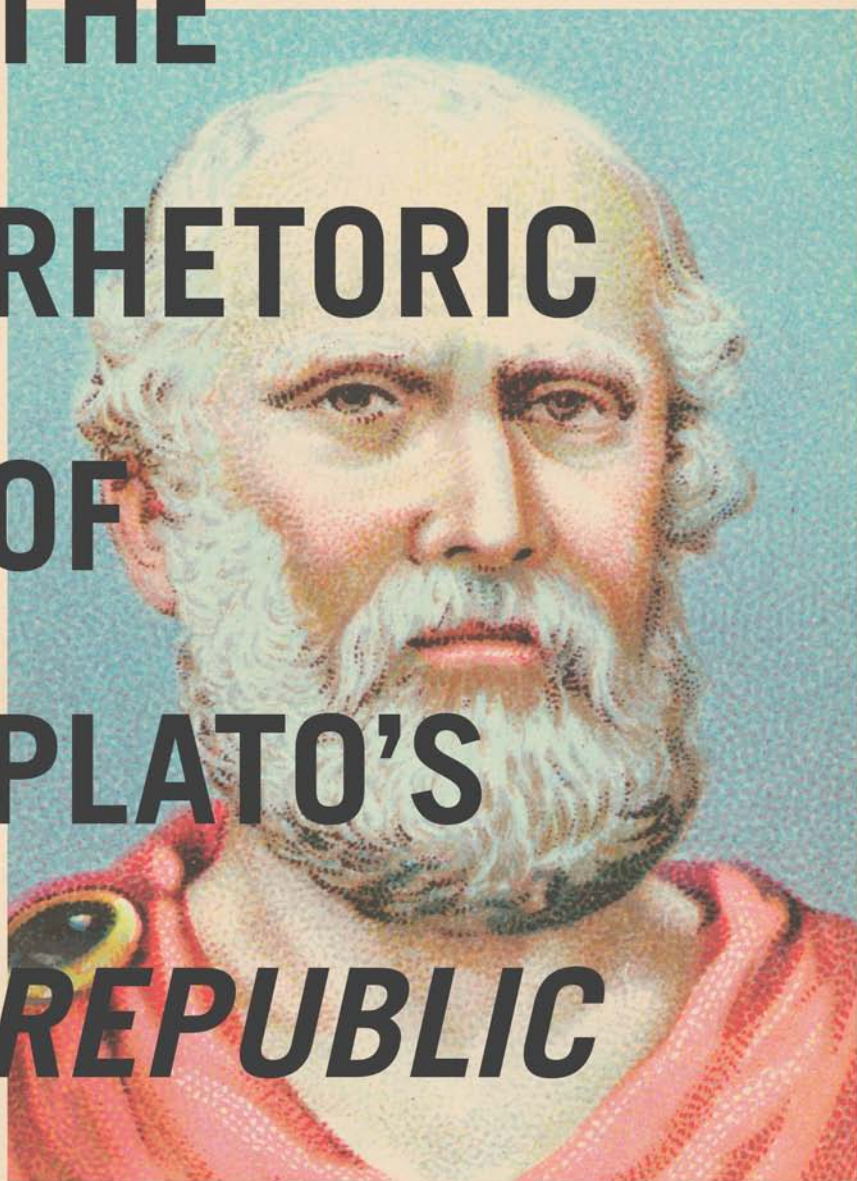


# THE RHETORIC OF PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*



DEMOCRACY AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL  
PROBLEM OF PERSUASION

*James L. Kastely*

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Democracy and the Philosophical Problem of Persuasion

JAMES L. KASTELY

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FOR LYNN, WHO DANCES IN THE  
CHORUS OF THE SAME GOD.



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## PREFACE

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I have always been drawn to thinkers and writers whose work cannot be easily categorized. It can't be an accident that I keep finding myself writing on thinkers like Plato and Kenneth Burke. Their work continually invites or forces me to rethink what I thought I knew. They are like Daedalus's sculptures in the *Meno*—they just don't stay put. This is especially true with Plato. He, more than anyone else, has helped me understand the philosophical importance of rhetoric and the depth of certain issues that are foundational for rhetoric. His philosophical attention to those fundamental issues has helped me navigate what it means to be, as Burke would have it, an animal born into language.

Although I felt that I had contributed what I had to say on the work of Plato and Burke and swore to myself that I would write no more on either of them, I have found once again that Burke and Plato have challenged me to revise and expand my understanding of one of rhetoric's most basic activities: persuasion. I have found myself, almost despite myself, writing yet again on and in response to them.

To understand persuasion better, I first turned to Burke and his understanding of the dialectical relationship between persuasion and identification. That led to my essay "Love and Strife: Ultimate Motives in Burke's *A Rhetoric of Motives*" (*Rhetorica* 31.2 [2013]: 172–98). Plato had, as I originally imagined this project, a small role to play in a larger study of persuasion—I thought I might focus one chapter, and maybe not even that, on a dialogue or two that examined what Plato had to say about persuasion. But as I reread the *Republic*, the importance of Plato's thought on persuasion became evident to me. I began to appreciate that, for him, persuasion posed a fundamental problem for philosophy. In the *Republic*, philosophy's difficulties with persuasion call into question the meaningfulness of philo-

sophic discourse. Persuasion is Plato's focal point for raising the questions of whether philosophy has a practical role to play in human affairs, and especially of whether it can contribute to those efforts that seek responsible ways to live in an imperfect world. In the *Republic*, these questions are about the possibility of philosophic discourse contributing to the well-being of nonphilosophers. For Plato, the central question of the dialogue—whether a genuinely persuasive defense of justice is possible—is not a theoretical problem; rather, it is a practical question about the effectiveness of philosophic discourse.

The need for a genuinely persuasive defense of justice arises from a fundamental threat to democracy. In democratic Athens, as represented in the dialogue, the underlying sentiment among the citizenry is that no one really desires to be just and that, at best, justice represents a compromise between the desire for unlimited power and the fear of what others might do to one if those others had such power. The defense of justice is an especially pressing problem because the standard arguments put forward in its defense have inadvertently promoted injustice and led to a false understanding of the natural appeal of injustice. As Plato sees it, democracies face an inherent rhetorical crisis in which it is difficult, if not impossible, to justify the very values that are foundational for those political orders.

The way in which Plato frames the problem of persuasion conveys that, whatever else it is, the *Republic* is a major work of rhetorical theory investigating the possibility of an effective radical discourse that is culturally transformative. Plato's concern with rhetoric differs from that of theorists who focus on persuasion as part of normal political discourse. He is interested, instead, in the possibility of a discourse that challenges the inherited understanding of a culture. For this type of discourse, persuasion is a particularly vexed issue because, at least initially, its claims are counterintuitive and contradict what nearly everyone takes to be an understanding grounded in and confirmed by reality as it is experienced on a daily basis. Glaucon and Adeimantus, the dialogue's main interlocutors, point out to Socrates that if the people said what they truly believed, then they would have to confess that they prefer to act unjustly if they could get away with it. The average citizen values justice principally as a compromised solution that protects the person from the potentially aggressive acts of those powerful individuals who would otherwise not be inhibited from acting on their natural desire to pursue freely their own interests and trample over the lives of others. Given the common perception that people naturally desire injustice, the *Politeia* (normally translated as the *Republic* but meaning something like "constitution") needs to investigate the ways in which individuals and cities are

constituted by the cultures that they inherit. Since discourse plays an important role in such constitution, it becomes an issue for rhetoric, on both the individual and political levels, and since the constitution of an audience is a question of the shaping of their ethical and political character, rhetoric, as an art of constitution, is a concern for philosophy.

It is evident early in the dialogue that the *Republic* is a work of self-interrogation—it is an act of philosophy investigating whether philosophy has the possibility of contributing to the promotion of justice in the everyday world in which injustice is likely to persist. Plato uses Book 1 and the opening of Book 2 to orchestrate a set of events highlighting the failure of a philosophic discourse based on Socratic refutation. He defines the problem rhetorically: Socratic discourse fails because it persuades few, if any, of those who hear it of the correctness of its insights. This failure is evident in the characters' response to Socrates's refutation of the rhetor, Thrasymachus. Glaucon comments that Socrates's victory over Thrasymachus is meaningless because it does not speak to what people really believe and why they believe it. Socrates's failure is particularly important because it is one in a long line of failed defenses, and the absence of a single persuasive defense of justice lends strong support to the prevalent belief that what people really value is injustice. The failed defenses of justice raise questions about what is required for a genuinely persuasive defense. And that, in turn, raises a question about what is entailed for a discourse to be persuasive. This question of persuasion becomes particularly important for philosophy because philosophy is in the difficult position of addressing an audience of nonphilosophers who have little reason to credit philosophic discourse with any authority.

