech, things that are in the city beyond the necessary, and the oddity and yet the sense of including hunting on this list. In the feverish city, hunting is practiced for its own sake as the free rehearsal of the pursuit of desire; this is what makes it such an excellent image of philosophy. Socrates pointedly includes hunting in the list of professions that will form the city that Glaucon the hunter finds satisfying to his *pleonexia*: Socrates seeks to satisfy his companion at the hunting festival with the promise of hunting in the beautiful city. Hunters were absent from the

city of piggish men because there were no real men to hunt animals: hunting as an activity reifies the separation of the purportedly tame citizens from the wild animals outside.[28] On this logic, hunting is a symbol of civilization as such, and the living tension between wildness and tameness that a city embodies.

Hunting does not come back into the dialogic city without Socrates first bringing in loose women, the hetaeras or courtesans; these arrive a few lines before the hunters do, at 373a. Nurses and nursemaids, and those who craft women's adornment arrive after the hunters, at 373b. It's striking that hunting and women make an appearance in Book II as part of the same action; this is precisely the same conjunction that Socrates makes when in Book V he draws women into the guardian class and has them hunt along with the men: in both cases women and hunting arrive in the same breath. Why do women first come into the dialogue as members of the fevered city, and why do they do so only as courtesans and nurses? And why is their presence coordinated with the presence of hunting?

That women aren't present in the city of pigs is yet another humorous deficiency of the most necessary city, for it lacks what's necessary for its posterity. In the founding of the fevered city, Socrates makes the presence of women felt explicitly in the conversation for the first time. While Socrates' action in Book V is to draw the women into a public role in the city, in Book II he settles for something easier. Not departing from custom, Socrates places women in certain well-established professions of theirs, highlighting two in particular, nurses and prostitutes; in other words, those women who give other women some relief from the necessary tasks of child-raising, and those women who cultivate the *eros* of men. While the presence of women in the fevered city at all reminds one of the city's dependence on desire, the courtesans represent an appreciation of eros *as such* in the city that was lacking before. Courtesans, Socrates' polite term for this large *genos* made up of women of quite various status, the courtesans themselves being paradigmatically foreigners, operate outside of the civic order and its reliance on sexual desire as a vehicle for child-making. Like hunting, an activity that in its imitation of a natural activity rises to an expression of freedom when conscious, courtesans represent a certain freedom of *eros*; something more like desire for its own sake. The significance of nurses, who were either free or enslaved foreigners or hired natives is initially more obscure, but consider: nurses deal with the results of *eros*, but at a remove; they allow the child-bearing consequences of *eros* to be softened, though sometimes at the expense of the nurses' own *eros*.[29] In a sense, not only courtesans, but nurses as well allow greater freedom for *eros*. Again, there are no virgins or matrons mentioned at this point, just as there is still silence on the question of marriage; no women whose *eros* is commanded by the marriage laws of the city. At this point in the dialogue, women's *eros* remains entirely outside the official law.

In Book II, both women and hunting stand connected with *eros*, and both make a contrast to tame, orderly life within the city. Hunters must hunt outside of the city, and courtesans and nurses, hired or otherwise enchained privately by men or women, care for *eros* or its consequences without proper civic regulation. Both of these aspects are united in the character of Bendis, the huntress known for the freedom of her favors.[30] Nor are nurses removed from this conjunction: Athenians favored Thracian women as wet nurses, identifiable in paintings as such by their native dress and their tattoos.[31] Despite the urbanity of the feverish city, Socrates is associating its luxuries and comforts with Thrace. Socrates has not brought in just any women into the fevered city, but he has brought in Bendidean women, whose *eros* is wild and fertile as the Thracian goddess is wild—as wild, indeed, as *eros* itself. But crucially, the Thracian element dramatizes what is the case for all women under Greek *nomos*, from courtesans to housewives, from foreigners to natives, from the free to the enchained: all live unregulated in a kind of artificial wilderness, in lawless privacy in the city, outside of the regulating force of the public eye of thumotic recognition. John Gould dramatizes this strange state in these terms: "[the law] defines the woman as incapable of a self-determined act, as almost in law an un-person, outside the limits of those who constitute society's responsible and representative agents . . . . women stand 'outside' society, yet are essential to it."[32] For Socrates, this is true of every woman in Athens; and as the Athenian Stranger opines, it applies to the laws of Sparta and Crete as well (805d). Women's presence is felt and ritualized, but somehow unratified; they do not inhabit the polity as public citizens, even the citizen wives.

Now, in the course of the conversation, Socrates does not allow the feverish city to run its course for very long. With the help of Adeimantus and Glaucon, Socrates immediately sets out to cure the fevered city of its ills with strong medicine: the cure is described as a purification (399e). Once Glaucon has agreed to the figure of the rulers of dogs that guard, Socrates asks if they ought to consider how these rulers will be educated. Glaucon does not respond to this question: instead, his brother Adeimantus does. Although Adeimantus' character is not exhaustively described by the adjective "austere," it's not unreasonable that he has this reputation among the commentators.[33] He doesn't seem to have the same outward erotic commitments that Glaucon does; while another important preoccupation of his is a concern over the purity and the existence of the gods (366a–b).[34] This is the sort of person who becomes Socrates' first partner in the purification (399e): the musical education of the guardians is the first long regulatory subject, and the stories and poems about the gods will be changed to reflect the virtues desired for the guardians (395c). Nurses will have to watch their words, and be persuaded by the lawgiver to tell only good stories (377c, 381e); even Glaucon at this point is willing to blame men who wish for Corinthian mistresses at the expense of

their health (404d). By this purge, the rowdy qualities of the fevered city will be quieted: the instruments of the sunlit, orderly Apollo are to be preferred to Marsyas the lascivious satyr (399e). All of this purgative medicine prepares the way for the eventual disclosure of the internal justice of the soul, unveiled in Book IV from 441c to 444a, where the desires are to be under the eye of the *thumos* at the behest of reason; this fundamental structure of the soul and city is made possible by the abstraction from *eros*, and its tacit devaluation by the pressing civic concerns of healing the city.[35] The true health of the soul, as Socrates puts it at this point in the dialogue, is justice (444d), and justice is likewise the true cure to the city's fever. At this point in the dialogue, *eros* and the quasi-philosophical rule of reason are completely at odds.[36]

Despite all this curative work, however, this deep problem remains: women remain uncured, because they are not recipients of the medicinal education, in any class: they remain part of all classes and so classless, and thus untouched by any external justice, let alone the internal kind. The guardians, all men at this point, are specifically abjured by Socrates not to imitate a woman: "either a young woman or an older one, or one who's giving her husband a tongue-lashing; or one who's wrangling with the gods and making much of herself because she imagines herself to be happy; or one who's caught up in misfortune, clinging to her sorrow and her lamentation. And as for one who's sick or in love (ἐρῶσαν) or in labor, we'll be far from needing them." (395d–e). As I noted in chapter 2, Adeimantus is less friendly to women's putative vices or virtues than his brother; he is also seen blaming nagging women as a tribe in Book VIII (549e), and so it makes sense that his medicine includes this contrast: his idea of virtue is the opposite of a woman in misfortune, childbirth, or in love. Of course, the money-making and the auxiliary classes won't have such medicinal education either, but need only to be kept in check by the guardians. But the guardians will have to consort with *some* women in order to perpetuate their class, and if merely the poetry they see and hear will be a problem, so much the more the human beings with whom they consult on matters of *eros*: and here the pervasiveness of the political problem that women pose starts to become recognizable.

I argued in chapter 1, following the Athenian Stranger's remarks in the *Laws*, that to leave the women unregulated by the law is a grave oversight of the lawgiver.[37] The Stranger goes on to say that women are not merely half of the problem, but twice as much a problem as men, because the disorder of their passions—one might say, their native injustice—is greater than men's (781b). Not only is the *eros* that men have for women a political problem, but the *eros* of women themselves poses a still greater problem: and it's the latter, we should note, that the law specifically leaves untouched. Childbirth, it should be noted, does not *solve* the problem of women's eros; it's merely a visible sign of the problem. Now, Socrates has plenty of laws to regulate

men's *eros*: he even recommends in Book III that men's tendency to commit outrages (ἀπαργάς) against women, one of the Greek ways of speaking of rape, should not make a part of the stories of the heroes who have the respect of the polis—quite a change from ordinary Greek storytelling (391d). But Socrates has no corresponding regulation for women's *eros* at this point, beyond shunning it as a model for men. Indeed, women, along with children, slaves, and free people, are Socrates' example for the intemperate element in the city in speech (431c).

Now, the popular notion, *au courant* in the present day, that women are the less erotic *genos* than men—and readers of the *Republic* ought to note the danger involved in battling for such titles—would entail that women don't pose much of a danger in this regard, despite the Athenian Stranger's warning. But if one consults the history of this notion, one discovers that it is of relatively recent origin; women had the dubious honor of being known as the more dangerously erotic sex until the late 19th century, when the balance was shifted to the male *genos*.[38] Most importantly for our purposes, the received wisdom among the Hellenes was on the side of the ladies, to Hera's chagrin.[39] Indeed, as I will discuss in chapter 6, the Athenian Stranger goes so far as to claim that women are wily (ἐπίκλοπος) and secretive—that is, they share the qualities that Socrates contends that Eros possesses in the *Symposium*.[40] Although it would be a mistake to fall into the Enlightenment view, and take women's hiddenness from the public eye as a sign of their absence from and relative unimportance to the life of the community, nevertheless the fact remains that women, customarily, in the eyes of male citizens, are strange, wild creatures. Again John Gould helpfully dramatizes: women "are not part of, do not belong easily in, the male ordered world of the 'civilized' community. . . . their 'wildness' will out."[41] Whatever the final truth of the matter, Plato makes use of the trope of women's wildness, familiar to his original audience, and draws our attention to it as a force to be reckoned with politically.

I should note that in the context of *Republic* scholarship, this is the opposite of what is often argued about women's *eros* and its relation to the city in speech; my consideration of Bendis and the hunt offers to clear up an important oversight in the usual interpretation of the significance of women in this book. The usual notion seems to be that since homosexual love is not tied to the bearing of children or the civic enterprise of marriage, it's free of the city, and a sign, therefore, of *eros* properly speaking.[42] Women's *eros*—both *eros* for women and the *eros* of women themselves—is the more fundamentally civic, since it is more directly connected with the generation of children; as such, it is less likely to transform into *eros* for philosophy, if at all.[43] Women, on this interpretation, are a Platonic symbol of domesticity and *eros* in chains.[44] But as I have argued, to begin with such domestic women are

left to the side in the *Republic*; instead we start with courtesans and nurses, and women who participate in the erotic activity of the hunt. Indeed, one of the few direct references to *eros* in the work is to the *eros* of women, when Adeimantus agrees not to imitate women in *eros* (395e). In the *Republic*, women are the example of what is problematically strong about *eros*—not as symbols of what *eros* desires, but as the troublesome possessors of *eros* of their own; and when the gaze lands on women within more respectable civic institutions, even there their *eros* is troublingly not satisfied. Indeed, as Pausanias describes it, pederasty is the very thing that ensures the proper passage of received wisdom to the next generation (*Symposium* 184d–e), and as such is the true flowering of civilization. This is not to say that Pausanias has the right idea about pederasty; rather to point out that the possibility of the tame, or even temptation toward it, is present in both sorts of *eros*—and neither goes without its share of the wild. At any rate, if women's *eros* were tamed by civic life, marriage and child-rearing, and flowed along well with the city's laws, then women would not be all that much of a problem in the first place, and would require no special law above breeding arrangements: but this is not how the women's law is dramatized in the Platonic corpus.

To say therefore, as Socrates does in Book IV, that at some later date the laws for women will be written on the principle that the things of friends are in common (423e), precisely side-steps the political problem that the passions of women present. If women are in common as possessions, this law continues to pretend that only the *eros* of men will be at issue: the *eros* of women will be regulated by friendship of men, and as things or possessions, they will not present any troubling passions, being things. As the reader will recall, Adeimantus agrees to this initially, but at Polemarchus' request, he reignites this troubling question at the start of Book V. Now, Adeimantus and Polemarchus are the opposed pair of attendees at Bendis's festival to the pairing of Socrates and Glaucon; Adeimantus and Polemarchus are more worried than Glaucon about the thorough regulation of *eros*, and as such, it's appropriate that they request more information on the women's law; they are concerned, perhaps, that things will get too wild if women are to be given the scope of commonality. Likewise, it's appropriate that the greater friends to *eros* be the ones to discuss the women and their lawlessness.

There's one more crucial reference to hunting before the hunting guardians of Book V; in Book IV, the discovery of the definition of justice itself is dramatized by Socrates as a hunt. Considering Socrates' constant attention the problem of men's wildness, there is poetic justice in Socrates' imagery of a chase for justice, which once again places the hunt right at the center of the evening's concerns. Indeed, it's one of the most dramatic moments in the book; Socrates makes it a moment of high suspense. But its limitations run parallel to the obvious limitations of the laws for women in the earlier books, and serve to dramatize the

necessity of Socrates' insistence on a beginning from the ground up. Here's the scenario, once Socrates and Glaucon agree that only the form of justice remains:

> 'So Glaucon, right now we need to be circling down and surrounding the covert like huntsmen (κυνηγέτας), bringing the mind to bear, lest Justice get away from us somewhere and become obscured, passing beyond the edge of sight. Because it's clear it's in there somewhere! So *look*, and look with a bold heart—in case you see anything before I do' [. . .]
> 'Follow,' I said, 'after praying with me.'
> 'These things I will do,' he said, 'but just you lead the way.'
> 'And truly,' I declared, 'the place is hard to walk around in, and deeply dark.'
> 'Anyway it's shaded all right, and hard to search around in.'
> 'Yes, but all the same, one has to keep going.'
> 'Yes, one must go on,' he said.
> And I, looking down, declared "IOU, IOU, GLAUCON! We've hazarded upon its step, and I believe it won't run away altogether quite!
> 'Good tidings of great joy!' said he.
> 'But in truth, how dense we were in our condition,' I said.
> 'How so?'
> 'All this time, you blessed one, it appears that right from the beginning, the thing was tumbling about at our feet, and we weren't seeing it, but we were being utterly ridiculous (καταγελαστότατοι), just like people who seek for what they already have in their hands.' (432b–d)

Socrates narrates a strange pastoral interlude; he places himself with elaborate imagery in a shady, rural covert; he and Glaucon are the hunters for, ironically, the wild beast justice. As in Books II and V, Glaucon is Socrates' partner when hunting is at issue. They even make a hunting prayer: such is traditionally made to Artemis, or as Xenophon recommends, to Apollo and Artemis of the Wilderness (τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι καὶ τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι τῇ Ἀγροτέρᾳ); Xenophon opens his book *On Hunting* with an invocation of both siblings, and closes it with an appeal to the goddess alone.[45] Just as he did at the beginning of the *Republic*, Socrates is once more making a prayer to a hunting goddess with Glaucon, though it's fitting that his prayer be to a goddess more temperate than Bendis. I noted earlier that Apollo was a kind of model for the proper musical education of the guardians; not many of the Greek gods are mentioned by Socrates past the purge of Books II and III, but Apollo's oracle is to be consulted at key moments in the city in speech, both before and after the Third Wave (427c, 461e, 540c). It turns out that Apollo's sister Artemis is also considered worthy of prayer in the purged city.

The hunt that Socrates and Glaucon engage in, however, is far too spirited for its own good. Socrates engages in some over-acting as he goes through the motions of the hunt, bewailing the denseness of the brush without breaking character. His sudden *iou, iou*! (a tragic or joyous cry, depending) is

amusingly like the baying of the hounds; combined with Glaucon's enthusiastic response, the noise they're making marks them as less experienced, over-spirited puppies, acting in such a way as to scare the quarry away. Xenophon describes this phenomenon: "[some hounds] will drive ahead, eagerly following false lines and getting wildly excited over anything that turns up, well knowing that they are playing the fool."[46] Indeed, Socrates is comically failing to follow his advice to the good philosophic hunter in the *Lysis*, which I discussed in the previous chapter, wherein he remarks "for what kind of hunter, do you think, would he be, if while on the hunt he scared away the prey and made it harder to catch? (*Lysis* 206a)" Socrates leads Glaucon on something of a wild-goose chase.

It makes sense, therefore, that the definitions that Socrates and Glaucon gain remain merely civic-oriented approximations: the courage that they discover is the courage of a citizen, and the justice is the justice of a soul *as* a city.[47] Indeed, they're only hunting in an image of the forest; they are still very much within the limits of the city in speech, and their definitions are correspondingly political. As Socrates himself reminds us in Book VI, his definitions in Book IV were hardly sufficient, and a longer path would be needed to get at the real ones, the definition of justice included (504b). The hunt in Book IV is focused on the victorious discovery of what was already embedded into the laws Socrates and the brothers built, namely, minding one's own business. It ought to make sense, therefore, that the hunting we see in Book IV is not the kind of erotic hunting that Socrates praises elsewhere: it *has* to be inadequately erotic, because *eros* has no real place in the city in speech, yet. Indeed, at this point in the dialogue, Bendis' attributes are severed: women still possess all the wild, lawless passion that the justice of the guardians stands in contrast to, and the hunt is an unsuccessfully thumotic exercise.

THE HUNT FOR THE GOOD

What changes between the thumotic, comedic hunt for justice in Book IV, and Socrates' addition of hunting to the main duties of the guardians, that heralds the rule of philosophy in the city in speech? If Polemarchus had never asked his question about women and children in common, Socrates would have moved on from this moment to his discussion of the degenerate regimes, and this would be the last place where hunting surfaced; the book would lack the rule of philosophy, and the description of its highest reaches in the realm of the forms. But the question was asked, and Socrates says that the argument will have to start again as if from the beginning (450a). On the most basic level, the change is the introduction of women: women as a subject for conversation, and women as rulers and learners in the guardian

class. In the context of what I've described about Socrates' actions in the Waves, the large-scale dramatic change is that women have been drawn into the argument and into the city, and will hunt alongside the men: in fact, Bendis' attributes that were severed before are now reunited. Women are the *pretext* for the change, but their problematically wild *eros* is the subtext that has been taken up by Socrates into the argument and the character of the guardian class. Although the hunt in Book IV is comedic, the hunt in the First Wave is a serious part of that often humorous section. Whatever makes Socrates decide, as soon as he hears the question about women and children, to give philosophy the rule outright in the city in speech, it's marked by the addition of the erotic hunt to the duties of the guardians, and the presence of the previously unregulated erotic *genos*.

It's appropriate, then, to add this element to Socrates' action with respect to women in Book V: he has not just drawn them into the city, but, in a sense, he has tamed them. He brings women out of their private, lawless, wild state into the realm of the laws of the city. Indeed, the very conjunction of Socrates' image of women with dogs that *guard* is a radical one; dogs, after all, are the paradigmatically tamable and domesticable animal: Socrates' image contains the strange implication that women can be tamed at all, the inversion of Helen's self-shaming term "dog-eyes" (*Odyssey* 4.145). Once women are in the guardian class, their *eros* receives regulation at the hands of the laws: men and women alike will not couple with whomever they please, but with the best (459a). Likewise, their shared education will be founded on the principles of the internal justice of the soul; they too are to be cured of their distemper through the rule of reason. They will possess virtue instead of cloaks (457a), the virtue that Socrates described only a little earlier at Book IV as "a certain health, beauty, and good condition of the soul" (444e). Though Socrates pretends that the question of women poses no special problem in Book II, when given a second chance by Polemarchus' question, he uses the opportunity to resurrect the question of law for women, and his plans for the *genos* are grander than any other lawgiver—Lycurgus, Aristotle, and the Athenian Stranger—combined.

But the *genos* of women is not simply added to the existing class of guardians as described in Books II–IV, with the justice of the soul detailed therein. The guardians in Book V are not as domestic as the guardians in the previous books: they will not only guard, but hunt. This will give their activities and their character an element of wildness, an element of *eros*, that they did not previously possess. As I argued above, the hunt is where humans distance themselves from merely animal life, by playfully enacting animal activity *qua* free human activity done for its own sake. Hunting embodies the tension between wild and tame in its essence; it is a wild thing done *as* civilized, and as such is the unstable tension between this opposing pair. When Socrates

first speaks of the male and female hunters, he describes them with the words for male and female animals (θῆλυς and ἄρσην). This usage takes on an additional shade of meaning in the light of the common hunt: even as just rulers of a just regime, they still possess something of the wild animal; the guardians are characterized by Socrates as possessing something of the instability of beasts.[48] Together the men and women take the field in war (466e), and they take their children with them mounted on horses (467e); this is the guardian class at its most Thracian.[49]

Though Socrates has, in a sense, tamed the women by bringing them and their wild *eros* into the guardian class, he does not intend that they should be fully tame, nor their male companions either; after all, *eros* can only be checked or redirected, not finally tamed. Instead, the male and female guardians will study philosophy, that non-domestic enterprise; as Strauss reminds the reader, "the *Republic* could unqualifiedly abstract from *eros* only if it could abstract from philosophy."[50] Instead of simply restraining *eros* as he did in Books II–IV, in Book V, Socrates is redirecting it. Socrates makes a decision not only to do the business of philosophy by constructing a city in speech with reason presumably in charge of its construction, but to publicly appoint philosophy as the official ruler. Even though philosophy may suffer in the public eye, philosophy has to be present in the city in speech in some public, official way in order to truly test its capacity to rule. To be present in some authentic sense, it has to possess something of *eros*, even if this *eros* is publicly hidden. It appears that part of the key to this hidden incorporation of *eros* is represented by the presence of erotic hunting, and by the entrance of women into the guardian class. Once women themselves take part in the hunt, the guardians are properly hunters; once the guardians are hunters, then philosophy can come on the scene to rule, and pursue the unknown rather than merely bark at it. The soul now tamed *qua* hunter has the "purity to behold and to stretch itself out toward perceiving what it doesn't know" (572a). In a sense, women make the dramatic difference between the thumotic hunt and something more like desire for wisdom; not present as some abstract feminine ideal, but as embodied citizens, and citizen hunters.[51]

But if the guardians are hunters, what is it that they hunt? Recall that Glaucon characterized *pleonexia* as the pursuit or hunt (διώκειν) for more, since that's what humans pursue "as good" (359c). But in Book VII, Socrates reshapes this basic principle: he claims that all souls pursue the Good itself, and that a guardian in ignorance of this highest source is not worth much as a ruler (505e–506a). In some sense, the quarry of the guardians is the Good; they are supposed to turn their powers to the sight of that which is beyond Being as hunters; they are supposed to reshape and redirect their natural desire for more into a pursuit of the Good. Nor is this pursuit merely a quality of derivatively thumotic philosophy; Socrates speaks of the pursuit of or

hunt for the truth in Book VI, in the context of his discussion of "true erotic philosophy (490a)." Socrates describes the yearning of the search like this: "and neither would the edge of his *eros* be blunted, nor would he leave off from it, until he lays a hand on the nature of each thing in itself" (490b). The obverse pursuit is also relevant: Socrates warns us not to pursue injustice as Thrasymachus counsels (586d), or allow desire to gain the upper hand and pursue pleasures alien to those of reason's (587a). The philosophy of the guardians as represented in Book VII is not unlike the activity of hunting; it's not without some direction or goal, and the goal is yearned for as quarry, albeit an elusive one. Again, Strauss is helpful: "the education of the warriors is supposed to culminate in the *eros* of the beautiful; that *eros* points to philosophic *eros*, the *eros* peculiar to the philosophers (501d2), which becomes the quest for knowledge of the idea of the good, an idea higher than the idea of justice."[52] Fortunately for us as readers, Socrates can't fully abstract from philosophy; and as long as philosophy is present in some guise, something of *eros* remains; Socrates' invocation of the hunt at the beginning of his trio of proposals which lead to the instatement of philosophers as kings is a reminder of this phenomenon.

Now, there's danger in the pursuit of hunting as an image in this way. Socrates gives many full-blown images of philosophy's activity in the *Republic*, of which the most famous, the Cave and the Divided Line, are remote from questions of hunting. Indeed, he eventually describes the grasping the Good itself by the hand (532b), and of course, as a sight most removed from bodily things as possible (508d); most significantly, this vision is something the soul must be drawn or led or turned to by an outside hand (515e, 521d). I will discuss the nature of the philosophy of the guardians in chapter 8, for it exists in tension with the *eros* for the truth that Socrates describes philosophers outside of the city in speech as possessing (501d). But nevertheless, the parallelism remains, that the hunting guardians will turn their attention to that which all souls hunt for: and only they will grasp it by hand. Something like the following might express the contrast between the image of pursuit of the Good, and the later images of philosophy's own peculiar activity: while our orientation toward the Good as a thing pursued is more like a natural relation, since it is shared by all, philosophy as seen in the *Republic* requires something more than *simply* the cultivation of a natural affinity; it requires the athleticism of the education Socrates recommends for its complete flowering. Consider Socrates' contention that arithmetic, of all things, is good for the guardians to learn because it actively helps the dual activities of war and philosophy; it must be practiced "for the sake of war and of ease in redirecting the soul itself from becoming to truth and being" (525c). But even with all this athleticism, Socrates' plans for the guardians are supposed to help them achieve what Socrates was unable to do in Book IV: seek the forms outside of

the confines of merely civic definitions and merely civic truth. Consider how Aesara, a Pythagorean *femme philosophe* active around 3rd and 4th century BC, consciously plays with the *Republic*'s imagery of philosophical activity as hunting in her own writing: "by following the tracks within himself whoever seeks will make a discovery: law is in him and justice, which is the orderly arrangement of the soul."[53] It's striking to witness Aesara choosing to retain the imagery of the hunt: for her it leads directly to an ordered soul, via the practice of philosophy; the very thing Socrates is hoping to recommend to his guardiennes.

One can playfully rewrite the arc of the *Republic* in terms of its hunting narrative: it begins with the hunting festival of Bendis, moves to the taming of Thrasymachus, to the hunters in the fevered city, to the thumotic hunt for justice, to the guardians who will hunt together, and the climax is the claim that all hunt for the Good, and the appropriation of this orientation by philosophy proper. Notably, once the reader departs the height of Book VII, *eros*, the hunt, and women are once again disparate elements apart from one another; *eros* is a tyrant again (572a), the hunt is merely the pastime of the timocratic man (549a), and while three lady fates, Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos, weave the spindle of the world, they are robed (617c) and the maiden Lachesis exhorts men to virtue through the remove of a herald (617e).[54] The huntress Atalanta chooses the life and honors of an athletic man in some ordinary city (620b), and some men even choose the lives of beasts as preferable to humans (620a–c). In some way, at the end of the *Republic* the reader is back where they started.

In the light of the whole, the hunt for the Good in Book VI stands out as the crux of the hunting narrative; something changes from the wild hunting festival at the beginning of the book, to the point where the hunt merges with philosophy. Again, Strauss notes this transition: "the education of the warriors is supposed to culminate in the *eros* of the beautiful; that *eros* points to philosophic *eros*, the *eros* peculiar to the philosophers (501d2), which becomes the quest for knowledge of the idea of the good, an idea higher than the idea of justice."[55] A change in the *eros* of the guardians has taken place; and rather than a Freudian scenario where we all possess animal desires that are merely cloaked as higher, it's something like a real transformation; the power and the force inchoate in the animal or wild state becomes directed, articulated, and changed into the higher, born again, by the redirecting, periagogic force of education. The taming of women that Socrates accomplishes runs parallel to this transformation: women's own *eros* is transformed.

In the First Wave, Socrates makes a law not for the feminine as such, but for human women, and for the best of them to be educated in philosophy and to rule in the city as philosophers. Socrates proposes to take women and their *eros* into the guardian class, but he does not leave them without a new object for their

desire: they will now desire to know, and seek to grasp the Good itself. Again, women are not merely the objects of the *eros* of others, but a place has been made for the active use of their own *eros*; because instead of being the hunted thing, they themselves will hunt. This is a far grander proposal than other law-givers aspire to, because Socrates' law for women is concerned with more than the political—no less, indeed, than with the hunt for the forms themselves.

NOTES

1. *On Hunting*, I. 7.
2. In the *Oresteia*, Athena's divine intervention is required to transform the furies into goddesses of the hearth; for more on the inadequacy of this transformation, see chapter 9.
3. *Histories* V.6.
4. See Beth Cohen, "Man-killers and their victims: inversions of the heroic ideal in classical art" in *Not The Classical Ideal: Athens and the Construction of the Other in Greek Art*, ed. Beth Cohen (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 364–389.
5. See Despoina Tsiafakis on the Athenian romanticization of the Thracians in "The Allure and Repulsion of Thracians in the Art of Classical Athens," in *Not the Classical Ideal*, 364–389. For questions of alliance, see Robert Garland's *Introducing New Gods: The Politics of Athenian Religion* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 112. Tsiafakis points out the faithful, hag-like Thracian slave-nurse was the flip side to the free Thracian women depicted killing Orpheus for seducing their men (373).
6. See Aleksandur Fol and Ivan Marazov, *Thrace and the Thracians* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), 22–4; and Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 149. As Janouchova notes, the Piraeus cult draws out the moon/life-cycle element very strongly, with its kinship with the fertile element in Artemis Mounichia (103), though Bendis remains both war-like and linked to the Great Mother as well.
7. Herodotus *Histories* V. 7.
8. Garland, *Introducing New Gods,* 113; and also Janouchova, 97.
9. Tsiafakis, 373.
10. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 149.
11. Ibid.
12. Homer *Iliad* XXI.470, 483ff. Trans. Richard Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).
13. See Petra Janouchova, "The Cult of Bendis in Athens and Thrace," *Graeco-Latina Brunesia*, no. 18:1 (2013), 102; and Burkett, 152.
14. Contra Rosen, PRS, 20.
15. Garland, 1–22.
16. Tsiafakis, 386.
17. Garland, 106–9; Burkert, 139.
18. Garland, 22.
19. See Page, "Polemarchus," 246.
20. Rosen, PRS, 44–45, 58–9; Contra Strauss (CM, 74, 78, 84–5).
21. Strauss, CM,116; contra Rosen, PRS, 38.

22. Strauss, CM, 84.

23. Rosen, PRS, 50–51; Strauss, CM, 84.

24. *Gilgamesh*, Tablet I, lines 180–220.

25. The verb συνόντες does not always imply sexual togetherness (a more active "mixing" is required), but one could imagine the pleasant being-togetherness the male inhabitants of the city of pigs as a sort of man-party à la the *Symposium*.

26. Page, "Unnamed Fifth," 8. Page's reading takes into account the totality and range of human desires, rather than artificially separating off one city as masculine and the other as feminine as Marina McCoy does ("The City of Sows and Sexual Differentiation in Plato's *Republic*," in *Plato's Animals*, ed. Jeremy Bell and Michael Naas (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 149–160. See note 1 in chapter 1 for a discussion of her interpretation.

27. Page, "Unnamed Fifth," 9.

28. This view is partially anticipated in the work of the anthropologist Tim Ingold in "Hunting, sacrifice, and the domestication of animals," in *The Appropriation of Nature: Essays on Human Ecology and Social Relations*, ed. T. Ingold (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1987), 243–76; see also *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*, ed. Tim Ingold (London: Routledge, 2000).

29. See Lesley Beaumont in *Childhood in Ancient Athens: Iconography and Social History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 56; and Davidson, 87.

30. Fol and Marazov, *Thrace and the Thracians*, 22–24. Her worship was in part an orgiastic celebration of fertility; see also Janouchova, 103.

31. Beaumont, 57; see also ibid., 230n32.

32. "Law, Custom and Myth: Aspects of the Social Position of Women in Classical Athens," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 100, Centenary Issue (1980): 44–5, 46). For the Athenian Stranger's plan to convert women into citizens, see Laws 81c. When the Athenian speaks of his sense of the inadequacy of all Greek law for women, he considers Spartan and Cretan law to share the same basic problem (805d).

33. Strauss, CM, 110–11.

34. Ibid., 90.

35. Ibid., 112.

36. Ibid., 128.

37. *Laws* 780e–781a.

38. See John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman's *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* for an overview of the shifting paradigms, particularly "Crusades for Sexual Order" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 202–221. David Halperin, citing Mark Golden, notes that women often were portrayed on vase paintings as taking active pleasure in sex, in marked contrast to young boys ("Why is Diotima a Woman?" 134).

39. For Hera's anger at the judgment of Tiresias, see Pseudo-Apollodorus *Bibliotheca,* III.6.7. For a collection of the gossip of the age on the subject, see Sue Blundell, *Women in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1998), 100–103.

40. *Laws* 781a; *Symposium* 206b. See also Benardete, *Plato's* Laws, 230–31.

41. John Gould, "Women in Classical Athens," 57; see also Burkert, GR, 230.

42. Rosen: "…pederasty is in the Platonic dialogues a sign of the detachment of *eros* from politics, as is most obvious in the massive fact that it cannot lead to sexual reproduction" (*PRS*, 210).

43. Rosen: "…the first [element in the symbolic significance of pederasty] being the rejection of childbearing…. Philosophy makes young women unsuited for preparing to assume the management of a house and the rearing of children. This is precisely why Socrates' proposals concerning women were so revolutionary. The ostensibly greater philosophic capacity of boys makes more the transformation of bodily *eros* into love of the soul, and thence of the Ideas" (PRS, 211).

44. Bloom: "Women have a more powerful attachment to the home and the children than do men" (IE, 383). Both Nichols and Saxonhouse argue for the strong connection between the female and *eros*, but because it stems from the ability to give birth, such *eros* would be subject to Bloom and Rosen's criticism (Nichols, review of *Women in Western Political Thought*, 246–7; and Saxonhouse, "Philosopher and the Female," 76–77, "Comedy in Callipolis," 900).

45. *On Hunting* I.1, XIII.18, VI.13. Philostratus the Elder records in the *Imagines*: "…and the hunters as they advance will hymn Artemis Agrotera . . . after a prayer the hunters continue the hunt" (Philostratus the Elder *Imagines* i.28; trans. Arthur Fairbanks, Loeb Classical Library 256 [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931], 113).

46. *On Hunting* iii. 3–7.

47. 430c; Strauss, CM, 108–9.

48. Contra Saxonhouse, who sees this usage as implying Hobbesian bestiality, rather than simply what is wild ("Comedy in Callipolis," 898); see Ch. 2, 82n53.

49. Levy notes that the maleness of the accompanying officials are stressed (17), but this hardly contradicts the strongly explicit statement a few lines above that men and women will march together (ὅτι κοινῇ στρατεύσονται) to war. I would consider this to be a passage where rhetoric requires women's presence to not be insisted on once stated initially, given the discomfort Socrates notes that people have with the notion of women riding horses (452c), yet his insistence that they will have to.

50. Strauss, CM, 112.

51. Contra Rosen, PRS, 167; Bloom, IE, 384; and Benardete, SSS, 114.

52. Strauss, CM, 112.

53. Vicki Lynn Harper notes that the whole of Aesara's fragment is full of imagery from the *Republic* in "The Neopythagorean Women as Philosophers," in *Pythagorean Women: Their History and Writings*, Sarah B. Pomeroy ed. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2012), 117. Harper points out that instead of reasoning from city to soul, Aesara begins with soul and reasons to city, recommending introspection first; likewise, tantalizingly, she uses the image of an ordered household to reflect the order of the soul (ibid., 118).

54. Claudia Baracchi sees a connection between Bendis and the three Fates, on account of Bendis' night festival and the Fates as the offspring of unaided Night (*Myth, Life, and War*, 192, 210n15).

55. Strauss, CM, 112.

Chapter 5

Women and Men, Exercising Naked, Together

Among Socrates' many strange laws for his best city in the *Republic*, one of the strangest is his insistence in the First Wave that the women exercise naked along with the men, as part of their common education as guardians. Historically speaking, it's been one of details that has stuck most in the throats of its readers, prompting even the 20th-century reader H. Gauss to insist, against all textual evidence, that Socrates argued for separate *Frauengymnasia*, where the women would exercise privately unclothed.[1] Many dialogic readers have taken common naked exercise to be the ironic linchpin of the First Wave, and there are certainly reasons to consider it as a crucial element of the passage—as long as it's placed in the context of the other forces at work, such as the narrative arc of Glaucon's aporia, and Socrates' proposal that female guardians be clothed in robes of virtue alone. But since this passage in particular has tempted even readers who lack the hermeneutic excuse of irony to distort the text past recognition, special care is required to determine just what is so funny about both sexes exercising naked together—except, well, just about everything about it.

One crucial thing is the recovery of just how often young women *did* go about naked and train as athletes under Greek customs; as well as an expansion of our view of women in the classical Greek world beyond the habits of honored wives and virtuous daughters, to include all womankind therein. Also necessary is a consideration of the inevitable distortion that has plagued scholarship on these issues, where each polity's laws and its hopes for women under them, changes its notions about just went on among the honored Greeks, who so often stand as a sort of rhetorical trump card in these sorts of disputations.