As I read the *Republic*, Plato takes seriously philosophy's obligation to be as rhetorically cogent as possible. However, he sees that as a complex task. Not only does he need to develop an innovative and genuinely persuasive defense of justice, he also needs to make that defense available in such a way that it resists reduction to a fixed understanding that would transform it into ideology. There cannot be a single argument that settles for all time the defense of justice. Rather, the need for such defenses arises because the world changes. The fact that the Kallipolis (the beautiful or noble city) Socrates designs is a place that obsessively resists and outlaws change should alert us to the significance Plato attached to the consequences of change. As the dialogue admits, the Kallipolis, even in its theoretical form, cannot finally resist change because no human constitution can adequately contain all of the consequences of a world that is shaped in part by contingency. Contingency is always threatening to move order to disorder. The

question becomes, How does one create a discourse adequate to a world shaped by contingency? How does the dialogue allow us to invent new defenses of justice when the forces of change and contingency inevitably gut the inherited defenses of their persuasive force? If justice is to be truly defended, Plato cannot meet that challenge by simply offering a definitive account of justice, thus closing the argument for all time. A world shaped by contingency eventually renders any argument, however convincing it may be at one time, unpersuasive. Plato has to teach us how to be appropriately rhetorical. He needs to teach us how to reinvent or reconstitute ourselves in order to be able to defend justice in the specific historical and political circumstances in which it becomes threatened.

To do this, he presents his theoretical investigation of rhetoric in a form that is self-consciously rhetorical. The *Republic* is a narrative work, and that is an important rhetorical choice. As many scholars have noted, Plato is seeking to displace Homer and to appropriate and transform the resources employed for the transmission of traditional cultural values. Plato, however, does not seek to transmit traditional cultural values; he seeks to change them. Additionally, he seeks to constitute rhetors and audiences who have the flexibility to open themselves to new understandings when historical change requires them to defend in new ways their foundational values. The *Republic's* narrative brings its readers inside the practice of rhetoric through a mimetic act in which they participate in the operation of philosophic persuasion. To read the *Republic* as a work of rhetorical theory is to understand rhetoric narratively, to understand it as a practice responsive to history. Instead of recommending a specific set of practices, the *Republic* argues for the understanding that persuasion is shaped historically.

To achieve this difficult end of making rhetors who can reinvent themselves to be adequate to historical change and cultural containment, Plato has constructed the *Republic* as a mimetic presentation of an act of persuasion—of a genuinely persuasive defense of justice. In contrast to the *Iliad*, which takes war as its main focus, the *Republic* offers the representation of an extended conversation that seeks to provide two young interlocutors with the arguments that they need to defend justice in a political culture in which justice is considered, at best, to have only instrumental value. The dialogue, however, is not simply a mimetic act; it is also an extended reflection on the complications that follow from participation in a mimetic experience. This reflection on the rhetorical force of mimesis provides the dialogue with the antidote necessary if one is to engage with a mimetic work and not be inadvertently injured.

In the pages that follow, I present a reading of the *Republic* as a mimetic representation of an act of persuasion intended to provide us with the resources to invent future defenses of justice when the occasion demands them. I assume that Socrates's aim of providing such assistance to Thrasymachus, the professional rhetor in the dialogue, is also an offer to all of us who seek to act rhetorically and to develop genuinely persuasive defenses of justice in the historical worlds in which we live. I assume that what gives such defenses a serious point is that injustice is present in these worlds and that most people believe it to be an undeniable truth that being unjust can be profitable. If that were not the case, there would be no reason to argue for the value of justice, for its value would not be at issue. What makes the defense of justice imperative is that events in the world argue continually that justice is not valuable. The persistence of injustice in the world makes a philosophic defense of justice necessary.

The Plato whom I depict in this book may look unfamiliar, especially to those in my own field, the history and theory of rhetoric. I hope to show those readers that Plato is an important ally to rhetoric, one whose potential contribution to rhetoric we have not fully appreciated. We need to enlarge our understanding of Plato and see him as more than a critic of rhetoric and more than a theoretician who holds rhetoric accountable to standards that no practical art could ever meet. I argue, instead, for Plato as a rhetorical theorist who engages core issues for rhetoric as he seeks to offer guidance on how to invent a genuinely persuasive discourse for a value, foundational for both individuals and cities, that is imperiled because the average citizen does not understand his or her own desires. And I argue for a Plato who explores why and how desires that appear and feel natural to people are a consequence of past rhetorical acts that have constituted the soul in ways that the individual neither perceives nor understands. The Plato that I offer understands the soul as a rhetorical artifact. Accordingly, I offer a reading of the *Republic* as a mimetic act that seeks to constitute people who can engage with each other rhetorically—both as the creators of discourse and as the audiences who can listen to or read that discourse with a critical awareness that both recovers issues for serious discussion and constitutes individuals as citizens who are shaped by and act through discourse.

In developing my reading, I draw on the work of scholars from a variety of disciplines: philosophy, political theory, aesthetics, classical studies, and rhetoric. Indeed, one of the real joys of working on Plato is encountering the rich, nuanced, and diverse response to his work. I am confident that readers of this book could randomly pick any of the scholars cited in my

bibliography at the end of this book and would encounter an engaged intelligence that would allow them to develop a deeper appreciation for Plato's achievement.

Certain scholarship has been especially helpful to me. G. R. F. Ferrari's *City and Soul in Plato's Republic* was the work that first prompted me to look seriously at persuasion in the *Republic*. My belief in Plato as a thinker concerned with the role of philosophy in the world was reinforced by Danielle S. Allen's *Why Plato Wrote*, which argues that Plato believes in the responsibility of philosophy to contribute to political life. Sara S. Monoson, John R. Wallach, Arlene Saxonhouse, and J. Peter Euben offered to me a Plato not in retreat from Athens and opposed to democracy but rather one who wrestled with problems that I can imagine a responsible citizen worrying over. David Roochnik's *Beautiful City: The Dialectical Character of Plato's Republic* was instrumental to my appreciation of the role of eros in the *Republic*. Stanley Rosen's *Plato's Republic: A Study* was a model of rigorous and nuanced philosophical reading. What these scholars and others repeatedly demonstrated was the importance of seeing Plato as a thinker who was engaged concretely with a contingent world and the necessity of seeing his writing as a response to that world. Such an insight may seem obvious, but I don't think it is. Even more, I think that it incorporates an important hermeneutic principle that prevents domestication of serious thought. Many, probably most, readers initially encounter Plato in an academic setting. And it is very easy for them to see his work as academic, but the *Republic's* intended scope is more expansive. He sought ways to enable the citizens of a democracy to reflect upon their political culture and to understand the ways in which it had constituted them. Part of the value of looking at Plato rhetorically is it encourages readers to ask what this writing was intended to do in its world and in what way it was a response to the world.

I offer my own reading of Plato's *Republic* not as a comprehensive reading of the dialogue, but as an inquiry into and argument for understanding it as a work of rhetorical theory. Chapters 1 and 2 work together to establish the crisis that needs the *Republic's* extended inquiry into the viability of philosophy as a meaningful discourse. This crisis is presented initially as a rhetorical problem (there currently exists no genuinely persuasive defense of justice) and as a philosophical problem (the Socratic elenchus is also not persuasive). The goal of the dialogue is to develop a philosophic rhetoric capable of responding to this crisis.

To resolve this crisis, Socrates needs to discover a discourse that is effective with a democratic audience, for this is an audience that, in general, resists Socrates's elenctic discourse. This audience has been persuaded by

conventional discourse that being just is unpleasant and something to be avoided, if possible. This pervasive skepticism is what has occasioned the crisis. In chapters 3–9, I offer a reading of the dialogue as the mimetic presentation of an act of philosophic persuasion designed to address this crisis. The aim of this mimetic presentation is to transform the way that the interlocutors within the dialogue and the readers of the dialogue understand justice so that these paired audiences not only will be intellectually convinced of the value of justice but also will be affectively reconstituted so that they desire to be just. My focus in these chapters is on demonstrating how, in Books 3–9 of the *Republic*, Plato acts a philosophic rhetor responding to the needs of an audience of nonphilosophers and to the anticipated resistance by this audience who doubts the worth of philosophy. I analyze how the dialogue was constructed as a rhetorically purposive presentation of philosophy, and also show that what Plato offers his readers is not philosophy but the image of philosophy. I argue that Plato understands that if philosophy is to be humanly meaningful, it needs to become rhetorical. Philosophy, as Plato imagined it, is an arduous pursuit that requires a rare combination of intellectual ability and tremendous stamina of which few are capable. The nature of the practice would seem to make its insights beyond the reach of the average citizen. Only as a work of rhetoric can philosophy reach the nonphilosopher and convince the lay person of the subject's significance. Plato's use of rhetorical figures (for example, the cave, the divided line, or the analogy of city and soul) is evidence of his efforts to genuinely persuade his audience of the value of justice and the worth and relevance of philosophy to discussions about justice. In chapter 10, I read the infamous Book 10 as Plato's rhetorical analysis of the operation of mimesis and as his instruction in how to read the *Republic* rhetorically so its readers do not inadvertently transform it into a work of ideology. Finally, chapter 11 concludes the argument by looking at the practice of philosophical rhetoric that Plato has made available through his mimetic presentation of an act of persuasion.

It is hard to overestimate what a generative text the *Republic* is. It has provoked serious responses by philosophers, political theorists, aestheticians, psychological theorists, democratic theorists, metaphysicians, epistemologists, and scholars in classical studies. The list could be extended. And although it has received the attention of some scholars who work on rhetoric (Harvey Yunis and Marina McCoy, to name two), it has not been read widely as a central text for the theory of rhetoric. I hope that my study will inaugurate a reconsideration of the importance of the *Republic* for the history and theory of rhetoric. It is also my hope that those rhetorical theo-



rists who are interested in investigating the role of radical discourse as a resource for social change will engage with Plato as a fellow traveler. Most significantly, a serious engagement with the *Republic* will help both rhetorical theorists and philosophers get beyond their ancient opposition and welcome the dialectical interactions that would enrich both practices. And I believe that Plato's rhetorical presentation of his philosophical reconsideration of persuasion can serve as a model to bring people inside the practice of rhetoric not by focusing their attention on the technical aspects of discourse but by engaging them with the philosophical issues that are foundational for the practice and that make the practice meaningful. To read the *Republic* rhetorically is to engage in an act that constitutes oneself as an artistic rhetor, one who can reinvent himself or herself to be adequate to respond to the recurring discursive crisis over foundational values fated to arise from a contingency that can be addressed but never permanently contained.

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the significance of particular points. She is the kind of reader whom all writers seek. Most of all, I want to thank my wife, Lynn Voskuil. She is my intellectual partner. Her integrity, generosity, and love have been essential to my work on Plato and to my efforts to understand the philosophical significance of persuasion.

## The *Republic*: Plato's Democratic Epic

In recent years, a strong case has been made that Plato has much to contribute to rhetorical theory and cannot be read, as he has been by some in the past, as an unyielding and unsympathetic opponent of rhetoric.<sup>1</sup> Along with this revision of Plato's relationship to rhetoric, there has been a serious reconsideration of his relationship to democracy, and he is no longer seen as necessarily an implacable foe.<sup>2</sup> I am making a stronger claim. I argue that the *Republic*, when read as a work of rhetorical theory, contributes positively to our ability to think about problems fundamental for a democracy.<sup>3</sup> At the center of my argument is the challenge Glaucon and Adeimantus issue Socrates to provide not only a seeming defense of justice but one that is genuinely persuasive (357b). They seek a rhetoric adequate to the ethical and political complexity encountered in the everyday world. Their request for a genuinely persuasive defense of justice does not serve merely as a pretext that allows Plato to explore a myriad of issues; it is what makes the dialogue a unified and coherent work of philosophy. At issue is not primarily the question of what justice is or might be (although the dialogue is clearly concerned with this question), but the prior question of whether it is even possible for people to engage in a meaningful discourse about justice. However much justice is a philosophical problem, it is equally or more so a rhetorical problem, and indeed, it is the rhetorical crisis that makes justice a problem for philosophy. At stake is philosophy's viability as a practical discourse. As Danielle Allen has argued, Plato believed that philosophy has an obligation to be practical: "A guiding principle of both Platonic and Socratic philosophy . . . is that leaving people with false ethical concepts, when one has the power to correct them, is to harm them" (28). That Plato set this rhetorical crisis in a democratic Athens suggests that he believed this crisis raises questions specifically about democracy's ability to deliberate about

and justify one of its foundational values. Josiah Ober makes the important point that democratic discourse was shaped by the ordinary citizens of Athens: "'The many' gained control of the public language employed in political deliberations, and so the primary context for felicitous speech performance in Athens was defined by popular, not elite, ideology" (*Political Dissent*, 40). He specifically cites "justice" as one of these key terms in the democratic political vocabulary (*Political Dissent*, 40). And, as Arlene Sax-onhouse notes, "democracy is based on the claim to rule as a principle of justice" (106). If the citizens of a democracy are cynical about the value of justice, then democracy is imperiled at its core.

There is a particular urgency to the question of whether philosophy can speak meaningfully to a democratic population. At issue is the vexed problem of philosophy's capacity to impact an audience that is, for the most part, composed of nonphilosophers. Marina McCoy has observed that, for Plato, "it is the philosopher's very desire for truth that requires him to keep revisiting foundational questions in light of new experiences, in particular in the face of challenges to it from non-philosophers" (19).<sup>4</sup> The binary of philosopher and nonphilosopher is central for Plato, and he uses it strategically to define philosophy. This binary "enables Plato to erect a new hierarchical system which places all people in one of two categories: that of the philosopher and that of the non-philosopher" (Nightingale, 55). On the one hand, the limitations of the nonphilosopher are essential for understanding what is distinctive about philosophy; on the other hand, the nonphilosopher poses a fundamental challenge to philosophy—namely, how does a philosopher explain the significance of philosophy to those who cannot participate in dialectic. If Plato sought to address problems that were real for an audience of nonspecialists and that arose as part of everyday life, then it is reasonable to assume that he was alert to the need to create a rhetoric that could reach this audience. Stanley Rosen offers a concise characterization of the need for such a rhetoric: "When we converse, especially, on a topic that arouses as much excitement as does politics, and that requires modes of persuasion other than purely logical, we do not simply exchange arguments crafted for validity, as though we were doing exercises in a logic textbook" (2). If it is to succeed, a discourse about justice derived from the practice of philosophy must be capable of offering a nonphilosophic audience a persuasive argument, and that is possible only if the argument responds seriously to the world in which the audience lives. If this audience is to free itself from an intellectual and political inheritance rooted in and continually reinforced by its everyday experience of the world, Plato needs to persuade nonphilosophers that such an argument is necessary.<sup>5</sup> Danielle

Allen emphasizes the importance that Plato attaches to philosophy having consequences in the real world: "As Plato presents the discipline of 'pharmacology,' it entails above all understanding how abstract concepts and their rhetorical conveyance, whether in images or stories or poems or even dialectical argument, shift the horizons of understanding and expectation and the normative commitments both of the individual and of the social group with consequences for lived experience" (22). If philosophy is to help the citizens free themselves from their imprisonment in the cave, then it has to be rhetorically effective. If it fails as rhetoric, then philosophy is proven to be irrelevant.

At stake in the rhetorical crisis in the *Republic* is the possibility of a political discourse derived from a philosophical inquiry. The goal of this discourse would be to allow the citizens of democracy to understand themselves and their form of government as grounded in values that are inherently political. As Paul W. Ludwig wonderfully puts it, "He [Socrates] perfects politics, not because a perfect politics is necessarily good, but because a perfect politics is perfectly revelatory of what politics is" (217). As a work of rhetorical theory, the *Republic* is asking the fundamental question of whether it is possible to have a political discourse that is not simply a displaced pursuit of private interest. If the value of justice is defended in terms of private advantage, the political as an independent concept and value loses meaning and becomes merely a rhetorical cover for the exercise of private advantage. In terms of the dialogue, that would mean that the interlocutor Thrasymachus was right all along.

But when philosophy takes seriously its obligation to seek a persuasive discourse, it encounters a paradox. If, on the one hand, philosophic discourse can only address those who already practice it, then it is redundant and unnecessary; if, on the other hand, philosophic discourse cannot be understood or appreciated by those who are not philosophers, then it is fated to be incomprehensible to the majority of people. In either case, it appears to be pointless. This looming irrelevance argues that persuasion is a structural issue for philosophy—one that cannot be approached as a matter of strategy, for it goes to the very heart of philosophy as a meaningful human practice that can contribute to the larger human good.<sup>6</sup> Nowhere is the importance of this potential contribution more in question than in the defense of justice. As the *Republic* makes clear in the first two books, the citizens of a democracy have good reasons to believe that injustice is preferable to justice. Glaucon makes this point explicitly: "I shall claim that all those who practice it do so as something unavoidable, against their will, and not because they regard it as a good. Thirdly, I shall say that this is a rational way

for them to behave, since the unjust man, in their view, has a much better life than the just man" (358c).<sup>7</sup> Justice needs the assistance of philosophy to come up with a defense sufficiently powerful to counter a self-evident truth that threatens to erode a principle that is foundational for a democracy.