I have found it dialectically necessary, however, to take seriously the strongest version of the argument about the ultimate absurdity of women's

participation in such exercise, where such ridicule is supposed to dramatize the impossibility that the private sex would become fully public. We're certainly justified asking whether Plato wishes to ridicule women themselves, even women's bodies, in this moment. Considering this will allow me to speak to one of the common 20th-century accusations against Socrates, his so-called misogyny. In the end, this argument of absurdity fails because it treats privacy as univocal, and so fails to think through the question of what naked exercise would mean to women in different political positions, from priestesses to prostitutes and in between. Whether we as readers are tempted to believe that Plato is making light of the female *genos* from hasty zealous ire or from the hopes of hidden sympathy, this mistaking misses equally the full range of the political problem of, and the depth of Plato's concern for women in all their different and manifold relations to being present, public, or private, as women at all.

THE PEDAGOGY OF NAKED GYMNASTIC

Socrates' first full argument in the First Wave goes like this: since men and women will share all the tasks of the guardians in common, they should be educated in common; since education comprises music and gymnastic, music and gymnastic will now be given to women too. Sensing slight hesitation from Glaucon ("likely, from what you say," 452a), Socrates pauses in the forward motion of his argument, and concedes that what they are speaking of might well sound laughable, when compared to the current habits (*ethos*), if they were to put their words into practice. He claims to put forward the strongest objection possible, with the strategy that, as many have noted, if he can show this strongest objection to be unfounded, the plan will seem reasonable, and the argument can continue. "What," Socrates says, "is the funniest thing you see among them? Or isn't it clear it's the women, naked (γυμνὰς), exercising in the *palaestra*, together with the men?" First of all, to the Hellene ear the practice of athletic exercise is simply understood to be done unclothed; in fact the word "gymnastic" literally means "the skill of naked exercise." Therefore, to include women in gymnastic would not unexpectedly include nakedness for them as well. But Socrates makes it clear, with his extra repetition of the adjective *gymnas*, that everyone will be naked, and in the same place at the same time.

But even these customary associations don't make naked exercise, together, a necessary educational maxim. Even though "gymnastic" is also a Greek way of talking about education as a whole, it still doesn't *have* to entail common nakedness, considering Socrates' pedagogic inventiveness. Indeed, Socrates is about to radically reshape the education for all the guardians, though to be

sure, athletic prowess in war for both sexes remains central to his concerns (537a). Practically speaking, Socrates could have constructed a common enough education with naked exercise in separate places, if the nakedness was crucial, and have the sexes come together for war games in various outfits, such as the races the Athenian Stranger proposes for his youths, where some wear the armor of a hoplite, others the gear of an archer (*Laws* 833b). Indeed, the Athenian Stranger, who is strongly in favor of exercise for both sexes, has common exercise cease at the age of six, after which each sex exercises on its own (794c). Nakedness, then, by this logic, is a practical detail of curriculum, and as such, the specific practice could have been left out.[2] But why then would Socrates add to his argument, which will be difficult enough, what is at the least a rhetorical weakness? After all, Socrates has been attempting to *tame* desires by education; why add such a temptation? Now, more than a few readers respond to this passage by asking, why can't we just save Socrates' argument for common education by throwing out this tiny detail, which at the least raises immediate erotic concerns? But first of all, this is not the only time Socrates brings it up; nakedness for women is part of his final conclusion at the end of the wave (457a). Furthermore, since logographic necessity is, after all, our gold standard for writing, we can hardly alter away any troubling detail that Plato puts in; this is missing the point. Common naked exercise is more than a curricular detail for Socrates; and it's not negotiable.

On the other hand, it's important to keep co-ed *palaestras* in the context of the wider question of the women's law. Plato's two Athenian lawgivers, Socrates and the Athenian Stranger, attempt to enact laws that fundamentally alter the place of women in political life. Socrates speaks of a shared hunt for the men and women, and he insists on common exercise; the Athenian Stranger, by contrast, wishes to promote the use of common tables for women, where like the Spartan men, all the women in his projected polity will eat together in the public square, open to the sight of all (*Laws* 781a). In both of these memorable specifications, some kind of contrast between what was private and what will now be public is at work. Each of these images dramatizes a certain aspect of the overall problem with the action of the argument that each lawgiver proposes, wherein he must draw those who live out of sight, into the sight of all. And so, while Socrates' image dramatizes the problem in a rather more racy fashion, it doesn't stand for the whole problem of the women's law *exclusively* in Plato's thinking. The problem is more general than the particularities of Socrates' image might suggest; and the particularities of the image very much shape the immediate problem at hand. While the Athenian Stranger is ultimately concerned about the reaction of the women themselves, Socrates is focused on the problematic reaction of the onlookers; he includes himself and Glaucon as the primary onlookers as they gaze at this strange sight; in an important sense, the question of what is

laughable is tied up with what is laughable *to men* as they look at men and women exercising. Furthermore, while the Athenian Stranger presents the reaction of the women as potentially deal-breaking, Socrates easily persuades Glaucon that the onlookers will get used to it.

PIECING TOGETHER A NEW *NOMOS*

In the argument of the First Wave, the question of nakedness is dismissed as ostensibly a matter of habit and custom; customs change, and this one will too; therefore common naked exercise is ultimately not a problem. Socrates has chosen well his means of drawing out Glaucon's hesitation: Glaucon immediately relaxes, responding to the image with a "By Zeus! That *would* be amusing, at least as things stand now, it would seem (452b)." Glaucon's caveat "at least as things stand now" shows he is already responding to what Socrates will draw out further, that just as naked exercise for men once seemed strange but now seems perfectly reasonable and indeed better, so too will objections to the practice as common to both sexes fade as the laughter of the eye departs in favor of what reason reveals as good (452d). Glaucon is perfectly willing to agree that custom changes, and that custom can change about nakedness, agreeing strongly to all of Socrates' exhortations to reason, even the notion that the only standard for the beautiful is the good. This ready agreement stands in sharp contrast to the drama that is about to unfold over the question of women's natures; again, the sticking point for Glaucon is not common education, but similarity in nature and the concurrent possibility that some women will be stronger than men. And so, even when it's a question of education conceived as naked exercise, Glaucon is perfectly ready to admit women into the *palaestra*, just as he is later ready to bargain for kisses from either sex (458c).

Why would Glaucon be so ready to make this change in the customary law? Some readers of Plato assume that such a change would appear beyond the pale for Plato's audience, which requires them to find some reason to explain away Glaucon's acquiescence. But the fact is, exercise for the young of the female sex was a not an extraordinary occurrence in Ancient Greece. Far from being merely the projection of Platonic lawgivers, the practice was not infrequent in both religious and secular contexts. The Athenian female youths had a form of naked exercise through their worship of the goddess Artemis. In Athens, before their marriage, certain girls participated in rituals to Artemis Mounichia, this being the temple near the Piraeus where Bendis was to take up a spot, and/or to Artemis of Brauron, a more distant and rural locale. Important parts of Brauron's cultic event were naked races and naked dancing; this ritual marked their last tribute to their youth and virginity.[3] Although the rites were not necessarily compulsory for all citizen women,

the sisters and mothers of the Athenians present certainly could have participated. The city of Athens celebrated the Brauronia every fourth year; Aristophanes invokes the festival twice (*Peace* 872–6, *Lysistrata* 636ff).[4]

A still closer precedent for what Socrates recommends comes from Spartan custom. In daily life, gymnastic was a part of the education of Spartan girls; they were noted athletes, and old and young alike were known to exercise in the nude; they also appeared in public for choral dances.[5] In fact, the Athenian Stranger speaks approvingly of these specific customs and recommends the implementation of many—his only quarrel is that the Spartans don't have the women exercise enough, and he considers it a particularly large oversight that they are not trained specifically for warfare.[6] Since so many of the new practices Socrates has recommended over the course of the *Republic* have some similarity to Spartan customs, it's reasonable that the recommendation of yet another practice with Spartan precedent would not be much of a scandal.[7] Furthermore, in the classical period, maidens from Sparta and possibly elsewhere would compete in races at a portion of the Olympics dedicated to Hera, "with their hair let down, with skirts just above the knees, and the right shoulder bare to the breast"; there are bronze statuettes of girls both in this costume as well as girls simply naked while exercising.[8]

The real difference between Greek customs and the city in speech, is that Socrates is changing what, for his audience, was ordinarily a private and/or religious practice into a public, political one practiced throughout life. Women would be doing what they already did in isolated moments, but now for specifically civic purposes in the company of men. These considerations help make sense of the fact that while Socrates does describe the scene of common exercise as "the most laughable" (γελοιότατον) aspect of his plan for education, he does not raise the scenario to the rank of "most absurd" (καταγελαστότατόν), a term he reserves for other, more fully ridiculous moments in the evening's conversation. The cave dwellers find the man returning from above to be an object of derision (518b), the ultimate fate of the unjust man is to be utterly ridiculous (613d); in the First Wave, it is the triumph of men over women in weaving that is most absurd of all (455c). This explains why Socrates can move so easily and quickly through his education argument, in sharp contrast to the later contentiousness surrounding female human nature: common naked exercise is funny, but not utterly ridiculous.

DID WOMEN EXERCISE NAKED IN GREECE IN THE 19TH CENTURY?

Now, why have such practices for women been often downplayed by commentators on this passage, allowing Socrates' attempts to shift custom in

this direction to be painted as outrageous? Socrates' insistence that women participate in war gets the most ridicule, yet this is the very thing his more moderate counterpart, the Athenian Stranger, recommends—a practice which is the more reasonable if gymnastic for women is not unheard of. A *locus classicus* for this narrow vision can be found in Benjamin Jowett, the influential English translator of Plato in the 19th century:

> The Greeks had noble conceptions of womanhood in the goddesses Athene and Artemis, and in the heroines Antigone and Andromache. But these ideals had no counterpart in actual life . . . . She took no part in military or political matters; nor is there any instance in the later ages of Greece of a woman becoming famous in literature. "Hers is the greatest glory who has the least renown among men," is the historian's conception of feminine excellence.[9]

Jowett is making the classic mistake of insisting that public political presence is the only presence within the city that counts or holds influence. Likewise, he forgets to mention, perhaps from misplaced delicacy, the women whose infamy we might as well call fame, as for example the courtesan Phryne, tried for impiety in Athens in the 4th century BC for introducing new gods, roughly fifty years after Socrates.[10] Part of the problem lies in the artificiality of the modern distinction between "culture" and politics, which does not do much to explain the rich fabric of Greek *nomos*; this split likewise contributes to a tendency to ignore the religious practices central to it. For Jowett, lack of public political presence is no place at all; and this is partially why, I'd wager, exercise at the Heraian games or the activities at Brauron can seem irrelevant to politics. But it is not a few virtuously, suspiciously silent aristocratic women who constitute all women—the *genos* likewise includes the priestesses, virginal or otherwise, and all the courtesans, from the bridge-women (*gephuris*) to the big-spenders (*megalomisthoi*) in possession of their own houses, not to mention the day laborers or the extra-household weavers, an industry largely peopled by women in Athens.[11] Socrates visits a courtesan, Theodote, in her own home, in the conversation Xenophon recounts (*Memorabilia* 3.11.4). The irony of Jowett's invocation of Pericles is that he forgets that Pericles himself was entangled with a talkative woman with all too much influence on political matters, his mistress Aspasia. In the *Menexenus*, Socrates doubles down on this irony, claiming that Aspasia herself wrote the speech containing Pericles' *bon mot* on women's virtue (236b). Aspasia's pedagogic success is the more noteworthy, considering Pericles' failure, as Socrates points out in the *Meno*, to educate his legitimate sons at all well (94b). Nor, it must be noted, is Plato's Socrates alone in his appreciation of Aspasia; Xenophon's Socrates likewise speaks of Aspasia's knowledge, while Aeschines' Socrates recommends her

as a teacher to others; her words and deeds were a notorious part of classical Athens' milieu, specifically associated with Socrates.[12] In any case, make no mistake, the conversation of the *Republic* is peppered throughout by allusions to all the different sorts of women that make up the *genos* inside and outside notoriety, from the orphaned virgin (495c) to the nagging wife (549d), to the woman in love or in childbirth (395e). Plato's observant eye provides ready material for Socratic poeticizing; Socrates has a very clear sense of the presence of women who, whether quiet or loud, nevertheless cut a figure.

The history of the scholarly debates over the place of women in Greece is a fascinating one. For instance, take the issue of whether Athenian women were expected to spend most of their lives indoors in imitation of those in so-called oriental seclusion—or not. There exists the odd phenomenon, that when we listen to the words of men in classical Athens, we can trick ourselves into thinking that women in Greece lived a tightly controlled life indoors. But not only does this come from only taking into account a small fraction of the population, not to mention ignoring archeological, economic, and cultic evidence, it also requires the reader to take the admonitions of such kingly sources as Creon and Pericles, both highly interested in the perpetuation of the tale of women's indoor virtue for their own political ends, as straightforward, factual reporting.[13] Once we take the character and *telos* of such remarks in context, it becomes clear that political rhetoric toward silence and remaining indoors becomes necessary precisely when there is a real danger of the opposite: Antigone heeds Creon's advice not for a moment. It requires wealth and position to be able to afford separate women's quarters, as well as servants or slaves to run all the any number of minor errands, while streetwalkers of many varieties wander about. Aristotle points out that it's impossible to keep the women of the poor from going out to work.[14] Likewise, numerous religious festivals, several held for women exclusive of men, require women's presence outside the house.[15] Indeed, a common lament of cuckolded husbands in Menander is that their wife met someone when out at a festival; Aristophanes' women are inventive in their excuses for having been out.[16] None of this is to say that there's not a real tension between indoor and outdoor, private and public; but the tension is dynamic, and the religious calendar full of prescheduled transgressions. The fact is, that no matter what laws we live under, there is a real temptation to distort the fragments we do possess on all these matters. And to be sure, this is no less a problem for our current polity, since our own eagerness to find something like our own freedoms among the Greeks is likewise a temptation toward distortion.[17] The underlying human problem is, even the physical presence of another human being is not enough for us to consider them as present in the political sense: even to catch the eye remains fraught with the possibility of not seeing, whether from *eros* or absorption in one's own power. Public space is possible when we regard each other with mutual

respect with our very eyes: and this is a matter, as Plato implies, of *seeing*. And so the task is not only to initially reimagine, but to continually hold in our sight the scene in the Piraeus that Socrates and his interlocutors have walked inside away from, as peopled with women enough.[18]

THE PRESENCE AND ABSENCE OF WOMEN'S BODIES

But even after taking into account Greek customs in the rich sense, while reminding ourselves that no polity examines the Greeks free from their own concerns, neither the precedents for women's exercise nor the presence of a rich world of women obviate the dialogic fact that Socrates does in fact describe women and men exercising naked together as funny. Socrates frames his description as an invitation for Glaucon to view the sight of both together, exhorting him to direct his gaze in a specific direction.

> 'What is the funniest thing you see among them? Or isn't it clear it's the women, naked, exercising in the *palaestra* (γυμνὰς τὰς γυναῖκας ἐν ταῖς παλαίστραις γυμναζομένας) together with the men, not only the young ones, but also the older ones right there, like the old men in gymnasiums, though they're shriveled and not a pleasant sight, who love to exercise still?' (452a10–b3)

The interesting thing about this image is what is absent from it. Socrates first names adult men and women; he mentions the presence of young women, but does not allow the gaze to linger there, immediately shifting the attention first to older women, and from there to older men. Now, the upshot of the argument is that ugly old women would be funny to view (one is reminded of the opening scene of *The Color of Pomegranates*); but Socrates reserves the unambiguously visual descriptors of "wrinkled and unpleasant to look at" for the category into which he himself falls; and indeed, for the kind of ugliness that the men present would either possess or fear. The scenario Socrates describes is reminiscent of the beginning of the *Lysis*, where Socrates in his age has come to see the beauty of the youth at the *palaestra* (203b–204a). Such a wrinkled state, while it may inspire pity on the part of some, certainly arouses disgust from others; consider the suitors' reaction to Odysseus when he arrives at his palace under Athena's disguise of an old vagrant: "It is my thought that he can give us illumination from his bald head, which has no hair, not even a little."[19] Socrates' later example of eristical bald men (454c) likewise plays into this sense of potential loss of beauty. By playing on the fears rather than the desires of his audience, Socrates allows the beautiful bodies of the young, the ones he is specifically

making laws for, to remain hidden in plain sight. This redirection to the ugly cloaks the temptation present in such a scenario to focus on the beauty of the naked young, as Dikaios Logos does in Aristophanes's *Clouds*.[20] Now, this could well have been an image about the male gaze turned toward the bodies of young women; instead, Socrates subverts this moment by directing the gaze of the young man toward the inevitable problems of male age. He does this because while youth can find age amusing, the bodies of the young are not funny, but desirable. The only way his argument can remain a joke, is by hiding young women's bodies; there is something of gallantry, perhaps, in this cloaking. And so, while I have certainly heard it argued that Socrates finds it so, I can't see in this moment a disgust for the female body as such engaged in exercise.

The most obviously funny thing about common naked exercise is, the erotic complications that would inevitably arise from the sights of beautiful bodies. Naked exercise is not without practical difficulties for either sex at any age, this too being full of humorous possibilities; but the more interestingly comic situation, perhaps, is on the order of soul.[21] Anyone might fall in love with anyone else at any moment, this being the perennial stuff of comedic action—and directly opposed to Socrates' plans to mate the best with the best. Now, some have argued that common naked exercise would lead to the opposite result, as in the case of communes devoted to naked living, or even naked beaches in Europe or Russia; they worry that without clothes, the conditions necessary for *eros* between the sexes will depart.[22] There is something potentially boring about all ages naked together, even animalistic, if human animals completely immune to *eros* as such can be found—but a gymnasium is a different community than a beach or a commune. Striving together for bodily excellence in the presence of excellent others is just the kind of thing that draws one's notice to the presence of beauty or to shame at its lack in oneself; and so puts one in mind of *eros*. After all, the presence of *eros* among members of the same sex who exercise naked together is well documented. Xenophon notes the sight of nearly naked male athletes at the Olympics was a common source of homosexual attraction, while the Athenian Stranger condemns the entire practice as too much of a temptation for *any* sex (*Laws* 636a).[23] Naked exercise poses an erotic problem for all humans—and so for the lawgiver.

Now, this is not a problem Socrates simply passes over: toward the beginning of the Second Wave, he declares that when the guardians "are mingled together in the gyms and in the rest of their upbringing, they'll be led, I suppose, by inborn necessity toward mixing together in sex" (458d). This is not a wholly foreign idea: Pausanias notes that maidens, whether or not they competed, were encouraged to attend the Olympics, so that the mutual attraction between themselves and the athletes could be taken

advantage of for matrimonial purposes.[24] But Socrates proposes stronger medicine: such attraction will be an explicitly encouraged everyday occurrence, and he gambles that the medicinal lies of his rigged lottery, where the rulers will secretly match up the breeding pairs under the illusion of random chance, will be enough to keep the best mingling with the best (459c–d). It's amusing that the very misdirection of the image ultimately draws our attention back to the problem; we can't look at wrinkled old men forever. It's funny that the very power of the soul Socrates has been willing to demote for much of the evening's conversation, is now blithely taken up into his plans—in such an alarmingly precarious way. What's most funny of all is that Socrates is clearly underestimating the power he as lawgiver will have over the *eros* he allows to foment. Just as in his image of old men haunting the *palaestras*, it is ultimately Socrates himself that raises the biggest laugh.

How does Socrates ostensibly propose to deal with the repercussions of this change? To have no other plan for softening or controlling the effects of common naked exercise, other than a specious lottery, would be perilous in the extreme. At the very end of the First Wave, he casually shares his plan: after having obtained agreement that the women will now share in all the duties of the guardians and be educated alongside the men, he concludes: "It's clear then that the women guardians must strip, seeing that they will be clothed in virtue instead of cloaks" (ἐπείπερ ἀρετὴν ἀντὶ ἱματίων ἀμφιέσονται, 457a). Although Socrates spoke earlier as if the change in custom would need no further provision once everyone became accustomed to it, his reference to nakedness again shows otherwise; indeed, he speaks of these robes in a way that makes them potentially emblematic of the whole question of law for women. I see in this moment the real linchpin of the passage, since it is the culmination of the earlier question of naked exercise, the thing that is supposed to make the whole plan possible. Wearing virtue instead of cloaks or robes is Socrates' specific plan for how the women will exist in public once they no longer possess the privacy he has carefully pushed under the rug. In one sense, it can be spoken of as his solution to the problem, since he represents it as such: the women will just do this, wear virtue, and all will be well. On the other hand, surely invisible robes as a solution ought to sound questionable, as soon as the reader considers them for a moment. The tension inherent in this solution will prove crucial to thinking through the underlying problem, and requires its own separate consideration later on. But it does raise this question: if women will be clothed in virtue, in a sense they still have some sort of clothing. This tugs the reader back to the question of privacy I began with: overall, the action of Socrates' argument is to pull women out of the private into the public eye. Is this meant to be the funny part?

LAUGHTER AT THE FEMALE FORM

Let's consider the most extreme argument connected with the customary privacy of women that has been made: that this shift from private practice to public one goes against women's nature as lovers of the private, and Socrates therefore introduces this shift as a way of showing the impossibility and undesirability of his city in speech, and probably of the rule and education of women as well. Women could not step into the public because of a sense of appropriate shame; when unclothed they feel the natural shame that is an expression of their peculiar nature; women are too attached to the domestic and therefore the customary city, making them unsuited to reside as guardians in the best city in speech.[25] Socrates' rebuttals of our temptation to laugh at common naked exercise are therefore weak because they are ironic, and he means not to counsel us against laughter as he appears to, but rather to incite us to laugh all the more. The First Wave is a reminder that the city in speech is against nature, and a sign of this is that it's funny.

Now, this argument could stand, even if it is not the bodies of women themselves which are meant to be funny, but their private state in general. But given the earlier discussion of the necessity of expanding our view of women to include all the varieties of political positions possible for them in Greek *nomos*, in all its messy detail, the solecism of this argument should be obvious: so-called domesticity is simply but one of the many options possible for all the women that live out of the public eye, but one of the species of privacy among the broader genus; while the bridge-woman may retain a fondness for her bridge, the shameless courtesan hunts where she pleases. Most of the population of Greek women were not attached to a private home in the way a law-abiding Athenian aristocrat was exhorted to be; privacy or the non-public realm has as many inflections as there are footholds for women in the community.

The second problem with this argument is that it takes "the private" to be filled out by the Greek expression τό ἴδιον alone, without considering the other way the Greek language and Socrates himself speak of life lived outside of the public realm of citizens.[26] The phrase τό ἴδιον, or "one's own," speaks to what is private to one's self, whether this is one's own estate, family, or body, the *accoutrements* of political animals expressed through the notion of possession. Socrates frequently voices his concern for the competing force of the private as *to idion* (373e, 443a), looking for a justice that will be useful both in common and in private (333d). But also crucial to Socrates' argument in the *Republic* is the entirely cityless, propertyless version of privacy, named by the word ἐρεμία, variously translated as "isolation," "loneliness," "desolation." This quality bespeaks the realm outside the city's walls as typified by the mountain or forest, peopled with wild beasts; it is also associated with the

desires of the tyrant (604a). As I discussed in chapter 4, women are customarily seen as private or wild in this latter sense, no less than as partial participants in the former. It is this latter quality that Socrates names in Book VI, when he unites the characters of philosophy and the orphaned *parthenos* (495e); and so it's this quality of privacy that is particularly germane to the First Wave. The irony of the attempt to show that women *qua* domestic are a dangerous drag on the abilities of the lawmaker, and as such can't qualify as guardians, is that this argument only sees a fraction of the political problem women represent in the *Republic*, once privacy is no longer taken as univocal. By this logic, Socrates' inclusion of women in the guardian class, who bear this very quality, is not funny so much as it is terrifying.

But still, the argument can be made: even given the fact that women customarily inhabit not only domestic privacy, but anti-domestic privacy as well, is there still some hilarity in the private sex leaving the private? To be sure, other aspects of the women's law, such as the hope that no mother would recognize her child, famously ridiculed by Aristotle in the *Politics*, are funny enough.[27] In the First Wave, Socrates speaks of his wish to prevent the comedians from minding their own business (452c) in order to stave off laughter at common naked exercise; but such an act of injustice merely highlights the fact that comic poets too must be given their due. Certain modes of laughter are of themselves serious and even thoughtful, as long as we take care to notice just what we're laughing at; though I will note in passing, that in the god-fearing polity the Athenian Stranger describes, where the comic poets are put under no restraint, citizenship, some share in governance, and education are granted to women.[28] This implies that these measures *of themselves* are not what is laughable about women's entrance into the public. But to speak to the seriousness of the comic poets, consider the following distinction: Henry Fielding, novelist, jurist, and admirer of Aristophanes, considers that the presentation of the monstrous or the unnatural, one might say, is the absurd; while the hilarious or the funny, in the attempt to affect or put on that which is beyond nature, reveals nature after all—at least according to someone who is himself a comic poet.[29] Fielding's examples of the latter are when "ugliness aims at the applause of beauty, or lameness endeavors to display ability."[30]

One possibility, then, is that it is women themselves who are being laughed at, and that there is something humorously unfit in their entrance into the public, because of some difference or deficiency on their part. Now, to laugh in this way at the expense of the *genos* of women is a real human possibility, and one possible even for those famed for a kind of expansive benevolence toward humanity in general, as in the case of Dr. Johnson and his *bon mot*: "Sir, a women preaching is like a dog's walking on its hind legs. It is not well done; but you are surprised to find it done at all."[31] Where

comes this sense of woman as deficient or even crippled in some way? Johnson's joke depends on our willingness to regard the female human being as belonging to an entirely different species; I would suggest that this is a case where the otherness of the female *genos* is being read as deficient—on account of being not-man.

ORPHIC MISOGYNY, SOCRATIC MISANDRY

Now, when irony comes on the scene, anything looks possible; and to be sure, it's well to consider all human possibilities. Does Socrates have this sense in common with Dr. Johnson? It is certainly the case that in the *Republic*, Socrates speaks contemptuously of breeding in general (586b), and treats his guardian breeders rather callously—but in the *Symposium*, while it is certainly argued that the offsprings of the mind are to be *preferred*, Socrates paints himself as an admirer of birth in general, who keenly teaches what his teacher Diotima pronounces, that there is something divine about all human engendering and bringing to birth (206c). In the *Republic* itself, Socrates makes a point of giving us a definite example of someone who bears true hatred for the female *genos* (μίσει τοῦ γυναικείου γένους), in the case of Orpheus in the Myth of Er, who wishes to be a swan rather than be born again of a human woman (620a); in this example there is that same sense of the sex as different in kind, and as different in kind, hated as unfit. But it seems less likely that Phaenarete the midwife's son, who ascribes his knowledge of the erotic art to the mythical priestess Diotima, and his knowledge of rhetoric to our friend Aspasia, a quite real harlot, feels precisely the same as Orpheus. I will note that Socrates reports that both his male teachers, the linguistically inclined Prodicus and the musician Connus, fail to teach him anything (*Meno* 96d; *Euthydemus* 272c). In the character of Orpheus, by contrast, Socrates takes care to present us with a *true* "misogynist"; though indeed I would question the utility of naming him as such, since the term is too often used to elide crucial differences among the various reactions of men to women.[32] On the other hand, to wish to escape the human race, on account of the female *genos*, is a noteworthy sort of hatred to be sure.

Now, many readers make a point of contrasting Socrates' plans for women in the First Wave, with his allusions not too much later to the "womanish" stripping of corpses foolishly practiced by the Greeks against each other (469d). And whether such readers deplore or indeed approve Socrates' usage, they find that it undercuts his action toward women as a whole.[33] But the use of the purported vices of the other sex for what is after all a rhetorical *telos*, is not the same as thoroughgoing hatred of the race of women. In fact, Socrates also uses "manfully" and "eristically" in the same breath in the First Wave to ridicule all

wrongheaded practitioners of dialectic (454b), but no one would argue from this that he hates the *genos* of men.[34] Socrates' image of common naked exercise is not an attempt to portray women as "Ugliness aiming at the applause of Beauty," in Fielding's apt phrase; but rather, Socrates uses ugliness to hide the problems associated with Beauty—which is indeed amusing. Again, what Socrates ultimately paints as deficient or ugly in his description of naked exercise is his very own self—whereas his action as a whole is to secure a place for women in the most treasured class of the city. Likewise, as I argued in chapter 2, Socrates' capitulation to Glaucon on the matter of the relative strength of men is precisely that, a rhetorically necessary capitulation, in sharp contrast to what Socrates says on other occasions (*Timaeus* 18c, *Meno* 72d–73c), and is a deliberate act aimed at preserving his initial plan to make men and women guardians share in the common act of hunting together and guarding. Finally, Socrates is not alone in recognizing the need to manage the rhetorical introduction of his actions with respect to women; consider what the Athenian Stranger says about the *reason* he initially introduced his plan for common tables for women as one posing great practical difficulty: the great strength of disbelief (*Laws* 839d) stands in the way of understanding that it is possible, even though it is relatively easy to see that it is quite feasible (Ibid., 842d); he finds the same sort of gradually more explicit approach necessary for women's participation in gymnastic and warfare (*Laws* 794d, 796c, 804e, 829e.)[35]

The presence of women in the Platonic corpus is a strange mixture of presence and absence. Unlike Xenophon, who has his Socrates converse with—and successfully shame—an Athenian courtesan, Plato does not present us with a scene where Socrates speaks with a living, present human woman. So much so indeed, that Plato's Socrates speaks of his determination to examine in speech both men and women—once he has arrived in Hades (*Apology* 41c). But women's presence in the corpus is not merely mythic, as the reference to Aspasia in the *Menexenus* reminds us. Again, Socrates' own vision of the variables within the *genos* of women is purposefully broad and highly specific, with Diotima's holy prophecies and Aspasia's courtesanly advice standing at satisfyingly opposed extremes. It is the public silence of women that speaks most; in Plato, women do not receive Socratic refutation; Socrates is the midwife to men; but the student of women. In some sense, two of the *genos* already know, and are thus qualified as teachers in a way Socrates is not. Of course, some readers certainly wish to interpret away Socrates' crediting his knowledge of erotics and rhetoric to women as a trivial or ironic detail; but this strikes me as an absurdity on the level of H. Gauss' interpolation of *Frauengymnasia*.[36] Socrates's strange plans in the *Republic* do indeed speak volumes on the oddity of women's position in the human community, and the strangeness of what Socrates himself in the service of the kingship of philosophy is willing to attempt; but they aren't a

denunciation of the sex—any more than they are a sort of childish piracy of women's prerogatives.[37] Knowledge is not a trivial matter to Socrates, or for that matter, to Plato. It sits at the heart of Socrates' way of being in the world, and though he publicly claims to know nothing, as any first-time reader can tell you, in quite an irritating way he clearly knows all too much. In the Greek world, one's teacher is one's lineage; in the *Republic*, Socrates absolutely insists that the lineage of this beloved vision of truth itself (though not without a side-helping of useful falsehoods) inform the pedagogy of female students; indeed, he stands as a sort of daimonic mediator between his teachers and the students he envisions—while making sure that their education be oriented primarily towards the virtues not of respectable Athenian wives, but of the foreign nurses and courtesans.

MUTUAL LAUGHTER

Though Socrates is famous for his irony, his relationship with those who make jokes of all varieties is infamously strained. Twice, in the First Wave, Socrates alludes to this tension between himself and the comic poets; first he remarks that they must not mind their own business but rather in this case be serious (σπουδάζειν), which, as it is often remarked, implies that he is proposing injustice toward this class, since to mind one's own business is justice (433b).[38] Socrates' war with the comic poets is serious; after all, they are in some sense responsible for his indictment, as he remarks in the *Apology* (18d); he is willing, perhaps, to do injustice to those who do injustice to him. Such warfare is also reflected in his final remark, at the end of the Wave, where he mendaciously misquotes Pindar (457b). This poet's original caveat was, to not to pick the fruits of wisdom before they are ripe, implying that wisdom in the hands of the philosophers is capable of being half-baked. But in Socrates' version, it is laughter itself that is not ripe, and in his version, it is the comic poets who miss the mark. I would like to suggest that such a quarrel is not something that ought to be settled once and for all; should we side with the comic poets and conclude that Socrates' proposals, and philosophy itself, are in fact laughable after all, we are simply siding with Socrates' accusers, and against his express argument that philosophy has something legitimate to say for itself. To conclude that Socrates' Waves are *simply* laughable is to let the comic poet have the last laugh.[39] On the other hand, when philosophy makes its native desire to rule explicit, and when Socrates himself enacts his dialogic revenge on the assembled company, that is indeed funny; it's funny that Socrates is claiming he actually after all ought to be not put to death—but to be in charge of the state. It's quite funny that Socrates of all people is claiming that we ought to do injustice to anyone, even if they happen to be

pesky comedians. The comic poet claims there is a limit to what philosophy can do, and the philosopher says that the business of comic poets ought to have its limits as well; the dialectic between them might lead to something like better wisdom.

At the end of the First Wave, in contrast to his earlier misdirection, Socrates speaks directly to the problem of the temptation specifically male onlookers have, to laugh at women. Socrates remarks that "the man (ἀνὴρ) who laughs at naked women engaged in exercise for the sake of the best . . . has no idea, it seems, what he's laughing at or what he's doing (457b)." Socrates neatly describes the basic temptation of readers—and specifically, readers among the male *genos*—who come to his remarks about female exercise, that they would be in ignorance about just what they are laughing at, or what they reveal about themselves when they do. Indeed, Socrates' construction of the disputatious opponent ("the person who contradicts this sort of thing," 455b) is the conjuring of the true opponent to his proposals: the manly man, attached to his own *genos*, willing and in the habit of saying whatever it takes to defeat a proposal to which he has a strong thumotic reaction—a character many women, I imagine, would find recognizable—who nevertheless displays his ignorance rather than his cleverness in his false use of logos. Such ignorance requires Socratic education; Socrates is not lying when he demands that the comic poets think twice before they ridicule what is good. But reader take warning: Socrates also makes it clear on another occasion that the jokes between *genê* run both ways. In the *Theaetetus*, he tells the story of the time that Thales, who while out for a walk and gazing at the stars, fell into a hole; a "gracefully witty" Thracian servant girl (Θρᾷττά τις ἐμμελὴς καὶ χαρίεσσα) standing nearby bursts into laughter (174a). Socrates returns to the laughter of Thracian girls twice more in his oration against all those who find the philosopher foolish (174c, 175d); their specific laughter seems to be on his mind. In both the *Theaetetus* and the *Republic*, Socrates makes a point of attempting to school our laughter on behalf of the better practice of philosophy; and if we as readers attempt to side with the comic poets instead of Plato, we're missing the point, not to mention the complexity of the joke.

NOTES

1. Bluestone, 44.

2. As Drew Hyland argues in "Plato's Three Waves and the Question of Utopia," 94.

3. Burkert, 263; and Janouchova, 99. Paula Perlman argues for a connection to the Athenian Stranger's plans for female exercises and the rites at Brauron in "Plato's Laws and the Bears of Brauron," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 24 no. 2 (1983): 115–24.

4. See Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion* (London: Routledge, 2002), 94; and also by the same author, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1997), 201.

5. Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Spartan Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 12, 25–8.

6. *Laws* 806b. Note that the Athenian Stranger recommends naked dance for youths of both sexes, the better for marriage purposes (*Laws* 772a); girls will participate in naked races until puberty, after which they will continue to race clothed until marriage or the age of twenty (*Laws* 833c); the Stranger's provisions are given relative respectability by his insistence on their status as religious practice.

7. Commentators Halliwell and Adam both find the Spartan connection for exercising women to be perfectly reasonable, and to lend authority to the whole (Halliwell, 10–12; and Adam, 280).

8. See Dillon on the Heraian games, *Girls and Women*, 131–2, 220ff; the quoted description is Pausanius' (5.16.3). See also Thomas Scanlon's extensive discussion of both Brauron and the Heraean games in *Eros and Greek Athletics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), chs. 4–6; he presents tables of extant naked female exercisers in bronze, as well as the full range of Spartan female athletic activity (136–8); and Pomeroy, *Spartan Women,* 164.

9. (*The Dialogues of Plato*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1892), 159. See also Marilyn Katz, "Did the Women of Ancient Athens Attend the Theater in the Eighteenth Century?" *Classical Philology* Vol. 93, no. 2 (1998): 105–124), whose excellent title I am playing on. See David Cohen's "Seclusion, Separation, and the Status of Women in Classical Athens," *Greece & Rome*, Vol. 36, no. 1 (1989): 3–15; see also "Adultery, women, and control" in *Law, Sexuality, and Society: The Enforcement of Morals in Classical Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 133–162.

10. See Edith Eidinow, *Envy, Poison, and Death: Women on Trial in Classical Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 23ff.

11. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes*, 104.

12. Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, 3.14; this particular fragment of Aeschines' dialogue *Aspasia* is preserved in Cicero's *De inventione*, I.51–53.