Plato believes that the common but mistaken belief in the desirability of injustice cannot be dismissed simply as an error in calculation or a misunderstanding of true, if unrecognized, motives. The standard defenses concede that what people truly desire is injustice and accept the claim that if people could operate with impunity, they would choose to be unjust. Another interlocutor, Adeimantus, asserts: "If we can have injustice coupled with counterfeit respectability, then we shall be following our own inclinations in our dealings with gods and men alike, both in our lifetime and after our death. That is the opinion of most people and of the experts. In light of these arguments, Socrates, what could induce anyone with force of personality, any financial resources, any physical strength or family connections, to be prepared to respect justice, rather than laugh when he hears it recommended?" (366b–c). There seems to be a general agreement that the desire to be unjust, as it is manifested in everyday life, simply registers a brute fact. That this desire is often suppressed or held in check does not negate its continuing presence or, more importantly, the continuing appeal of injustice.<sup>8</sup>

For Plato, however, both desire and belief are shaped, at least in part, by rhetoric and hence have the possibility of being transformed by a discourse that can speak to foundational values. This understanding is central to Socrates's criticism of traditional poetry. He acknowledges that his own love of poetry is, in part, a product of the way in which his culture has shaped him: "It's the same with us. The love of imitative poetry has grown in us as a result of our being brought up in these wonderful regimes of ours, and this will predispose us to believe that she is as good and as true as possible" (607e–608a). Through mimesis, a culture transmits and inculcates its values and shapes the ethical and political character of its citizens. Consequently, mimesis is a major rhetorical resource with which to constitute individuals and cities by cultivating certain beliefs and desires that become part of the individual's personality and the city's ideology. Mimesis is, of course, a vexed activity for Plato, and I will discuss it at length in chapter 10. But at this point in the argument all that I want to note is that if we are to understand why mimesis is important for Plato, then we need to appreciate that he sees it as operating rhetorically. G. R. F. Ferrari provides a helpful clarification: "'Imitation,' indeed, is too pale a word in English for what Socrates evidently speaks of here: 'identification' or 'emu-

lation' would be closer to the mark" ("Plato and Poetry," 116). If mimesis is a form of identification or emulation, then it is an affective activity that has an important role to play in the constitution or reconstitution of souls. Understanding mimesis will be essential to understanding how it might be possible for a philosopher to genuinely persuade a nonphilosophic audience without making them into philosophers. A philosophic rhetoric would be a discursive practice that seeks to shape or reshape the soul as an affective and endoxic entity. For Plato, the human soul is, in part, a rhetorical artifact.<sup>9</sup> Any defense of justice that fails rhetorically to transform its audience's beliefs and desires necessarily fails as a genuinely persuasive defense.<sup>10</sup>

Persuasion is at the heart of the *Republic*. And although *politeia* has been traditionally translated as "republic," an alternative and more helpful translation is "constitution." The act of constitution—as the act through which a soul or a city is made into a functional unity by the harmonious arrangement of belief, desire, and reason—depends upon the artful use of language to enable an audience to transform itself. Persuasion is distinguished from an activity such as manipulation in that the aim of manipulation is to assist change in the audience by imposing an outside order on the audience, while persuasion's purpose is to allow the audience to understand and embrace the order that is proposed to it. The order is internalized and becomes the audience's own. The dialogue as an effort at constitution provides a mimetic representation of the act of philosophic persuasion. In arguing that Plato should be considered as a philosophical poet, Jill Gordon provides the following definition of a Socratic dialogue: "A Socratic dialogue is an imitation of philosophical activity which by means of language represents dialogue that aims at turning one toward the philosophical life" (77). She goes on to say that the "object of mimesis is philosophical conversation" (78). Gordon argues that where Aristotle gives the place of preference to action, the Socratic dialogue gives it to thought (78–79). But this is a misleading distinction. The thought—the philosophic content—especially in the *Republic*, cannot be separated, even analytically, from the action. The inquiry into justice is enacted as a conversation, and philosophical conversation is represented as certain kind of discursive activity. In the *Republic* this represented philosophical conversation is identified explicitly in Book 2 as an act of genuine persuasion (357b).

Socrates and his interlocutors engage in the activity of constitution as they craft an ideal state, and, for Plato, philosophical persuasion's guiding purpose and way of proceeding are both embodied in the act of constitution. Philosophical persuasion seeks to reconstitute its audience to reflect in new ways about the values that ground their lives. Its purpose is to support a



practice in which a community and the individuals within that community move from an unreflective possession of a political constitution (one embodied both in a set of laws and practices and equally in an individual and communal identity) to a reflective possession of that constitution. To effect this individual and political reconstitution, Plato crafted the *Republic* as a mimetic representation of a genuine act of persuasion. As a work of mimesis, the dialogue is an extended rhetorical effort by a philosopher to persuade nonphilosophers so that they come to realize the value of justice and truly desire to be just.

Currently, when the citizens are forced to explain to themselves and others why one should value justice, they give lip service to a political value in which they do not believe. If they said what they honestly believed, then they would have to confess that they do not desire to be just. If they reluctantly concede the need for justice, this is only an admission on their part of their own inadequacy to pursue their true desires. Glaucon makes this point succinctly: "They [the general population of the city] say that this is the origin and essential nature of justice, that it is a compromise between the best case, which is doing wrong and getting away with it, and the worst case, which is being wronged and being unable to retaliate" (359a–b). Contradiction and hypocrisy may be too strong a description of this situation, but the reluctant defense of justice at least indicates a deep dissatisfaction with the political life most people feel that they are compelled to lead, and it argues for an inherent instability within democracy. Tyranny, in the form of the dream or fantasy or nightmare of absolute power and freedom, must be an always-present threat. A democratic community that does not value justice as an end in itself is vulnerable to the continual appeal of tyranny, for it is the fantasized life of the tyrant that the citizens truly desire. If Glaucon and Adeimantus are right that traditional discourse has proven incapable of providing a convincing defense of justice, and, in fact, has supplied unintentional support for the inherent attractiveness of tyranny, then for democracy to be viable a new rhetoric must be undertaken, one that through the activity of persuasion allows an audience (both the interlocutors within the dialogue and the readers of the dialogue) to reconstitute themselves as citizens moved by a sense of justice.

## I

The *Republic* engages a problem that is beyond most rhetorical theory, which seeks primarily to theorize and offer advice on how to be effective within normal discursive practice.<sup>11</sup> Thrasymachus, as the professional

rhetor in the dialogue, takes great pride in having formulated such a discourse that is intended to be effective in the world as it is. He offers himself as a practitioner of an enlightened and sophisticated rhetorical practice, one that bases its authority on an understanding of the force of the current cultural commonplaces and the timidity of the average citizen. He boasts that rhetoric's authority is grounded in its willingness to look unblinkingly at reality, to regard things the way they really are, and to move beyond the confused self-deception that compromises the majority's understanding of reality and its discussion of justice (343b–d).<sup>12</sup> As a rhetorical practitioner and theorist, he sees himself as a bold intellectual, unintimidated by conventional understanding, with the courage to speak the truth about the inherent appeal of tyranny (344a).

According to Thrasymachus, all people desire power, so what distinguishes some people is their courage, ability, and willingness to act on this basic desire. Rhetoric is an instrument that serves the interest of this natural meritocracy. It enables large-souled individuals, those who understand and act on this innate desire for power, to acquire agency (338d–339a). For Thrasymachus, the practice of rhetoric can thus be divided into two discourses: the discourse of the average citizen, which is a naive, ineffective, and compromised rehearsal of ethical bromides that produce a surface allegiance to justice but are without genuine persuasive force; and the enlightened and hardheaded discourse of professional rhetors that, through its contemptuous disregard for the polite surface discourse of democracy and a cynical exploitation of this surface discourse, offers a real agency to the rhetor who seeks to pursue private advantage. For this enlightened rhetoric, justice is not at all problematic; it is merely what serves the interest of those in power for whom discourse employs justice as an instrumentality that they use to maintain their hegemony. Accordingly, in this world, a person who seeks power should master a rhetoric that strategically masks personal ambition by manipulating the surface discourse of that culture.

W. G. Runciman contends that Thrasymachus's argument poses a central challenge to Socrates, and Runciman believes that Socrates, and also Plato, fail to answer the challenge. As he puts it,

his [Thrasymachus'] rejection of Socrates' claim that justice is both intrinsically good and inherently beneficial to those who practice it demands a much more effective rejoinder than Socrates gives it. Thrasymachus is the prototype of the saloon-bar realist who knows that life is a jungle in which people all lie and cheat whenever they can escape getting caught. Nice guys finish last, suckers don't deserve an even break,

politicians are in it for themselves. . . . But, says Thrasymachus, look around you! Anyone not distracted by specious philosophical chit-chat from seeing the world as it is knows that people who will always come off best are those most determined to pursue their own interests at the expense of everyone else. (15–16)

Runciman is certainly right that Thrasymachus's view is the commonly held belief and that it is continually confirmed by events that occur daily. Because Runciman is not a professional philosopher but an accomplished social scientist, his challenge to the dialogue's persuasiveness is especially important. He represents an intelligent and careful reader (a reasonable non-philosopher) who is not persuaded by the dialogue. If the dialogue's claim that it has the possibility of mounting a serious case for justice is to be persuasive, then we need to provide an interpretation of it that meets the concerns of readers like Runciman. The question is, Does Plato develop an answer that attends seriously to commonly held beliefs and equally provides reasons for seeing that those beliefs, despite their apparent self-evidence, are wrong? With this conundrum, Plato has deliberately created a crisis for philosophy.

Despite philosophy being shaken to the core by this rhetorical crisis, the dialogue is more often read in terms of a dialectical engagement of philosophy and poetry. For example, an alert reader like J. Peter Euben recognizes the centrality of Thrasymachus to the dialogue: "In many ways, Thrasymachus is the most important interlocutor in book 1, and perhaps in the entire dialogue" (*Tragedy of Political Theory*, 247). He goes on, however, to characterize Thrasymachus's contribution to the dialogue not as provoking a reconsideration of the relationship of philosophy and rhetoric but as raising questions about poetry and power:

Moreover, it is Thrasymachus who introduced the theme of power and rule, which, coming when and where it does, links the critique of poetry to that theme. If the poets and tragedians were indeed the political educators of Greece and were, as such, regarded as statesmen, then the question of power included the question about the power of poetry and tragedy. It is at least interesting that Socrates's principal adversaries in book 1 are poets and tyrants. (247)

Euben is right that the power of poetry and the ever-present threat of tyranny shape Plato's understanding of justice as a philosophical problem, but neither poets nor tyrants participate as interlocutors in the conversation in

the *Republic*. Instead, we should see Socrates's failed confrontation with Thrasymachus, who is a rhetor and not a poet or tyrant, as prompting the central question for the dialogue, a question about the rhetorical efficacy of Socratic philosophy.

As Leo Strauss makes clear, if the *Republic* is to succeed as an act of rhetoric, it must transform both the philosopher and the democratic audience: "Only a radical change on the part of both the cities and the philosophers can bring about the harmony between them for which they seem to be meant by nature" (123). But such a change is possible, Strauss continues, only if there can be a discourse that is genuinely persuasive:

To bring about the needed change on the part of the city, of the non-philosophers or the multitude, the right kind of persuasion is necessary and sufficient. The right kind of persuasion is supplied by the art of persuasion, the art of Thrasymachus, directed by the philosopher and in the service of philosophy. (123)

Strauss goes on to note that while Homer and the tragedians are expelled from the just city, Thrasymachus, whom Socrates now claims as a friend, is invited into the city. So while the status of poetry may be uncertain in the just city, rhetoric, as the art of persuasion, is essential to that city. But if this looks as if it recognizes the centrality of rhetoric to a philosophy that seeks to be politically effective, Strauss does not believe that Socrates acquires this art. He mentions that the multitude that Socrates persuades "are not the many in deed but only the many in speech" (124), for the nonphilosophic audience does not actually partake in the discussion within the *Republic*. For Strauss, the dialogue provides little evidence that Socrates has learned and can use the art of Thrasymachus.

Strauss is right that Socrates does not learn the art of Thrasymachus; however, he is wrong to assume Socrates does not discover and transmit an art of persuasion. The rhetorical education within the dialogue does not proceed from Thrasymachus to Socrates but from Socrates to Thrasymachus, who eventually moves from being a theoretical challenger to an active (and possibly sympathetic) audience member. The dialogue's narrative argues that rhetoric needs to be educated by philosophy, not philosophy by rhetoric. If philosophical rhetoric is to achieve the type of persuasion that is appropriate to philosophy, it must promote a set of beliefs that are paradoxically both stable and provisional. As Stanley Rosen cautions, the danger of a philosophical rhetoric is that, as it becomes stabilized, it will be transformed into ideology (395–96). Further, a philosophical rhetoric must

involve an exercise in translation as it seeks to make meaningful insights from a discourse in which its audience does not participate. The dialogue is aware that a philosophical rhetoric both conveys and distorts the understanding of philosophy as it seeks to make this understanding available to a nonphilosophical audience. As an instance of rhetoric appropriating mimesis, the dialogue does not so much offer the reader an understanding of philosophy as much as it offers an image of philosophy.

Hayden Ausland argues that Plato's manner of writing shows an awareness of the missteps that confront philosophy as it seeks an appropriate rhetorical practice. Plato's rhetorical savvy can be seen in the literary destabilization that he effects and that approximates Socratic irony:

Now Plato seems disinclined to write treatises on the assumption that he can simply deposit his own understanding in these for us to consume. He seems concerned rather with the task of redirecting his readers' attention in some way. It seems likely to this end that he avoids dogmatic pronouncements throughout his dialogues, never once addressing us in propria persona. And what his characters say can be so ambiguous a mixture that his works seem to resist even the assignment of main themes, much less an account of their author's thoughts about these. Plato's dialogues in this way constitute a literary version of Socrates' irony. ("On Reading Plato Mimetically," 384)

The point of philosophical rhetoric is not so much agreement on a particular point as it is the creation of a particular type of actor who constitutes himself or herself through political discourse. Norbert Blössner has argued that the *Republic* cannot be read as a work of philosophy that just happens to employ literary strategies to convey a fixed philosophic position but rather must be understood as organized rhetorically to effect a reconstitution of its audience, if its philosophic intent is to be understood: "It is Plato's interpreters who have imposed the idea that Socrates is transmitting fixed doctrine. . . . The text of the *Republic* offers no support, then, for the claim that Plato uses it to put his own views before the readers. What Plato is doing is rather to stage a dramatic discussion in which the character Socrates fictionally interacts with various partners in various ways, yet always in ways that are appropriate to the particular addressee and the particular statement" (377). By reconstituting its citizens through their participation in a discourse governed by principles of persuasion, philosophical rhetoric seeks to make justice an active principle in a democracy. The point of that

persuasion is to enable individuals and communities to constitute themselves as just citizens and cities.

The dialogue thus seeks to intervene politically through an act of cultural transformation. To achieve its revolutionary intent, the *Republic* draws on a literary/rhetorical tradition that has deep cultural roots in ancient Greece. The dialogue's goal is neither to impose an ideal and abstract structure on a democratically organized population nor to engage in a theoretical discussion about justice in which there is no possibility of philosophical discourse impacting everyday life; what it seeks, instead, is to alter and expand an understanding of what constitutes political discourse. In effect, it seeks to create a new role for literature by adapting a traditional discourse for a new political situation. The *Republic* argues that we need to expand our notion of political discourse and to understand that discourse about foundational values is different in kind from discourse about other aspects of political life. Its concern is to address certain problems that inhere within democracy and that require a philosophical response.

Sarah Monoson has made a strong case that Plato's understanding of and attitudes toward democracy resist the assumption of a simple antagonism on Plato's part to democracy:

In his [Plato's] work, a searching consideration of the possibilities raised by some democratic ideals and institutions coexists alongside severe criticisms of democratic life and politics. Plato finds the lived experience and ideology of Athenian democracy repulsive and fascinating, troubling and intriguing. He not only assails democratic practice but also weaves hesitations about the reach of that attack into the very presentation of his thought. A substantial measure of ambivalence, not unequivocal hostility, marks his attitude toward democracy as he knew it. (*Plato's Democratic Entanglements*, 3)

If we move beyond casting Plato in a simple opposition to democracy, it frees us to look at him as a thinker more fully engaged with the problems that arise in and because of democratic rule. It allows us to understand his philosophy as a situated practice responding to a particular set of problems. Such an understanding helps us to see Plato's philosophy as motivated by problems that would have occupied an intelligent and responsible citizen who was living in a particular culture and whose political identity was shaped, at least in part, by a particular set of political institutions and practices.<sup>13</sup>

I am, of course, not the first to recognize that the *Republic* stands in a complicated relationship to democracy and that it may be more sympathetic to democracy than many believe.<sup>14</sup> David Roochnik has argued, for example:

Despite appearances to the contrary, especially passages from book 8, the *Republic* actually offers a qualified and cautious defense, rather than a resounding condemnation, of democracy. The defense, however, is specifically dialectical. In other words, it is not stated as an isolated political thesis expounded explicitly and then substantiated at a particular juncture of the work. Instead, it emerges from the dialogue as a whole, from the very fabric of the work understood as a dialectical activity which, as Socrates says, is “probably” possible only in a democracy (see *Republic* 557d). (2)

My argument, however, does not claim that the *Republic* offers a limited defense of democracy. I argue, instead, that democracy as a type of political organization gives rise to fundamental questions that can only be addressed philosophically. My assumption is that the *Republic* is intended for an audience who, like Socrates and his interlocutors, are citizens in a democracy and whose concerns arise in and are shaped by the democracy in which they live. As Saxonhouse reminds us, “Socrates is a creature of democracy and no other regime” (91). I assume that what motivates philosophy (or at least what motivates Platonic philosophy) is the need to address issues that are important to people and that do not appear to be able to be addressed by normal rhetorical practice. The existence of certain pressing political problems leads Plato to bring rhetoric and philosophy together. Read as a work of rhetorical theory, the *Republic* should have consequences for how one lives responsibly in a political society in which injustice is an ongoing concern.