13. For extremely fine-tuned phenomenological considerations on the ways men and women interacted with space in the Greek oikos, see Lisa C. Nevett's *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

14. *Politics* 1300a, 1323a. See *Pomeroy, Goddess, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 79–80.

15. Burkert discusses several festivals that were an occasion where women would meet together in public: the Skira, one of the preludes to the Panathenaia, Athen's new year (GR, 230); at the Thesmophoria, a festival of Demeter special to women (244); and at the Haloa, a festival of winter (265). Likewise, larger festivals or cults required the presence of both men and women, such as the Eleusinian mysteries (285).

16. John Gould, "Women in Classical Athens," 57.

17. James Davidson's advice is helpful, that we must keep attempting to regard the Greeks as neither wholly Other or too easily recognizable, see *Courtesans and Fishcakes* (London: Harper Perennial, 1999), xv–xxvi.

18. In satisfying contrast, Mary K. Lefkowitz has a nice sense of the inadequacy of 20th-century theoretic structures, no less than 20th-century customs, when applied to Greek myth (see "Preface to Second Edition" in *Women in Greek Myth*

(Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2007), ix–xiii). But I will note that the position eloquently expressed by Jowett remains a perennial temptation: scholars with as disparate inclinations as David Halperin and Marina McCoy express a similar disbelief in the reality of women as people with self-hood in the ancient world (Halperin, 146; McCoy, 150–55). But this is perhaps the most self-obviating sort of Othering of women of all: to imagine that because Athenian women lived under customs we find strange or repellent and restrictive that they lacked a *nous* of their own, or desires to match. As de Tocqueville notes, Americans are apt to forget the distinction between equality of conditions and freedom, which a human being may possess under regimes other than democracy (*Democracy in America*, Vol. 2, Part 2, ch. 1). This is the sort of reasoning that most of all stands in the way of a formation of what Irigaray would call female genealogy (JTN, 15–22); it's part of why, I would suggest, there's been very little interest in the women authors in the Pythagorean, Neoplatonic, and Stoic communities of the ancient world; and yet they possess the very sort of exchange of written ideas between women and men that Irigaray feels the lack of (JTN, 54).

19. Homer *Odyssey,* xviii.354–5.

20. Aristophanes *Clouds* 978.

21. I have heard it claimed that the bouncing of breasts on old women would be humorous, though in all fairness, I don't think this would be *more* humorous than analogous bouncing for males; certainly there is precedent for the humor of the latter in Attic comedies. Jacob Howland, following Bloom in his contempt for the sex that young men are forced to have with ugly old women in the *Ecclesiazusae* ("Response to Hall," 324), insists on the putative presence here of ugly old women as animalistic (*The* Republic*: The Odyssey of Philosophy* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), 113.

22. Respectively, Paul Ludwig, *Eros and Polis: Desire and Community in Greek Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 307; and Peter Nasmyth, *Georgia: In the Mountains of Poetry* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 86.

23. Xenophon *Symposium* 1.2–10.

24. See Thomas F. Scanlon's discussion of the various sources and corroborations of Pausanius' account in *Eros and Greek Athletics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 98–120.

25. "As a political proposal, the public nakedness of men and women is nonsense. Shame is an essential component of the erotic relations between men and women. . . . [Women] are involved with the private things which are likely to oppose the city . . . this a city without homes, and the women will have more to overcome if they are to accept it, for their natures lead them to love private things most" (IE, 382). Bloom concludes that Socrates' plans are "absurd conceits" which "have never existed in reality or the thoughts of serious men" (IE, 380). Steven Berg likewise considers shame as a natural condition "dictated" by the "hiddenness" or privacy of women, and required for the flourishing of the "natural" goods of a spouse and children of one's own ("The 'Woman Drama,'" 68).

26. Bloom is among the most thoughtful on what the loss of the private would mean, but this elision is the crux of his failure to account for womankind (IE, 380-4); Strauss makes this elision as well (CM, 114–5); likewise Saxonhouse ("The Philosopher and the Female," 78).

27. *Politics* II.3, 1262a15.

28. See Strauss, *Plato's* Laws, 2, 57, 167. Page has it that "Aristophanic laughter is meant to be taken seriously" in "Truth and Lies," 28n25; see also Nichols, *Socrates and the Political Community*, 29–33. For the Athenian Stranger and the citizen-esque role he describes, see *Laws* 814c.

29. See the "Author's Preface" to *Joseph Andrews* (New York: Rinehart & Co., Inc., 1959), xx–xxi. My choice to use Fielding's poetics on laughter at the natural, instead of Socrates' intriguing but pointedly incomplete description of laughter at lack of self-knowledge in the *Philebus*, is pace Strauss, *Socrates and Aristophanes*, 5; I'm suspicious of the definition as it arrives in the midst of Socrates' rather eristical battle against pleasure (*Philebus* 12a, 66e).

30. *Joseph Andrews*, xxii–xxiii.

31. James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1946), ch. XV, 169.

32. Danielle Allen has a useful compilation of various words in Greek that make use of the prefix "mis-" in *Why Plato Wrote* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 158–60. Socrates, for instance, does not share Euripides' familiar quandary, wherein he garners the reputation of being a μισογύνης on account of his tragedies, but remain a φιλογύνης "on the couch," as Athenaeus reports (*Deinosophists* 13.5.35).

33. Natalie Harris Bluestone *Women and the Ideal Society*, 127n2; likewise Rosen (PRS, 196); and Leon Harold Craig in *The War Lover* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 11.

34. Michael Kochin argues that Socrates' so-called "sexist language" has a very pointed rhetorical goal: Socrates, speaking to a room full of men, "turns male prejudice against itself" (GRPT, 40–41).

35. The Stranger begins by hinting that even young women would benefit by the exercise of working with heavy arms (794d), in passing implies both sexes go to war (796c), eventually asserts that he can say "without any fear" that women can participate in gymnastic and horse-matters (804e), and finally presents his strongest declaration yet that participation in warfare will be absolutely equal as a supreme good to the state (829e). Additionally, it's worth noting that in the passage 839cd, the Stranger compares his need to practice rhetorical care for women's common tables, to the reaction of a young and violent man (ἀνήρ, 839b), who, standing by, will denounce the practice of only having sex with women one expects to bear one's children, as foolish and impossible (ἀνόητα and ἀδύνατα); it's not hard to picture the Stranger having the same sort of bystander in mind when he exercises care with his plan for the tables of women. On the other hand, Socrates himself exercises less initial caution with his youthful audience, than the Stranger does with his aged one; but this may well be a matter of temperament.

36. Abraham Melamed notes that Plato's opinions of women as philosopher-queens inculcated a more favorable opinion of the *genos* in medieval Jewish thought, through the descriptions and support of Muslim writers (*The Philosopher-King in Medieval and Renaissance Jewish Political Thought* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), 204n14). See also Melamed's discussion of how Maimonides hints esoterically at the capacity of women to be prophets and so the highest sort of

human intellectual potential, as well leaving open the possibility that women may study metaphysics in "Maimonides on Women," 99–134; Melamed sees Platonic influence here as well.

37. I must admit I find David Halperin's reading of Diotima's wisdom as a sort of male siphoning-off of female wisdom to be peculiarly contrarian ("Why is Diotima a Woman," 146–8); I'll note that Allan Bloom shares his views, the real difference being that Bloom strongly approves the practice (IE, 383–4). The strange party trick of the end of Halperin's influential essay, wherein he denounces his statement of his opinions as merely more male erasure of women's experience and as such to be dismissed into meaninglessness, is almost too tempting an offer to refuse. Irigaray, whom Halperin quotes briefly, makes this argument better, though hardly anyone could put the shortcomings of her account in the context of her strengths better than Andrea Nye in "Irigaray and Diotima at Plato's Symposium" (in *Feminist Interpretations of Plato*, ed. Nancy Tuana (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994)), 197–215.

38. Bloom, IE, 381.

39. Bloom remarks on the danger of this (IE, 380–81).

Chapter 6

Hera, Artemis, and the Political Problem of Privacy

Among the many ironies in Socrates' insistence that the most necessary city consists alone in four or five necessarily childless men, is his tacit reassignment of the trade of weaving to an *anér*—and out of the hands of women. Not merely the provenance of the respectable wife, weaving was also a female profession in its own right, peopled both by free and enslaved women. It was not considered a thoroughly desirable trade; there's a Hellenistic epigram that describes the decision of a lady weaver to leave her profession in search of a better:

> To Athena she said,
> "I shall apply myself to Aphrodite's work,
> and vote like Paris against you."[1]

In the Greek world of custom, law, and myth, the religious calendar and its rituals make up at least half the whole. And while there are certainly rituals and goddesses associated with the narrative arc of women's life, as articulated by stages of embodiment from virgin to wife to mother, in another sense the goddesses represent not so much stages, as alternatives. The curious character of Athena, untouchable maiden and master of the war cry at once, attests to this. Athena hardly represents an inevitable moment in the life of any given woman, but rather a special sort of mantle, a way of being, and specifically a female one. The priestess of Athena Polias in Athens was one of the most important religious figures in the city; as Burkert records, not herself a virgin but an older woman with the busiest years of family life behind her, she wanders the streets wearing the aegis.[2] The epigram of the dissatisfied weaver shows the reasoning process of one woman, as she chooses a new profession, and how she frames her deliberation as turning from one goddess

and her proper work, to quite a different goddess and thus to quite a different profession.

For both Socrates and the Athenian Stranger, the life that women live as private non-citizens, though shaped and given a definite pattern by ritual, poses a peculiar political problem, because it remains unregulated by the city proper, which lacks civic-minded laws for women. Both set out to solve the problem of women's untamed state by taking up elements of other customs and religious rituals, practiced in private by women alone among themselves, and turning them into a common practice for both sexes side by side. For Socrates, this is naked gymnastic; for the Athenian Stranger, it is taking the practice of eating together, which Athenian women would do at the Thesmophoria (where alarmingly, the women got together to eat cakes in the shape of male genitalia), and changing it into an everyday occurrence, open to the sight of all.[3] In both plans, there is the common thread of public meeting and public sight, which will both mark and in some sense effect the new law. But while Socrates is perfectly sanguine about the specifics of his outlandish measure, the Stranger voices his worries that the *genos* of women will resist entrance to the public most strenuously. He fears that the women will not wish to leave behind their "robed and shady" life, and the lawgiver may be overpowered by their wishes in the end (*Laws* 781c).

What would it mean for women, as woven into the fabric of Greek *nomos* and religion, to step into the public and be seen? Why is there a reluctance to leave—what good things reside in a life lived in shade? What problems does their residence there pose, such that the canny lawgiver would risk attempting to tame them? The question takes on the more interest, when it becomes fully understood just how many alternatives there are to a life lived in privacy in this way. Socrates' descriptions of the feverish city, rife with purveyors of Aphrodite's work no less than of Athena's, show his awareness of the problem in all its variability. These questions have to be asked in the light of all the alternatives available to the human women Plato's characters and readers happen to come across in daily life; about not merely the absolute silence of the virgin goddess of the hearth, Hestia, but of the talkative and wily pair of friends, Hera and Athena, as well as Apollo's harsh twin sister, the single-minded Artemis. It would be simple-minded to assume that since women lacked share in government, they were not a strong presence and force in the polity; and it's the presence of this absence, hidden in plain sight, that needs to be recovered.

But for us, in this day and age, to play at recovering the logic of the epigrammatist is a tricky thing. What is striking is the anonymous lady's lack of either sentiment or *Angst* as she makes her choice, an equanimity which we might find difficult to maintain. The French feminist Luce Irigaray notes that there is a strange absence of concerns specific to women in public discourse

and indeed, in Western liberal democratic law itself; the problem is as varied as lack of paid leave for parents, the prudent advice that counsels one to hide one's pregnancy, or even plans for pregnancy, from a potential employer, and the persistence and the depth of the human troubles surrounding the problem of rape.[4] Our modern laws, which necessarily speak of all human beings as equivalent, lack—if I may speak Platonically—a women's law; and one immediate practical result is a real difficulty in articulating one's presence in and out of the civic world embodied as something other than as a man. If like myself, the reader feels the presence of this absence, then part of the charm of the Greek world must be for us, not only a Heideggerian return to the origin in the service of understanding the limitation of our modern selves, but a help for recovering the presence, deeply private as it is, of something like an articulated self qua woman. Consider, for instance, the immediately recognizable squabbles, delights, and intrepidity of the two friends, Praxinoa and Gorgo, who make their way through a crowd to see the Adonia in Alexandria, in the fifteenth *Idyll* of the 3rd-century BC author Theocritus. A stranger tries to shush their enthusiasm (and their Doric vowels), and Praxinoa responds indignantly "Buy your slaves before you order them about, pray"; upon which Gorgo shushes Praxinoa, telling her to be quiet because the singer, a young girl from Argos, is about to start.[5] The specificity, amount, and richness of religious activity available to women—from dedications, sacrifices, establishing shrines, priestesshoods, male-excluding festivals—renders the assumption that women in classical Greece would *not* have such a sense of self, as naive at best.[6] It's out of the material of this world that Plato represents Socrates' strange attempt to fashion the women's law.

Now, a turn to the Greeks in this way might well expect to be met with equal parts of boredom and disdain; as Nietzsche remarks, "nearly every age and stage has at some time or other sought with profound irritation to free itself from the Greeks."[7] It's easy enough, to be sure, to feel such irritation with justice, when the classical age is presented as a more or less nightmarish attempt at hagiography, quickly devolving into a cartoonish pastiche of our all-too-lesser angels.[8] Yet equally tempting is the notion that the pagan world is, as Kierkegaard puts it, enshrouded by darkness, in contrast to the better light of our wisdom, godly or ungodly alike.[9] While seemingly everyone in the last hundred years has had an opinion about Diotima, speculation based on a few sentences from Plato and Aristotle on the role of women in these authors has nevertheless proved remarkably sterile ground for the 20th century. Plato's work requires an attention to the richness of the world he writes about, no less than respect for the wholeness of each of his individual works, that it has not always received.[10] But fortunately for us, Plato as author is not offering his world as something for us to slavishly imitate, but as a way to open up questions about any world where women cut a figure; taken

as such, the possibility is not unreasonable that his works may possess for us the regenerative properties Kierkegaard insists the Greek world at large possesses.[11]

The plans of Plato's lawgivers to tame the women through the means of public sight take place against religious *muthos* and even taboo concerning the sight of a goddess naked; indeed, some of the most popular stories and iconography are records of punishment for such transgression. Of the six Greek Olympian goddesses, there are well-known stories about two being caught sight of while naked, Aphrodite and Artemis; while the remaining four goddesses, Hera, Demeter, Hestia, and Athena, escape detection.[12] Now, while the reader might expect Socrates to express particular fondness for Athena, this is left for another of Plato's leading men, the Athenian Stranger, who waxes rather gustily about his fondness for the goddess of his native town.[13] Socrates, by contrast, is known for swearing with the women's oath "by Hera!" and likening himself to a midwife after the pattern of Artemis. In the *Republic* itself, except for the virgin deities in the Myth of Er, Apollo is the only god who visibly makes the cut past the trimming of Homer in Books II–III; though indeed, the hunting prayer that Socrates alludes to in Book IV is made to Apollo and his sister Artemis in the same breath. In what follows, I will spend my time with the goddesses that make the most of a figure in the dialogues, Hera and Artemis. Each offers a different, dialectically opposed alternative to life lived in private, based on how each views their relationship to *eros*: Hera's use of cunning and Zeus' attraction to her to obtain political sway, and Artemis' desire to eschew bodily lust forever, in favor of the erotic attractions of the hunt. Each choice with respect to *eros* poses a different political problem for the lawgiver; Hera represents the problem that women will become the power behind the throne without any balancing concern for the public good, while Artemis's hatred of *eros* opens up the question of rape as a political problem.

One final set of caveats: in what follows, despite my primary concern with the lives of the individual women living within these customs and rituals, my discussion of individual goddesses might seem to represent the common mistake of taking these characters as archetypes of some sort, and so run the risk of missing the relation between divine image and living human. Now, to claim that these distinct figures represented separate ideals or even *natures*, would be as potentially tempting but as ultimately metaphysically inelegant as Jung's own imperfect attempt at a human pantheon. Rather, each figure—by means of the concrete, specific, and absolutely permeating rituals that give shape to the everyday of daily life—provides a different way of being in the world, which in turn provides a way of articulating and unfolding the self, the very sort of unfolding the anonymous weaver gave voice to. Now, by this I mean something importantly different from the notion of gender as

performative; this practice is not some artificial standard we're locked into signaling to one another, with no center other than an abstract self. On the other hand, it would not be precise to speak of this as properly female human nature either; it's worth recalling Strauss' adage, that it takes philosophers to first distinguish nature as separate from and potentially opposed to custom—while what the Greek female divinities represent is something more like a polymorphous phenomenology.[14] While the felt presence of nature is always part of the interest of Greek *muthos*, one of the strengths of its *muthos* is that such nature is allowed to present itself in as many forms and faces as the teller finds necessary. Greek religion is a practice, not a doctrine; and as such is peculiarly suited to this kind of phenomenological self-accounting. And so, while to speak of the Greek goddesses is to adopt a kind of strategic essentialism—to call on an ethos as a kind of shorthand where variety and exception are assumed, even to the point of perfect hermaphroditism—it's just this sort of strategic essentialism that allows the contrast to be usefully dialectical, as long as the reader in all charity keeps in mind all the variations of temperament and embodiment possible to the human organism.

LIFE IN THE SHADE

Shade, σκοτεινός, is an evocative Platonic motif which does a variety of work throughout the corpus: the imagery is of a forested, dappled shade, where beasts reside and humans go hunting; it's the word Socrates uses to describe the grove in which he and Glaucon hunt for justice in Book IV (432c). In addition to being the place where women reside according to the Athenian Stranger (781c), it is also the shade of Non-Being into which the sophist escapes (*Sophist* 254a); Socrates often uses it to mean the obscurity of thought (*Critias* 109e), or a place where thought has trouble penetrating (*Alciabiades* 134e). It is often remarked that while Jane Austen marks herself as the master of representing women's inner life, she shows a certain delicate reticence with respect to the inwardness of men; and while her menfolk are always vividly recognizable, she does not hazard to imitate what remains private to them. I see a corresponding, converse reticence in Plato about the sex opposite to him: women's residence in the shade is difficult to peer into, and it is not easily pierced by the light of the sun.

Such dappled shade might well sound appealing; until one realizes just what is supposed to go on there. It is the privacy of isolation, loneliness, and wildness, "ἐρεμία"; the sort of isolation that Socrates ascribes to the orphaned *parthenos* who helps us pity the plight of philosophy under customary laws in Book VI; it is also the isolation the tyrant and the housewife possess, where alone in solitude, the tyrant finds it easier to give reign to his worst desires

(604a). It is the paradox that even being kept within the walls of a house, one's privacy can take on this wild quality; even surrounded by the walls of the city, the race of women inhabit a sort of wilderness, untouched by the sight of the public eye. This isolation underlies all the different characters that women take on in the city; the courtesan is more obviously part of this feverish realm than others, perhaps, but Socrates carefully notes the virgin and the matron inhabit it as well. Such wildness is a kind of freedom, through a kind of slavery, if you will, that puts women both below and above the law: as Emma says of Jane Fairfax, one may almost say of them that the world's law is not their own.[15] This is the locus of the political problem that women represent: for what does it mean for a city, when half of its inhabitants are allowed to live in a half-lit, non-civic realm?

Where Socrates merely hints, the Athenian Stranger is quite explicit about the dangers this state of affairs lets grow up in the city:

> The female sex, that very *genos* among we humans which, owing to its lack of public face (ἀσθενές), is in other respects extremely secretive and wily (λαθραιότερον μᾶλλον καὶ ἐπικλοπώτερον), has been abandoned to their disorder, the lawgiver withdrawing from the field (781a).

The souls of the women are left disordered, without the tempering effects of justice in the soul. Like the tyrant, their desires run unchecked; and the very wildness of their position allows the qualities of secrecy and wiliness to grow and tangle. Now, wiliness is a quality well-known in Greek circles; such is the cunning and planning Athena is mistress of cunning (ἐπίκλωπος).[16] The Athenian Stranger is explicitly linking the qualities Athena displays with the entire *genos*. Tellingly, while Aristotle does refer to the deceptive and wily (ψευδέστερον and εὐαπατητότερον) character of female animals in his *History of Animals* (IX.1, 608b12), he is for the most part silent about these qualities in the political context, ostensibly offering quite a different view of women's nature in Book I of his *Politics*. But in the aftermath of his discussion of the *Republic* in *Politics* II, he notes the problem with leaving half the human beings in a city unruled by law, speaking with some asperity: "But what difference does it make whether the women rule, or the rulers are ruled by women?"[17] And here the political problem thickens, because it is not merely that women live is isolation, or even that their desires are wild; but that they use their position of hiddenness to rule others, and to get what they want.

Sparta, as Aristotle notes and deplores, was managed by its women in its heyday; the warlike men were swayed too easily by the women's use of *eros* against their relatively intemperate selves.[18] Indeed, when Diotima speaks of Eros personified as a hunter in the *Symposium*, Eros *is* cunning in and of

itself (203d). In short, there is a recognizable art or knack that women possess with respect to *eros*, which as a trope, plays out across Greek storytelling in a fascinating way.[19] Consider Homer's version of Hera: not only her use of Aphrodite's charms to entice Zeus to lie down with her, and forget the battle (*Iliad* XIV.190–223), but also the matchmaking art she uses to obtain Sleep's help against his better judgment, by offering him marriage with the nymph he has always desired (*Iliad* XIV.263–279).[20] In Book III of the *Republic*, Socrates recommends excising the former passage from Homer, on the grounds that the intemperate lust of Zeus ought not to be represented (390b); it is a crucial sign of the weakness of the proposed laws at that point, that Socrates makes no poetic recommendation that would curtail the activities of Hera. To be sure, Socrates is concerned that the story of Aphrodite and Ares being caught together in bed be removed (390c); but this still does not address the underlying problem. While Hera is represented as canny about her use of *eros*, and poor Aphrodite is not, it is crucial that Aphrodite is not spoken of as particularly ashamed to be visible, even in this absurd circumstance; rather the men standing nearby speak of their willingness to undergo the laughter of the gods to join her.

Bodily strength and public face are not required for the exercise of this strength. Nor does *eros* have to be present for the cunning of those in private to be wielded sharply; the simple hiddenness of the position gives insight and force. Athena's use of wiliness to exploit the hidden weaknesses of others is well documented. She uses her knowledge to trick men into hubris, persuading Pandaros to shoot at Menelaeus and break the truce (*Iliad* IV.86–104); worse yet, she fools them into trusting too much, as she does to Hector, to trick him into being finally killed by Achilles (*Iliad* XXII.225–247). This vision of the hidden weaknesses of others is what a life in privacy makes possible: it is easier to see the vices of others and discover how to master them when they don't see you. I take it that this is the force of Socrates' claim that Thrasymachus the wild beast would have rendered him speechless, but that he caught sight of Thrasymachus first (336d). The force of the public eye on us distorts what we are able to keep our heads and *see*, and correspondingly distorts what can be said and known. I mentioned earlier that Socrates claims to have learned the erotic and the rhetorical arts from women; the mythology surrounding women's cunning and erotic machinations makes that claim all too plausible. That he would have learned the erotic art from a respectable priestess is Socrates' own peculiar twist on the subject; his penchant for swearing "by Hera!" is in this light particularly evocative.[21]

These considerations show the peculiar irony of the interpretive move that, in the attempt to understand what Socrates' attempt to draw women into the public eye would mean for women, tries to claim some problematic natural shame properly keeps all women uniformly in decorous shade.[22] Aristotle's

biological reasoning again fits perfectly with the mythology surrounding women: he describes the female as the more shameless sex of the two in *History of Animals* (VII.17, 608b13). Whatever the truth of this account, it certainly shows the anachronistic perverseness of the 20th-century trope of women's natural shame as the source of their love for the private. According to the Athenian Stranger, it is precisely the private state that allows women's shameless cunning to perpetuate itself. The Stranger is perfectly clear what women's reaction to the proposal they join the public sphere: rather than *cower* back into the shade, they resist with Homeric shouts (βοῆς, 781d) and bid fair to "overpower the lawgiver by far" (781d). The contrast is perfect: not despite their lack of public face (ἀσθενές is deceptively translated as "weakness") but *because* of it, they possess a strength potentially stronger than the lawgiver himself.

DOMESTICITY AND LOVE OF ONE'S OWN

In Aeschylus' trilogy the *Oresteia*, the goddess Athena, as judge and lawgiver, sets out to solve the problem of the Furies, strange monstrous woman creatures, who with their preference for maternal revenge are causing ruptures in the peace of the land. Athena rules openly against them, not allowing them their revenge against the matricide Orestes; but nevertheless provides a solution to their restless harsh desires: she gives them a home in Athens, and the way Aeschylus tells it, they rejoice at the gift and settle down in their new guise as Eumenides. But given that the goddess is herself childless, motherless, and a collaborator with the male *genos* to boot, it might be expected that such a solution is not without its problems, if we recast her action as a potential lawgiving solution for all womankind. Given that women are cunning, wily, and essentially erotic in this tyrannical way, could turning their force toward the home stop their restlessness?

The hearth is indeed one *option* for womankind among the relatively civilized Olympians; the goddess Hestia embodies this pause in restlessness by her perfect silence on the larger stage. But domesticity remains but one option; and Hestia herself remains a virgin in her guardianship of the home fire. Whereas, human women who marry into the hearth, necessarily retain their *eros*, and domesticity can't satisfy the *pleonexia* of women—indeed, it rests for no human. In Socrates' discussion of the degenerate regimes, he links the downfall of true aristocracy to a mother's restless desires. The trouble starts when the guardians allow themselves to own private property. The father of the nascent timocratic man is a decent fellow who stays out of politics; the son is egged on by his mother to discontent; she is frustrated with her husband's lack of power, money, and honor (549c–d). Socrates likens

her complaints to "songs that women like to sing on that theme" to which Adeimantus responds "yes, and just like them (549d)." Recall, of course, that Adeimantus himself is not free of the desire for money, estate; he is the one who starts the objection that the property-less guardians don't look so very happy (419a); Glaucon himself in his speech in praise of the unjust man notes he can marry who he pleases (362b). Toward the end of the evening Socrates does not neglect to promise that the just man will have overflowing funds and marry at will (613d). Adeimantus' complaint and desire represent well the sort of haggling husbands and wives sometimes take on with respect to their shared fortune, each blaming the other for their want. Nevertheless, it's telling that the *pleonexia* of women incites the change from one regime to another in this instance; not only is the marriage number crucial for the city's safety (546b), but the desires of women themselves are a political problem, and they can't be contained by being tied to the hearth; in fact, such tying seems to make the restlessness rather more severe, as Socrates illustrates by comparing the restlessness of the tyrant indoors to the housewife's (604a). It's an open secret that women, despite their ostensible domesticity, possess *pleonexia* enough. While children can become the official vehicle for such striving, such aggrandizement hardly disguises the underlying desire of the woman herself to have some sway politically, however remote her official position. Of course, such sway can be turned merely to gratify the lust after wealth or finery, as in the story Socrates tells in Book IX of Eriphyle, who betrays her husband for a necklace (590a).

All this being said, it is certainly possible for humans to rest their desire in domesticity, to locate happiness in the hearth, as in the immortal poetics of Jane Austen. Such domesticity is a gentler, more tenuous state; it requires graciousness to take up the hearth, the family, with a good will. This is why deTocqueville speaks of such women with peculiar awe and gratitude—the more so as this graciousness is rare enough.[23] Hera, for instance, is known for her lack of such graciousness; she is full of the complaints Adeimantus complains about, Zeus himself lamenting, "Dear lady, I never escape you, you are always full of suspicion."[24] Indeed, it requires a different sort of Queen of Heaven to make this possibility more fully realized, as well as an entirely different sort of poetry; not to mention a *parthenos* who takes up the pen herself.

The truth is, in the Greek *muthos*, the institutions of marriage, priestess-hood, prostitution, and nurses as constituting the ways of being a woman in the world, are ultimately doubled-edged swords for the city. Each political position is supposed to lead to tame ladies who are *for* others; but each role also provides a position from which larger civic concerns, for which they are not directly held responsible or given a public stake in, may be bent to their more or less serious desires. Such power may be wielded, on occasion, in real concern for the good of others, whether on behalf of ancestral family, children, or even city;

but because women do not properly have something of their own in all public right, they are the more willing to abandon the city's desires in favor their own.

Nor are the political problems associated with *eremia* limited to women alone. Indeed, it's important not to romanticize the position of women in the city at the expense of recognizing the parallel roles of the similarly lawless metics, slaves, and visiting foreigners. Slaves and the poor also exist in a kind of isolation and hiddenness within the city; therefore it should be expected that some of the qualities of cunning and wiliness, associated with political privacy, are also a possession of these humans as well. Socrates notes that it is not merely the complaints of the mother, but the goading of servants and slaves that bring about the timocratic son's revolt from his father (549e).[25] Indeed, when the Athenian Stranger discusses women's possession of secrecy and cunning, he is careful not to pin himself down on whether they possess it by nature or by custom; he speaks of nature at work in one breath, then of custom's force in another.[26] To be sure, however, the laws of the city already have traditional structures to deal with the competing claims of metic, foreigner, slave, and citizen; all of which make the absence of women's law more pressing. The political problem of women encompasses more, if only by the numbers, and is, perhaps, the more difficult because of being hidden in plain sight. Women, collected as political *genos* across all other lines, have perhaps less desperation than the poor as a body, and yet more hope than slaves as a body; since they begin from a more foundational, eros-laden position, they have more chances to undermine those in political power, albeit poor, foreign, enslaved, or not; they are correspondingly more dangerous; there's no need for full-scale revolution to gain some measure of power.[27]

Now, alongside this discussion of women's privacy viewed as *eremia*, is another sense in Greek of what is private, which is named by the phrase *to idion*, one's own, what is peculiar to one's self. Indeed, it's extremely common for readers of the *Republic* who are trying to think through the privacy of women to conflate these two senses, to overlook *eremia* completely, while assigning love of one's own paradigmatically to women. The way the account runs is, women are supposed to be the paramount example of love of one's own through their too-strong attachment to their children; in fact a consideration of women's love in this way is supposed to reveal the depth of the political problem of ownness. And make no mistake, Socrates certainly views love of one's own as a profound problem for the human community; part of the benefit of justice in itself is supposed to work both for the public realm, as well as among one's private affairs (333d); the just man will neither betray comrades in private, nor the state in public (443a). But just what is one's own? When Socrates outlaws private property for the guardians in Book IV, he names it as what is what is private to one's self, what is one's own; the guardians will only own privately what is barely necessary

(416d). *To idion* is one's own in the sense that it is a possession, things that are yours and not the city's; indeed, the reason why *to idion* is a good in tension with the common good of the city in the first place is, private property depends on the city's blessing for its continuing to be held as such.

Consider Socrates' contention that the guardians will have nothing private *but* the body at 464e: I take it that the point is, most humans customarily consider a larger realm, extended to property and family posterity, honor, and connection, as properly their own. This is precisely why women as such initially pose such a problem: when Socrates remarks that women will be held in common in Book IV, the point is that usually they are supposed to make up part of the *to idion* of some other human being who is not their own self; and the only change Socrates initially makes is that now they will be held in common, explicitly as possessions (κτῆσις), possessed by all in the manner that friends share out possessions (424a). Women participate in *to idion* as the private property of another, as the one's own of another. Nor can the argument be saved by rewriting "one's own" as the body: for the body of a women is not properly her own in the same sense as for a man, because the law does not protect it as hers, and in many circumstances she is at the mercy of the strength of others.[28] Indeed, the very act of childbirth is the divorcing of what was briefly one's body out in the world as an independent body in its own right, that can never properly be one's own again. Women are the more dangerous precisely because nothing is properly their own in the sense of *to idion*; they have less reason to follow the law because they less stake or interest in retaining what they can't possess or hold public stake in. To take revenge by means of erotic trickery, using one's body as a chess piece in the game, can be an attempt to reclaim some self-articulated presence by means of what others view as rightfully theirs.

But the question remains, do mothers see their children as their property, and therefore their own in this sense? Mary Nichols considers Diotima's praise of birth in the *Symposium*, to reflect this dangerously tilted reasoning: "Presumably, it is because of her role in procreation that a woman understands and feels more surely than a man the human need to have something of one's own."[29] Now, Diotima certainly speaks lovingly of birth, and that which comes forth from it, but when she speaks of *eros* as that which desires to have the good forever, she does not use the phrase *to idion* to describe such having. Rather, she employs the dative of possession, "being in existence to or for one's self always"; regardless of the name the grammarians choose to pin on it, it's at the least a different kind of relationship. Indeed, while Diotima speaks of the reverence or honor (208b) that parents have for their children, she does not speak much of love for offspring in general, except to note the relation between offspring of the *nous* is much steadier (209c). Diotima is primarily a lover of the image of birth itself.

Aristotle is helpful in parsing this phenomenological difference: he notes that parents love their children as *another self* (ὡς ἑαυτούς, NE 1161b27); there is something in the love that notes the other as a self, and not as an object. Aristotle notes that mother loves the child more because she knows better it is *of* herself (ἀυτῶν, NE 1168a25); but for something to be *of* one's self, is to see the coming forth and the absence. The trouble with children is that the farther they get from the divorcing moment of birth, the more obvious it is that they are a self in their own right. The mourning of the loss of what was once united can attempt to be satisfied by *insisting* that children are one's property; but this is not particularly satisfying, and it is crucially a second layer of attachment over the original relationship. Of course, a paradigmatic problem for the city is the tension between the need for soldiers and the desire of the mother to retain the life of the son, but consider the precise motive. Aristotle speaks of the love mothers have for the mere existence of their children, even when they have given the child up (*Nic. Eth.* 1159a27ff.). The mother is not concerned primarily that children satisfy her immediate, self-ful desire to witness herself living on; she takes delight in their mere prospering from afar, and this is why mothers are a model for the friendship of *arete*. War threatens not the children as the property or posterity of the mother, but their very existence, their life or death. The relation between mother and child stands in tension with the city indeed, but their love for children is by contrast the model the friendship that for Aristotle makes the city most of all hang together (*Nic. Eth.* VIII.9). In the end, the deeper, broader political problem associated with women is that, humanly, women want things *for* their own selves; and that the isolated privacy they inhabit lends itself particularly well for the prosecution of desires without check.

In sum, women have no need a ring of Gyges; in a sense, they already possess that perfect invisibility or privacy, which according to Glaucon, would lead to perfect injustice (359c–360c). Thrasymachus considers the laws to be nothing but a sham, built around the advantage of the rulers; the admiration he shows for the powerful ones who recognize this and act accordingly, might as well also be applied to these shameless ones. It becomes understandable, then, why the state of privacy would be loveable, since what human being would not be tempted to enjoy power and the free play of their desire? In short, women have tyranny available to them, without the ordinary safeguards a city puts up against such grasping of power. We are too used, perhaps, to consider the only goods to be public ones, and the only power worth having, or satisfying in itself, to be full outright public power; but the truth is, the customary state of women is, in certain lights, choiceworthy—and sometimes, too choiceworthy for the city's good. The familiar problem, perhaps, is that women want some good on behalf of someone else, husband, child, family; but the deeper problem is that women want.

THE PRIVACY OF ARTEMIS

But what of the remaining Olympian goddess, the virgin huntress Artemis? A recovery of her character is particularly difficult because of the remoteness of her character from a more Christian hagiography of maidenhood; once considered, however, she is one of the most humanly recognizable alternatives in the phenomenology of women's inner lives. She, like Aphrodite, is one of the goddesses who was caught sight of naked; and so her story is of particular interest to the lawgiver. Likewise, Artemis is particularly relevant to the action of the *Republic*, in that the evening's conversation in praise of justice and virtue takes place as a sequel to and alternative for the festival of the lusty huntress from Thrace, Bendis, whose temple was the neighbor of Artemis' in the Piraeus.[30] Furthermore, the character of Artemis should be especially interesting to readers of Plato, since as I noted earlier, Socrates identifies his art of midwifery as an action parallel to Artemis'. But to think on Artemis is to attempt to peer even deeper into the shade surrounding women's lives; in her persona as Mistress of the Animals, she inhabits the mountains and forests, the wildest places farthest from the city. In fact, she is supposed to inhabit the very sort of wild solitude I've been discussing as peculiarly linked to women by Plato. Her worship was particularly linked to the time of life of maidenhood, and some Athenian girls took part in her rituals at the temple site of Brauron, located outside of Athens; among the rituals they took part in to mark the occasion of the end of their maidenhood involved dancing and racing naked; there are also hints that the young women there "played the bear" in service to the goddess.[31] She, like her brother Apollo, was particularly associated with the education of the young; the hunting prayer that Socrates makes in Book IV, takes on a special significance by this association.