The democratic setting of the *Republic* is not accidental. As Socrates makes clear in Book 8, democracies afford their citizens a freedom essential for anyone trying imaginatively and philosophically to address the issue of justice. Socrates contends that the type of inquiry in which he and his fellow interlocutors are engaged is indebted to democracy:

Because the liberty it [democracy] allows its citizens means it has every type of constitution within it. So anyone wanting to found a city, as we have just been doing, will probably find he has to go to a city with a democratic regime, and there choose whatever political arrangements he

fancies. Like shopping for constitutions in a bazaar. Then, when he has made his choice, he can found a city along those lines. (557d)

Although Harvey Yunis does not go so far as to label Plato's intended audience as democratic, his description of the dialogue's likely readers suggests strongly that such readers would require a political organization that permitted a free exercise of thought:

It would be wrong to assume that the reading audience of a classical prose author would consist of those contemporaries who would find that author's message most congenial, as if, for example Plato wrote for an elite audience because they were likely to share his strongly anti-democratic views. The classical prose authors evidently wanted to reach as many readers as possible and to persuade them to their view, creating and expanding their audience by the very act of writing artistic prose for an anonymous public. Whatever the readers actually were, they were addressed not as aristocrats or upper-class gentry, but as autonomous, thinking individuals. ("Protrectic Rhetoric of the *Republic*," 11)

If prose authors imagined that these "autonomous, thinking individuals" composed an audience for whom persuasion was a meaningful activity, then such individuals had to be citizens of a polis in which they could act on these changed beliefs. The *Republic* is Plato's rhetorical effort to help such readers figure out how to live principally in the world in which he and they existed—and that was a democratic Athens.

## II

Part of the function of Books 8–9 is to lay out the choices that citizens in a democracy can and do make. If these books disclose the potential intellectual richness of a democracy for philosophical investigation, they point equally to the ever-present threat of fragmentation arising from competing narratives that conceptualize the city (and possibly justice) in radically different ways. The richness and diversity that mark the operation of normal rhetorical practice within a democracy create the genuine possibility that various civic groups will be incomprehensible to each other, and fated to be in agonistic relationships, with each of these groups understanding justice differently and interpreting the actions of others as instances of injustice. Strife is inevitable, and an uneasy tolerance the best that can be hoped for.



It is easy to see how such a situation could produce a Thrasymachean understanding of justice, in which justice functions as a cover term for the operation of power. Such an understanding of justice would simply reflect the views and self-interest of those with power, and the average citizen, faced with the prospect of domination by the powerful, would come to accept a compromised position on justice as a necessary means for preventing those with more power from injuring those with less.

This potential for strife notwithstanding, the fact that democratic citizens constitute themselves and their cities by their choices makes justice into both a practical and a theoretical problem. Democracy requires a discussion about its foundational values; it needs philosophic discourse. Equally, philosophy would require democracy, for if philosophy is to be practical, it requires a political organization that permits action.<sup>15</sup> Further, philosophy entertains the possibility of allowing citizens to understand that certain beliefs and desires that are looked on as products of nature—of human nature—are in fact choices, even if no one has made these choices consciously. By making the constitution of the democratic citizen and the city a subject of reflection, philosophy opens them up to reinterpretation and possible reform. Finally, because any democracy necessarily falls short of the democratic ideal, there is an inherent danger that an imperfect democracy calls into question the values that are foundational for a democracy, as these values are partly contradicted by daily life.<sup>16</sup> If no political order can achieve fully its purpose and finds itself, sometimes frequently, in a complex and troubling stance toward its fundamental values as the world resists or translates these values into alternative understandings, there is an ongoing need for a rhetorical practice that can reflect upon and impact the self-understanding of a community and the individuals within that community. Philosophy would then be a required practice for a principled life in an imperfect world.

The *Republic's* placement in a democratic setting invites reading it as a work that sees itself addressing problems that are peculiar to and important for a democracy (Monoson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements*, 212–13). In this vein, Stanley Rosen, argues that the dialogue is better read as a contribution to a progressive political spirit than as a reactionary text:

By bringing philosophy down from the heavens to the cities of humankind, Socrates invests it with a political responsibility and thereby, far from being a conservative, founds the radical Western tradition according to which justice must be pursued by doctrinal construction. For this

decisive reason, his teaching is much closer to that of the modern progressive spirit than is that of Aristotle, the true conservative. (9)

But for this doctrinal construction to be meaningful in the dialogue, it must also be practical. Plato has Glaucon and Adeimantus challenge Socrates to provide not merely a theoretical defense of justice but one that speaks to the common perception that people would, if they were free to follow their natural inclinations, pursue injustice: "Plato was addressing readers who—for any reason whatsoever—were less than fully convinced that justice was always more profitable than injustice, and that category included virtually everyone" (Yunis, "The Protreptic Rhetoric of the *Republic*, 5). Glaucon and Adeimantus are troubled not because they find themselves flummoxed by current self-appointed intellectuals but because there is a broad and general agreement among the people that they naturally desire injustice. The discontent felt by Glaucon and Adeimantus arises because they can offer no response that they themselves find convincing to this popular and near universal belief. It is their frustration at the lack of effective rhetorical discourse that can address the issue of justice which makes them discontented and turn to Socrates for a solution.

Whatever difficulties may arise because of the way in which the audience had been constituted culturally and historically, the fact that political authority in a democracy depends on persuasion means that a Platonic philosophy that sees personal and civic identity as the consequence of choice has the possibility of influencing that authority. Precisely because democracy depends upon persuasion, philosophy acquires a point that it does not have with other forms of political organization. If, in the *Republic*, Plato is attempting to respond to a structural problem in democracy, then his dialogue cannot be read simply or only as a work of theory; it needs to be assessed for its contribution to everyday democratic practice. Philosophy must justify itself by demonstrating that it can address foundational problems that have resisted the efforts of other types of discourse and whose resolution is essential if citizens are to be shaped by the desire for justice in a world in which injustice, more often than not, triumphs. What Plato must show is that philosophy is essential to a democracy for which a commitment to justice is a foundational principle. Depending on how one understands justice, one becomes a particular type of citizen and contributes to the quality of a particular type of city, one in which justice shapes the quality of human meetings. Books 8 and 9 show how central ethical terms, justice being one of them, are defined or redefined to suit the inclinations of

those in power. Socrates observes that the ethical vocabulary of an emerging generation in a democracy that sees freedom only in terms of the absence of constraint undergoes a change in the basic meanings of its terms: "A sense of shame is classed as simple-mindedness, deprived of rights, and driven into exile. Self-discipline is called cowardice, heaped with insults and sent packing" (560d). The current disvaluing of justice at the opening of the dialogue is a register of the distortion of the city's basic ethical vocabulary. Without a revolutionary defense of justice, it is not possible to hold things in common. Consequently, there is no community, and political life becomes an uneasy truce between potentially warring factions. But such a life is itself not a political life—there are no collective goods, and the public order is at best a paranoid compromise of people who do not recognize that others may have legitimate claims on them.

The very nature of Socratic persuasion is to seek revolutionary and fundamental change. If we take him at his word, he conceives of himself as someone functioning rhetorically and performing a public service, one that is of benefit to both the individual and the state. In the *Apology*, Socrates identifies his primary activity as persuasion, which he believes to be a genuine good for the city:

For I spend all my time going about trying to persuade you, young and old, to make your first and chief concern not for your bodies nor for your possessions, but for the highest welfare of your souls, proclaiming as I go, Wealth does not bring goodness, but goodness brings wealth and every other blessing, both to the individual and to the state. (30b)

He understands himself to be addressing a problem that is both endemic and pervasive. As he conceives it, he is not simply confronting some sort of misconception that is amenable to correction by any standard means. Whatever else Socratic persuasion may involve, it cannot be a typical instance of address, for it entails getting people to alter fundamentally the way that they understand things. Because it encounters audiences that are convinced that it is, at best, useless, and certainly out of touch with a reality that everyone else can unproblematically see is there, Socratic persuasion cannot be a straightforward process. At its best, Socratic discourse is seen as irrelevant. At its worst, Socratic persuasion is considered harmful because, in its debunking of received wisdom and commonly held belief, it is ethically and politically corrosive.

But if a commitment to persuasion creates a possible opening within a democracy for philosophy, as Michael Walzer has pointed out, there is an

inherent structural tension between philosophy and democracy (379). Walzer recognizes that the philosopher, as philosopher, cannot participate in the ways that other citizens do: "He [the philosopher] cannot be a participant in the rough and tumble politics of his city, but he can be a founder or a legislator, a nocturnal councilor, or a judge—or, more realistically, he can be an advisor to such figures, whispering in the ear of power. Shaped by the very nature of the philosophical project, he has little taste for bargaining and mutual accommodation" (381). That is, the philosopher, as philosopher, cannot avail himself or herself of the normal rhetorical practices in a city. The kind of speech the philosopher performs is of a different kind than that of everyday political or social life. Its legitimacy is suspect and its authority must be earned in the face of a skepticism that is fair and appropriate. If Walzer is right, the role of a philosopher in a democracy is always problematic. To the democrat, the philosopher must appear to be an autocrat or absolutist of some kind. The skepticism of a democratic audience toward the philosopher points to the larger question of how the insights uncovered by the philosophic investigation can be communicated effectively to the public.

### III

It is important to understand how radical and innovative Platonic philosophical discourse is (Kurke, 7–8; see also Swearingen, 56). Plato deliberately transforms several discursive modes to create a new literary form, one that is adequate to a rhetorical challenge that both requires a different type of discourse and requires that discourse to be effective with audiences who are shaped by those traditional discourses. Andrea Nightingale has argued that contrary to Socrates's assertion that there was an ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy, no such quarrel existed.<sup>17</sup> According to Nightingale, Plato mischaracterized the situation to give the upstart discourse of philosophy a prestige it had not earned and did not have. His fabrication of the quarrel hid, in part, the novice status of philosophy as a discourse seeking a role for itself in the shaping and direction of culture. Whether one fully agrees with Nightingale, her larger point holds: prior to Plato, poetry was a hegemonic discourse.

Plato is well aware that received wisdom has a formidable authority. He is equally aware that such wisdom cannot be dismissed as either unresponsive to the actual reality of everyday life or as a product of willful delusion. A culture's commonplaces have developed over time and are products of a vision that can be tied to a history, and further that vision is, more or less,

confirmed by everyday experience. For this reason, Socrates must address the ways that a culture perpetuates itself by transmitting its values. These ways are primarily literary, and this means that a philosophy that is rhetorically informed and seeks to have a cultural impact needs to be literary—it has to contend with the prevalent literary forms.<sup>18</sup> This contest is not an aesthetic but rather a rhetorical agon.

As Jeffrey Walker has argued, the relationship between what came to be considered as literary concerns and what came to be considered as rhetorical concerns was, for the ancient Greeks, not a fixed and strict opposition but a far more fluid situation. He argues that the primary sense of rhetoric is best understood in terms of epideictic practices rather than, as many of the standard historical accounts contend, in terms of a practical civic discourse (1–41, esp. viii–ix). As defined by Walker, *epideictic*

appears as that which shapes and cultivates the basic codes of value and belief by which a society or culture lives; it shapes the ideologies and imageries with which, and by which, the individual members of a community identify themselves; and, perhaps most significantly, it shapes the fundamental grounds, the “deep” commitments and presuppositions, that will underlie and ultimately determine decision and debate in particular pragmatic forums. (9)

Building on Aristotle’s claim that epideictic rhetoric offers its audience not the role of judge but of *theoros* (observer or spectator), Walker sees epideictic rhetoric asking “its audience to form opinions, or even to revise their existing beliefs and attitudes on a given topic” (9). That is precisely what Socrates is seeking to accomplish with his interlocutors and Plato with his readers. The dialogue pursues its political ends through an act of cultural intervention. It does not propose a particular course of action but rather seeks to reshape belief and desire and to reform the audience’s “deep commitments.” Once we recognize the *Republic* as a work of epideictic rhetoric, we can begin to appreciate its appropriation of a literary genre and its transformation of that genre to a revolutionary end that does not seek to transmit received cultural values but to change them fundamentally.

Although Isocrates, rather than Plato, is the more central figure in Walker’s revisionary history, Walker acknowledges: “Despite their differences, Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle all agree with Hesiod’s account of eloquence. The discourse of the truly eloquent and truly sage *rhetor*, like that of Hesiod’s eloquent and good *basileus*—discourse that is truly ‘the Muses’ sacred gift to humankind’ because it fosters justice, peace, and good judgment in

civic and private life—arises from a *logôn technê* whose preeminent paradigms of eloquence and wisdom are embodied in the proliferating and much-ramified realm of epideictic" (40). I would argue that it is helpful to see both Isocrates and Plato reacting to the abuse of rhetoric, and one key difference is that Isocrates sought to professionalize the traditional practices while Plato sought to redirect them to revolutionary ends.

It would be fair to ask in what way a written text is a political act and to ask how Plato imagined his texts to work on his readers. Danielle Allen captures the complexity of Plato's rhetorical task: "Plato's dialogues were so many seeds sown broadly under the hot Athenian sun to implant culturally and politically salient changes in the democracy's system of value, that is, its constitution. Plato wrote to re-order the symbol garden of Athenian culture" (68). A work entitled *Politeia* need not—and probably should not—be read primarily as offering a political model to be implemented but rather as an exploration of the process of constitution. Even scholars like Donald Morrison who argue that Plato intended the Kallipolis to serve as model for an actual city acknowledge that the "claim that Callipolis is realizable must be qualified" (234). According to Morrison, what Plato is offering is a model that can be achieved approximately. The Kallipolis, in effect, becomes a political ideal that can prompt political change and be a standard against which the worth of any particular city can be measured. But even in this qualified form, the Kallipolis's realization is a very distant possibility, and if the defense of justice depends upon such a remote realization, then that is not a very persuasive defense. If, however, the *Republic* is read as an inquiry into the complex process of constitution, it necessarily becomes a work about the centrality of persuasion in politics. Its goal is not to design a theoretical city whose impracticality is evident even to those who design it, but to show how the activity of imaginative theorizing provides a resource for citizens to rethink and reform their inherited political culture. Through persuasion, philosophy becomes an agent for political change because it allows citizens to understand themselves differently.

To effect a fundamental political change, Socrates must examine the persuasive nature and force of a culture's master narratives, of those stories that have created and continue to preserve its core identity. If the everyday beliefs of a given culture have been inculcated and normalized by a poetic tradition, Plato must identify, appropriate, and transform the resources of that tradition (Yunis, "The Protreptic Rhetoric of the *Republic*," 18). He then has to redirect his transformation of a poetical tradition, so that it can operate rhetorically to new ends. To transform Athens's poetic inheritance, Plato must invent a new, rhetorically self-aware literature that re-

places the older poetry, which was instrumental in transmitting a culture in which no one was persuaded that justice is genuinely desirable in itself. He has to create a new literature that can provide genuinely compelling reasons whose worth can be measured in their ability to reconstitute desire. A philosophical persuasion must attempt nothing less than the psychological reconstitution of its audience.

A transformation of this magnitude requires a new model of heroic action.<sup>19</sup> If the *Republic* is to succeed with a democratic audience, then Plato must appropriate the epic and transform it so that it has a new and productive relevance for democracy. Ferrari recognizes that the dialogue, undoubtedly, is an epic: "The *Republic* is, without a doubt, Plato's epic. In its scale, in its complexity, in its inexhaustible abundance of questions that it raises, both hermeneutic and more purely philosophic—above all, in its lissom gravity, the *Republic* is the one truly successful epic to which Plato stretched himself in his lifetime. . . . The *Republic* is Plato's philosophic *Iliad* and *Odyssey* combined" ("Editor's Introduction," xvi). And although he does not focus on the *Republic's* relation to democracy, Charles Segal makes the case for Plato's appropriation of the epic:

The *Republic* both utilizes and usurps the age-old function of myth as the repository of the social forms and roles available to man. Here again Plato rejoins Homer. His endeavor in the *Republic*, probably never before undertaken on such a scale, harks back to the all-embracing comprehensive scale and concerns of epic poetry. In archaic society epic contains and transmits what can be regarded as the firm and stable knowledge about human society and human relationships. In concrete narrative scenes and events it distills a total image of what the noblest forms of human societies are, what norms bear the stamp of heroic validity, what constitutes irreverence to the gods or baseness among men. (324)<sup>20</sup>

While Segal emphasizes Plato's use of epic, however, he does not explore the instigations for such a radical rescripting of a cultural narrative. Certainly, part of the answer must lie in the understanding that the inherited cultural narrative is no longer a seamless fit to a polis in a changed set of circumstances. The heroism of an archaic culture, while not totally irrelevant to a democracy, cannot supply the model of citizenship necessary for a democracy.

Segal recognizes that Plato saw a need for a new heroism: "Platonic heroism divests the old heroic pattern of its passion, its overvaluation of one's appearance in the eyes of others, its tragic irrationality" (320). He sees

Plato's depiction of Socrates as offering a model of this new heroism. The problem is that Socrates is not a character who can be imitated.<sup>21</sup> David K. O'Connor gets at the ambiguity over Socrates as hero:

The terms of the rewriting prohibit us from saying Socrates simply is or simply is not this prose epic's hero. Is he the intrepid Odysseus himself, hero of a philosophical epic with its own nostalgia for a heavenly home (see 692a–b), or is he Teiresias, the hero's guide, intelligent and prophetic, but still essentially blind, with only a divination of the hero's way? Plato's myth refuses us the satisfaction of Homer's *Odyssey*, since we cannot say whether the main character found his way through many labors at last to home, or remained stranded in the dead-world of politics and ambition, saving others though he could not save himself. It is hard to see an accident in an ambiguity so subtly composed. (71–72)

If there is agreement about anything, it is that Socrates is unique, a quality Alcibiades makes clear in the *Symposium*. Further, a simple imitation of Socratic practice would be suicidal.<sup>22</sup> If one is in doubt, all one has to do is to read the *Apology*. And it is not only that no one can imitate Socrates, but also on a basic level, the dialogues provide a testament to his political ineffectiveness. So how is one to understand this new form of heroism that resists literal imitation and demonstrates the ineffectiveness of its protagonist?