Consider how Socrates describes her in the *Cratylus*, by means of playful etymology:

> . . . Artemis appears to get her name from her healthy (ἀρτεμὲς) and ordered (κόσμιον) nature, and her love (ἐπιθυμίαν) of virginity; in like manner he who named the goddess named her a wise judge of virtue (ἀρετῆς ἴσοτρα), or also too probably, as she hates the ploughing (ἄροτον μισησάσης) of man in woman; either for any or all of these reasons did he assign this name to the goddess. (406b)

Just like the passage from the *Laws* describing women's life in the shade, there's no doubt that this is another thematically cross-reference in the Platonic dialogues to the First Wave of the *Republic*. Socrates sounds like he is describing a woman who is the opposite of what the Athenian Stranger imagined: while the Stranger specifically said the nature of women is disordered (781a), Socrates identifies one who is ordered, and healthy rather than

sick; this resonates with Socrates' description of justice as health of the soul in *Republic* IV (444e). Likewise, Socrates describes a person who is contemptuous of fleshly desires in a way not unlike his own stance in the *Republic* (389e, 403a).[32] Finally, the reference to virtue is quite striking: there's a strong connection between Artemis' role as a judge of virtue, and Socrates' provision of robes of virtue for women in the First Wave.

As Socrates hints, Artemis maintains a very different relationship with *eros* than the other goddesses discussed above. The Hellenistic poet Callimachus relates that when Artemis was born, she grasped Zeus' knees in supplication and begged to always keep her virginity, that she might be given the bow and arrow for hunting, and whatever city Zeus pleases, since she will stay largely on the mountain, for "seldom is it that Artemis goes down to the town."[33] The exchange detailed here is a powerful one: instead of being caught up in marriage and childbirth, Artemis departs the city and its genealogy in favor of the wild, taking up the hunt instead. Such an exchange explains why, despite Artemis' hatred for mere lust, she remains nevertheless a profoundly erotic figure; as Burkert notes, her circle of followers is at a particularly high risk for rape.[34] In fact, Artemis represents in a very vivid way the real transformation or sublation of human desire into divine *eros*; rather than some pidgin Freudian repression, it is the very kind of transformation Socrates makes use of when he personifies Eros as a wondrous hunter (*Symposium* 203d). The question, therefore, is particularly pressing: what happens when Artemis's privacy is transgressed against, when she is seen naked? The classic story is located around the transgression of a hunting companion, Actaeon, who was subsequently changed into a deer and torn to death by his own hunting dogs.

Now, the myth of Actaeon's punishment is an old one, with a reference in *The Catalogue of Women*, the archaic work attributed to Hesiod. Indeed, Artemis is one of the oldest of the gods, and the dedication of hunting trophies to her go back to the Paleolithic.[35] And although Homer doesn't draw out her character very much (Hera makes short work of Artemis in the Battle of the Gods in *Iliad* 21, sending her back in tears to her deer), the story of Artemis and Actaeon was frequently the choice of poetic elaboration in the classical period—most of which is unfortunately not extant; only a few fragments of Aeschylus' play *Toxotides*, or Archer maidens, remains. But Lamar Ronald Lacy's reasonable reconstruction, based on extant literary sources as well as the iconography of the scene, goes like this: Actaeon happened upon the goddess bathing at a spring sacred to her; but unlike Aphrodite who departed smiling away, Artemis reacted with harsh revenge for her former companion.[36]

Just what is the locus of Artemis' anger? One option is that Artemis would simply feel shame at being seen; and this avenue is the more worth considering, since as I noted before, it's this sort of logic that some readers of the

Republic use to explain the impossibility of Socrates' plans for common naked exercise. Likewise, given the importance of Artemis to Socrates' thinking, it's of vital importance to investigate the question in this specific way; rather than, for instance, looking to Herodotus' story about the Lydian queen who was seen naked by Gyges, since after all it is a story that demonstrates that regimes change when custom is breached, the very change Socrates is already trying to effect.[37] Now, fortunately for us, there is a poet that makes the story of Actaeon about Artemis' shame, the Roman poet Ovid. The story of Actaeon's transformation finds a natural place in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; in that work, however, Ovid begins the story with Actaeon's complete acquittal. It was merely chance, Ovid says, that Actaeon saw Artemis naked at all, and a mistake should not receive severe punishment.[38] For Ovid, the injustice and the blame lie with Artemis, the one seen, and not with those standing round. Artemis's words—or rather Diana's—words to Actaeon locate her sense of the nature of the crime:

> Go tell it, if your tongue can tell the tale,
> your bold eyes saw me stripped of all my robes.[39]

Diana's anger is focused on two points: Actaeon's eyes and Actaeon's tongue. She fears his eyes, which make her body a public thing to behold, and his tongue, which would complete the offense by making the sight a public tale. Diana makes this boast just before Actaeon has been changed into a deer: no longer in the human realm, Actaeon will no longer speak to others of what he has seen.

The problem with Ovid's account, for our purposes, is that it depends on the concern of Diana for her public reputation in the cities of men; but the Greek Artemis paradigmatically does not care about this, since she rejects civic things for wild ones. Artemis does not sit in Zeus' court; she can't be embarrassed in the way Hera is, when Zeus outfaces her in a quarrel (*Iliad* I.531–600). Only a person with some stake in the public things would worry that tales of his private embarrassment would be carried to a mocking public, because there he has something to lose; while even a Roman goddess of the wild might be somewhat civilized, Artemis is not. Finally, Ovid's version still doesn't fully make sense of the crime: it only explains why Actaeon has been changed into an animal without speech; but not why he is the prey of his dogs as a deer. Ovid presents, perhaps, something like the reaction of a virtuous Roman matron, fully rooted in the community, but we are trying to uncover a different psychology from this.

If Artemis had simply wanted to destroy Actaeon, her friend until that moment, there are countless ways to do it. Yet she chooses to make the hunter the hunted: this is a striking reversal. Lacy finds the common Greek thread of the story to be some attempt on Actaeon's part to pursue the goddess with

eros, possibly in the hopes of becoming her consort in a sort of *theogamia*, marriage between gods.[40] It's this attempt to pursue Artemis erotically that makes sense of the punishment: the one who was shameless enough to pursue the hunting goddess will now himself be pursued. Actaeon attempted to make Artemis his prey: he is punished for his erotic hubris by becoming nothing more than the prey himself.[41] The manner of the punishment of Artemis' former hunting companion is extremely harsh, as perhaps could be expected, given her attitude toward bodily lust; Callimachus warns that those who seek to woo (μνᾶσαθαι) Artemis come to a bad end (*Hymns* III, 264). Love of humans distracts from the single-minded hunt; unlike her brother Apollo, there are no tales of young men or women pursued by Artemis. Likewise, Artemis is attempting to live as wild, without any of the interpersonal ties of the city: all her *eros* is directed to the hunt, and to be presented with *eros* directed toward her is as surprising as it is threatening. Again, to employ Socrates's logic, Artemis hates the ploughing of men into women (*Cratylus* 406b), and to someone with this hatred, any *eros* directed toward them is incapable of beauty: it appears ugly. Actaeon lacks the proper fear, reverence, and shame (αἰδώς) he should have when witnessing the divine form, which is apt to drive even pious humans into madness; Artemis herself, a goddess without blemish, responds with white-hot righteous indignation, that her purity would be met with an *eros* she could only consider to be ugly.

It makes sense that Hera and Athena, who possess a certain mastery of the erotic art, would remain in control of who sees them, where, and under what circumstances; likewise, it stands to reason that Aphrodite, who lives by *eros* and is therefore without complete mastery over it, would not always be capable of remaining hidden.[42] But Artemis' character possesses a strange tension: because her life is oriented toward the hunt, possessing *eros* only as transformed and directed by this pursuit, her *eros* is in danger of forgetting its own origin; because of her unfamiliarity with it, she does not respect or even anticipate its power. And so unlike Hera and Athena, she is caught sight of, with disastrous results. This likewise explains the irony that despite Artemis' views on *eros* and her strict rules for her companions, her followers are nevertheless continually being pursued by those who would outrage them. The goddess herself acts as avenger against either the companion who seeks to depart from maidenhood, or against the offender who carries them off; Pindar describes Artemis' revenge against Tityos' attempted rape of Leto: "Tityos by Artemis was hunted down with darts from her unconquerable quiver suddenly sped . . . so that a man may learn to touch only those loves that are within his power."[43] Indeed, Atalanta, the huntress, athlete, and companion of Artemis that Socrates writes into his final Myth of Er, is one of the rare successes of Artemis' circle, in that her eventual fall from divine grace came from her husband's failure to thank Aphrodite, rather than Artemis' revenge.

In fact, no less than Hera's wiles, or Aphrodite's charms, or Athena's cunning, Artemis' relation to *eros* poses a problem for the lawgiver.

THE POLITICAL PROBLEM OF UNCONCERN FOR THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Artemis' willful ignorance of *eros* is perhaps even less familiar to us than Hera's conscious use of it; but as the goddess to whom the *parthenoi* in Athens devoted rituals ranging from the naked rites of Brauron to prayers to escape death in childbirth, her character is a visible way of being in the world no less than queenly Hera. Problems for the city and for civic life arise when human women reason with and act on the logic of Artemis *within* the importantly different space of the political realm, and in despite of it. On the mountain, Artemis is the master of the beasts; but among the city, she is not; and human women remain at the mercy of the strength of other humans within the human-made walls. Physical strength creates an imbalance in the polity, not only among men, who are continually tempted to test each other in contests of strength more or less literally; but it also creates an imbalance among men and women, made sharper because direct contests of strength are not a tenable solution to that difference. Ingenuity can't always overwhelm strength; sometimes strength is stronger, as when Hera simply has to sit down when Zeus tells her to—or otherwise he will throw her off the mountain.[44] When *eros* is added to this natural imbalance of strength, the lawgiver's predicament is complete: in short, the obverse political problem to women's overweening mastery of *eros* is the political problem of rape. Part of the city's most necessary work is to partially correct this imbalance of strength by sacred law; to have some measure of protection from strength at least in certain contexts is one of the cornerstones of women's participation, not merely in cities, but in the project of civilization. A sign of this is that while the customary stories of the hero Theseus include his several rapes, the later heroes of the Trojan war go to fight on behalf of the rape of Helen, be she unwilling or willing regardless.[45]

Now, let me be clear: we come to the question of rape with some different concerns from those of the Greek world; a sign of this difference is that there is no word that denotes "rape" as our word does in English.[46] Rather than an invocation of our *au courant* concerns with autonomy and consent, the older concern speaks to the tension between the political and the pre-political. An act of *hubris*, dishonor (ἀτιμία), force (βία, βιάζειν), defilement (ἀισχύνειν), or seizure (ἁρπαγή), is not only a problem because of the transgression of the political pacts of marriage and alliance; worse than this, something of the wild beast announces itself when such *hubris* is displayed; men appear as

something more and less than tame. The frequency with which such stories were told, whether of Theseus, Heracles, Apollo, or Zeus himself, reminds us how deeply this potential for transgression runs, both in the heroic and the divine. The problem is, that the presence of the wild or the pre-political, as displayed in stories of erotic hubris, reminds us that civilization itself stands on not entirely trustworthy grounds: for as I argued earlier, the city becomes a recognizably human city when *eros* allows humans to assert their independence from the merely necessary; in short, one of the sources of a city is also a potential source of its destruction. This is part of why Socrates, as a careful lawgiver, has to disparage *eros* the tyrant, *eros* the wild beast, in the *Republic*; Socrates is very explicit that in his best city, the stories about Theseus and Perithous will no longer include rape (ἀπαργάς, 391d).

Now, Socrates is full of plans for the sexual mixing (μῖξιν) of his male and female guardians; his ostensible concern is that the offsprings follow his plans to breed the best with the best (458d); accordingly, should "a man in his prime lay hold (ἅπτηται) of a woman in her prime without being paired by the ruler (461b)," the offspring will be just as much a bastard as if it comes from cross-generational incest or from those outside the age requirements. But the Athenian Stranger is more explicit about the dangers of the partnership of men and women that he too is making plans for:

> When, in the course of the argument, I arrived at education, I saw young men and women consorting together (ὁμιλοῦντας) in friendship with one another (φιλοφρόνως ἀλλήλοις). A fear came over me, of the reasonable sort, as I reflected on the problem of how someone will manage a city like this . . . how in this city will they ever avoid the desires that cast many down in the depths, the desires that reason, endeavoring to become law, orders them to keep apart from? . . . With regard to the erotic love (τῶν ἐρώτον) of women for men and men for women, whence ten thousands of things have happened to human beings, in private and to whole cities, in what way could one guard against them? (835d–836b)

The Athenian Stranger's sense of the "ten thousands" of kinds of problems *eros* is capable of bringing upon humans is sufficiently broad; the nice reversal of "of women for men and men for women," shows likewise that the problem goes in both directions. Likewise, his contrast of "in private (ἰδίᾳ) and to whole cities" nicely hints at the range of the problems I've been discussing, all the way from carrying off someone in private to the seduction of rulers. Now, when women and men are educated together, as both Socrates and the Stranger plan to do, the problem will be even worse than it already is. Erotic love will sweep them into the depths (ἔσχατα), or, that is, to the extreme—to the extreme of human nature that appears as a beast more bestial than other animals. In striking contrast to Socrates, the Stranger's concern is not merely

that a breeding program will be interrupted, but that the internal rule of reason will be subverted in both sexes, and what he calls the friendship between the sexes will be put in danger.[47]

For Socrates' part, however, he does register his sense of the danger of *parthenoi* in particular from the ravages of suitors—that is, when he is describing the plight of philosophy under customary laws as like an orphaned maiden (495b). Without friends to help her, unworthy suitors come in beside her, hang blame on her, and dishonor her (ᾔσχυνάν), that is, dishonor her in the sense of defilement.[48] Without the kind of care Socrates wishes to give her in his best city, she gives birth to bastards (496a). Later in Book VII, Socrates again returns to this theme, noting that those who lay hands on (ἅπτεσθαι) lady philosophy now are themselves illegitimately born, and this is the reason why she has fallen into dishonor (ἀτιμία, 535c). The implication is clear: lady philosophy stands in danger of rape, and Socrates' edifice of laws is meant to offer the *parthenos* something other than the "false and alien" life she lives now, rather more full of "those who consort (ὁμολούντον) with her worthily" (496b).

Now, while Socrates is certainly more tender of the maiden who embodies Philosophy than the women he plans to conscript as guardians, it's worth noting that he seeks to obtain the reader's sympathy for philosophy *by means of* their potential sympathy for the plight of the maiden in danger of defilement.[49] And while Socrates' blithe plans for his specious lottery certainly promise disaster, no less than they announce his own hubris with respect to *eros*, the complexity of his images of philosophy as a maiden are remarkable for their narrative accuracy. The details of the extended metaphor are quite filled out, and all specific to the precarious position of the virgin he wishes to portray; he uses more than just one way of referring to rape that the language possesses. Though unacknowledged as a problem directly by him, the language he uses marks it as problem in general—for women. On the Athenian Stranger's part, just as he is more forthright on the danger, he likewise makes an explicit law against rape to protect the friendship of his men and women: while Athenian citizens of Plato's day could choose to prosecute a rapist such that a variety of penalties was possible, ranging from death to a fine, the Stranger proposes a law as harsh as it gets: for those who offer violence with respect to matters of Aphrodite (βιάζεταί τις . . . περὶ τὰ ἀφροδίσια), whether to woman or boy, they will be slain, either by the outraged person themselves, or by father, brother, or son (874c).[50] Death is the very penalty, I will note in passing, that de Tocqueville approves in America, as the necessary accompaniment to the freedom unmarried girls are given.[51] From all of these considerations, I would argue this much: that Plato, who as an author certainly has respect for the holiness of *eros*, likewise has a care as an author for violent transgression, whatever his various main characters say

under given circumstances; if we also consider that in both the Stranger's and Socrates' polities, the women will be trained in warfare, they will not be left without resources. Socrates is the less worried, perhaps, because unlike the Athenian Stranger, who claims that the greatest *eros* is that for procreation (*Laws* 783a), for Socrates *eros* has a higher and stronger iteration, the very sort he offers his guardians, male and female alike.[52]

But even when the city customarily guarantees women a certain protection from the *eros* of others, the imbalance of strength and the ever-renewing presence of *eros* remain of necessity a perennial source of tension, and the political problem of rape is not *solved* by law, let alone by philosophical pursuit; it is merely mitigated. Likewise, the problem has to be considered in the light of the different sorts of reactions to *eros* I sketched above; where of the women living out of the sight of the laws in shady, isolated privacy, some women manage to remain unseen—and others do not. For the women who learn the knack of working with the *eros* of others, in a manner that affords them some political strength of their own, they at least possess resources, if not final safety. But some women reason with the logic of Artemis, as is one right and proper way of being in the world for women, as those who live without a care for human *eros*; almost in a world of their own, in solitude; and they believe themselves accordingly to be unseen. It's on the one hand a youthful way of being, though it can continue past the time of youth, and even past the advent of *ta aphrodisia*; the recovery of this character is just the sort of recovery Irigaray is looking for, when she counsels women to inhabit for a time a world without erotic concerns.[53] But the basic contradiction remains, that despite an Artemisian belief that they *wholly* inhabit the solitude of the shade, human women inhabit the human realm of the polity, even if they do so unacknowledged by the official public eye; and cover them how you will, they will be seen. In the Greek world, stories of a chance encounter with a woman walking home from a festival, leading to either marriage, adultery, or rape, are almost too frequent a trope.[54] We likewise know the too-familiar story, where the man says, "she was asking for it," but the woman knows not that of which he speaks.[55] Not all stories of rape go like this, but enough of them do; when we understand how often a different logic than that of Hera or Aphrodite is at work, this particular story becomes humanly explicable. Artemis' follower Daphne, who in her attempt to escape Apollo at all costs, was willing to depart the human realm and become a tree, is likewise explicable on these grounds. There is irony in the temptation on the offender's part to throw out the epithets of Aphrodite at the lady, when it is not Aphrodite they address. Here lies a fundamentally different understanding of *eros* among two different human beings; and the result is an outrage. To be sure, the Artemisian state is hardly the efficient cause of the interaction; but it is a part of this particular story, a piece in the puzzle of human misery.

As with the other inflection of privacy I considered above, shame as lack is not at work here, but a lack of shame, the source of which is a certain ignorance, or rather, a native love of the freedom of wildness of youth; in French, the word for this is *farouche*. Yet there is a kind of public space made up of beauty seen and beauty pursued, whether or not the laws acknowledge women's presence in public space; and the Artemisian unawareness of this space compounds the human problem. The human version of Artemis' logic is to believe that there is a holiness, a natural being-above-reproach to the privacy that women customarily inhabit; they feel secure in its possession, a place hollowed out from the seemingly petty concerns of the greater world. For instance, this sense of self-sufficiency can express itself in carelessness toward clothes, or rather, in the amount or variety of clothes not being fully important, the only standard being their own specific sense of the beautiful. It should be obvious to everyone, such lovers of holy privacy imagine, that their actions have no public side, that they are remote, and their intentions are purely removed. The sight of others leaves them untouched—only an assault of their privacy leads them to an initial awareness that some do not recognize that holiness. And so, when they are troubled by the *eros* of men, the surprise is real, if not justified, perhaps, by a better knowledge of human nature. Such humans don't realize they inhabit *of necessity* public space, which they inevitably do even if they don't possess public standing; their attention is focused elsewhere. Of course, women's presence in public usually provokes comment without respect to subtleties in dress; yet dress remains a way of potentially being legible, despite the continual possibility of willful misreading; the Artemisian problem is to be in ignorance of the presence of language.[56] Ultimately, as I'll discuss in the next chapter, Socrates' robes of virtue suggest that something more than clothes is required; since after all, a complete covering, as seen in the case of the burka, is no less ineffective.[57] Artemis' followers, however, are nevertheless continually threatened with outrages; it is perhaps ultimately unsurprising that Artemis in her wild purity is a profoundly erotic figure: transformed *eros* is beautiful. Women who have this reaction to privacy present a danger to the polity no less than the masters of *eros*; nor any less danger despite the fact that, being human, they can't shoot down whatever offender they please, though the wish is fair enough. Under customary laws, Socrates' orphaned *parthenos* is in trouble deep.

One final observation: Plato figures the race of women, as a whole, as inhabiting the specifically Artemisian solitude of the forest, in the shade. This suggests a common root to the problem that women customarily pose to the polity, and the common source may be named in this way: the unwillingness women often evince, to recognize the necessity for, or the nature of, the public itself. This is not at all an unwillingness to look to the common good, and still less an unwillingness to be on the watch for the good of another.[58] This

is the deepest formulation of the danger posed by living in private, the most profound political problem of all that women's political position represents: the danger of an entire *genos* in the city underestimating the goods of the public city *as public*, the public space created by the recognition of one pair of eyes to another, with mutual respect in each. Whether this underestimation takes the form of the secret tyrant, or the wandering *farouche*, the problem is no less pressing.

Both of Plato's lawgivers see the problems for the polity that ensue when the women remain lawless in the shade, unregulated by the laws of the city; whether women use *eros* to master others, or themselves fall victim to it, both of these ways of living put the *eros* of women into tension with the city's aims, and make manifest the deep problems with a lack of women's law, despite the articulation provided by religious ritual and myth—an articulation that any lawgiver would do well to take into account. Under these customary laws, both men at the hands of women, and women at the hands of men, stand to lose. Both of Plato's lawgivers aim to bring women out of the shade, and into the properly civic public eye, in order to solve these problems; their several attempts reflect their lawgiving priorities, and their successes and failures are measured by the scope they give for all the desires of all the women involved.

NOTES

1. Davidson, 87. Davidson notes that those who report the epigrams of women no doubt put something of their own in, no less than Plato did for Socrates; but this does not mean Socrates as living was any less wise, or the women any less witty (ibid.).
2. GR, 97–8. Also Dillon, *Girls and Women*, 84–89.
3. GR, 244.
4. Irigaray, *Je, tu, nous: towards a culture of difference* (trans. Alison Martin. New York: Routledge, 1993), 81–92; I will note that to my eye, Irigaray is a helpfully phenomenological thinker rather than a closet "essentialist" (see Virpi Lehtinen, *Luce Irigaray's Phenomenology of Feminine Being* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2014)). Of course, Irigaray herself would no doubt find much to quarrel with my way of attempting to recover something womanly from the Greeks, yet she herself is continually drawn to at least attempt a revision; for a recent look at the variety of her interest, see Elena Tzelepis, and Athena Athanasiou, eds., *Rewriting Difference: Luce Irigaray and 'the Greeks'* (New York: SUNY Press, 2010). Elizabeth Weed in "The Question of Reading Irigary" provides a good discussion of the Anglo-American tradition's troubles with Irigaray, and yet the good to be had from her project of continuing to "argue that sexual difference has yet to be thought in Western Civilization, much as Heidegger claimed the need to rethink the relation of Being and beings" (Ibid., 16); my own contribution is the argument that, contra Irigaray, Plato can give us real help with the scope of the question, once we notice the aporetic element in his thought.

Paul Allen Miller argues in *Diotima at the Barricades: French Feminists Read Plato* that Plato has already provided a regenerative force among the French feminists, and continues to do so at large (Oxford: Oxford university press, 2016), 267–278.

5. *The Greek Bucolic Poets*, J.M Edmonds, trans., Loeb Classical Library Volume 28 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,1912), 189. Idyll 15 is considered to be genuinely by Theocritus (see *Theocritus: A Selection*, Richard L. Hunter, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3n13. I will note that it seems to me to be an impossibly 19th-century Hegelian-progressive view to attribute an inner life to women in the Hellenistic period, but refuse it to those in the Classical.

6. Dillon, *Girls and Women*, 163. For the festivals, see Burkert, GR, 230–265.

7. *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Walter Kaufmann in *The Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Modern Library, 1992), 93.

8. See Donna Zuckerberg's response to attempts to use the classics to make the case for, among other things, neo-Nazism, in "How to be a good classicist under a bad emperor," *Eidolon*, November 21, 2016; https://eidolon.pub/how-to-be-a-good-classicist-under-a-bad-emperor-6b848df6e54a#.7kzrj6xv5; Accessed January 15, 2017.

9. Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 55.

10. For instance, Julie Kristeva's discussion of Diotima is certainly intriguing, but the alien poetics she brings to the text do as much to obscure as to reveal (*Tales of Love*, 71–82); likewise Irigaray, though she does more justice to the text of the *Symposium* than she does to the *Republic* ("Sorcerer Love: A Reading of Plato's *Symposium*, Diotima's Speech," in *Feminist Interpretations of Plato*, 181–96); both don't do enough with the way the dramatic arc of the dialogue itself undercuts Socrates' attempt to claim a true and final knowledge of erotics.

11. *Fear and Trembling*, 55.

12. While Apollodorus reports that Pherecydes of Athens, the 5th century mythographer, has a story about Athena being seen naked by Tiresias, as far as I can tell there doesn't seem to be the sort of poetic interest in it that Actaeon's story received; likewise, while Actaeon is a popular subject of iconography, the Tiresias story is absent and Athena remains clothed (see A.C. Villing, *The Iconography of Athena in Attic Vase-painting from 440–370* BC, MPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1992). The story surfaces in the Hellenistic poet Callimachus' *Hymn to Athena*; Fontini Hadjittofi argues that Callimachus adopts the story in order to re-write his hymn modeled off Homer's *Hymn to Aphrodite*, thus portraying a more erotic Athena, in order to please the Ptolemaic court in Alexandria ("Callimachus' Sexy Athena," *Materi ali e discussioni per l'a nalisi dei testi classici*, no. 60 (2008), 9–37. It's worth noting that Athens in the Classical period had stricter laws about women in public even than other cities at the time, such as Sparta or Corinth (Dillon, *Girls and Women*, 130).

13. The Stranger speaks of her as δέσποινα, Mistress, at *Laws* 796c.

14. Strauss, *Natural Right*, 81ff.

15. Emma, the virtuous and occasionally officious *parthenos*, has to say of her working counterpart: "If a woman can ever be excused for thinking only of herself, it is in a situation like Jane Fairfax's—of such, one may almost say, that 'the world is not theirs, nor the world's law'" (*Emma*, vol. III, ch. 10). Emma is paraphrasing

Romeo's speech *Romeo and Juliet* V.1, where Romeo shames a foreign and thus potentially lawless apothecary into giving him poison.

16. Hom. *Od.* XIII.287–95.

17. *Politics* II.9, 1269b30.

18. *Politics* II.6, 1269b20.

19. Consider Ronna Burger's characterization of this phenomenon in "In the Court of an Oriental Despot: The Book of Esther" (public lecture, Tulane University Judeo-Christian Studies, New Orleans, March 12, 2014); likewise Bloom: "Men need women and can easily be controlled by them" (IE, 383).

20. Homer also has Agamemnon decry Hera's mastery of language (Il. XXIX.95–133). Seemee Ali notes that for Homer there is a special connection between Hera and the *nous*, specifically used to deliberate over actions that aim at the good of the community as a whole ("Seeing Hera in the Iliad," Center for Hellenic Studies Research Bulletin 3, no. 2 (2015), http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hlnc.essay:AliS.Seeing_Hera_in_the_Iliad.2015; Accessed January 15, 2017).

21. In an excellent example of finite irony, David Johnson opines that Socrates' appropriation of an oath from the opposite sex denotes irony, and irony signals that the opposite is meant in *Socrates and Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 47. By contrast, Ali notes that there is something peculiarly interior about Hera's divinely thoughtful activity ("Seeing Hera in the Iliad"); I share her sense that the Greek goddesses represent something recognizable to those interested in the interiority of women's lives.

22. Bloom claims that Socrates "fabricates" a false tale about the nature of women in order to represent them as potentially without shame (IE, 383); likewise Stephen Berg argues that shame "dictates" the conventional hiddenness of women, and since the hiddenness of women is necessary for "a spouse and children of one's own," therefore, although shame appears to be conventional, "shame is a condition of the actual existence of those natural goods," i.e., a spouse and child ("The 'Woman Drama,'" 68).

23. *Democracy in America*, vol. II. p. 3. ch. 10.

24. Hom. *Il.* I.561.

25. Burger notes the necessity of the collusion between Esther and Mordecai ("The Book of Esther," March 12, 2014).

26. For custom, see *Laws* 781c; for nature, 781a. It's important to note that later the Athenian Stranger declares he only pretended to fear for the nature of women, in fear at the strength of custom: "It was in this sense, in view of the dead weight of incredulity, that I spoke of the great difficulty of establishing either practice [of common tables] as a permanent law" (839d).

27. Roselli points out that the number of citizens in Athens around the time of the Peloponnesian War was roughly 40,000–60,000, while a conservative estimate of the total population was around 300,000; he notes that citizens were by far in the minority, surrounded by those without nearly as much interest in keeping the city as it was (*Theater of the People*, 13); such a situation is reminiscent of the danger of the tyrant, should he and his household be transported to the wilderness (*Republic* 578e).

28. Pace Strauss: "that which by nature is private or one's own is the body and only the body" (CM, 114–5). Kochin notices the oddity of claiming that Socrates is

simply "abstracting from the body" (*Gender and Rhetoric*, 82), but misses the distinction between the two sorts of privacy (ibid., 111); he does however note that the concern for legitimate offspring, to see children as one's posterity, is strongly linked to concerns of Greek *men* (ibid., 103).

29. Nichols, review of *Women in Western Political Thought*, 246–7**.**

30. Garland, 111.

31. Burkert, GR, 151. Again, Burkert considers the evidence for the girls "playing the bear" at Brauron to be a reasonable extension of customary activities devoted to Artemis (GR, Ibid.); likewise also Dillon (*Women and Girls*, 21, 221).

32. Halperin notes that the Athenian betrothal ceremony contains the line "I give you this woman for the plowing of legitimate children" ("Why is Diotima a Woman?" 141); Socrates unites Artemis' contempt for marriage and for sex in the agricultural image.

33. Callimachus *Hymns* iii. 6–19; the translation is by A.W. Mair and G.R. Mair (Loeb Classical Library 129 (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1921), 59).

34. GR, 150.

35. Ibid., 149.

36. Lamar Ronald Lacy, "Aktaion and a Lost 'Bath of Artemis,'" *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 110 (1990): 26–42.

37. In Herodotus *Histories* I.8–12, it is Gyges, rejecting the Lydian king Candaules' initial proposal that he see the queen naked, who speaks of "when seen naked woman puts aside the shame (αἰδώς) that is hers." When seen, Herodotus describes the queen as feeling shame (αἰσχύνω, related to αἰσχρος), remarking that "since among the Lydians and most of the foreign peoples it is felt as a great shame (αἰσχύνην) that even a man be seen naked." This passage is a *locus classicus* for those that would argue that for *Greek* women shame is not customary, but natural; from whence they argue that all women feel similarly. This story requires a full-scale interpretation in its own right, but I will point out that the queen's response to being seen is a prime example of the shameless sort of political actions I've been describing: offering Gyges either his death or the death of her own husband, she ensures the transfer of power to someone more under her own thumb. Likewise, I will note that in the case of the goddesses' *aidos* in Odyssey VIII.324 that leads them to remain away from the spectacle of Aphrodite and Ares in bed, Aphrodite herself departs for her ritual bath named as "laughter-loving" (VIII.362), and Hephaestus describes her as "shameless" (VIII.319). The other goddesses' restraint stands in contrast to the weakness of the declared intemperance of Hermes (*pace* Zukert, 407n215).

38. *Metamorphoses* III.138.

39. *Metamorphoses* III.192, trans. Frank Justus Miller, Loeb Classical Library 42 (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1984), 137.

40. Lacy, 42; Callimachus *Hymns* iii.260–70; Diodorus Siculus *Bibliothek* iv.81.4. Diodorus, a Greek historian of 1st century BC, devoted scholarship similar to Callimachus' to the αἰτίαι of myths.

41. Contra Judith Barringer, in *The Hunt in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 126.

42. Hestia's presence at the hearth requires that no one sees or hears her, at all; Burkert also notes her vow of virginity (170).

43. Pindar *Pythian Odes* 4.4; translated by Geoffrey F. Conway in *Odes of Pindar* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972).

44. Hom. *Il.* I.565–7.

45. Homer is careful to leave the question of Helen's willingness up for interpretation: she gracefully attributes guilt to herself (*Il.* III.173–6) while talking to Priam, but castigates Aphrodite for her beguilement (*Il.* III.399–405); Nestor politely speaks of her being carried off (*Il*. II.356); Hector prefers to assign blame to his brother (*Il.* III.47).

46. Edward M. Harris discusses the differences over a broad range of instances from literature to myth to court cases, since while Athenian law did not consider consent at issue, they nevertheless had laws against outrages ("Did rape exist in classical Athens? Further reflections on the laws about sexual violence," *Dike* 7 (2004): 41–83).

47. When Socrates speaks of ten thousands of evils in the *Republic*, he is describing the ten thousands of oppositions that come about in the soul from conflicting opinion (603d); his stronger interest in the division of soul, rather than the problems of bodily desire, is clear. Kochin argues from these parallel passages that the partnership of men and women is rather obviated, since communal activity could only take place in "strict segregation" (104); but it's worth noting that even in the "second best" city of the Laws, which is more careful about the limitations of human beings, the Stranger believes this can be ameliorated by law (*Laws*, 839c–d).

48. For the use of ἀισχύνω in this sense of shaming by having intercourse with, see Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1226; Euripides, *Electra* 44, and Aristotle *Politics* 1311b7.

49. Harris notes that certainly "poets and artists" had sympathy for the plight and feelings of the woman dishonored against her will, Athenian law did not take this into account when sentencing ("Did Rape Exist," 78). Plato's lawgivers are merely taking the recognition of the plight into their lawgiving.

50. See Harris, "Did the Athenians Regard Seduction as a Worse Crime than Rape?" *The Classical Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (1990): 370–77.

51. *Democracy in America*, Vol. II, Part III, 12.

52. Elena Blair registers her skepticism of Kochin's argument, as she finds no evidence that such segregation is ever argued for; she likewise notes that this is a pattern in Kochin's work (PDW, 161, 164, 171, 179, 181). See also Zuckert, 100–103.

53. JTN, 75–81.

54. Consider this Hellenistic story from the 1st century AD, where the trope has become soap-operatic: "A public festival of Aphrodite took place, and almost all the women went to her temple. Callirhoe had never been out in public before, but her father wanted her to do reverence to the goddess, and her mother took her. Just at that time Chaereas was walking home from the gymnasium; he was as radiant as a star, the flush of exercise blooming on his bright countenance like gold on silver. Now, chance would have it that at the corner of a narrow street the two walked straight into each other; the god had contrived the meeting so that each should see the other. At once they were both smitten with love . . . . beauty had met nobility." Chariton, *Chaereas*

and Callirhoe, trans. B.P. Reardon, in *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 22.

55. See for example, Carmel v. Slate, 26 S.W.3d 726 (Tex.App. 2000): "She told the jury Appellant had called K.M. a tramp and said that K.M. 'deserved what she got, that . . . she was asking for it,' and 'had been teasing him for a long time.'"

56. My account of Artemis' logic is only a fraction of what would be required to speak thoughtfully about this profoundly vexed problem as it stands in current American discourse and political life; though women's beauty (or even simply their presence as women) can act as the final cause in these matters, the trouble is women can hardly fundamentally alter their inevitable effect on other people, any more than Aristotle's final cause of the cosmos could hope to have providential effect; for a man to blame his action on a woman's appearance or presence or even sobriety, is no less a misunderstanding of causality, than it is the logos of a self-indulgent, craven coward. The irony in all this is that locking the women away or covering them completely with a dust sheet is a demonstrably *worse* solution than having women in public, which is why Plato is pointing out the need for a different approach to the law.

57. The statistics on self-reported sexual assault in polities that employ the burka shows an even higher percentage than similar American polls; see Diya Nijhowne and Lauren Oates, "A national report on domestic abuse in Afghanistan," from *section15.ca*, July 4, 2008, accessed April 12, 2015, http://section15.ca/features/news/2008/07/04/afghan_women/.

58. This is not, I will note, in human women an unwillingness to look to the common good, and still less an unwillingness to be on the watch for the good of another; but rather a difficulty in viewing that which is public, and so a persistent sense of its unreality.

Chapter 7

Socrates' Proposal of Robes of Virtue

Although Socrates is firm that the eyebrow-raising plan for women and men's naked exercise makes a part of the common education of the guardians in the *Republic*, he is not without further plans to fine-tune the potential awkwardness of this arrangement. At the end of the First Wave, having obtained final agreement that the women will now be educated and share all in common with the men, Socrates concludes:

> It's clear then that the women guardians must strip, seeing that they will be clothed in virtue instead of cloaks . . . . (ἐπείπερ ἀρετὴν ἀντὶ ἱματίων ἀμφιέσονται, 457a)

This passage has received remarkably little attention from those who write about women in Plato, considering the amount of attention paid to the question of naked exercise. But it forms a natural extension and conclusion to that argument: standing at the end of the First Wave as a kind of coda and parting shot, it is Socrates' acknowledgement and solution to the problems he admits he raised, by insisting that men and women exercise naked together and indeed, share all in common. It is a solution specific to women: singled out, they must necessarily strip, and the garb of virtue will stand in for their ordinary clothes; with this, all will be well. In this blithe insistence, I see the real humor of the passage: Socrates has plenty of reasons why naked exercise will not be particularly funny under the laws of his polity, but here he leaves himself open to riposte. For, as the canny reader will note immediately, invisible robes of virtue are just that—invisible; and Socrates raises as many or more problems with his solution, as he seeks to address.

In what follows, I will argue that Socrates' robes of virtue are his solution, peculiar to his own lawgiving concerns, to the political problems of

women he raised in the earlier books of the *Republic*, their intemperate virtueless state, their lack of official regulation by the law, and their lack of public standing in the human community. Such robes speak also to the concerns of women themselves, the real difficulty of being a woman in public, and so subject to the gaze of others—and specifically, subject to the gaze of men. Socrates' image shows his awareness, and Plato's awareness, of problems recognizable to any woman who has spent time in public, whether under the laws of Western liberal democracy or any other; and though it is novel thing to say, I will argue this awareness manifests a certain care toward women as a *genos* on the part of Plato, beyond what we in the immediate aftermath of the 20th century have generally recognized. Socrates' offer to solve women's own problems in the customary polity is a calculated appeal to the desires of women themselves; likewise, not least in Plato's authorial concern with the women's law is that it is bound up in his expectation of women readers and his hope to draw them into his dialogic *cosmos*.

SOCRATES' ACTION IN COMPETITION WITH OTHER LAWGIVERS

In the Platonic corpus, Socrates has his plans for common exercise for both sexes together, while the Athenian Stranger has his notion to extend common tables to women in addition to men: these represent competing plans for the women's law, for while each lawgiver intends to draw the women into the public eye and let the public gaze be a practical schooling force for the amelioration of the *genos*, the way they go about it is quite different. Each has a different goal for the women's law: while the Stranger is attempting to write all the women into the polity as citizens and magistrates, Socrates' plans are for a philosophic education that would qualify the best of the *genos* for governorship as philosopher-queens. But while the Stranger spends time worrying over the difficulties of his far more practical plan, fearing that the women themselves will resist this change above all, Socrates blithely speaks of the full accomplishment of his rather extraordinary plans for women. He is even more confident in this, perhaps, than in his insistence that the guardians will be persuaded to turn their minds back to civic affairs once they've tasted philosophy. Indeed, when he speaks of women's common participation in all the activities of the guardian class, his main concern is the reluctance of those witnessing this novel participation—that is, he only speaks of the reluctance of *men*. Socrates seems to assume the women will assent willingly to *his* proposal. The question is, whether this is mere insouciance on Socrates' part—or a sign that he has an ace up his sleeve.

Now, readers often take Socrates' plans for women in the *Republic* to be offered on his part, whether women (or anyone else) likes them or not. Much is made of the notion that women appear to be "desexed" in some way in Book V; but as I argued earlier, women merely join in the full range of human qualities Socrates insisted upon earlier for his musical and athletic, warlike and graceful students.[1] Indeed, the Stranger, with his lawgiving preference for stressing the differences of women as a key strategy for their inclusion in the citizenry cannot guarantee as much range for the individual soul as Socrates immediately sets out to do.[2] The problem is not that women can't see themselves in the *Republic* as women; but rather, can they see themselves there as erotic beings, or as having purview for their desires, the very desires Socrates frets over? Is there a way in which Socrates' provisions for women are a desideratum for women themselves? Considering that Socrates is a master of the erotic art, we should take seriously his implicit claim that he has won over the women he intends to win, in a way that his Platonic counterpart can't quite do.

To consider Socrates' rhetorical problem with respect to women, in light of the laws he proposes for them, draws in moments from several different lines of my argument. Socrates' action in its most basic form is to pull women into the public, ruling place of the city; but the "from whence" of his action has proved to be as important as the "to whither." Women begin in the *Republic*'s conversation by being ignored completely as a political force; when they first make an appearance, they are represented by the outliers of their sex, the courtesans and the nurses; this mimics their customary place outside of the bounds of public life, where by long-standing arrangement they reside in a kind of private wilderness in the midst of the publicly civilized city, at once above and below the notice of the law. Socrates initially uses the *genos* as a foil for what the male guardians ought not to do; as the customarily more passionate sex of the two, they are his examples of intemperance, cowardice, and above all, as souls ruled by their *eros* (395e). As I discussed in the previous chapter, because of their position and their passions, women in the Greek world are a political problem, whether they make use of their private position to influence public affairs in secret, or by rejecting the bodily forms of *eros*, choose to live in a private world of their own. In both cases, the *genos* is let to live without the slightest regard for the good of public things; and so without regard for a fundamental aspect of civic life. Socrates' woman-problem, therefore, is particularly difficult: for the good of the city, women require a law that would tame their wildness and redirect their activity toward the good of the public whole—a wildness bound up with the very quality of soul that bids fair to be untamable.

For the guardians before the revolutions of Book V, the problem of *eros* is solved by the tripartite structure of the soul, where reason rules with spirit's

enforcing help, and the desires take the lowest place, *eros* without precedence among thirst and hunger. This balance is, as Socrates describes it in Book IV, the internal justice of the soul, the soul's health and the soul's reigning virtue (444e). Now, the irony of Socrates' plans for women in Book IV is that such virtue is not proscribed to them. They are to be held in common as the things of friends are, that is, as common property; since property lacks inwardness, there is no need for internal regulation of it; but since the real problem of women is their inwardness, the problem remains in full force. Without a law that would regulate women's own passions, there is no adequate women's law. For the problem was always this: what to do of women and their *eros*?

It is crucial to the dramatic turn in Book V, therefore, that Socrates speaks of women's possession of virtue at the close of the First Wave. Women—that is, the best of the women—will now undergo an education that will address and fine-tune the inward qualities of the soul. Before this moment, women appear in public on the condition of their assumed vice; women now appear in public on the strength of their virtue. Now, it hardly needs to be said, the virtue that Socrates has in mind is specifically *not* chastity, which would rather interfere with his breeding programs, or with the license he allows both men and women outside of child-producing prime; temperance, certainly, but not customary temperance. And while virtue of the soul does undergo transmogrification past its initial introduction in Book IV, it's certainly a goal that sticks around, in and out of the specific plans for the guardians: *areté* names the peak of excellence of the true-born lover of true philosophy in Book VI (498e), and finally names the excellence not of the body but of the soul's understanding (ἡ ἀρετή δὲ τοῦ φρονῆσαι), which may be turned by education toward the sight of the good (518d–e). This is the payoff of Socrates' insistence that his women will be educated; women's virtue will be not chaste but Socratic in nature. In the previous chapter, I discussed the many cross-references between Socrates' description of justice as the internal health and virtue of the soul, and his description of the goddess Artemis in the *Cratylus*; it's worth recalling that Socrates' plans for women have roots in both the customary, as well as in Socratic reasoning. Socrates' plans to tame the *genos* of women look more plausible in the light of this partial model. Now, it's worth noting that some lawgivers recommend internal virtue to women without the corresponding offer of rule—a highly unstable state of affairs.[3] Aristotle's solution, to imply that women's virtue is different in kind and so properly remains without the rulership, is more politically consistent, if frustrating to the lover of virtue (*Politics* I.13, 126012–22). Socrates' own solution, though not without its difficulties, allows excellence to take its rightful place; for the helmsman with knowledge of the stars to steer, as it were.

But if women are as wild as Greek custom makes out, how on earth will they be brought to be lovers of virtue—and of Socratic virtue to boot? If

Socrates is not to be made a liar, he will have to find a way to make their public place as guardians appealing to the women, in order for his action to be accomplished without the fate the Stranger fears for any lawgiver who attempts to change the state of women: to be overpowered by far by women themselves (781c). But Socrates did more than proscribe virtue to women; he offered virtue as a robe. What is appealing about such a proposition? And is what Socrates offers appealing enough to the previously untamed sex, that they would willingly accede to his offer?

To be in public, in the imagery of Plato's main characters, is a question of seeing and being seen. In Socrates' image of naked exercise, the question of where our eyes are directed—that is, the question of gaze—is fraught. He raises the problem of what it would mean for us to gaze at the beautiful young female form; but deflects the gaze off onto the wrinkled old form of men. Socrates, both as lawgiver and as benevolent ruler of the conversation, is in charge of where the gaze lands and under what circumstances, both for the citizens and for the reader; even as he raises the question of whether the sight will cause the onlooker to reject the prospect, he is chary of the power the gaze has for the witnessed one, and rescues the youth from the power of ridicule by continuing to hide them in speech. His robes of virtue are a continuation of this question of onlooker and witnessed: excellence is figured as a cloak that will surround women (ἀμφιέσονται) and serve as a shield that neutralizes gaze itself. For gaze will take place but no longer matter: for excellence itself is what will be seen.

Why should virtue possess this power to cloak? Paul Shorey, in his translation of this passage, points out that Socrates' robes of virtue are akin to what Rousseau's phrase, "couvertes de l'honnêteté publique" (clothed with public decency); but in Socrates' image the virtue in question is in possession of the bearer.[4] Consider Homer's pair of images where he speaks of the sight of two maidens, comparing the sight of Nausikaa to the sight of Artemis, for though he is speaking of a different excellence than Socrates, the phenomenon is the same:

> And even as Artemis, the archer, roves over the mountains, along the ridges of lofty Taygetus or Erymanthus, joying in the pursuit of boars and swift deer, and with her sport the wood-nymphs, the daughters of Zeus who bears the aegis, and Leto is glad at heart—high above them all Artemis holds her head and brows, and easily may she be known, though all are fair—so amid her handmaidens shone the maid unwed.[5]

Amid all the beauty present, Artemis is nevertheless seen, and recognized as herself, the archer *par excellence*. Likewise Nausikaa, the daughter of Areté, shines; virtue encircles one not in shadow but in light. The sight of Odysseus

discomposes Nausikaa's handmaidens, but she remains to question him, elegantly proud. Such virtue is not skin-deep, for consider the image: the robes of virtue aren't actually cloth, but something more than cloth; something arising out from within the skin to wrap all around. The comparison to Artemis is the more just, considering Socrates' insistence on her dedication to virtue; Socrates is not introducing a completely new balance of forces among womankind, but reshaping certain elements already present for his specific purposes. Robes of virtue, as an image, is a perfect acknowledgement of the inwardness of women, as having outward presence that commands respect; in Socrates' polity it is philosophic *areté* which demands it.

In the previous chapter, I separated off two aspects of women's relation to *eros*, either to wield it as a power or to seek distance from it by the pursuit of higher loves; I pointed out that human women are perennially tempted by both of these moments, by the desire for civic mastery or escape from the civic entirely. Socrates takes care to register his awareness of both the feverish courtesans and the friendless *parthenoi*; in order to draw the women into the city to rule and be educated, Socrates has to deal with both of these paradigmatic temperaments and their relationship to their *eros* and to the *eros* of others. His task is the more difficult, as his plans involve human women, who possess all these elements in a shifting mix; but his offer of rule and education by means of robes of virtue speaks to both of these moments. Although the customarily private life of women has plenty to recommend it, in that it contains many avenues for *eros*, it nevertheless remains full of tension, and not least among its problems is that it remains bounded by the *eros* of others. Even a private life, even the expectation of living largely indoors, can't keep women from being seen, and so pursued. Part of the genius of Socrates' arrangement is that it provides a way to remain hidden, or hidden in plain sight, with a cloak or hiding place in virtue itself. Women will be both private and public at once: they will have the safety of the private sphere, and the goods of public citizenship. Socrates' cloaks of virtue are the sort of cloak-weaving the Eleatic Stranger recommends to the true statesman, the defense against suffering that is a covering (*Statesman* 279c-e), Socrates' action is statesman-like.

Hidden from the eyes of *eros* by the shining of their virtue, they no longer need fear the outrages of the *eros* of others, even as the beauty of the body is allowed to be a witness for itself. Some of the dangers of the natural imbalance in strength between men and women can well be ameliorated, when women walk in public protected by their own virtue. While the power of such virtue depends in part on the polity's recognition and respect for it, *areté* has a way of speaking for itself—as for example, Socrates' manner in the retreat from Delium (*Symposium* 221a). And though on Socrates' plan, the women will have to teach their *eros* something like restraint, they will not lose the

political benefit of the private sphere which they enjoyed: they will still be able to rule, and in addition, receive public honor for the work. Human women—no less than human men—desire to rule and not rule; they waver between the charms of private and public life, the sweetness of lawlessness and the fruits of law. Socrates' offer of rule and education, by means of robes of virtue, speaks to this internal duality, and offers human beings of the female *genos* the chance to satisfy both aspects of their desire, to be private in the midst of the city and yet to rule as well.

If Socrates can offer women the best part of the goods that they possessed in the private, while offering the best goods of a life lived in the public eye—namely, public rule and the best, most careful education, and recognition of excellence—then he has made an appeal to the female *genos* indeed. While the First Wave is sometimes described as the relatively toothless opportunity to take advantage of whatever skill set one has by nature, Socrates is offering much more than that. Far from demanding women enter a sexless state, Socrates presents a specific solution to the problems that plague women as women in the customary polity, not by becoming men, but by recognition of their excellence. Socrates' robes of virtue wrap women's concerns up into Socratic ones; concerns specific to women become translated into care for Socratic education. Socrates speaks again and again of the testing of the guardians, of how they will be sorted out to find the best; this is what lovers of excellence love well. By means of robes of virtue, Socrates offers the best of the women—or rather, women who wish to prove themselves best—erotic and spirited satisfaction: robes of virtue are a masterful offer by the master of the erotic art.

THE APPEAL OF PHILOSOPHY

But Socrates' plan for the best of the women is more than just rule and generic education; he intends to give them the philosophical education described in Books VI–VII, and should they prove themselves among the best in philosophy and war, they will rule as philosopher-queens. This is a much more narrow political arrangement than bringing women under the law for the good of the polity, as the Athenian Stranger does. Each has a different plan to end the miseries of mankind; in the Stranger's city it is divine law that is the ultimate authority, while Socrates gives out that only philosophers could finally bring about this desirable state. The sort of ruler favored by the lawgiver makes a crucial difference for the women's law. Although in the Stranger's city, the entire race of women will have education and some share in the offices, judgeships, and religious authority, they will not participate in the Nocturnal Council, ultimately the highest governing authority, which stands in the place of ultimate philosophic

authority.[6] But Socrates, who always interests himself in the business of philosophy (*Phaedo* 61c), plans to seek out only the best of the women—that is, those who are best at philosophy—and hand to the worthy the highest political position possible: "and ruling women, Glaucon: for nothing I've said about the men applies any less to them, as many as are born with natures ready to the task" (540c). Now, Aristotle's polity, where the landed gentleman rules, comes off the worst of the trio in terms of women's desires; for while Aristotle is quite explicit about the dangers of women to the polity (*Politics* 1269b12ff), as well as the real potential good of their education (1260b12), he presents no explicit plans to combat these customary problems, noting merely in gnomic fashion that in the best polity, all must be given the one and the same education (1337a20ff); without making women explicitly part of this, the reader finds it easy enough to leave them out, and as readers of Plato can't help but note, a mere passing recommendation of exercise for women (1335b1ff) is laughably insufficient. Both of Plato's lawgivers judge it good to do better than this; but the difference between the two is striking: divine law guarantees women as a class a public place and a measure of participation in government without question, good things but within a limit and a measure; but when philosophy rules, some few women with the possession of the qualities every reader of the *Republic* is tempted by the argument to desire for themselves, have the best the polity can offer without stint, should they exercise themselves worthily for the goal. To those who are not unmoved by Socrates' daydreams about the education that would lead one to a sight of the truth itself, Socrates' plans for women present a real temptation—particularly to women themselves who prefer the vision of the Good itself, to civic goods within measure. Socrates speaks with more confidence of women's wish to participate in his polity: he recognizes the value of what he has to offer. If what makes the difference between the laws from Kallipolis to Magnesia is the place and role of philosophy, one can reason to this: Socrates' plans in the First Wave constitute a real appeal to women, because he offers them philosophy. Because the Stranger can't offer the study of philosophy to the race of women, his solution is simply less satisfying than Socrates', even if it should prove the better and more practical notion of the two.[7]

The peculiar position of philosophy in the *Republic*'s city in speech speaks to both the desire to rule and the desire to leave the city behind. Women, as members of the guardian class, stand to satisfy both desires: they have the chance at the highest political authority, but also the civically ratified *geis* to hunt for that which is knowable. If women's desire began as in a wild and lawless state, as philosopher-queens they still have an arena for such lawless desire in philosophy imagined as hunting. In a sense, the women of the guardian class skip over the temptations of a solely political life, or a life lived for the goods of associations with others; if they began with a tendency to undervalue the goods of or the necessity for the public, then it is not much

of a stretch, after all, to take up an activity that claims objects of higher merit than even the things of the city itself. Nor is it a trivial circumstance, to add to the proof of the appeal, that philosophic rigor promises to uncover the untruthfulness in the customary position of women; an example of this is that Socrates calls for the use of dialectic in the First Wave, in order to argue for the true difference between men and women (454a). *This* appeal, crucially, is made on behalf of truth and not nature or even justice; the customary position of women is sometimes comfortable enough, but for the promise of final truth. Such rigor also instructs the polity, albeit once philosophy itself does not raise a laugh, that they are not to laugh at women's education or their rule. Philosophy as ruler offers more honor to women than the city would on purely civic terms.

Indeed, if philosophy alone will tame our souls, or for that matter, offer us the most complete satisfaction of its desires possible, then only philosophy truly offers the hope of harmonizing these competing desires. And after all, since women already have opportunities for rule from the private state, a mere offer of magistracies is not particularly tempting. In short, only something that could promise the full satisfaction of *eros* could take the place of the tyrannical bent in the lawless passions of women; only philosophy promises such full erotic satisfaction, as a real alternative to the appeal of private tyranny. This is the sort of thing Socrates hints at, when he claims that the true philosophic natures, ruined by their upbringing, would be capable of the greatest injustice (491e); should women be capable of as much injustice as Plato's characters maintain, philosophy is a natural second sailing for the sex. Now, I will note that Socrates is not the only one to recognize the possibility of the adoption of virtue for women, from the Roman notion of *pudicitia*, a sort of modest stalwartness, to Kierkegaard's observation of women's peculiar excellence in the Christian virtues; indeed, the story goes that once women pick up the cause of virtue, they are as fierce in its defense, and as harsh and unforgiving in its enforcement even among their own, as the previous rumors of their wildness described the harshness of their injustice to be. But Socrates' recommendation of excellence in philosophy, at any rate, requires this single-mindedness from the very beginning; for him, this quality can only add to the charm of the guardians who pursue in all athleticism and grace all studies that can serve to lift them out of anything that falls short of Being—Artemis' divine purity reimagined as the purity of truth itself.

Now, reader take warning—Plato presents Socrates' plans as a sort of hyperbolic challenge: if and only if men are willing to regard the virtue of women as true virtue, not laughable but admirable, *even when they are naked*, only then will the miseries of humankind be solved. Such miseries peculiar to the interaction of men and women, including the ever-present dangers of rape and violence, are, as I detailed in the previous chapter, very much on Plato's

mind; all such dangers take on a deeper hue when the political partnership of men and women is proposed, as the Athenian Stranger makes all too clear. The Athenian Stranger is worried that *eros* will threaten the very friendship between the sexes (*Laws* 835d). The human ability to feel *eros* but restrain it, out of respect and interest in the minds and the speeches of others, is all too thinly stretched when the sexes are in political competition with each other. Aristotle is wrong to consider that Socrates' guardians would not need temperance in their affairs (1263b10); but they will require more virtue than that. Socrates pins his own hopes on philosophic virtue: and in that light, such virtue sounds indeed, all too philosophic.

THE DIALOGIC CITY

Part of the trouble is that it's not everyone to whom philosophy would have this appeal, among human men and women alike; as I will discuss in the next chapter, Socrates' proposal that philosophy should rule does not bid fair to thoroughly put an end to human misery, and indeed threatens to add to the stated troubles. As a human political solution, it remains partial; since after all, it only solves the problems of women in the human polity among the women who choose to take up philosophy, and it depends on the practice of such philosophy on the part of men as well. But while 20th-century readers bemoan this circumstance as a flaw, it is the rather a key and saving feature of the work. The greater bent of the *Republic*, as with all Plato's dialogues, is to be a book that presents a dialogic city to its readers, in which all readers are invited to participate. As a book that anyone may pick up and read, the reader is invited to rewrite their own heart and follow the laws of this best polity and no other, as Socrates puts it at the end of Book VII, no matter what human polity they inhabit—and this goes for women readers as well. Now, we live in a time where the *Republic*'s dialogic appeal is hardly allowed to take root, particularly with respect to women; to many, it appears dissatisfying at the very first glance, because its laws for women do not resemble our own. But if the reader allows themself to look past the 20th century and its prepossessions, women themselves have found the *Republic* a fascinating document enough. Consider the case of Julia Ward Howe, Boston suffragette and author of the lyrics to "the Battle Hymn of the Republic," who in 1887 was asked to give a speech on Plato's *Republic* to a women's suffrage annual meeting. Mrs. Howe found aspects of the women's law alarming, particularly the provision for the exposure of babies born outside of the marriage lottery; but on the question of women's weakness, the crucial sticking point for 20th-century readership, she sees the practical upshot of Socrates' action: "He calls woman a lesser man," she says, "but even from that standpoint demands that she shall

be made stronger instead of weaker."[8] She quarrels with the way he delineates difference, but to her, the practical elevation of qualified individuals makes all the difference. Her final report to the crowd is this: that the fact that the "women of the state equally with its men, shall be trained to high offices of public guardianship" is "the foremost and most sacred promise" of the book.[9] Nor is Mrs. Howe an isolated example: likewise consider the case of Adela Adam, wife of *Republic* commentator James Adam; after his death she wrote her own book on Plato; she is the first to speak in English of "philosopher-queens."[10] Then there is Ellen Francis Mason, who did the translations for several popular editions of Plato in America in the 19th century, published anonymously. For a 17th-century example, Margaret Cavendish's *Natures Picture* contains the brief dialogue *Heavens Library*, where in a council of the gods the *Republic* is to be thrown out of the library "because it was so strict it could never be put in use"; a neat ironical reflection upon Socrates' own attempts to divest the city of the poets, rather a compliment than otherwise: Plato remains Jove's philosopher-in-chief.[11]

There are likewise ancient examples: besides the familiar ancient gossip of Plato's two female students at the Academy, Axiothea and Lasthenia, reported in Diogenes Laertius and elsewhere, there is the fact that Diogenes addresses his book to a female φιλοπλάτων, a lover of Plato, who eagerly (φιλοτίμως) seeks out the words of Plato in preference to all others; no doubt the story of Plato's female students is at the least a special compliment to her.[12] And even the story as gossip is meant to be plausible: Plato put his name to the book that said women should learn philosophy, and so would be the sort of person to let this outlandish matriculation take place. The later story that Themistius, the 4th-century commentator on Aristotle, reports—that Axiothea, a native of the Spartan-ruled town Phlius, read the *Republic* and traveled to Athens to become Plato's student—falls under this category as well.[13] But there are more specific reports: Porphyry in his *Life of Plotinus* remarks that this Neo-platonist had a house full of young men and maidens keen for philosophy; Dominic O'Meara notes that certainly women were important members of Plotinus' school.[14] Indeed, there's a pattern of women across time and space being more immediately involved and even interested in the works of Plato; more than in, say, Aristotle, whose reputation concerning the sex gave rise to the popular Northern Renaissance artistic motif wherein Alexander's wife revenges herself upon the philosopher by tricking him into letting her ride upon his back.[15]

When these Platonic examples are placed alongside the phenomenon I noted before, the tendency of male scholars to employ *suggesto falsi* or *suppresso veri*, that is, to consciously mistranslate or explain away the First Wave, the women's reaction is the more striking. This passage has led members of the male *genos* to turn directly away from the text in order to absorb

the book, as in the case of 15th-century Italian humanist educator Guarino's marginalia, which summarizes the provisions of the First Wave as "from civil duties women would abstain."[16] Whereas, as seen in the case of Julia Ward Howe, the difficulties are directly acknowledged while the text itself remains a trusted friend. Beside this history, our 20th-century preoccupation with the so-called limitations of women in Plato seems somewhat childish; we've been missing what the book is supposed to *do*. To women readers across time and space, the simple presence of women in the best polity is electrifying. And I will note, it immediately opens the door to further dialectic on these subjects, such as the idea Giulia Turamini proposed in her 1664 lecture, "Concerning the Excellence of Women Over Men," wherein she cites Plato's "inclusion of women in government" as evidence for her case.[17] Likewise, in Castiglione's discussion of the *Republic* in *Book of the Courtier*, one of the speakers is accused of flattering the ladies present by repeating Plato's views on women; the women in the room beg the first speaker to continue his subject.[18] While Socrates dramatizes his rhetorical capitulation to Glaucon over the question of which sex gets to triumph in the end while hinting of the dangers of eristic, as a *book*, the action of the action of the argument, if you will, remains well in place.

Plato is an author who, more than most and perhaps more than all, has a consciousness of and forethought for the fate of a book in the world once it has left its author's hands and cannot answer its detractors; as we learn in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates considers the problems of authorship practically insurmountable (*Phaedrus* 275e), but Plato by his choice to publish does not. Such a careful author simply must have considered the possibility of female readership—and the possibility of unfavorable reaction no less than favorable; as Socrates notes, there are those women who are philosophic by nature, and others who quite frankly bear it hatred (456a).[19] Indeed, for someone who wrote no less than two books that purport to alter the women's law, to not consider the possibility of such readership is at the least deeply imprudent; it need hardly be said that while literacy was not universal, there were readers enough—particularly among the courtesans themselves, as well as other more respectable female readers, such as the wife of Isomachus in Xenophon's *Oikonomicus* who keeps the accounts.[20] Women were already present in the Pythagorean community before Plato began to write; well might he understand that there was an audience awaiting him. It has been argued more than once that the *Republic* was intended as propaedeutic rhetoric to concerns highly specific to men, and the taming of their attitudes toward warfare; but the genius of Plato is that the book can speak to more than one *genos* at a time.[21] In a letter from the later lady Pythagorean Theano II to her friend Rhodope, also a lady *philosophe*: "Are you dispirited? I am dispirited. Are you distressed because I have not yet sent you Plato's book,

the one entitled 'Ideas or Parmenides'? But I myself am distressed, because no one has yet met with me to discuss Kleon [the Pythagorean]."[22] Plato book's aren't didactic, disembodied treatises on the abstract nature of things, but artfully represented aporetic conversations between human, all too human beings, that are meant to give birth to lively conversation, and to the desire to read more.

Again, women have a strange presence and absence in Plato's dialogues; but while Socrates merely reports the sayings of women to men, Plato as an author reports the sayings of Socrates to all human beings. In Plato's writings, women take a place in the cosmos, in the ordered whole made up of all of his writings, so strangely and pointedly and intriguingly at-cross-purposes. The First Wave is perhaps the loudest remark; if only because so few people bring themselves to read the *Laws*; but it's hardly an isolated instance of presence, even with all its absences. In Plato's cosmos, for those who are willing to listen for silence as well as for talk, for private concerns as well as public, there is a world to be found that is recognizable to and loveable by women themselves—no less than for the reader who considers the nature of the sex an open question—wherein they can see themselves because Plato wrote them in to the best polity, as key figures therein. Socrates speaks to the concerns of women with his robes of virtue; Plato as an author speaks to the concerns of women as human beings. Socrates' robes of virtue are at once a political solution to a political problem, and a profound rhetorical gift, a tantalizing and delicate mark of respect for inwardness and care for its protection; robes of virtue are a desirable accession that allow women to see their own concerns written into the daimonic mind of Plato's favorite leading man.

To be attracted by the idea of philosophic virtue, one need not be a handpicked guardian oneself in an impossibly beautiful polity, or be present at the *Symposium* to become friends with philosophic *eros*. The genius of Plato's book is that it's set up to be compelling to women readers across time and space, no matter what the women's law is under their regime, and no matter what the best solution to the women's law happens to be. Socrates' heavenly polity in the soul offers the hope and promise for individual human women to follow its laws and no other, by themselves—whether or not other human women wish to follow them there. Plato's *Republic* is one of the profound liberators of human women our reading selves have ever seen, because it proposes to liberate all human beings by means of justice in the soul.

NOTES

1. Rosen, PRS, 186; Nichols, review of *Women in Political Thought*, 246–7; Saxonhouse, "Philosopher and Female," 75.

2. As Kochin notes, this is a crucial flaw in the Stranger's plan (*Gender and Rhetoric*, 121). For women as citizens, see *Laws* 814c.

3. In the novel *He Knew He Was Right,* Anthony Trollope notes the tension in the arrangements of Victoria's England, where the husband is supposed to be "lord and master" despite his own lack of virtue, and his wife's possession of a virtue at least equal to if not superior to his own.

4. *Lettre à d'Alembert sur les Spectacles*. Quoted in *Republic I*, trans. and ed. Paul Shorey, Loeb Classical Library 237 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), 451).

5. *Od.* VI.109.

6. See Kochin, GRPT, 89; but also see Adela Adam's consideration of possible loopholes, even including the Nocturnal Council (*Plato: Moral and Political Ideals*,127–30). Elena Blair also sees a loophole present for Nocturnal Council among other offices: for a complete list see PDW, 163–65; 169–72. Loopholes in a law to which one is explicitly "enslaved" (*Laws* 715d, 762d) are quite suggestive. I will note that Aristotle does recommend exercise for both men and women–but this plunges him into the same troubles of Sparta which he has already described as insufficient (Politics 1335b12).

7. The Athenian Stranger, for whom *eros* is at its strongest and greatest when turned to procreation (*Laws* 783a), for all that he speaks of the disordered condition of women, seems to miss the rhetorical and civic need to give women's *eros* a higher calling; he worries over the strength of "lawless love" (840e).

8. Mrs. Howe's excellent reading of the *Republic* may be found in *Julia Ward Howe and the woman suffrage movement* (Boston: The Colonial Press, 1913), 48–92.

9. Howe, 89.

10. While her professed interest in justice is quite utilitarian, A. Adam speaks of "the fair images of philosopher-kings . . . [which] represent also philosopher-queens" in *Plato: Moral and Political Ideals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), 126; see also Bluestone (*Woman and the Ideal Society*, 72).

11. "As for the Philosophers, the first shall be *Plato,* and his Works shall be all kept, but his Commonwealth; and that shall be put out, by reason it was so strict it could never be put in use, nor come into practice"; ("Heavens Library" in *Natures Picture* (Ann Arbor, MI and Oxford, UK: Text Creation Partnership, http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A53048.0001.001, Accessed December 15, 2016), 710. See also Emma L. E. Rees, *Margaret Cavendish: Gender, genre, exile* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 83. Cavendish herself is very fond of the notion of so-called Platonic love; in *The Blazing World*, the characters of the Empress and the Duchess are friends in speech, namely, "such was their Platonic friendship, as these two loving souls did often meet and rejoice in each other's conversation" (*The Blazing World and Other Writings*, Kate Lilley, ed. (New York: Penguin, 1994), 202).

12. *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* III.46; the other direct address is at *Lives* X.29. See Pamela Gordon's discussion of Diogenes' connections and motivations, as well as the addressee of his book, in *Epicurus in Lycia* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 49–53.

13. Alice Swift Riginos discusses Diogenes' various sources, including Themistius, Dicaearchus, and the *Index Herculanesis* in *Platonica: The Anecdotes concerning the Life and Writings of Plato* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), 184. Mary R. Lefkowitz discusses the additional papyrus fragment from Oxyrhynchus, a large regional capitol in Hellenistic times, which mentions Plato's female students in *Women in Greek Myth* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2007), 185n27.

14. *Life of Plotinus* 9.1–11. Dominic J. O'Meara discusses the use Neoplatonists made of *Republic* V to argue for women's inclusion in Neoplatonic communities in *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 83ff. Elena Blair is likewise impressed with the sheer number of "intellectual women"; she collects a list of Stoic and Cynic women, as well as men with reading daughters (PDW, 53–4).

15. As in Henri d'Andeli's 13th-century *Lai d'Aristote*.

16. Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, 11. Again, the necessity that the Athenian Stranger himself speaks to, of *initially* stressing the great difficulty of enacting common tables for women out of caution of the great strength of disbelief of his audience of men, despite his own ultimate belief in its feasibility (*Laws* 839c), speaks volumes.

17. George W. McClure, *Parlour Games and the Public Life of Women in Renaissance Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 139–42.

18. *Book of the Courtier*, (London: Everyman's Library, 1948), 195.

19. Virginia Woolf, while discussing her intriguing sense of the nature of consciousness, has this to say of philosophy: "How to justify this instinct or belief I do not know, for words of philosophy, if one has not been educated at a university, are apt to play one false" (*Room of One's Own*, 108).

20. Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, 9.10. Davidson notes that courtesans were famous for their obscene puns on lines from tragedy (*Courtesans and Fishcakes*, 93). While Laura McClure makes the fair point that Athenaeus is hardly a historical reference for the classical period, in the modern sense, she admits that there were, if only a handful in a conservative estimate, such ladies (*Courtesans at Table* (New York: Routledge, 2003)). I would note that even if a woman is being paid for her favors, it does not do well to silence her voice by considering her literacy obviated by her profession, in the name of putting an end to "fetishization." The Athenian Stranger notes that "the educated among the women" will prefer the genre of tragedy to all other genres (*Laws* 658c); such readers might note the signs of tragedy present in the work others would miss.

21. Kochin, *Gender and Rhetoric*, 82, 134; and the ever-charming Leon Harold Craig in *The War Lover* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 21.

22. Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Pythagorean Women: Their History and Writings* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2012), 70, 93.

Chapter 8

The Tragedy of the Philosopher-King

To many readers of the *Republic*, nothing is more infuriating than the suggestion that Socrates "didn't really mean it" or that he is "just kidding" about the just city; and indeed, there could hardly be a more trivializing approach. On this account, Socrates is reduced to a kind of low humorist, a two-bit stand-up comedian of the spirit, and his very *word*, his constant avowal that the unjust life is not worth living, turns to ashes in the mouth. But as any reader who has taken up more than a handful of Plato's writings knows—the reader who has kept their first copies of Plato with reverence and has not returned even the most pitiful translation back to be sold to other mere purchasers—the speeches of his most devilishly interesting character possess more than the ordinary qualities of language which we mortals employ. Such is the burning quality of Socrates' statement that: until philosophers are kings, or kings take up philosophy in all sober seriousness, there will be no end to the evils of this world. What a crowning dialectical achievement, for the mortal that wrote it—the one who loved this sentence so well that he wrote it twice, as the central puzzle, the central "if" of both the *Republic* and the *Laws*, only substituting out the philosopher part for divine law in the case of the latter (713d). What hubris, that is nevertheless enrapturing; indeed it is the most hubristic of all theoretical statements, that some one idea would do away with all human ills—Plato taking the trouble to construct two entirely different enunciators of the phrase.

In the *Republic*, Plato allows us to witness this remarkable statement as out of the mouth of someone who is admittedly devoted above all things to philosophy—a partisan of the profession, if there ever was one. Socrates on the evening of the Bendidea is utterly buoyant, perfectly genial, but famously, on occasion, moved to anger—spiritedly verbal to the point of long-windedness whenever he gets on the subject of philosophy's low account in the

public eye. And so it makes perfect sense that *his* solution to the political evils of mankind would be just that: to put a philosopher in charge; the irony of which is not lost, at any rate, to the most casual of unsympathetic readers. To counter the words of Cleitophon, who saves his opinions about Socrates' behavior in the *Republic* till another day, Socrates himself does *not* come in like a god on a stage; in fact he comes from Athens; truly demonic though his way with words is, he himself is nevertheless mortal, with all the human marks and wrinkles that set the illuminating boundaries of an individual soul. Without the care of Plato's artful specificity, Socrates would be impressive, but hardly *interesting*.

And so, for the reader of the *Republic*, as with any of Plato's books, to read the book is first of all to allow oneself to be enraptured by the extraordinary language of his most extraordinary main character: whose avowed purpose is not merely to seem to convince us to choose the life of justice, but really to do so. On the other hand, we'd be stubbornly remiss if we refused to notice the paradox of not only his shameless willingness to change the ground of the argument depending on who he's talking to; but the troubling lordliness of each of his visions, that seem to ask more than human beings may well be capable of, or even what would be ultimately good. Plato as an author asks us to witness Socrates' failures as much as his successes, the full reach of his words with all their scraping drawbacks. Alas, while in the *Symposium* we are helped by the late entrance of Socrates' desperately unsuccessful lover Alcibiades, to point out the flaws and yet the gold inside, the *Republic* ends without some insightful last word from somebody else; and the burden is placed rather on the reader. And so, our work is always to allow ourselves to bear witness to Socrates' infinite irony: the presence of, in everything he says, of everything he leaves of necessity *that* time unsaid, which is the very essence of irony itself.

In what follows, I will consider the nature of the problem Socrates worries over again and again, and what he insists his paradoxical *bon mot* is supposed, in part, to solve: the suspicion and disdain that even very decent and respectable members of any human community bear toward the practice of philosophy, and the troubling inability of its practitioners to see what's in front of their noses. There is a quarrel at work here, no less than the quarrel Socrates admits to between philosophy and poetry; if we are being honest, philosophy is a somewhat quarrelsome venture; part of its charm is its willingness to pick yet another fight, when the occasion demands it. Now, the gnomic way of naming this particular quarrel, is to call it the fight between philosophy and the city; "the city" here meaning something not unlike what, in the telling phrase from 18th-century English, novelists from Oliver Goldsmith to Fanny Burney would term "the world," as in, the world of human beings in a community who take pride in their commitment to what is *merely*

worldly. At its best, "the city" bespeaks partisans of the human community and its political institutions, who insist on their ability to prosecute their love without the need of being a philosopher themselves. A sign of this problem is the too obvious fact, that no one who is *not* a partisan of philosophy would ever dream of voting it the kingship, no matter what Plato wrote in his book. Although it may seem laughable to say so, it is not an over-dramatization to note that, in its most extreme form, the death of the philosopher is the natural result of such tension. But the other side of this problem is the legitimate humor the city expresses at the philosopher's expense, when by some word or action he reminds us that he too is all too human. In fact, the reason why this quarrel is at all interesting is because right is not solely on philosophy's side.

The strange picture of infallible philosophy that Socrates presents in the *Republi*c, at odds with his more aporetic and/or erotic moments, is supposed to rescue philosophy in the eyes of its detractors by the selfless pursuit of truth at all costs. But it nevertheless comes with a price: with taking up divine infallibility, it loses the ability to articulate human things. The *Republic* is not merely another work of political theory; rather it allows us to see at once the possibilities and the flaws of political theory itself.

THE REPUTATION OF PHILOSOPHY

When a philosopher has been put to death by their native city, it would seem trivial, perhaps, to consider that something so lighthearted as laughter could cast any serious shade on his activities. Socrates indeed notes, before making his proposals in Book V public, that to fear laughter when giving voice to the truth is childish (450e); yet nevertheless records, with painstaking accuracy and frequent repetition, the predicament that announces itself, when philosophy becomes a figure of fun. He introduces his plan for philosopher-kings, of course, as that which will drown himself in particular, Socrates, with billows of laughter and a nasty reputation (473c). But even without such a questionable and infamous promotion, the practice and the practitioners of philosophy are, he fears, amusing enough. Socrates talks often about the persistent problems of reputation and laughter elsewhere in the dialogues: while the witty, sensible handmaiden laughs at Thales when he falls into a hole, and attempts to school him into better wisdom, the many have far less sympathy, and merely find the philosopher absurd (*Theaetetus* 174a, 174e, 175b). Laughter in the *Republic* forms much of the subject of the interlude between the initial announcement of philosopher-kings in Book V, and the justly famous images of the work of philosophy in the last part of Book VI and the first part of Book VII. Adeimantus objects to the notion of philosopher-kings, since most people who practice philosophy are cranks and scoundrels; and those few

decent ones are useless (487d). Socrates sets out to prove him wrong, insisting that the problem lies with the wrong people taking up in the practice, and in the wrong way: they do not follow the lead of truth (490a).

His decision to expand upon this interlude leads to a passionate defense of true erotic philosophy (487d); and while he describes a philosophy only questionably related to the coursework he has in store for the guardians, he does tip his hand to why he thinks not just the city, but philosophy will be better off, should philosophers rule: philosophy is in trouble, under ordinary laws. Its status is no better than that of an orphaned maiden, who can't choose her lover but is at the mercy of any opportunist who comes along, and in danger of dishonor and even defilement (495c). The neatness of the comparison between the state of women under customary laws is the more apt, since it captures not only the problem of reputation and *eros*, but likewise hints at the darker side of violence. Upon hearing the plan for philosopher-kings, Glaucon remarks that men, and not trivial ones, will come after Socrates with weapons (474a); as Socrates points out, the laughter of Aristophanes is his most dangerous accuser (*Apology* 18d). The tension between philosophy and other members of the polis has both a dark and a lighter side, represented by death on the one hand and laughter on the other—with the ever-present danger of laughter flipping into something darker. Socrates names death as a danger to any philosopher who engages in a public life under ordinary laws, rather than a private life at *Republic* 496d, describing such a death as being ripped apart by wild beasts. But while violence is never off the table, Socrates spends more time on the question of the disrespect that laughter announces, and that a poor reputation makes endemic. To not be taken seriously, perhaps, is a fate worse than death; to not be listened to, is for the truth to remain unheard.

Into this tension steps Socrates with his plans for philosophers not merely to avoid imprisonment, but to rule the city in all public right. While the rule of philosopher-kings is ostensibly for the good of the city, which requires the philosopher's knowledge for its just preservation, Socrates' measure, as it plays out, has the happy further result of solving things for philosophy, as well. In the city in speech, philosophy, instead of being laughed at or persecuted, would be given the highest honors, sacrificing to them as to divinities (540c); instead of being at odds with the city, fearful of its life or in danger of public shame (535c), the best souls of the city would be handed over to it as students (519c, 536b).[1] When put like this, it begins to sound that philosophy will be much the gainer in this transaction. Indeed, in this city, philosophy needs no cloak of respectability to hide its outlandish habits; it simply rules outright, without the need for any form of concealment to preserve its position; it rules publicly as the proper pastime of the best human souls and the natural preserver of the city.

Now, the flaws in the rule of the philosopher-king are usually examined in the light of the question of whether such a measure, as Socrates insists, is the one and only thing that could bring the just city into being, and so whether such a city run on rules that are explicitly meant to ignore consequences would be possible or loveable; and this is certainly a just mode of attack. On the other hand, this *programme* tends to ignore the other side of the problem: philosophy's qualifications for governorship in the first place—and its own private troubles under all other governing plans. To ask whether philosophy can possibly rule, is not so much the narrow question of whether the philosopher could install himself into the ruling seat; but whether this philosophy will do what it says it will: if it will answer everything we hope of philosophy, and everything we expect out of a king. Philosophy in the *Republic* has to do a lot of work: it has to show itself to be not the practice of cranks, but the respectable, trustworthy practice of the pursuit of truth; it has to actually be in the possession of the truth, in order to make everything run smoothly.

HOW THE GUARDIANS GO ABOUT PHILOSOPHIZING

But what constitutes knowledge for the guardians? It is not a sort of god-like omniscience that is already in possession of every particular, and so every particular answer to a given problem? While Socrates' images of true knowing are justly famous for their ability to inspire no less than stick in the memory, the question is complicated by the distance between Socrates' modest description of his share in the business of philosophy (*Phaedo* 61c), and the guardians who are said to look on the light of the Good (518d). Of course, to really do justice to philosophy as described in Books VI and VII would require a longer road; but several elements stand out: the Good, the forms, and the commitment, first expressed at the end of Book V, to knowing only what always *is* (480a).

Though the goal of the evening's conversation is Justice itself, the hunting guardians have a higher quarry: the Good, which stands above even justice and beauty in nobility and precedence. But this stratospheric peak comes with a rider: the Good is beyond being (509b); to this revelation, Glaucon shouts amusingly, "Apollo! What daimonic hyperbole!" Though such a principle might well have, as Glaucon also puts it, "perfectly seamless (ἀμήκανον) beauty . . . if it grants knowledge and truth, yet is more beautiful than these" (509a), it may come with too a high price for the lover of learning. If the guardians hunt for the Good, they will certainly never reach it, for what is beyond being is beyond knowledge: if knowledge is of that which always *is* (478a), the Good cannot properly be said *to be*.[2] The hunt is perpetual; and as such, in danger of being vitiated. Despite being one of the most exalted

images of philosophic knowing, this vision of the Good has drawbacks; though indeed, as readers are caught up in the fervor, such things often sink into the background.

The forms share an analogous danger: they are infamously separate, divorced from perception (511b–c); this poses a string of problems, not the least of which being, since they can't account for motion or change in things, or be the being of an individual, the forms cannot account for the soul.[3] To be sure, this is not a function required of them in this dialogue; here they have a higher purpose. Consider this: in Book V, once it has been established that philosophers will rule, Socrates declares that their next order of business is to say what philosophy *is*, from 474c to 480b. Socrates describes the passage as a somewhat lengthy argument (484a), and it's rather divorced from what comes before and after it; yet it sets the tone and the ground rules for the philosophizing of the philosopher-kings. This is the argument where the forms first make their appearance in the *Republic*, at 479a, under the aegis of the Beautiful Itself. Likewise, this is where the initial distinctions between opinion and knowledge (478a), being, non-being and the hazy realm of what is in between, later named as becoming (479d), arise. The most important of these principles for our current purposes comes roughly at the center of this section, when Socrates ask Glaucon whether, when we know, we know something or nothing. Glaucon responds, "Something that *is*; how could something that *is not* be understood?" (477a) Well might Glaucon ask this. Socrates follows along with this: "Then have we sufficiently got this, even if we were to look at it from various angles, that what wholly *is*, is wholly knowable, while what *is not* in any way, is not knowable at all?" Glaucon responds that it is indeed sufficient. This principle may seem reasonable in the abstract, but it entails a limitation on knowledge that is quite extreme: first of all, if we only can thoroughly know what completely *is*, that means that anything less than that, anything changing or perceptible, is less than fully knowable. This includes both the natural realm and the human realm—even the political arena itself would be off limits, and worst of all, knowledge of ignorance: for knowing that one knows nothing is to know something *is not*. But the restriction doesn't stop in Book V; what *is not* is off the table completely, and this is no small deprivation: the ascent to the sun begins with a prohibition against the knowledge of shadows and darkness itself. Socrates' later images of the divided line, sun, and cave are more vivid, striking, and memorable than this passage, but they all depend upon this preference for pure being for their hierarchical structure, and there's never any question of revising the position on non-being. Indeed, Socrates makes sure to get Adeimantus' agreement as well to the notion that true philosophers are lovers of what *is* and the truth (501d), as the final refutation to his objections against philosophy as it's customarily practiced. All in all, the philosophizing of the guardians is a cold, pure business; the light

of the sun is not praised for its warmth. The argument at the end of Book V concludes with Socrates' question: "Those who welcome gladly each thing itself that *is* must be called philosophers, and not lovers of opinion?" to which Glaucon responds, "Absolutely" (480a). It is this sort of philosopher that Socrates says should be put in charge of the state.

Now, although Socrates as lawgiver has instituted the rule of this sort of philosophy, such philosophizing does not perfectly remind us of Socrates' own activities, even granting that the Forms are a favorite hobby-horse of his; this discrepancy forces us to acknowledge the depth of the strangeness in the way philosophy is officially practiced in the city in speech. First of all, the philosophers here are not only compelled to rule, they must first be compelled, in a sense, to get their first glimpse of the truth (519b): their whole soul and body must be turned around by outward redirection in order to get the first glimpse of the Good (518c–d). It is not slavish compulsion: Socrates takes care to show that while outside redirection is required, it is the redirection of real teaching, which is not forceful in the same way as political compulsion; such teachers, Socrates notes, do not "put sight into blind eyes" (518c); but it's still more of a question of compulsion than one of desire.[4]

Furthermore, as Rosen points out, in the city in speech, everyone is a Platonist: there are no other schools of thought.[5] And though the philosophers rule, there are checks and balances to their absolute knowledge, as I just noted: philosophy is limited in *what* it can know, and *how* such can be known; there is no cheerful contemplation of *Dasein* on a free afternoon.[6] Indeed, this separation exacerbates the distance between the proper activity of a philosopher and the ruling he will be compelled to do.[7] But the biggest oddity of all is that in the city in speech, the philosophers do not philosophize out of *eros* for wisdom; this separates the guardians' philosophy from Socrates' avocations most distinctly, since he is the practitioner of the erotic art (*Phaedrus* 257a); and it vitiates the promise of wisdom from those educated in such a manner. This is consistent with Socrates' prohibition of the *is not*, since *eros* is born not only from plenty but from lack (*Symposium* 203b). Now, I argued in chapter 3 that *eros* is present in a limited way among the guardian class, as signified by the addition of the hunt to the otherwise city-bound guardian duties; but such a private hint of *eros*—especially when coupled with the thumotic desire for victorious hunting—is not the same thing as a public acknowledgement of its role and power. The guardians would be likewise bereft of more than this inward orientation; again, even though all souls seek the Good, outside agency is required to turn them around to the actual sight of the sunlit realms. Likewise, while the hunt is a leisurely event that takes place outside of the city in the forest and mountains, in all of Socrates' images of the guardian's way of knowing, there's never any question of an exploration of the natural realm—there's simply the firelit cave with its ambiguous

image-bearers, and the realm of pure light.[8] In short, the philosophy of the guardians is about as tame sort of philosophizing that one can well achieve; they are bred by the city, limited in their philosophic grasp, all belong to the same school of thought, and are not given to erotic pursuits. Why does Socrates legislate for the rule of a philosophy that would lack his own knowledge of erotics?

PHILOSOPHY'S DESIRE TO RULE

Socrates has accomplished one thing at least: he has painted a picture of a philosophy that definitely would be unwilling to rule. Glaucon calls attention to the extent of the problem before Socrates points it out: the guardians will consider their ruling activities as far less worthy than their philosophizing (519d). But the unwillingness to rule is one of the strongest reasons to be persuaded that philosophy is qualified for the office; and Socrates reminds Glaucon that the philosophers have no call to refuse, since the city has bred them like king bees to preside over the hive (520b). If rule must be courted by non-lovers (521b), then Socrates has found a *genos* of people who have some claim to the possession of this crucial qualification, without which there is no solution to the city's problems. Despite the otherworldliness of the guardians, they do look at least *un*worldly; the philosophical *ethos* of the guardians has a plausibility to it, that Socrates very much needs for his project of the promotion of philosophy's rule. Socrates needs to conceal philosophy's desires, or at least the strength and variety of them, in order to make its rule look reasonable. Our willingness to *entertain* the notion that philosophy could rule a city rests on the tameness of such guardians—and by entertain I mean, as a baseline, to consider it for the space of time required to read about it, and not throw the book down in disgust. Such unworldliness is part of Plato's appeal to the landed and educated gentry, or those who sympathize with such, as in the case of the Oxford idealists of the late 18th and early 19th centuries.[9] There is no generally plausible or average-reader-friendly way to argue for erotic philosopher-kings, despite the persuasiveness of philosophy as something desirous to know.

Aside from their own cavils at the philosophizing of the guardians, the reader learns of the limitations of the tame guardians from Socrates himself. In Book VI, in the course of answering Adeimantus' objection that most philosophers one hears of are cranks, scoundrels, or useless (487d), Socrates permits himself to describe how philosophy comes about, not just for the city in speech, but in any city at any time (496b–c). Indeed, the city in speech is only vaguely on the horizon, and the more ordinary, fevered problems of ordinary cities are back in force.[10] It's in this context of defense that Socrates

speaks of philosophy as the orphaned virgin, unwed and abandoned by her friends (495c); getting more and more worked up, he speaks of the "slur on philosophy that has taken hold, and has done so unjustly" (497a). A moment later, he says to Adeimantus: "Since you're here with me, you will observe my bold-heartedness (προθυμίαν). Behold how spiritedly (προθύμως) and recklessly (παρακινδυνευτικῶς) I'm now going to say, it's necessary for a city to take up [philosophy] in a complete reverse of the way it does now" (497e). Adeimantus agrees with him: "How truly do you seem to me to speak spiritedly, Socrates" (498c). What is the cause of all this spirited eagerness from Socrates? The reason comes right after this, in his softened restatement of the proposal for philosophy's rule: no city or polity or even a single man, he says, will reach fulfillment unless the few living philosophers who are not scoundrels pay heed to the city, or a "true erotic desire for true philosophy" comes over kings or the sons of kings (499b). Socrates allows himself to speak boldly, "forced by the truth," on behalf of a kind of philosophy different than that of the guardians of the city in speech: a philosophy that resembles the erotic love of wisdom that Socrates speaks so eloquently about on other occasions. Socrates can't conceal, while temporarily free of the graceful fiction of the city in speech, his preference for philosophy in a different guise, where *eros* can be praised instead of blamed.

And here in Book VI, Socrates does more than simply praise true *eros* for wisdom: he speaks of defense, dishonor, slur, abandonment; his language is of spirit leaping to the rescue of its beloved. The weapon employed is truth itself: truth must lead the potential philosopher, and it must be sought for "always and in everything," or else the seeker will be "a faker who has no part in true philosophy in any way" (490a); and when "Truth was the leader, I don't suppose we'd ever declare that a chorus of evils follows it" (490c). Of course, the irony of specifically spirited defense on behalf of *eros* should not be lost on us; the more so, since in these passages it becomes clear that Socrates doubts whether the guardians back in the city in speech will ever really philosophize adequately. Socrates notes at 497d that there is a need for someone as wise as the original lawgiver to be always in the city, but he purposefully sidesteps the question of whether the city they've designed is the same as one which would possess such a person. But although it is by means of a spirited defense, Socrates nevertheless reveals his preference for erotic philosophy in the *Republic* itself, even as he proposes that a more thumotic philosophy should rule.

To be sure, Socrates later finds himself laughable when he finally goes too far in his spiritedness: "… because I was looking at Philosophy while I spoke, and I saw her spattered with mud, and it was so wrong, and I seemed to myself to be moved to passion (ἀγανακτήσας), as if wild with anger, and had my say too seriously about the people responsible" (536c). Glaucon, in

contrast to his brother, is ready to let Socrates off the hook for this charge, but Socrates responds that he indeed manifested this quality: while the reader might well wish to preserve Socrates from any hint of the thumotic, Socrates insists that he "seems so to himself;" the same sort of way he speaks of all the observations he makes about the state of his interlocutors that evening (349a, 548e). And indeed, there is Adeimantus' earlier evidence that Socrates *was* speaking thumotically (498c); Adeimantus is always of the lookout for overweening spirit, as when he accuses Glaucon of a love of victory (548d). This moment of anger is important precisely because it does provide a rare insight into Socrates' internal state: even Socrates is capable of getting angry, on such an important topic as the proper lovers of philosophy—even Socrates displays philosophy's thumotic desire to rule; a reminder to all other mortals to take care. This is not to say a thumotic free-for-all is appropriate; Socrates' blame of himself in this instance alone seems to imply that ultimately, anger against those who "drown philosophy in ridicule" would be going too fair. Again, as Socrates remarked at the beginning of Book V, it would be childish to fear being laughed at (451a).[11] On the other hand, a vindication of how philosophy would flourish with proper lovers, and a defense against those who would dishonor it by lumping all its suitors together, is not at all unjustified—at least among friends.

Although Socrates records this particular instance as a transgression, he ultimately gives himself a long rope in all this spiritedness, allowing many further bold words to be spoken. As before, there are erotic concerns at stake: here, Socrates lets his desire to speak of the true suitors of philosophy triumphing over the unworthy run wild, and can't resist putting the upstarts—his example is a short bald blacksmith—in their place (495e). Socrates wants the absolute best for philosophy: angry at the way things usually turn out, he thinks things should be arranged better. And lest the reader be too concerned at Socrates' manifestation of *thumos*, we should recall what we've gained from his honesty; surely we are more than willing, perhaps even grateful, as lovers of philosophy, to hear more of the truth of true erotic philosophy in the record of this evening's conversation about justice; if Socrates had restrained himself, we would be confined to tame praise of the philosophy of the guardians merely, and its prejudice in favor of the *thumos*. But this strange dramatization of Socrates' willingness to display his affection for true philosophy, is more than just an opportunity to remind the reader of what's missing from the dialogue; it's also dramatically necessary that Socrates, as a lover of philosophy, to reveal his underlying commitment to philosophy's preeminence, honor, and *right* to the best of what the city has to offer: in short, it's important that Socrates display the desire of philosophy, under certain circumstances, to rule—because *not* to do so would be to falsify the nature of the desire to know.

There is a strange disharmony in the inner constitution of the lover of philosophy: a desire not to rule, and yet to rule. The desire *not* to rule is the more familiar: those who have seen the Good wish to stay there and not come down among the prisoners (519d), because they believe they live in the Isles of the Blessed while still living (519c); only by representing it to these men that it is a necessary thing to return (520c), and that they owe it to the city that raised them on purpose to philosophize to help it out (520b) are they brought, grudgingly, to rule. If philosophy is the greatest pleasure, who would wish to leave off, for any extraneous purpose? The wish, nevertheless, to rule in some way is less familiar, but no less present; Socrates' spirited defense of true philosophy against the all-too-just charge of being a *genos* peopled by cranks and scoundrels, is one of the more overweening examples, but we experience something like this concretely, in the pleasure we receive when we witness Socrates refute someone like Ion or Euthyphro; in those dialogues, the joke is squarely at the expense of the thoughtless. Or, to put it a different way: philosophy minds the business of all; and so would seem qualified, if truthful, to tell everyone what to do; and in the pride of its strength—that is, in pride of the truth—it already has thoughts on just what everyone ought to do instead.[12] Although the truth is the private possession of no one, the lover of philosophy does feel pride *on its behalf*—and this is proper pride—but with this pride is the absolute conviction of its universality *for all others*, whether or not they know it—in short, a conviction of its absolute/ultimate *dominion*. While the truth is no one's private possession, it is still universal; and even benevolent tyranny is tyranny.[13] And so, on the everyday, human level, we regularly feel the wish for forethought to triumph over ignorance, and this is a sign of both the presence and the pervasiveness of this phenomenon.[14] Indeed, it's not a coincidence that when Socrates contends that the being of philosophy is to know what *is*, as I considered above, Socrates makes a continental divide between knowledge and opinion. He even gives them the questionable merit of separate faculties (478a); opinion has to be placed as opposed to knowledge as possible, because in a sense, it is the enemy. Likewise, the lover of sights or arts is "on one side," and the philosophers are "on the other side" (476a–b); knowledge "surpasses" (ὑπερβαίνουσα) opinion in clarity (478c); this language is an excellent example of the notion that thumoeidetic analysis makes for strange categorical bedfellows, for it's the thumos that provides the heat, the harshness, and the clarity of the division.[15]

Now, let me be clear: I'm not saying this native tendency is good from start to finish, or present equally and in the same way for all members of the *genos*, or even all bad; but it is bred in the bone, and at once something to be on guard against, and yet to cherish.[16] Consider this: if the philosopher did *not* love truth in this way—who would? If truth is a human phenomenon, different from being and beings, in some sense truth needs a human champion

in order to exist at all.[17] And so, I would argue that there *is* a philosophic indignation, just as there is a philosophic *eros*; while true *eros* might have more divine potential for wisdom than thumos in that it gives us the end, it's not as though *eros* is any more trustworthy than thumos: for we are capable of desiring things that are bad for us even when we already know they are bad, despite what Socrates says at parties.

Socrates' change of subject in Book I from the merits of old age combined with money to justice proper, is another instance of just this sort of revolutionary spirit. While pressing homeward from the festival of Bendis, Socrates is shanghaied with playful force to the house of Cephalus; impatient with Cephalus' obtuse urbanity, Socrates commits an act of nearly outright rudeness—I say nearly, because anyone who's hosted Socrates before must know it's likely the conversation will end up in philosophy—and pushes the conversation beyond the bounds of politeness and exchange of anecdote into a place where Socrates, and not his host, is at home; the conversation is only saved by the goodwill and the rather more agile urbanity of Polemarchus. But although justice becomes the topic of conversation for quite a while, even this regime will ultimately give way; and it's no coincidence that eventually the conversation turns to philosophy, even beyond its sponsorship as the solution to the just city.

But all these things pale in comparison to Socrates' proposal of philosopher-kings: announced in the very center of the dialogue, it is the circumstance that most exemplifies the desire of philosophy to rule in the dialogue as a whole. Socrates' pronouncement seems to come from nowhere: dramatically speaking, it's unexpected, since it's not at all what was requested by his interlocutors. Indeed, what human being could even think up, let alone argue for, such an outlandish suggestion—other than that daimonic man? On the other hand, once proposed, philosophy is willing enough to consider itself *qualified*, if not ultimately likely to obtain rule: as I argued above, Socrates argues that philosophy is knowledge of what *is*, and all other exercises of apparent knowing possess only shadows (480a); but the step from such hard and fast knowledge as a qualification to rule does not receive a lengthy argument. Socrates presents it as fairly uncontroversial that those who have sharp sight rather than blindness, those who have knowledge of what *is*, would be the best for the ruler to possess, with the small addition that they will also have some experience as well (4484b–d). Glaucon does express hesitation that the guardians will have enough experience ("so long as they are not left behind in other respects," 784d); this hesitation is largely done away with in Glaucon's mind over the course of the next few pages; but this is just the argument that makes Adeimantus speak up with his objections about cranks, scoundrels, and useless men (487b). The reader is never in a place to seriously question the efficacy of philosophy's peculiar knowledge in *ruling*; and

while Adeimantus does object to the current of Socrates' argument, his worry about cranks, scoundrels, and useless men still leaves open the possibility that the merely useless man could be turned to use.[18] Glaucon's willingness at this point to trust Socrates' judgment in the question of rule, despite some slight hesitation over the question of experience, sets the stage for the reader's momentary willingness to find the measure plausible; we are in Socrates' hands at this point in the dialogue, and only he knows what will happen next. But though it's important we possess this fleeting acceptance, it should not distract us from the revolutionary action that has just taken place. When the question of who should rule was first carefully introduced, Socrates remarks, "By Zeus, it's no trivial thing we're calling down as a curse on ourselves" (374e); as I argued before, the question of who should rule is one that of itself inspires deep interest and even immediate calculation: the bare content of the proposal of the Third Wave is alarming in its novel and total allotment of rule to a strange *genos*. To be sure, it's been argued that Socrates' action in the *Republic* is to defend philosophy, and make an apology for it, a better one than his public defense speech.[19] And certainly philosophy's reputation is in an important sense ameliorated by what takes place that evening. But the truth is, more than amelioration is at work: Socrates proposes nothing less than the outright, public rule not just of wise men, but philosophers in truth. And make no mistake, Socrates' spirited actions remind us that this tendency to wish for philosophy to rule is not just a characteristic of thumotic guardians, but of the daimonic Socrates as well.[20] Perhaps it seems impious to suggest that Socrates himself is capable of such—but that it *would* seem even impious, would rather suggest our spirited attachment to the image of selfless philosophy.

Socrates' proposal that philosophers should rule in the city to rid humankind from evils is the perfect dialogic revenge. Considering his enforced presence in the conversation at Cephalus' house, it was no doubt satisfying to turn the conversation to philosophic consideration of justice, but this is still a subtle pleasure; moreover, the usurpation remains partly concealed by the fabric of social intercourse. But in Book V, Socrates revenges himself with a total reversal of the ordinary hierarchy of power: he declares not merely that philosophers should be consulted in the forming of the city or in questions of justice, but that they should rule as the final authority in the city. Philosophers ought to rule outright: they ought to rule *publicly* in full recognition of their role as philosophers. In a sense, by this act, Socrates is declaring that he himself, and those such as he, should be the true ruler of both the just city and everything else you can think of. Heretofore, Socrates' role as philosophic lawgiver was only implicit, as he voiced and named the laws in Books II–IV; this demand for public recognition of what was already quietly the case is as revealing as it is public.[21] It's dramatically necessary that Socrates, on his

own dialogic authority, publicly declare that philosophy should rule, because only then does Socrates display the truth of philosophy's desire to rule. This is the action of Socrates' argument for the rule of philosophers: his action of taking up the rule displays the hidden desire of philosophy to rule. Now, this is not to say that Socrates commits this deed without genuine interest in solving the problems that people have both in living with others, and trying to live with themselves. But if rule can only be courted by non-lovers (521b), this raises a serious doubt as to the ultimate legitimacy of philosophy's kingship.

FALLING INTO HOLES WHILE LOOKING AT STARS

This revealing action shows the most vexed source of the tension between philosophy and the city: the philosopher's sense not only that he knows better about the city than the city itself, but his reluctance to leave the city and its wrongheadedness alone—and more than reluctance, his outright desire to publicly mind the business of every other citizen on behalf of the truth itself; in short, his desire to rule. If it is Socrates who founds political philosophy, in his action of assigning rule to philosophy, he prefigures everything praiseworthy and troubling about the new discipline. When alerted to this fact by the practice of political philosophy, the city understandably becomes angry; it senses not an otherworldly resident on the fringes, but a direct rival to its proper business. The city is tempted to put the philosopher to death, because it senses a rival—and the danger is pressing because the rival is a legitimate one. The city is alarmed not merely because it is told that it has opinion, not knowledge, and so is necessarily dependent on its ancestral opinions; though of course it is so alarmed, the more so when such pronouncements are made publicly. But more than this, the city senses a sort of pride on the philosopher's part in something more than opinion, an even warlike pride; and the city suspects the philosopher of being no better than its own flawed self—that philosophy's strident claims for the necessity of its radical removal and distance from ordinary human life promises no better truths than someone who remains committed wholly to the city. If philosophy too is capable of vehemence in that it seems to have no *better* claim to rule than the city's imperfect one—and very likely a worse one, given its notorious penchant for what looks to be abstract. Thoughtful citizens admit the flaws of the city in private; but resent it when philosophy seems to overstep itself, offering advice that announces itself as the unassailable crown of wisdom. The city justly recognizes that philosophy is—a busybody.

Socrates officially paints his proposal as likely to provoke a wave of laughter (473c), but Glaucon, though himself willing to listen calmly, speaks out about the probability of men rushing at Socrates with weapons (473e);

Socrates lets us know he takes such anger seriously. He couches his portrait of philosophy as knowing what *is* as something that surely wouldn't provoke angry responses (480a); he finally disarms Adeimantus' crucial objections by insisting on the nature of the philosopher as one who is a lover of what *is*, of the truth, and is best (502a). The very thing that causes the tension has become the means of rehabilitating the philosopher; the love of truth is both the qualification and the disqualification to rule. The reality and justice of such anger is why Socrates takes care to conceal the desire of philosophy to rule, by making an image of non-erotic philosophers who must be dragged away from their favorite work to rule reluctantly over the citizens. But as I argued above, Socrates can't conceal this desire entirely, and in his spirited defense of true erotic philosophy (499b) against those who would drown it in ridicule (536b), he lets us see what real philosophy looks like in its unconcealed partisanship for itself—both the appeal of such, because when the subject is philosophy itself we need to hear the truth about its erotic attachment, since this is a major reason to regard its claim to truth as legitimate; and the attendant danger of becoming overly vehement on its own behalf. With his proposal that philosophy should rule, Socrates indicts himself, and even his own peculiar attempt to philosophize about the human things by means of accounts (*Phaedo* 99d); as I argued above, even Socrates seems too vehement, too tyrannical to himself, and even knowledge of ignorance wishes to defend itself as having something to say.

Of course, it's worth noting that while the city is right to be suspicious of the philosopher, the city's conscience isn't entirely clean. The city announces itself, and needs to announce itself as the residence of tame men, men who are no longer quite the same as other animals. It exists and does its work, however, as an expression and an attempt to satisfy our native *pleonexia*, our desire for more, that is not tame; and a sign of the truth of this is its devotion to the hunt and to war. The city can't afford to be overly honest about its dependence on a living tension between wildness and civilization; its dependence on war even as it announces itself as the champion of peace; its preference for and praise of its citizens who are such by no extraordinary merit, but by accident of birth; and its exclusion of all who are accidentally not born there.[22] The city can't afford to publicly listen when philosophy announces the city's limitations; and so while its anger against the philosopher is in part justified by the nature of the philosopher's attachment to truth, the necessity of its dishonesty shows that there's something disingenuous about the way the city carries on the quarrel. The city and philosophy are mutually responsible for the tension between them—though the city's role, perhaps, is less forgivable.

But there is a tragic flaw in philosophy's heroic plan to save us from ignorance and all human ills, and the root of the problem is its love of pure truth,

of heavenly wisdom rather than the human variety. Socrates claims truth will solve all problems: "if truth leads the way, I don't suppose we'd ever declare it's followed by a chorus of evils" (490c); but this is not quite true. The love of the pure light of pure truth is not a love of human things but of divine; the lover of truth finds himself caught in the apparent dichotomy between the abstract and the concrete, the universal and particular; and to state it baldly, this love *tempts* him to favor what is universal and abstract; or even to confuse what is ultimately still wrongheadedly universal for something that is the right dialectical expression of both the universal and particular.[23] I argued above that we needed to account for not only the anger of serious citizens committed to the prosecution of political things, but their laughter as well; this tendency inherent in the proper love of truth leads the philosopher to appear ridiculous—as something other than a serious human being. When Socrates displays the desire of philosophy to rule with his momentary vehemence against the all-too-frequent pursuit of philosophy by those unworthy of her, Socrates describes himself as laughable (γελοῖον, 536b), if not absolutely ridiculous (καταγέλαστος). On Socrates' own authority, when this desire to rule overreaches itself, it looks foolish. It's not merely funny that Thales, who does not speak on political matters, would fall into a hole while looking up at the stars, though his moment of abstraction is indeed funny. It's funny that Socrates, that lover of philosophy, who all too eagerly wants the best things for philosophy possible, even after having recommended the happy ending of the rule of philosophy, and the organization of all civic things for philosophy's benefit, would still become incensed at the paltry, customary state of the beloved. Only desire to rule, over and above the limitations of the city, can account for the humor of this; because if philosophy is simply right and the city simply wrong, well, there's nothing funny about that. Philosophy's rule in that case would be ultimately desirable, if simply unfeasible—but in that scenario, the Third Wave would not participate in the humor of Book V's triad, as we nevertheless know that it does. Socrates' proposal for the rule of philosophy, at the heart of the conversation of the *Republic*, not only acts as an apology for his activities, or presents his second sailing into political things, but dramatizes the danger involved for philosophy as a rival claimant to the throne of the city. Socrates graciously and beautifully allows us to see, at his expense, that such a proposal is deeply, deeply funny.[24] Indeed, the fact that we the readers can find this potential overreach of philosophy to be funny, rather than simply dangerous, displays the hope that philosophy, or the human being, could eventually find for itself some better wisdom.

Now, Socrates does indeed make a case for the usefulness of the theoretic in the practical realm as practical, when he argues that "anyone who's going to act thoughtfully either in private or in public needs to have sight" of the Good, the highest source and cause (517c); and it is a sign of his knowledge

of erotics that he manages to make it look compelling. Eva Brann speaks of "a knowledge so alive and rich that it goes immediately over into action without leaving room for the mediation of a wavering or perverse will"; this comes about when "our souls are alight with, are filled with, what truly is."[25] Now, on this argument, there's no difference at the highest level between the theoretic and practical knowing; and Socrates' proposal is in some sense asymptotic. But whatever the truth of things at the far end of the world, there is still the problem of the unsettling, exciting effect of even a little theory on the feckless soul. Socrates conceals that the tendency of the theoretic is to cut a tyrannical swathe through the practical details of a state of affairs, to arrange the details in the image of its theory; expressed another way, the tendency of philosophy, and not just political philosophy, is to become ideology, a fixed code of true things that gives no quarter.[26] He conceals this by setting the Good as the highest thing the philosopher must look to, higher than being—the strangest of hierarchies—and a different sort of thing from the One; and this ranking allows the highest theoretic knowledge to look practical. It describes the highest theoretic knowledge of the cosmos as of immediate practical efficacy; indeed, the only thing that makes practice efficacious (517c). He reveals, however, the problematic nature of this notion by placing the Good beyond the realm of what would actually be knowable, that is, beyond what *is*. If the source of our good action is unknowable, how could we hope to contemplate it to ameliorate our vision of the world? Nor would the promotion of the practice of a more publicly erotic philosophy get Socrates' argument for philosophy's better wisdom off the hook; its wildness at once announces its disqualification from promoting the tameness that the city requires, if only because of the real danger of its lack of sympathy for what looks, to erotic philosophy, to be merely tame. Again, Socrates portrays himself as a case in point of the dangers of this tendency; and his lawgiving has a character that is at once less forgiving and less practical than the Athenian Stranger's, whose commitment to the rule of law that imitates the gods (*Laws* 716c), instead of philosophy, explicitly makes for more moderate laws for its citizens—though indeed, has its own fatal dependence on philosophy.[27] As I will argue in the following chapter, Socrates' specific plans for women to rule and philosophize are a crucial sign of the danger of Socrates' own idiosyncratic lawgiving.

THE PROBLEM WITH THE RULE OF PHILOSOPHY

Socrates' third proposal in Book V of *Republic* is deeply problematic: it would not be good for the city if its official rulers were philosophers; there would be no end to human evils, and in fact, certain evils threaten all the

worse. The city is a place where people in all their humanity make their home; should philosophers rule as such there, their commitments to sources beyond the human realm, as well as to *eros*, would lead them to enact monstrous things and become monstrous themselves. Socrates gives us a sign of this, when he suggests at the end of Book VII that the only way to first bring about the rule of philosophers would be to send everyone over the age of ten "out into the countryside" (541a).[28] Such an enactment is not merely preposterous. Again, the problem with the city in speech is not only that a too-strong commitment to justice is at work—though it is that—but also a willingness to do whatever is best for philosophy at the expense of ordinary human life, brought on by the intoxicating principle of giving free reign to philosophy's love of truth, which *ought* to rule.[29] A sign of the difference between these two ruling desires, is that while the pursuit of perfect justice radically restricts the purview of the poets, after it becomes clear that philosophers themselves would be in charge of the city, the poets are outlawed entirely: Stanley Rosen remarks that Socrates has a "need to be unjust to philosophy's greatest rival."[30] Philosophy, in its desire to rule in perfect truth, enacts stricter control over the republic of letters, and what may rival it in wisdom, than even the desire for justice without regard for consequences. The city ruled by philosophers stands in danger of becoming no longer recognizably human, in the same sense that the city of pigs was not recognizable as a desirable place to live; neither extreme is reasonable. Socrates insists, in the last moments of his discussion of the philosophic education, that the city as described and as ruled by philosophers is just barely possible (540d); and perhaps he is telling the truth, since the possibility that a political ideology, in its belief in its own wisdom and right to rule, could instigate a successful revolution on its behalf, should it be able to convince warriors to back it, is hardly an unfamiliar sight. But this final grotesque transformation of philosophy into ideology through an indulgence of this underlying belief is a revealing one: whether or not such a city is possible, it is not desirable.[31] Ideology is not a desirable ruler, because it has a commitment to theory over practice; it admits no measures that go against its theoretic prepossessions.

Now, possibility, in itself, is a tricky notion. At one extreme there is bare conceivability, and at the other is Aristotle's strongest example of unshakable nature, the stone that can't be taught other than to fall (*Nic. Eth*. II.1). The trouble is that cities, in all their variety, fall in between these two extremes, and man is the animal capable of anything—even the worst things. Arguments among human beings about whether some collection of laws is really possible, in any sense, will never cease to take place; and we should note that the same sort of endless conversation is just as inevitable for Aristotle's city ruled by gentlemen, and the Athenian Stranger's city ruled by law aspiring to the divine; or any outlandish city described by Herodotus. But leaving such

conversations to the side, as pleasant as they are in the right company, the more interesting human problem is that participants in such talk are known to grow frustrated with discussion, pick up their weapons, and attempt to enact their own such scheme, letting the details of the possible fall as they may. A perfect city, hazily conceived, is indeed in some important sense possible, because of the love for the truth that sets all men free, which philosophy by right encourages, leads them to think ideology fitly usurps the current state of affairs. It is this tendency, how it arises and whether it may be educated, that is the most pressing question, and it is what Plato's art both reveals and seeks to doctor.

Now, to say that the city in speech of the *Republic* is not desirable, is not to discount that something like wisdom is just what the city, any city, stands in need of. The risibility of the *Republic*'s city in speech has to be weighed alongside its ability to appeal and inspirit: why is it nevertheless tempting to give rule to the philosopher? Many readers leave the book with something like an impossible wish, not merely that their internal constitutions be ordered, but that the polis could see a little more philosophy; and this is no less the work of the book, than the working out of our sense of what is off about the city in speech. But in the Platonic corpus, the city of Socrates, Glaucon, and Adeimantus, is the funny one; the Athenian Stranger's city is tamely boring. As Aristotle notes, there is a temptation on the part of those who speak about political matters toward thinking of what could be best, rather than what suits any particular polity (*Politics* 1288b35); it ought to go without saying, though of course it doesn't, that this is a modern temptation no less than an ancient one. That Plato has artfully displayed the *humor* of this particular human temptation, is the blessed dramatic achievement. Human beings want to live in human cities, not the unrecognizable locales constructed by philosophers who turn their eyes to human things; and it is right that it should be so. The *Republic* displays for us that the solution to all human ills is not to put the philosophers in charge, into outright, public political rule—however charmingly they make the argument, or however much we as lovers of philosophy might desire it to be so; or however much we might desire an end to human ills. In Socrates' image, the eyes of those returned to the cave from the sight of the Good are filled with darkness, and they appear ridiculous to those standing by (517d); the other side of this is to learn to find our own theorizing selves, if not ridiculous, at the least, humorous enough.

NOTES

1. See Strauss, CM, 125; Bloom, IE, 468; and Rosen, PRS, 9.

2. See Jacob Klein, *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra*: "this solution is bought at the price of the limits which are set for the logos" (New

York: Dover Publications, 1968), 99. See also Brann's discussion of the importance, as well as difficulty of conveying, Plato's unwritten teachings on the One ("Music of the *Republic*," 205–6).

3. Aristotle is very witty on the inadequacy of "participation" as the saving link in *Metaphysics* I.9.

4. Contra Strauss, CM, 128.

5. Rosen, PRS, 391.

6. Heidegger's description of the thing that stays for a while, and in its presencing draws together the fourfold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals, is precisely what the guardians are not to *see* ("The Thing" in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper Collins, 1971), 171–2).

7. Rosen, PRS, 284.

8. Contra Strauss, CM, 125; and Benardete, SSS, 175; but see Rosen, PRS, 275.

9. See Melissa Lane, *Plato's Progeny,* 97–108.

10. See Page, "Polemarchus," 267n42.

11. See Michael Davis, "Spirit of Ideas," 31.

12. Strauss, CM, 57.

13. Contra Strauss, CM, 115.

14. Rosen, PRS, 229.

15. See Davis, "Spirit of Ideas," 24; and Burger, "The Thumotic and Erotic Soul," 66.

16. Rosen, PRS, 166. Contra Strauss, CM, 110-11.

17. Consider Robert Sokolowski's account of man as the "agent of truth" (*Phenomenology of the Human Person* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1–4).

18. Contra Strauss, *Natural Right*, 140–43.

19. Bloom, IE, 307.

20. Page, "Polemarchus," 248–9.

21. Rosen, PRS, 87, 167.

22. See Strauss, *Natural Right*, 104.

23. See Rosen, PRS, 396. I will add that in this category falls Bloom's odd contention that philosophy is best understood as stripping, in a nod to the female guardians' disrobement: "souls, in order to know, must strip away the conventions which cover their nature" (IE, 382; see also Berg, "The 'Woman Drama,'" 56). This seems unnecessarily dichotomous, and ignores philosophy's need to understand nature in dynamic relation to custom; Benardete has a more subtle reading of the relation when he argues that law, in a sense, reveals Being (see Ronna Burger's exegesis in "Definitional Law in the Bible," 9). Whereas, I will note that it is Kant who shares this affinity for philosophy as stripping: "To behold virtue in her proper form is nothing other than to present morality stripped of all admixture of what is sensuous" (Groundwork for the *Metaphysics of Morals* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1981), 34n19). Nietzsche, by contrast, in the "Preface" to *The Gay Science*, speaks against the desire to "truth at any cost" that demands unveiling and uncovering what is "hidden for good reasons," such as the "riddles and iridescent uncertainties of nature" (trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974,) 38); later, in aphorism §352, he remarks that Europeans

fear their nakedness not from shame at body, but from shame at their mediocrity and weakness: "it is precisely as tame animals that we are a shameful sight, and in need of moral disguise" (295). I fear that Bloom has fallen into Kant's trap, for the reasons Nietzsche details.

24. Contra Rosen, who considers that the joke is on Socrates without his participation, and that this is Socrates' actual best solution to the just city, and the best one (PRS, 8–9); in Rosen's version, the ironist has to be only Plato.

25. *Music of the Republic,* 331.

26. Rosen, PRS, 6, 229, 394.

27. For the paradox of the *Laws*' relation to philosophy, see Strauss (*The Argument and the Action of Plato's* Laws, 14, 185–6). For its commitment to moderation, see *Laws* 716c.

28. Rosen is eloquent on the ugliness of this plan: "Plato, Strauss, and Political Philosophy: An Interview with Stanley Rosen," *Diotima* II, no. 1 (Spring 2001): http://college.holycross.edu/diotima/n1v2/rosen.htm (accessed April 15, 2015). Heidegger's life, for instance, is a memorial to the absurdity of philosopher-kings; likewise, the blindness of such eyes is why Plato tried to link philosophy to study of city in the first place; consider also Richard Velkley discussion of what Strauss considered lacking about Heidegger's understanding of the tyrant (*Heidegger, Strauss, and the Premises of Philosophy*, 110–118).

29. Rosen, PRS, 9.

30. PRS, 369.

31. Contra Strauss, CM, 127; *Natural Right,* 141; for Strauss there is no essential reason why the truly wise should rule. I will note that Michael Kochin's contention that if the city is meant to be satirical, then one can't learn anything of practical value from it, is worth considering but not quite right: the *Republic* engenders equally endless conversation about all of Socrates' practical details, as well as his shockingly accurate understanding of the degenerate regimes, to great practical benefit—*as well as* opening up the larger point about possibility and ideology (*Gender and Rhetoric*, 82). Kochin appears to share Strauss' sense that the wisdom of the guardians', as well as Socrates, is *simply* correct about whatever it would be correct for the city to do, if possible, even if there are insuperable problems to its enactment (ibid., 128–9).

Chapter 9

Woman is a Political Animal

The Greek language happily possesses more than a few words and phrases that announce a subtle difference in the diction of its thought: the mere existence of the word "kalos" for instance, which describes what is somehow united both as beautiful and as good, gives the careful first-time reader the feeling of having discovered another linguistic country. But the words we translate as "political" from *politikos*, or "city" from *polis*, or "regime" from *politeia*, are peculiarly difficult to parse; the reach of our English words seem all too dully limited, with all their current associations of abstract power relations, rule of law, nation states as the proper building block of human society, and of politics as usual divorced from questions of custom, locality, and religious practice. But learning to hear "politics" as a Greek word offers to reunite these, and to show the sinews of the whole: politics in the ancient sense means every kind of human association and relation, gathered up into one locale, of which the city is the public face and the grounding surety. Heard as such, it is but justice for Aristotle to name the human being as that which is by nature the animal who is political, and announce the *telos* of the city as not merely living but living well.[1]

And so politics, the political art, becomes in Greek the study of all these relations, customs as well as written law, "culture" not exhausted by obsessions religious or secular; not only the bare question of constitution but the underlying problem of regime, that is, what groups or individuals the city is oriented toward promoting the wealth, security, and honor of, whether it be the few wealthy or the numerous poor. As such, ancient political philosophy is preoccupied with the presence of the elements of race, class, slavery, and sex in any given community, and with the way the whole is woven out of them all: this is why the woman question falls under the head of politics in the first place. We reach toward this meaning when we want to describe

ourselves as social animals, but the irony is that this word posits a realm of the social that abstractly lies outside of the way regime gives shape to our actions.

This sort of widened understanding of politics makes more explicable the still impossibly narrow claim that all philosophy is primarily political, or even that Socrates' philosophy is such, in that it adds more subjects of interest than merely who oppresses whom. But it remains a limited view of Socrates' work in particular, since whether an erotic or thumotic or even a death-seeking vision of philosophy is at issue, the question is always where the moment of departure from the merely human is; at what point we attempt to leave behind the teeming crowd of merely human animals and seek by ourselves in our grasp of the forms by the hand, to be as deathless as possible, living a life on earth that resembles the residents of the Isles of the Blessed. The beauty of Plato's writing is that in the *Republic* in particular, we are invited to witness the hair-raising political ramifications of such an escape—yet nevertheless leave with its promise ringing in our ears.

In what follows, I will argue that what Socrates gets wrong about the community he proposes for his guardians of the city is not from insufficient respect for female human nature, but rather from too little care for the political as such, in his great wish to rewrite the city as a breeding ground for future philosophers. In his plans for women, tempted by his desire to secure them as valuable students, Socrates commits the error of primarily considering the *genos* in the light of their very real individual talents alone, and his plans to replace the private household with a magistracy of nursing, among other things, are a comically insufficient patch-up to what he interrupts in human life. Although Aristotle himself as statesman chooses to retain the customary position of women, despite his recognition of its insufficiencies, his objections to *Republic* V in the *Politics* are nevertheless of particular help here. His more thorough attention to all the elements needed in a city stand as counterweight to what Plato chose to publish as Socrates' airy plans—the crucial point being that even Aristotle's objections are not based on nature but politics. The comedy of Socrates' actions is a useful study for the lawgiver, because it shows the problems of attempting to right any one political injustice without considering its unjust effects on another portion of the community. Socrates' forgivable but ultimately erroneous plans show the very limitations of what even the best laws can do for the human community. I will argue that much of what is customarily said to be natural in women is in fact political—that is, political in the ancient sense; and it is promulgated as natural because of our need to maintain the noble story that we are political animals who can be thoroughly satisfied by the political. Plato satirizes the limitations of the human community, the better to point us to the satisfactions of philosophy.

OIKONOMY

Aristotle has many objections to Socrates' Book V plans in his *Politics*, but only one for the laws of the First Wave. To Socrates' plans to model the partnership of men and women on the partnership of hunting dogs, where the female rests for the space of pregnancy and nursing only to take up the work again, he makes this brief and rather testy remark: "but animals have no oikonomy! (1264b5)" In Greek, the house is the *oikos*; care for the space where human beings inevitably rest their head at night is the *nomos* of the house, that is, its *oikonomos*, the custom and rule of the household. The irony that our English word, "economy," with its bare regard for the movement of funds without regard for the good of anything but the funds themselves, is derived from *oikonomy*, should not be lost on us. For Aristotle, the *oikos* is a fundamental building block of civic life: not our 20th-century fiction of the nuclear family, but a smaller group within the city, where those with natural ties have the precedence and rule, and have direct mastery over those few who as slaves, complete much of the labor of the household, such as cooking, cleaning, etc.[2] Aristotle's arrangements, which will hardly strike us as just, nevertheless provide a plan for every necessary element required in the places everyone, with a family or not, ends up living—unlike the nuclear family, that deeply bourgeois myth, which somehow manages all the labor together or is dependent on the labor of those happily distant, where without slaves, the house-labor ultimately devolves on the female—with the inherent tension that such tasks are nevertheless still thoughtlessly conceived to be mindless.[3]

Socrates has different plans: the ties to our relations, even the uncle and the cousin, distort our allegiance away from the city (462b), and his idea is that all natural ties will remain secret, while everyone will consider everyone else, depending on their age, as mother and father, uncle and cousin, son and daughter. "All the tasks" will be shared out, in this blanket phrase; there will be no individual households but all will do all and share all in common, such that no one is able to say "my own" (462a–d). It is this aspect, no less than his specific plans for women, that have so angered readers, most of whom come to the text with some attachment to private property; and Socrates' plans certainly have their troubles. Socrates tips his hand by not making any specific provision for household tasks, which like the question of rule, cause dissension when choices are made about who will do them, albeit in the opposite direction. This is why myths cluster thickly around why the person doing them is appropriate for the task: it merely depends on the *nomos* whether the story is about slaves, or about women, or about the poor, or about the foreigner. By making no specific provision for these tasks, Socrates shows his forgetfulness of an essential aspect of political life, and one that the lawgiver specifically can't forget: doing away with households will not do away with household cares.[4]

But Socrates has picked his initial example of hunting hounds well: a pack of roving dogs do not cook their food, and all chase after the prey together. It makes the answer to the woman question simple. To anyone who, like Glaucon, has ever trained or bred dogs for a task, it would be a waste not to hunt with the female dogs as well. As I mentioned in chapter 3, while Xenophon counsels care with pregnant dogs, lest in their love of work (φιλοπονία) they harm themselves or their puppies, it is nevertheless not even a question whether the females would work at the same tasks as the males.[5] Considered in terms of animals, while the tasks of bearing and rearing puppies require a generous section of the life of the female, there's no essential reason that the one task could not be taken up before or after the other. Likewise, while Socrates' hounds are hardly to be lap dogs, his image nevertheless casts the female *genos* as capable of domestication, a valuable rhetorical addition.

But young dogs still require nursing or upbringing: the question is, as Glaucon puts it, what to do about "their upbringing (τροφῆς) when they are still young, in the time between birth and education, which seems to be the most trying (ἐπιπονωτάτη, 450c)." The care implied in the Greek word *trophe*, which extends the metaphor of mother's milk to cover all of the interval before the more formal *paideia* or education proper begins, is often used by Socrates as a way of thinking of the whole of the education of the guardians; such usage suggests the sort of care that Socrates would wish all to extend to all their education. Now, the question of what to do about births and nursing, and the marriage behind it, is what would ordinarily be understood as the substance of the woman question proper; it is Socrates who separated off this question from the question of what other tasks women might pursue. But he is aware that some plans must be made about nursing proper; indeed, he's had a fair amount to say about certain aspects of nursing before this moment, having much to revise in this customarily female domain. His first target is the stories the nurses tell, and he demands that the nurses be persuaded to tell only the good ones, leaving out most of those now told (377c); he refers to his plans for the education of the guardians in Books II–IV as "education and nursing (445e)" or simply "nursing" (412b). But when pressed for more detail in Book V, he relates the most radical alteration of all: aside from the science-fiction-esque plans for the breeding of the best to the best, which will take place under the cover of specious lottery secretly controlled by the rulers, written into his plans for commonality is the result that no child will know its parent, and no parent their child. The idea is that all the adults will therefore nurse all the young together: but instead of individual care, Socrates institutes a sort of magistracy of nursing. He describes cavalierly the "pens" for the lactating women, to be presided over by officials both male and female, who will decide how much milk and when and from whom each baby receives it (460b–d). This is the first breaking point, at which to laugh over the pitiful

plight of the herd and the herdsmen, or bemoan the sight of such an institutionalized attempt at care: the young of the guardians are in nothing better than state-run orphanages.

While the humor of the First Wave provokes debate, the absurdities of the Second Wave are not a question. The minor impracticalities boggle the mind—how will the officials know about milk?—but more importantly, our animal selves, as Aristotle points out, could hardly be deceived for long about which baby was ours: he points out that in all likelihood parents would recognize their children (1262a14). But beyond the folly of these details is the underlying fact that children require more than common nurses to form human relations: indeed, much current research about early childhood centers around the problems that arise when institutions attempt to be substitution for care from individuals.[6] Aristotle is at his most witty on this point: "how much better to be the real cousin of somebody, than a son in Plato's fashion! (1262a12)."[7] Socrates is cutting out a vital swathe of what political life demands: the need that the very young have to have a family who loves them best, when they are at their most difficult to care for.

But while Socrates does offer a sketch of what nursing will look like, he simply doesn't have much to say about it. While both the Athenian Stranger and Aristotle both have a fair number of recommendations for the care of babies, small children, and even women in pregnancy, Socrates merely remarks that appointed nurse officials will manage the troubles of weaning and sleepless nights, "and so forth" (460d); his "and so forth" is about as good as it gets. In point of fact, the question of what to do about early childhood is indeed difficult, and easily overlooked by the lawgiver, because of the ancient claim of women to this realm, who are themselves forgotten by law. Education as nursing is more on Socrates' mind than nursing proper; indeed, Socrates is famously neglectful of his own small children, while he runs after the older children of others. We who are human require a division of labor beyond what even hunting hounds possess; the tasks do not disappear when women depart from them. Socrates takes women away from their customary spot as the rulers of nursing, and places them alongside the men in every task. Socrates at the least shows his awareness that some provision must be made for nursing; but he evinces more care for the education of women in their own right, than for that of all children.

THE LUXURY OF NURSES, AND THE MATERNAL AS POLITICAL

But what would women themselves say, to Socrates' large-scale encroachment on the grounds of nursing and mothering? Recall that the first mention

of the task of nursing in the city in speech comes as part of the long list of luxuries including tables and couches, courtesans, imitators, and hunters (373a–c). Nurses are a luxury, but to whom? The truth is that nurses are a luxury to the female *genos*, to women themselves—paradoxically, themselves to themselves. The hiring, or for that matter the capturing, of nurses is of long-standing origin, concomitant with human civilization; it gives leisure, that desirable state, to those who would otherwise be occupied with the nursing themselves. Its dangers are likewise familiar: consider the case of Clytemnestra and Orestes' nurse; Clytemnestra argues that Orestes should not kill her because it is at her breast he suckled (*Supp.* 896); but as became clear long earlier, it is the Nurse who took care of him at night (*Supp.* 750), and ultimately Clytemnestra's argument holds no weight with him (*Supp.* 913). Nurses are always a temptation to women who can beg, borrow, or steal them; Socrates' myth of metals reunites the pair, when he bids the guardians to consider the earth as nurse and mother in one (*Republic* 414e). Socrates' plans in Book V merely radicalize a political reality: instead of shared, paid, or enslaved nurses, officials of both sexes will take these duties, and instead of some slight contact with the original mother—a figure in another part of the house—there will be none at all, known as such. Glaucon remarks that child-bearing or child-making (παιδοποιίας) will be made easy or leisurely (ῥᾳστώνην) for the female guardians (460d); this is not quite right, since the labor itself would remain as difficult as ever; yet the leisure that Socrates grants is not uncommon, just the means and the *telos* he chooses.

There is a tension between what nature bestows upon the mother in child-bearing, and what human women choose to do once the child is separate from them. While animal affection is usually provided, by no means does this guarantee that the mother will likewise become the nurse, or do it well. Again, consider what Xenophon has to say about the female hunting dogs: that love of work (φιλοπονία) stands at odds with what is good for pregnancy and rearing.[8] How much different from this can human women be said to be? Elizabeth Gaskell, novelist in the Victorian era and mother of four living children—hardly a poet without a stake in upholding the good of the customary—has this to say of a representative member of the female *genos*:

> "Still, it was unsatisfactory to see how completely her thoughts were turned upon herself and her own position, and this selfishness extended even to her relations with her children, whom she considered as encumbrances, even in the very midst of her somewhat animal affection for them."

It is unsatisfactory to witness, but it is nevertheless attested to: the animal affection is present, but is not enough to guarantee affectionate or sustained nursing, even in a human being—or perhaps especially so. Motherhood itself,

the maternal, the thing that the respectable poets of the city tell us is natural and just—is a political quality; it finds its most perfect embodiment within the bounds of the city. It is a human quality; but only natural insofar as human beings are naturally political. The civic institution of hiring or enslaving nurses shows that in the political realm itself there are ways enough to avoid it. Alas, Socrates knows his audience too well: considerations of family would not insuperably stand in the way of women's desires, whether to ignore *eros* or further prosecute it; women would be perfectly willing to sacrifice the claims of the household and even the satisfactions of nature, for the prosecution of their own desires, because in a strong sense, they already do. Diotima in the *Symposium*, with all her care for birth and begetting, speaks only rarely of the nursing of the young (207b, 209c); she reasons that the affection is strong from examples of animals, not humans, and her highest example of shared nursing is when children aren't involved (209c).[9]

Consider the phrasing of Aristotle's objection to Socrates' hunting guardians: "And it is utterly out of place/strange (ἄτοπον), to argue from the comparison to animals, that men and women should do the same work, since animals have no share in the household."[10] While some translations render ἄτοπον as "ridiculous," Aristotle is not appealing to the humor of Socrates' argument: he is saying that it is irrelevant, without a place, and quite strange; animal nature strictly speaking is out of place when the human animal starts making cities. The reason for this, is that whatever nature might render possible or just, what the city needs is quite different from the merely natural; it's out of place to consider nature when political concerns are paramount, because someone has to take care of the house, so that the human community can not only subsist but flourish. Custom has appointed women to the household, not without reason, but not, strictly speaking, with the *absolute* authority of nature, since it is all too apparent that some women have the nature of a doctor, an athlete, or musician (455e). For an animal, the hunt can be resumed easily enough after child-bearing and a decent interval of nursing; for a woman, custom ordains that she make the household her lifelong task, and let the house be the shelter of the young. But while the desire and ability for making children, at least, are natural enough; the desire, ability, and habit of raising them are not. If not even nursing, the task which above all others qualifies women for the household, can be said to be natural, then custom has much to conceal; as Socrates points out, plenty of men could be found who could weave and bake rather better than the women whose ordinary task it is (455c). In a crucial sense, civic life is asking that a certain injustice be done to women for the sake of its continued existence. At the very least, cities need children to continue at all, and so they need women to continue to supply this demand, their desires regardless. Babies can't simply be universally imported; the irony is that when babies are imported they are

always taken from somewhere, and from someone. Nor can animals do without animal birth, any more than they can do without early animal affection; human beings are of woman born, and the continuity of this genealogy is worth preserving, and recognizing.

But customary law asks more than that women take up the cares of the household; custom asks that the division of labor between male and female be promulgated *as natural*. Two tales about women's nature are at work, the story about their innate wildness, and the one about their fitness for the hearth. One might well ask, if the customary Greek tale is that women are somehow naturally wild, and naturally inhabit a sort of private shade that in certain lights looks almost forestlike, how did they get into cities in the first place? The more so, if civic life asks them to tame their desires more than other human beings? Women's presence in the city is delivered by a sort of Oresteian compromise: the genesis myth has a pack of them roving the earth as Furies, in search of implacable revenge for those who cross their animal affection; indeed, Aeschylus has the messenger paint them as doglike hunters (*Eum*. 264, 305). But Athena's lawgiving wisdom offers them a rest from their roving, and, according to the poet, the Furies accept her offer of the hearth and become known as the Eumenides. It's worth noting that while some polities prefer to picture women or the feminine as such as the gentle, musical, maternal side of human nature, the Greek poets retain a fine sense of pre-political wildness that the city can only partially tame, even after the Furies have come home to rest; either they are more honest, more reckless, or both. The Greek gossip about female human nature is the more satisfying as it shows there is a tension written into women's relation to the house: Athena, who Aeschylus paints as taking the part of the male in everything, is fairly honest about the *cui bono* of her decision.[11]

Now, the women are not the only *genos* that the city needs to describe as naturally subordinate to their ends: the same is true, as Socrates' myth of the metals capitalizes on, of the artisans, the serfs, the slaves, the poor. It is in the city's interest to mythologize its divisions of labor as natural, because political life *requires* we arrange life according to division of labor—and backdate the difference. Marx argues that division of labor is unjust because it is unnatural: he precisely overlooks the political as such.[12] Even cities, despite Aristotle's best attempt to say otherwise, are not strictly speaking natural, not in the same way as the self-growing wholeness of the organism is; they are perhaps part of what it means to be human and not simply animal, but they require more than nature to keep them going.[13] Strauss' remark that natural right would act as dynamite for civil society is a helpful way to see the problem: to give each human being their due according to their nature rather than taking the proper goal of civic life into account, is rather such life's destruction; in the case of the assertion of the natural right of the female *genos*, this dependence on civic

life on certain kinds of injustice becomes all too clear.[14] The irony of our own Enlightenment-born attempt to assert such natural right is that it abstracts more from women's peculiar share in the polis than even Socrates does, because he at least has plans for babies and for marriage; while Socrates' plans for nursing are laughable, some provision is better than no provision at all. As Irigaray notes, the Western world, among its other ills, is currently hell-bent on mass genocide—against itself: the search for one's own wealth and fulfillment as a singular individual loses sight of one's place in the genealogy of the human race, and when no one is giving a thought to what comes next when there are no babies, as is currently Italy's problem, the trouble becomes all too pressing.[15] When all human beings are treated as abstractly equal, the law becomes a law for those who take on the role of men only, and the question of children, no less than the genealogy of women themselves, gets left behind; again, to put it Platonically, we lack a women's law. Now, the necessary injustice of division of labor is not an injustice to rejoice over, any more than it is an injustice to somehow, impossibly, correct by converting the world into universal hermitage. The question is, how we in our own lawgiving make sure that in our pursuit of one aspect of justice, we do not commit a worse act of injustice elsewhere—or reason ourselves out of existence. In this light, even slavery is a problem relatively easy to solve, compared to the woman question.

While Socrates declares an end to the *individual* family of his guardians, he insists a universal family is still present, a community where all children are the concern of all, where even warfare is a family outing. I will note that Socrates' plans to rearrange the guardians into one family is not without precedent or even approval—at least from women. Consider again what the abolitionist and suffragette, Julia Ward Howe, herself deeply committed to motherhood, has to say in her reaction to *Republic* V. She is deeply disturbed by Socrates' plans to expose deformed babies, and for mothers to be separated from their natural children, but has no horror of the communal family Socrates proposes: she commends him for seeing that the raising of children would profit from participation from men.[16] Likewise, the husband and wife James and Adela Adam, each a scholar of the *Republic* in their own right, as well as parents of the criminologist Lady Barbara Wootton, consider that Socrates has not *abolished* the family anymore than he abolishes, in their eyes, marriage.[17] For an ancient example, consider the halcyon polity envisioned by Aristophanes' Praxagora: her plan is to turn the city into one giant household (*Ecclesiazusae* 674), where women rule (555), all property is in common (590), and all men will be considered as fathers, since paternity will be impossible to prove (635), and the women, who want to protect the soldiers, their children, as best they can (236), will take care of the children without help from men (674, 461); even the ugly women will have sex (617).[18] Now, Praxagora's concerns, not to mention Aristophanes,'

are complex, but for my purposes it is enough to notice that children will continue to be born and cared for well, without the need for the customary family. Praxagora seems more concerned with erotic matters, while Julia Ward Howe is primarily concerned with children, but each share a disregard for the civic and political consequences of common property and children in common.[19] If these examples are to be believed, it seems as though women would be willing enough to jettison the individual family, for the sake of their desires, whether it be for rule, for *eros*, or for the better raising of children. Socrates' proposals in the Second Wave, accordingly, might not seem as outrageous to women as one first might imagine. The problem with the Second Wave is not that women would be destroyed in some way *qua* women in order to participate in the communal life Socrates describes; the problem is that the scenario is all too satisfying, perhaps, to the desires that women show up to political life with. Socrates wishes to transform the natural desire for nursing help into a nursing partnership, as simple a sort of move, as to persuade a person that it's never just to harm one's enemies; and perhaps an easier point of persuasion.

Attachment to children is not the same as, or automatically leads to, attachment to the customary family; nor would attachment to the private as such guarantee this either. The household is a civic institution, insofar as it stands apart from the natural animal realm; the family itself, as conceived by the city as the sanctioned living together of a male, a female, and their legitimate offspring, is in a key sense political. Simone de Beauvoir speaks approvingly of Socrates' plans to "wrest" women "from the family," since that favors her plans for radical freedom of the individual; the irony in her preference for such freedom is that it is necessarily only finally accomplished within the achievement of total rather than limited Revolution; this is essentially question-begging.[20] She considers the political to be completely constructed and so easily rearranged into commonality: for all her Hegel she sees but one side of the human dichotomy, with no sublation in sight.[21] Her not-particularly-veiled contempt for breeding rivals Socrates' own (586a); though to be sure, alongside her send-up of nursing, Socrates' nursing concerns look the more impressive.[22] Customary civic life, with its concerns of inheritance, posterity, and extended-family loyalty and interest, proposes the limitation of human affairs into some kind of family and some kind of house as the shape to our natural desires, and there are certainly benefits to the practice. But there is an irony present in any argument that wishes to insist upon the naturalness of the family, without recognizing the political roots of such a contention, no less than in the argument that insists that *because* something is political there's nothing natural about it. To understand the political nature of the family is not in any sense to dishonor it, but rather it is the beginning of the fair assessment of its human worth, and the beginning of any attempt to legislate well for it.

For instance, the tendency of women to be dependent on other women for nursing simply has to be taken into account, lest we slip unwittingly back into the injustices of the Greek world, which we'd otherwise believe obviated.

WHAT LAW REVEALS OF BEING

Let me take up this argument from another angle: does custom or law deliberately obscure nature, or does it in some sense reveal it as well? Seth Benardete considers that the trope of clothing in some sense stands for custom itself; this is part of the force of Socrates' image in the First Wave, perhaps, when he demands that the women strip: perhaps he is asking women to discard custom itself.[23] But to abandon all custom and law would leave humans as beasts, or perhaps worse than beasts, if humans are potentially the most depraved of animals; to live simply as nature leaves us may well lead to the usual fears of incest or cannibalism, which as political animals we do well to avoid.[24] The law is not only a sign of our difference from the animals, it is our attempt to be so. But what about the women's law? Does the law that says women are suited by nature to stay in the shade of private life and run the household reveal something about nature, even as it conceals? Consider this: no one would argue that the absence of all *nomos*, and the anarchy or bestiality following upon it was desirable; the law conceals from us the extent of our potential for such anarchy in order to make the task of living as civilized humans easier. But what does human society look like, in the absence of any law that asks the women to hold fast to the household without citizenship, with privately-oriented *techne*? Unlovely perhaps; comfortless, rather lacking in babies, perhaps even ultimately unsustainable; but not straightforwardly unlivable, as in the case of anarchy; it is still in some sense recognizably human. The law as such sits more easily on the shoulders of human beings than the customary woman's law sits on the shoulders of women. This is one crucial aspect of the political problem that women's very existence makes for the polity, that law itself has no obvious *place* for women; hence the aptness of Socrates' phrase, "the women's law": there is no need to speak of the law of the *genos* of men. And after all, the wildness ascribed to female human nature by common Greek report is certainly not a secret: it is what is openly announced by the law as natural, and unfortunately for the lawgiver, is not something that clothes restrain. As I argued in chapter 7, clothes to a certain extent restrain the *eros* of others, but not the desires of those who themselves are clothed. But if there is an open secret that the women's law reveals, it is that law itself can't perfectly order human life; that the retreat from the wastes of nature into a public-oriented civic existence is not an unqualified good. Stanley Rosen speaks of nature itself as being unjust to women, in

that they are divided by nature; but nature is by its nature whole; division comes from the categories of the *logos* that seek to cut it up.[25] For example, amphibians aren't divided in their nature, but the wholeness of their nature makes breath in two elements possible. Rather, it is the political itself, in its need for division of labor, that makes the awkward cut that places women in the household; the awkwardness of the cut is what makes Socrates' revolutions, and the revolutions of later polities, possible at all. Natural right is not only dynamite to civil society; it is the kind of dynamite that holds a natural temptation for human beings.

THE REASON FOR SOCRATES' DESTRUCTION OF THE POLITICAL

The problem with Socrates' argument in the First Wave is that he appeals to nature and not politics, the nature of animals instead of the human political animal. Socrates is just barely willing to acknowledge that the female gives birth and the male mounts (454d); further than this in acknowledging natural difference he will not go. Socrates offers to take away the difficulties of nursing and raising children, and in their stead, offers rule and philosophical education, to such among the best who are capable of it; for the reasons I have detailed, there should be no surprise that his offer possesses appeal to the *genos* of women. Socrates' offer displays the tension between nature and custom's necessities, and it displays the capacity and desire of women to enter into political life in order to obtain the ostensibly highest goods political life can offer. Again, women are perfectly willing and capable of sacrificing the household for their own desires. But why does Socrates make this offer in the first place? Why is Socrates willing to destroy the household, so that women might do all tasks in common with the men? As I argued above, Socrates' proposals for the rule and education of women are not wholly idiosyncratic, in that both the Athenian Stranger and Aristotle promote the benefits of plans for education, and in the Stranger's case also for partial rule, for the *genos*. But what then is distinctive about Socrates' solution for women? What would be worth the risk of all of this? Nothing less than Lady Philosophy herself.

What is specifically strange about Socrates' proposal is his plan not only for the guardians to have no private family, and the rulers to breed the best to the best, but also for men and women alike to philosophize, and to rule as philosophers. What is different is that all of Socrates' plans, for men and women alike, are ostensibly meant to be good for philosophy, and promote philosophy's ends. As I argued in chapter 8, although all is done in the name of the best city possible, at second glance philosophy seems to have rather the better half of the bargain. In Socrates' city, philosophers have the best the

city offers, not in terms of worldly goods, but something rather better: instead of being laughed at or persecuted, philosophers would be given the highest honors, sacrificed to as to divinities (540c), and the best souls of the city would be handed over to it as students (519c, 536b).[26] The graceful fiction is that the best thing for the city would be for philosophy to be given the best. Although it quickly becomes apparent in the dialogue that Socrates' plans for philosophy turn sour, nevertheless the argument he makes in the Third Wave, in the mathematical center of the book, is the perfect act of dialogic revenge against customary *nomoi* and the restrictions it places on philosophy's purview. Socrates neatly turns the evening's events on its head: after having his arm twisted to get him to visit Cephalus' house at all, and rather rudely turning the conversation almost immediately to the nature of justice, his masterful counterstroke is to insist that perhaps philosophy ought to rule instead; only philosophy, he now contends, will solve human evils and make the best city possible. But philosophy's public rule doesn't come without political consequences: Socrates distorts the human community past recognition in the service of this end.

Socrates displays no compunction as he issues order after order in the Second Wave: the family—that is, parents and children—will cause dissension, and so away with the family; he shuffles the guardians as though they were *merely* animal in their mating, birthing, and nursing, with no law against the incest among brothers and sisters; indeed, in some sense, brothers and sisters who mate and kiss and hunt and practice war together describes well the sort of partnership he is preparing for his guardians. Such an image radically departs from the customary in a deeply uncomfortable way; but such is Socrates' cheerful plan for his guardians: "in the city that's going to be managed to the ultimate degree, women are to be common, children common, all education common, and the tasks involved in both war and peace are likewise common, and those among them who have turned out best in philosophy and war are to be kings" (Book VIII, 543a).

Socrates is quite clear: he plans to gut the customary arrangements in order to give his guardians the education and life that will prepare them to rule as philosophers, because, for the sake of argument, the argument has shown these things to be best. Not only does Socrates' spirited defense of true erotic philosophy display the tendency of philosophy to overstep itself, but also likewise do his enactments in the Second Wave. If Socrates' overall project, before Book V, was to present the best regime as natural, as the perfection of human nature at the hands of philosophical tinkering, the Waves are where he lets a crack or division show; this is where it becomes apparent that doing justice to nature can't guarantee the best regime; but Socrates lets this crack show because he no longer is as concerned about the regime as a whole, as he is about the philosopher-kings.[27]

Not only is this tendency dramatized by the Second Wave, it is also represented by the First: that women should be educated in philosophy is good for philosophy, if not necessarily for the city. Socrates argues in the First Wave that there's nothing better for the best city than the best men and women; but the same is true, or more true, for the practice of philosophy. In the city in speech, not only does philosophy not have to steal the sons away, it will likewise be supplied with daughters. What could be better for philosophy, than that the best of the souls be given over to it from birth? Again, in the Second Wave, Socrates' dismissive treatment of the guardians is his active joke against their animal selves, as his cruel send-up of the perfidies of lover's compliments displays (474d); but in the First Wave he spends quite a while arguing in defense not only of women's capacity, but also that no one should laugh at them (452a–e, 457a–b). He even shortens their child-bearing years to a twenty-year period between the ages of twenty and forty (*Republic* 460e); Aristotle counsels a much wider period, from eighteen to fifty (*Politics* VII.16, 1335a6–30); the Athenian Stranger allows for women as young as sixteen to marry (*Laws*, 785b). Again, Socrates cares more for women themselves than for arrangements for children.

Although Leo Strauss argues that it is justice without regard for consequences that governs Socrates' actions in the First Wave, I would contend that it is first and foremost Socrates' work on behalf of philosophy.[28] Socrates' arguments in the First Wave are never from justice; in fact, the word is mentioned only twice in Book V at all, right before the introduction of the Third Wave as part of a brief recap, only to fall away from the discussion again.[29] Instead, Socrates argues explicitly from nature, and how to turn nature toward what would be the best, *aristos*, for the philosopher-kings. He doesn't even end up arguing for "equality" of the sexes, but rather allows Glaucon's principle that the women will be taken as weaker to save the argument, and in the final analysis still secures the best of the women for the guardian class. If Socrates were attempting to do justice to women, to the whole *genos* of females, he would have assigned education to all women regardless of class, according to the capacity of each, just as he argues for the presence of female doctor and musician souls; and he may well have left out Glaucon's caveats. Instead, Socrates is interested only in the best, such as could be taught philosophy. Likewise, he does not restructure the family of every single member of the polity: only for the guardians. In an important sense, the whole political problem of leaving the women unregulated in the city at large has *not* been solved by Socrates, since the vast majority of women and their *eros* are left to live customary, lawless, private lives.[30] Finally, if giving women rule and/or education were simply the conclusion of the logic of pure justice, then one wouldn't expect Aristotle or the Athenian Stranger to speak for it, for each of these lawgivers is interested in not only justice but its consequences as well.

In the Three Waves of the *Republic*, Socrates bowdlerizes the civic life of his guardians, for the sake of philosophy; his willingness to put philosophy in charge of the city is both a sign of heroism and his fatal flaw. Socrates claims that there will be no end of miseries until philosophy rules, and in one sense he is correct; in another, he has his finger on only one aspect of the question. This is the paradox: the city needs the rule of wisdom, but philosophy in its love of truth is willing to distort the political out of existence; yet nevertheless we require a love of truth in order to uncover and articulate the political. The *Republic* dramatizes our need for political philosophy, even as it counsels us not to trust it as final authority. Socrates' saving grace is that unlike de Beauvoir, who is ultimately interested in freedom, he is at least aiming at the Good.

WHAT REMAINS FOR WOMEN'S NATURE

Here at a time where there is finally interest in asking questions about maleness and femaleness, men and women, maternal and paternal, as living questions, rather than succumb to the political need to take them as political fiat, there is much possibility for inquiry—as long as one does not simply fiat them out of existence, for equally political reasons. We have to think harder about the way we articulate these questions. To ask *whether* women have a different nature from men, distinct, articulate, is to ask the question wrong: it's asking a political question only barely cloaked by the insistence that we ask it in terms of nature alone, or that politics alone is paramount to the inquiry. It pretends that nature alone would somehow settle a political question, or vice versa. Worst of all, it makes an artificial separation between our political selves and our natural selves. But I want to make clear that such a question, or rather our locus of concern around men and women, the male and the female, is not *answered*, once and for all, by noting that it is, in the ancient sense of the word, political.[31] Plato is rather more open than Aristotle about the ways in which human beings either fall short, or reach beyond, their political origin. But one of the lessons of the book, even as we are taught to desire the philosophical life, is to show the impossibility of escaping the political altogether, and to point the reader back to the care of the whole; a call which Aristotle also attempts to take up, though not without his own set of myths. And so, to say that the maternal, the familial, even female human nature as such, are political notions is not to undercut them, but to give them their proper pride of place; while acknowledging that it is both true and not entirely true that the political is the limit of our nature. Kierkegaard notes that it is the pride of the Christian *nomos*, that has made what he calls sex differences more marked than in other polities (his counter-examples are

pagan); Kierkegaard considers this conscious division of labor to be the pride of civilization, a way to make nature more whole.[32] This suggests not merely our dependence on such myths, but their attraction; as well as the possibility that they might articulate something true about what a human being wishes to be, in their pursuit of excellence. But there are better and worse attempts to articulate women's difference as origin myth of political balance, and quite a number of them are laughably unsatisfying; I've discussed the weakness of several over the course of these essays, whether it's the deeply bourgeois notion of the nuclear family which abstracts from labor in an impossible way, or the Victorian insistence that women be excellent without possibility of rule in either religious or governing worlds, or even the un-Grecian notion that women care more for one's own than men do. The weaker the myth, the easier route to revolution.

But Socrates' own myths ask all humans to stretch out toward the whole human being. And so, in a discussion of Plato's thought on the woman question, it's appropriate to leave the question in its dialectical stage, with a sense of all the tensions involved in the asking of the question. Difference, even beyond the political, demands to be articulated; a sign of this is the endless debate, between members of the opposite sex, usually on behalf of their own *genos*, as to which is the better. In all future questions, it is well to acknowledge our debt to the political, no less than its power to distort the account, even as it provides something of the accounts' proper *telos*; and no less is required an acknowledgement of the human being's desire for rule, if not always for mastery. I would point the reader toward the cultivation of a phenomenology of the body as one crucial step, as a way to avoid the customary solecisms that have plagued this tangled nest of concerns, in order to help articulate the difference between *genê* without beginning from political assertion of essential Being, which often culminates in a religious articulation as in the case of the Pythagoreans' Table of Opposites; or the equally political assertion of Becoming at any metaphysical cost.[33]

One last coda: as Socrates narrates the Myth of Er, his last word to the dialogue as a whole, each soul stands by itself, without a city, in the underworld. Er witnesses the choice of each soul of their next life; he describes the choice of each soul as a pitiful, wonderful, and laughable to see (620a). Socrates represents several souls as willing to choose the life of animals: Agamemnon picks the life of an eagle; it's striking that even the shepherd of the people is willing to leave civic matters behind entirely. Orpheus, out of "hatred of the *genos* of women (γυναικείου)," chooses to be a swan rather than be born of a woman. Orpheus' choice, as he was known to be a lover of the sex, but met his end at their hands, is perhaps understandable; he seems to consider that there is a crucial difference between being born of an egg produced by a female swan, and being born of a human woman; his hatred of the female

is limited to the peculiarly human female, and her parts, not to mention his fabled attachment to eggs in general. Furthermore, two souls choose to change the sex of their bodies: Epeius, who built the Trojan Horse, chooses to become a skilled woman, a woman of artful craft (τεχνικῆς γυναικὸς); while Atalanta, follower of Artemis and the infamous lady runner, "having caught sight of the great honors of the athletic man, was unable to pass them by and took them" (620b). All of these are tantalizing details, left unarticulated in logos by Socrates but reached toward in his final myth. His myth reiterates some of what he specifically argued in the First Wave, where all souls male and female alike call out to some profession, some men to handcraft and some women to athleticism. Yet here he indicates that sexed body is apart from the soul and its desires—even as one body or the other allows its desires to be fully articulated. I would suggest that the soul stretches out toward Being; and our articulation of ourselves as of a sex is one way to attempt to hold fast to ourselves that is not unhelpful, even as it is in a sense partial. But Socrates' final moral in the Myth of Er, however, is quite clear: the one who lives "in an orderly polity, participating in virtue by habit, without the help of philosophy" (619c) is out of luck; only the life chosen with the help of philosophy will satisfy. Sex, Socrates seems to imply, is all very well; but the good life demands we take up philosophy and its questions above all.

NOTES

1. *Politics* I.2; see also III.9. This underlying sense of all the elements present in the whole is not the invention of political philosophers, but their linguistic and lived inheritance.

2. *Politics* I.7, 1255b30ff.

3. Slavery, I will note, as the Modern Slavery Research Project documents, is still very much an ugly part of the foundation of the economic success of the so-called first world. See http://www.modernslaveryresearch.org/. Also, I will note that Plato is more alive than Aristotle is to the tension written into the fact that some women belong to both the *genos* of women and the *genos* of the enslaved, and the concomitant problems that arise from this intersection, both for the woman herself and those making use of her enchained labor, especially as nurses; it's worth noting that Socrates prefers for himself the virtues of nurses and courtesans, than those of the putatively-honored wife, and he reshapes the excellence of his female guardians accordingly. There is much pressing work still to be done on intersectional issues in ancient political thought, once these differences are noticed.

4. For a look at the problems surrounding housework and keep in the current age, and a defense of its philosophic importance as activity to be reclaimed for oneself, see Mary Townsend, "Housework," *The Hedgehog Review* 18, no.1 (Spring 2016): 115–125.

5. Xenophon, *On Hunting* vii.2.

6. Early neglect in an institution, without a primary caregiver, hinders brain development, as seen, for instance, in Romanian orphanages. See John Hamilton, "Orphans' Lonely Beginnings Reveal How Parents Shape a Child's Brain," *NPR,* February 24, 2014, accessed April 15, 2015, http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2014/02/20/280237833/orphans-lonely-beginnings-reveal-how-parents-shape-a-childs-brain.

7. In Jowett's elegant recapitulation of this phrase (*Aristotle's Politics*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Modern Library: New York, 1943), 84).

8. *On Hunting* VII.4. Xenophon counsels that the puppies should not be given to a foster mother, since the milk, breath, and affection of their own mother do them good.

9. One can add to this evidence, the troubling reality of the willingness of certain women to kill their children, as in the case of Medea, since after all it is they who gave them life; likewise, Antigone argues for the priority of the brother, since after all, she could always have *more* children if necessary (*Ant*. 904–20).

10. *Politics* 1264b4. Aristotle also uses this word in the *Ethics* to describe the possibility that one might have a brutish desire and yet restrain oneself, as in the desire to eat a baby, or a "strange aphrodisiac pleasure" (*Nic Eth.* VII.5, 1149a15); for Aristotle, these brutish states are indeed strange or extraordinary but not particularly funny.

11. Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, 734. I'm indebted to Clare Coffey for the formulation of, to whom the good.

12. *German Ideology* (in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 159–60).

13. Aristotle's arguments for the city as natural in *Politics* I.2 are markedly different from his writings on nature properly speaking; see Michael Davis, *The Politics of Philosophy: A Commentary on Aristotle's Politics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996), 15–32.

14. *Natural Right*, 153.

15. Luce Irigaray, JTN, 12. For the crisis in Italy, which sits at the extreme end of a European trend, see Manuela Mesco, "More Italian Women Are Choosing Not to Have Children," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 22, 2014, accessed July 5, 2016, http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303949704579457662674779306.

16. Julia Ward Howe, *Julia Ward Howe and the woman suffrage movement* (Boston: The Colonial Press, 1913), 75, 68, 85. Howe, who was peculiarly attached the rights and pleasures of motherhood (ibid., 70), makes a striking contrast to what is claimed by Nichols and Saxonhouse about what follows from the logic of birth. I'm indebted to Rivka Maizlish for noticing this discrepancy, and for pointing out Mrs. Howe's remarkable text ("Julia Ward Howe Speaks on the Equality of Women in Plato's Republic," US Intellectual History Blog, February 26, 2014; http://s-usih.org/2014/02/julia-ward-howe-speaks-on-the-equality-of-women-in-platos-republic.html; accessed July 1, 2016).

17. See James Adam, *The* Republic *of Plato*, 292–296; and Adela Adam, *Plato: Moral and Political Ideals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), 139–142.

18. Nor is Aristophanes alone; in Alice B. Sheldon's short story "Houston, Houston, Do You Read?" men have died out, and all children are raised in a universal crèche; genetics are used to clone new citizens, but the women produce only females; just as Praxagora envisions, war has died out completely, and the women ultimately

choose to kill three stray men they come across (from *Her Smoke Rose Up Forever* (Sauk City, WI: Arkham House Publishers, 1990), 168–167).

19. Again, Kochin notes that the desire for heirs, which can only come out of a household of a man and woman (where the woman is rather closely watched) is the Greek world is particularly manly desire (GRPT, 103). Wendy Brown argues that "Plato" has missed something crucial about the nature of public political life by this over-feminization of politics in "'Supposing Truth Were a Woman...': Plato's Subversion of Masculine Discourse," *Political Theory* 16, no. 4 (Nov., 1988): 612.

20. *The Second Sex*, 130. For more on what de Beauvoir misses of the political as such in her demand for transcendence, see Townsend, "Housework," 121–22.

21. "it must be repeated again that within the human collectivity nothing is natural" (*The Second Sex*, 761).

22. For nursing, see *The Second Sex*, 559; as for child-bearing: "Those that go through pregnancy the most easily are, on the one hand, matrons totally devoted to their function as breeders" (543).

23. See Burger's account of Benardete's thinking on this subject: "The Hebrew Bible, we are told, has no word for nature, physis, in opposition to *nomos* or convention; but the clothing of man and woman, which covers over their natural nakedness, seems to represent precisely that distinction" ("Definitional Law in the Bible," 9). Also Benardete in *Herodotean Inquiries* remarks: "Shame is the law's expression of man's ignorance by way of prohibition. The law completes man by saying no to man. The law clothes man and thus turns philosophy—man's awareness of his own ignorance—into shame" ("Second Thoughts" (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 1999), 216). As I noted in chapter 5, when Bloom and Berg make this argument, they seem to be saying clothes reveal not human nature but female human nature, but this can't be right.

24. Burger: "The clothing of animal skins should be understood, perhaps, as an image of what the human being is or would be were it not for the law. While the clothing itself represents the divine law, it discloses at the same time the potential bestiality in human nature that makes the law necessary. This double meaning opens up what one might call the ultimate paradox of the law. On the one hand, it covers up and forbids us from uncovering what it has concealed; on the other hand, the law attempts to reveal something about the nature of things. The latter in the potential of the law indicated by the subtitle Benardete gave to his reading of Plato's *Laws*: 'the discovery of being'" ("Definitional Law in the Bible," 9).

25. Rosen: "there is no education that will suppress the conflict between a woman's body and her soul. Women are thus divided in their nature" (PRS, 178). Aristotle has it: "And it is surely strange (*atopon*) to cut [the soul] up in this way; for there is choice in the calculative part, and *epithumia* and *thumos* in the unreasoning part; and if the soul is divided into three, there will be desire in each" (*De Anima*, III.9, 432b5). To cut up the soul into professions at all is an artificial step.

26. Strauss describes this situation as: "the city that regards the proper bringing up of the philosophers as its most important task" (CM, 125). Likewise, Bloom describes Socrates' city as a solution to the customary need of philosophers to "steal the sons of the city away" in order to recruit them to philosophy; the city in speech is the happy land where this is no longer necessary (IE, 468).

27. See Strauss, *Natural Right*, 139.

28. "The just city . . . holds no attraction for anyone except for such lovers of justice as are willing to destroy the family" (Strauss, CM, 127).

29. 472b–c; Socrates fends off Glaucon's request for whether the city is possible, with the claim that they only wanted a model of justice to look to, not something that could actually come into being. Elena Blair also notes that justice is missing from the discussion (PDW, 95).

30. I'd argue that Plato retains the ambiguity of what the women do in the other classes of the city, in order for the reader to better picture what would take place were Socrates' woman-drama become universal; this is why Socrates argues for artisan women's natures but doesn't fill in the gap himself.

31. This artificial distinction is what distorts de Beauvoir's attempt to give an embodied account of the female; and allows her preference for Revolution to run rampant over the political (*The Second Sex*, 761).

32. This is the Judge's contention in *Either/Or*, as he attempts to prove the aesthetic, and not merely political, validity of marriage (*Either/Or* II, trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 29).

33. As for example in the work of Elizabeth A. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994); and Raia Prokhovnik, *Rational Woman: A Feminist Critique of Dichotomy* (London: Routledge, 1999). Simone de Beauvoir, however, remains one of the best authorial voices in her consciousness of speaking from a body while giving thought to the body, despite her various aversions; likewise Edith Stein is always worth considering in *Essays on Woman*, trans. Freda Mary Oben (Washington, DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1996). Likewise, Mari Mikkola's contention is worth considering, that the metaphysical disjunction implied by the flawed but popular sex/gender distinction ultimately implies the absurd goal of the abolition of women, and is at the very least rhetorically limited ("Ontological Commitments, Sex and Gender" in *Feminist Metaphysics*, Charlotte Witt, ed. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 67–84). For Aristotle's list of the Table of Opposites, see *Metaphysics* I.5; for Judith Butler's declaration of a preference for Becoming, see *Gender Trouble*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1999), 43. For a hylomorphic balance between Being and Becoming, see Sarah Borden Sharkey, An Aristotelian Feminisim (Dordrecht: Springer, 2016), 49–58.

Epilogue

Aporia on the Woman Question

What, after all, is the reason to read Plato's *Republic*, if one is interested in the Woman Question? One thing is clear: one has to be interested in the question as a living question; one cannot be convinced of the utter dreadfulness nor the unquestioned perfection of our current revolutions. Every reader of the book, across time and space, takes up this challenge: are they willing to set aside the laws of their own country, for the space it takes to consider a regime that resembles no regime under the sun, where only the rule of philosophers can put an end to human miseries? This necessary, temporary amnesia is no less a requirement to consider Socrates' parallel proposal, that the best of the women should be educated in philosophy and war alongside the best of the men, and that the best of these will rule. And so, let me ask again: what is the role, after all, of women in the political community? There is one thing that Plato does make manifest as a certainty: there must be a women's law, a female side to the drama of the human attempt to carve out a city worth living in, lest we forget about women and their concerns entirely. In Plato's work, Socrates stands out as the hero or anti-hero of such questioning: but he never fails to recommend to us to seek the whole human being, to seek all the qualities that would allow our souls to bend themselves toward a life worth living, and toward the truth of what is good, beautiful, or just. In the *Symposium*, Socrates recommends that men consider taking on womanly practices and reimagine their lives in terms of giving private birth to beautiful works and conversations; in the *Republic*, he asks women to take up the practices of men, to fight for their community and to rule in all public might—to become as it were Amazonian prostitutes, employing the colorful complaint of the 4th-century author Lactantius.[1] Standing in the midst of Plato's cosmos, among all its desirable yet contradictory recommendations—should we cultivate desire or shun it? Is spiritedness the friend of reason or its enemy?

Is the intellect our proper ruler or an impossibly harsh mistress?—it is impossible not to consider the possibility that a one-sided answer to any of these questions, and to the woman question itself, may well be insufficient.

In the First Wave of the *Republic*, Socrates sets the question for us to consider: what are the forms of sameness and difference between men and women? Is all the same between us, nothing at all, or some? When the question is put like this, it's clear that since "none at all" or "every single thing" don't work, "some, in some way, others not" is the only sensible answer—but that is precisely where the dialectical trouble begins. Socrates raises this question in a political context, in the context of the search and installment of the best city human beings are capable of: he is still, in the constraints of the conversation, required to speak to human nature insofar as he is considering the question of who should rule; and such a question is a restraint, and to a certain extent a profound distortion. Now, in one sense, this is nevertheless appropriate, since we are interested in the question not as isolated individuals but as people who inevitably live together, necessarily conducting our business with more than one-half of the human race, at least, should we wish the race to continue. On the other hand, to consider ourselves as merely political is to obviate the possibility of a private, inner life, of a question that is privately one's own, to ignore the desire to leap away from this world and see the itself by itself; the very desire Plato so beautifully dramatizes even as he makes its dangers apparent.

But it is precisely among these restraints that the reader is able to learn volumes about what it would take to answer this question. Plato presents a living conversation conducted among his two elder brothers and the hero of his youth, Socrates, who draws out the strengths and weakness of each as the conversation swings from one brother's predilections and prejudices to the other. Adeimantus' sharp and immediate distaste for the *genos* of women is contrasted to Glaucon's magnanimity and interest: yet even the more gracious, if somewhat improvident brother has his hesitations over whether to allow any similarity between the sexes. Socrates draws out Glaucon's squeamishness, pressing him as hard as he presses any interlocutor on any subject. The passage is both a witness to the reluctance of the male *genos* to let women enter the public sphere, and an iconic symbol of the extremely questionable concession that will soothe such reluctance, namely, Glaucon's response upon first hearing Socrates' proposal for sharing all pursuits in common: men's ultimate superiority in every pursuit. This compromise satisfies hardly a single other person in the entire history of the work's readership, from the one extreme of those who find any public participation of women to be repugnant, to those who hardly credit Plato with any wisdom at all, for Socrates' putting women permanently, in theory, second best. It's by noticing the ways that the reader is inevitably drawn into a conversation with the

text—as well as the potential for the work to stop the conversation altogether, by alarming the reader into tossing the book away in disgust—that the real artistry of Plato becomes manifest; and the real depth to which we are all as humans interested in the question becomes all too painfully clear.

But as if all this were not enough, Socrates ties the woman question to the question of philosophy's rule: he begins his quixotic attempt to argue for the justice of the rule and education of philosophy, by arguing that women themselves ought to be educated and rule. These measures, neither anticipated or desired by the listeners present, exist alongside each other in a parallelism which Socrates invokes again and again, whether by comparing the precariousness of philosophy's state under ordinary laws to the precariousness of women's lives, or by imagining his three arguments as a woman slipping away in a veil—until he chose to pull all three into the light of day. Make no mistake, the Three Waves together are themselves the Female Drama. Now, to draw out this parallelism as I have done, between the common peril, common law, and common irony residing in the law raises, perhaps, the reputation of women in the book, as much as it calls into question philosophy's rightful seat upon the throne. But such a parallelism holds much temptation, since it teases us to step outside of Socrates' own images, and let our fancy go to work on what all this might suggest to the lively imagination. Women's customary privacy, their customary wildness, their reputation of strong desires, all sound attractively similar to how philosophy is described elsewhere by Socrates; philosophy, for one, will not ultimately be able to do without the freedom of privacy and the direction and staying power provided by *eros* let to run wild, and Socrates threatens to cut off the very root of philosophic activity by his over-zealous care. Likewise, if those who live in private are tempted to regard the care for the public good as extraneous to their subsistence, then such a temptation will be shared by philosophy as well: in the wish to mark the contrast with the farm-raised philosophy of the guardians, it's tempting to counter that true philosophers spring up like mushrooms.[2] But it is nevertheless true that all humans owe a debt to the laws that raised them, however tempting it is to wish to escape either to the forest or the heavens; or to believe in one's own self-generation.

But what Socrates himself does stress, on his own terms and repeatedly, is the common danger that both women and philosophy face, from those who would laugh at their activities "for the sake of the best" (457c). While the temptation of either sex finding the other to be laughable is a human one, the danger that such laughter presents to philosophy and to women is equally real: not the least being that such laughter contains the darker hint of violence, for both. And so, while Socrates is right to expect that his own proposals will be found amusing, the deeper problem is that laughter itself remains a pressing political problem for women and philosophy, within every regime

that is not Socrates' own. Socrates is pointedly steadfast in his willingness to let them be heard, regardless of the consequences: "I'm in for it now," he says, "but it shall be said regardless (473c)." That the reader must first sit still while the argument details its plans for women is something of a test case for philosophy; shocked at first, the reader comes across the Third Wave in something of a state of bemused astonishment. To first allow what appears wholly other, the female, to take a share in the guarding of the city, waters the ground for the reader's acceptance of the even more outlandish notion of philosophy's rule.[3]

As Socrates contends in the First Wave, he wishes us to consider only that which helps or is beneficial (ὠφέλιμον) to be beautiful (457b); only that which would keep us from ill health.[4] To the extent to which we are willing to be schooled by Socrates' tales with respect to women and philosophy, to that extent we've allowed our laughter to be healed. In a sense, the work of the *Republic* is to bring together women and philosophy as allies, by allowing the excellence of one, to appeal to the excellence of the other. And while the book has so far been more successful in promoting the alliance between the *thumos* and reason, than the partnership of men and women, I would submit to the reader, that this is the fault of our readership insofar as we maintain a spirited commitment to our own side of the question.

But the problem that any discussion of women and the women's law faces is not merely the contentiousness of the issue, but the very forgetfulness of the question. The way women fade in and out of the focus of the conversation, is the drama of Socrates' sometime forgetfulness and sometime keen remembrance of the *genos*.[5] Initially forgotten in the most necessary city, the absurdity of such forgetfulness is made sharp; brought in as exemplars of what is wrong with intemperate living and with *eros* itself, there is something of regret as they once more disappear; the absurdity of the hazy plan to share them out as common possessions foretells the need but absence of wisdom among the guardians when they only possess music and gymnastic; then there is the trainwreck-style fascination present when they become present as contenders for the rulership; Socrates' forgetfulness of the very young in preference to the relatively freed-up lives of his lady guardians; the abrupt absence of women from what follows except as the embodiment of philosophy's problems under all other regimes; the sharp reminder that everything previously said about the philosophic education is meant to apply to women too; the troubling forgetfulness of all other women, and indeed all other citizens, as Socrates' plans for his budding philosophers takes center stage; the final announcement that virtue has no master from the thought of the robed maiden, alongside the pointed announcement that questions of strength and weakness are topics on which we must further deliberate (618d), in order to live the best life possible. The forgetfulness of the race of women, alongside

the controversy of their presence in public, taken with their hand on the spindle of the world—not only is the question fraught, the very ability to keep it in mind is a difficulty, and yet to keep it in mind is of cosmic importance.[6]

Such presence and absences mimic the presence and absence of women in the dialogues, not to mention the hiddenness of their customary state: and yet though the reader must take on even more than the usual amount of detective work required to find the thread, the one unifying factor is the constant, felt concern—in the backdrop of the forgetfulness or ire or desires of his various speakers in all their individual predilections—of Plato, the author himself. It is easy enough to write a book that points out the problem of women, without offering a law specific to women, as Aristotle does; but Plato writes no less than two books which profess an interest in the women's law, and in their education and participation in the public life of the city, not to mention writing in his Socrates' praise of his two lady teachers; Socrates builds on an expectation of our sympathy for the plight of women under customary laws, in order to aggrandize the right of philosophy to take over. I invite the reader to consider, that Plato was well aware of the controversial nature of what he put into Socrates' mouth in the middle of his most famous work; that he nevertheless risked the reputation of the book, not to mention his own reputation as a thinker, by this gamble, is an act of profound gallantry to the female sex: what the suffragette Julia Ward Howe calls in the midst her own rhetorical concerns, "the foremost and most sacred promise" of the book.[7] The irony that many readers find an Orphic or even Nietzschean hatred of woman in Plato, is all the more short-sighted in this light. All of Plato's books have to be recovered to the reader, in the light of Plato's thoughtfulness and concern for the race of women; not to mention the case studies he presents us with, of characters who manifest less thoughtfulness than he. The concerns that limit us to 19th- and 20th-century narratives have to be put aside, to allow Plato's thought to once again help us think about what constitutes the best city, and the best life, for human beings; Plato's work, in its ability to draw in female readers and legitimize their ability to think for themselves, is the birthright of every woman on the way to thinking herself through, and of every soul in possession of *gunaikeion eros*.

But Plato's concern does not manifest itself outside of our willingness to ask questions, and to consider the reasons why women pose such a problem to the lawgiver in the first place. The ire, the laughter, and perhaps especially the forgetfulness make it hard to consider: it is *not* that women practicing excellence in public for the sake of the best is laughable; nor indeed the notion of women philosophizing; nor even that some rearrangement of household cares is required when women take up pursuits in the city. Perhaps the argument that women are somehow divided in their natures, half citizen and half childbearer to the state, and so without final reconciliation as citizens or learners, comes the closest to noticing the shape of the trouble—but to say this is to

miss the problem inherent in the division of labor, and lets a civic burden threaten the wholeness of women's own souls, which after all, as souls, can't help but to be whole.[8] As Plato's book makes comically manifest, the division of labor itself, which is the foundation of cities as we know them, even when made into a thorough-going meritocracy, is an injustice to human beings, not only because to prosecute the idea fully, the rulers have to go against the desire of the individual human beings and assign them on capacity alone; but because it abstracts from a whole human being in the attempt to cast all of us as primarily represented by our profession, that is, by the way the city is benefitted. The existence of human women confounds the lawgiver's attempts to articulate and order the various professions and interests within the city, because it's simply more obvious in the case of women that to make this division absolute, to pin one human being to one single profession or place within the city, is in an important sense artificial. Consider Marx's ire at what he calls the "natural division of labor in the family" in *The German Ideology*: he is particularly irascible at this human pattern because it's the one division of labor no regime can do away with.[9] We are no less dependent on the time and care of women, spent in gestation no less than in early nursing cares, of which food is the least of the worries, than we are to the person who takes up carpentry, or to the plumber. A sign of this, is that to shove these tasks over to the so-called third world, whether by airlifting away their babies, or getting them to do our nursing for us, is merely the latest absurdity this fundamental necessity has drawn out, and its most unnecessary injustice.

But the truth is, while the division of labor is in an important sense a falsification, nevertheless some kind of divvying up the tasks is nevertheless desirable for any state that wishes for excellence in its productions. None of us, unless we became hermits, could live by our own labor alone; and the need for some division is no less true of excellence in the household, that is, in the place all of us who rest at night under shelter reside. All civic myths, the American dream included, are an attempt to justify the division of labor, whether it be to justify the poverty of the poor, to enshrine another race as other, or to explain away the intellect of women. Socrates' myth of the metals is an elegant pastiche of this need, even as it announces the weakness and ultimate failure of even this most perfect meritocracy. Now, the customary solution with respect to women is to keep them as the guardians of private life alone; but make no mistake, the reason why Plato wrote no less than two separate books that address this, is that the drawbacks of this particular solution manifest themselves at every turn, and demand, to the eye that doesn't refuse to overlook them, some different alternative. Of course, our current solution, to have no women's law at all, but merely a law for the abstract individual that naturally defaults to treating all citizens as men, and so inevitably commits what Irigaray warns is inevitably mass genocide of the nation state,

perpetrated on itself, is not so manifestly perfection, such that the inevitable nostalgia of some for previous woman-custom, however much it misses the point, remains inexplicable.[10] Would that there *were* a marriage number, a mystical arithmetic that would calculate all the marriages for us, that would take the burden off of the variability of our desires, and the selfishness of our estimations! That Plato writes two separate *answers* to the woman question, suggests that neither can we afford to have philosophy rule, nor can we afford *not* to have her rule, in such questions.

But Plato's *Republic* is not a roadmap back to a more customary *nomos*; the book is more unsettling than this. The question of women is a stumbling block no less to the political theoretician, than to the lawgiver. In an important sense, it seems to me that there is no properly theoretic solution to the woman question. Regarded as an either/or, it fails either way: to ignore the practical problem of children and their raising, is no less a problem than to ignore the desires and excellences of women, and the lawgiver ignores either one at everyone's peril; indeed, it's the kind of question that peculiarly stands in need of the true statesman's art, bent to the specifics of a particular community. Likewise, looking beyond the strategic essentialism of my formulation, the question of woman represents the problem of any soul who finds itself strangely cut apart or distorted by the myths we put together to help us think through our need for the division of labor, the myths that surround the civic place of any particular *genos*. The danger of the human community is that it would break apart humans in order to form its own wholeness; and any justice that considers itself as righteous, without acknowledging this comedic and tragic root of the city, is bound to turn ugly. In all this, it's well said that any lawgiver ought to look to the Good in their decisions; and while the political community certainly requires the willingness of any human being to question the goodness of their desires, to railroad over the desires and the intellect of women or any *genos* is—not—good, or desirable. The beauty of ancient political philosophy is that it begs us to see ourselves as fundamentally interwoven with the lives of everyone in our community, even while it acknowledges our desire to see ourselves out of it. Likewise, Plato acknowledges our wish to be the whole human being, with all the qualities named as male and female that would grant us the excellence we desire, despite the inevitability of any individual's failure. Socrates' irony allows us to see this tension between the love of philosophy which rescues us from the world, and the demands of the world even philosophers can never escape from, no less than the tension inherent in placing women in the human community; it teaches us to desire the just city, even as we witness the failure of the attempt to find a final solution.

Socrates' speeches are not a trifling code or a key to all mysteries; they are not simply satirical or simply exhilarating, though they are both. The irony of Socrates is a question in itself; and fortitude, no less than courage, is required

to proceed. For unlike mere display or even exegesis, such irony burns and shapes the person listening to it: as Kierkegaard, thinking of Socrates, remarks, irony seeks "not so much to remain in hiding itself, as to get others to disclose themselves."[11] To allow such irony to set us to work on this always fundamental and currently all-too-pressing human question, of articulating the something in the middle, in between the absolutely same and the absolutely different, announces itself as a philosophical task not without danger, perhaps most of all for the one doing the talking. But to let Plato's book do its work, we have to read it; and allow our reactions to be as much our study, as the reactions of Socrates' scripted interlocutors. And so I commend the reader to the Woman Question as seen in Plato's *Republic*: the dialectical delicacy with which we the reader are willing take it up, will be the measure of our lawgiving success—and our best hope, the willingness to which we as individuals wish to follow the laws of the best regime and no other, whatever regime we happen to inhabit.

NOTES

1. Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, 150; the quotation is from the third book of Lactantius' *Divine Institutes*.

2. Pace Michael Davis, "On the Spirit of Ideas," 24.

3. I'm indebted to Charlotte Thomas' talk on Book V which gave rise to this thought: "The City-Soul Analogy in *Republic,* Book 5" (paper presented at the annual meeting of Association for Core Texts and Courses, Plymouth, MA, April 9–12, 2015).

4. The tendency is to presume that Socrates' phrase, "what's beneficial is beautiful and what's harmful is ugly" (457b), prefers the useful or the merely utilitarian to the beautiful, and to criticize it accordingly (Strauss, CM, 116). But the pair "beneficial and harmful" rests on a medicinal metaphor in the Greek, and speaks to the overall tropes of health and sickness, healing and poisoning, and while the useful is a political good, the beneficial is a natural one. Socrates contrasts the beneficial to the merely useful, when speaking of the Good at 505a and again at 518b; the beneficial is the cause of flourishing which is more than mere success (379b). Bread is what keeps us alive, but it is also beneficial (559b). As Rosen remarks, Plato doesn't want us to master nature, he wants to heal us from it (PRS, 7, 355). This phrase, then, doesn't subordinate the beautiful to the good, as Benardete has it (SSS, 115), so much as it subordinates the beautiful to the healthy, which, one might say, splits the difference between the beautiful and the good. Socrates proposes a happy land where beauty is always conducive to health, as in Socrates' proposal of mutual kissing for the victors in war (468b).

5. Adela Adam remarks that it is "easy to see that his intellectual convictions outrun his instincts" (*Moral and Political*, 126).

6. Claudia Baracchi connects the representation of Necessity as a woman to a sort of cosmic displacement of the "patrilineal logic of the discourse of the good to the matrilineal imagery brought forth in the ending myth" (*Myth, Life, and War*, 193); this would be a fitting ending to the female drama of the whole that Bendis begins.

7. *Julia Ward Howe and the Woman Suffrage Movement*, 89. Likewise, A. Adam: "For this declaration women in all ages and countries owe an immense debt of gratitude to Plato" (*Moral and Political*, 127).

8. Contra Rosen, PRS, 178.

9. *Marx and Engels Reader*, 159.

10. Irigaray, JTN, 12.

11. *Concept of Irony*, 251.

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