To answer that question it is necessary to look not at Socrates's character in the *Republic* but the action that is represented in the dialogue. The *Republic* is often read as a philosophical investigation, an investigation that features, say, the dialectical method. There are certainly strong reasons to adopt such a position. Socrates uses some sort of dialectical reasoning or of the consequences of such reasoning as he works through and complicates an understanding of what is required if there is to be justice in the Kallipolis. This mode of argument can look very much like a representation of philosophic inquiry. But it is important to remember how Plato has framed the question that motivates Glaucon's challenge. Glaucon requested that Socrates provide a genuinely persuasive defense of justice. This is a request for a rhetoric that can truly address an important problem for a democracy. The nature of the request means that rhetoric, and not dialectic, must be the mimetic object of the dialogue. And if Socrates provides a fairly detailed account of the ascent through various intellectual disciplines required for someone to become a dialectician, this path is not the one offered by the dialogue to its readers. Rather, the readers of the dialogue make



whatever progress they do make by attending to the dialogue's narrative—which is structured as a mimetic representation of an act of persuasion. The intention of a philosophic rhetoric is to move an audience to rethink received wisdom and to inquire about the ways to achieve human potential in the actual political world in which humans live. This would be the heroism proper to a democratic citizen. Philosophical persuasion involves the transformation of an identity. It is an act of constitution (*politeia*), one that makes an individual into a citizen.

Hayden Ausland has argued that once we acknowledge that the dialogues are a particular type of literary work, we realize that they demand a certain mode of engagement from their readers:

Thus the ultimate responsibility for a response to Plato's dialogues lies with the reader himself. To learn from Plato, accordingly, it seems that we should not, so far as possible, presume an advance knowledge of what Plato wishes to say, or ought to say, or when or how he might choose to say it. . . . If we reflect that Plato invented his conversations to provoke his readers in the way in which Socrates' discourse awakens thought in his auditors, we are then to a certain extent obliged to enter into the discussion ourselves. ("On Reading Plato Mimetically," 386)

To read the dialogue as adequately motivated, one needs to take seriously the fact that the *Republic* was written in a democratically organized city in which freedom, not justice, is the core value.<sup>23</sup> In the *Republic*, Plato challenges a democracy's self-congratulation and its unexamined celebration of itself as a champion of freedom. Both the elite and the masses understand freedom not in a positive way but simply as the absence of constraint on desire. The question of whether a persuasive defense of justice is possible assumes importance because the world more often than not rewards injustice and has no satisfying answer as to why, as a matter of self-interest, one should be just in a world that is and will most likely remain unjust. If democracy is to be grounded on something other than either or both fear and hypocrisy, it needs to be able to offer an answer to that question. The aim of the *Republic*, as I take it, is to provide the citizens of a democracy with a way to think and speak about justice. The *Republic* is designed to bring its readers inside the practice of persuasion. Plato offers his readers a rhetoric complex and nuanced enough to allow democratic citizens to negotiate that ethically and politically complicated task of living responsibly in a political situation in which injustice is an inescapable and pervasive fact.

Plato does not require these citizens to become philosophers, but he does require philosophers to learn how to communicate effectively with these citizens. The *Republic* provides a detailed narrative of what the philosopher's descent back into the cave might look like. Plato does not seek to retreat from practice into political theory. Far from it. Instead, the *Republic* argues that philosophy needs to be practical, if it is to be meaningful.<sup>24</sup> The task of philosophy is to show how it is actually possible to live responsibly in a world in which injustice will, in all likelihood, thrive.<sup>25</sup> If it cannot do this, then it has failed to meet Glaucon's challenge, and it will simply confirm that people neither value justice nor desire to be just. It is not an exaggeration to say that the defense of justice represents the primary challenge for a democracy. In a democracy, an act of genuine persuasion should be considered heroic, for it embodies those ideals that allow a democracy to flourish.

## The Elenchic Victory and the Failure of Persuasion

Book 1 of the *Republic* is organized to bring out the difficulties that beset persuasion. This is evident in Plato's choice of Socrates's three main interlocutors: Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus. Ruby Blondell has pointed out that these three characters embody the three primary types of interlocutors whom Socrates normally encounters. These interlocutors are "marked by conventional wisdom, youthful enthusiasm and professional expertise" (165), with Cephalus representing conventional wisdom, Polemarchus youthful enthusiasm, and Thrasymachus professional expertise. As a collection of types, the interlocutors allow Plato to develop a typology of resistance to persuasion: there is a range from indifference, to uncritical yielding, to outright belligerent opposition. This movement does not signal progress in discovering an effective way to establish a new or more secure ground for foundational values. Rather, one is left with the sense that such an enterprise is exceedingly difficult and that an act of persuasion is an extremely rare occurrence. In fact, Socrates's apparent victory over Thrasymachus at the end of Book 1 reveals serious limitations in the Socratic elenchus as a means with which to change people's beliefs, and argues that Socrates's approach to persuasion needs to be rethought radically.

### I

The dialogue opens with a lighthearted exchange that presents a cluster of terms—persuasion, desire, and compulsion—that will have major philosophical implications for the dialogue. The initial question that the dialogue addresses is a practical one: how can Polemarchus get Socrates and Glaucon to accept his invitation? Polemarchus jokingly declares that he will use force if he has to. And although this is not intended as a serious

threat, it introduces an issue central to the dialogue—the relation of persuasion and compulsion. For an alternative strategy, Adeimantus proposes a far more effective approach. He offers Socrates and Glaucon the promise of pleasure, and pleasure has a strong suasive appeal. Adeimantus's offer presents a snapshot of how persuasion works in the everyday world, and his offer introduces a second major concern for the dialogue: the relation of persuasion to desire. Because persuasion creates desire, there is no need for compulsion or the threat of force because desire will move the audience to accept freely a proposed course of action. Adeimantus's proposal works.

Persuaded by the prospect of a pleasurable evening of conversation and the intriguing novelty of a nighttime horse race by torchlight, Socrates and Glaucon accompany the party of young men to the house of Cephaus, the father of Polemarchus.<sup>1</sup> Socrates cheerfully greets Cephalus, stating how much he enjoys talking with the elderly. Socrates remarks that since the elderly have gone before us, they should be valuable guides and help people understand "what the road is like" (328e). Given the apparent success and modesty of his life and his tranquil acceptance of old age, Cephalus would seem to be an admirable choice of a guide on how to conduct a good life. His is a wisdom discovered through the long process of living, and its authority resides in the vetting that takes place naturally through experience. So Socrates asks Cephalus whether old age is a pleasant or painful time. Unlike most of his contemporaries, Cephalus is happy with his lot and does not offer the standard complaint that old age is a burden. Rather, Cephalus believes that if an individual has the right attitude, it can be a time of contentment. In explaining his belief, Cephalus offers what has to be a counter-intuitive and surprising claim: happiness is the absence of desire (329c). He credits the waning of sexual desire as the major reason for his contentment in old age. So moderation and a peaceful old age are introduced into the dialogue not as an ethical achievement, but as the accidental by-product of a biological decline. Cephalus has not so much matured ethically as he has aged; the waning of his libido made his life less complicated.

Cephalus, in the easy virtue of old age, becomes a representative of a conventionally praiseworthy approach to life, but it is an approach that owes its emotional tranquility to two things: the lack of desire and the good fortune of having abundant material resources. C. D. C. Reeve argues the Cephalus poses an important challenge to a Socratic approach to philosophy:

The problem Cephalus poses to Socrates—and so to Plato (1.8, 2.13, 3.3)—is that he is to some degree moderate, just, pious, and wise without having studied philosophy or knowing what the virtues are. He is

thus a sort of living counterexample to Socrates' claim that virtue is that kind of knowledge. (1.2)

But it is not at all clear that Cephalus's moderation is actually praiseworthy. In response to Socrates's question as to whether old age is difficult, Cephalus claims that it is not difficult for him, and he distinguishes himself and Sophocles as two individuals not consumed by a sense of old age as loss. Instead, Cephalus and Sophocles feel themselves fortunate to have escaped from "a fierce and frenzied master" (329c), and they celebrate their release from eros, whom they consider as a "tyrant," as the reason for their current state of peace and freedom. What they celebrate is their release from desire. However much Cephalus may argue that it is one's character that determines whether old age is or is not a pleasant experience, his own account suggests that it is not so much one's character as it is the presence or absence of desire. The absence of desire radically simplifies the moral life by removing conflict. Significantly, Cephalus is the only character who exits the dialogue. His exit signals that for a character who operates from a conventional morality, there is no point in engaging with a philosopher to achieve a more secure understanding of justice. And because he is satisfied with his life, Cephalus has little interest in the discussion of justice. If Socrates had not raised the issue, it is uncertain whether Cephalus would, on his own, have worried much about it. Simple experience, even when it is the experience of a conventionally decent character, turns out not to promote serious thought about ethical problems and therefore is not a good guide for the ethical life. The fact of injustice is not so much a problem for Cephalus as something from which his wealth inures him. As Cephalus sees it, justice is really a problem for others.<sup>2</sup>

While from Cephalus's perspective the fading away of erotic engagement with the world may be a blessed relief, it must strike the reader as a significantly diminished life. Cephalus may not be dead yet, but his interest in this life seems to have faded completely. This easy asceticism should be ethically suspect. It can be argued that seeing desire and appetite only as tyrannical is itself an unhealthy attitude, and that a healthy life might be reasonably considered to be one in which desire and appetite are integrated into a larger vision of life and subordinated appropriately to that larger vision. As scholars note frequently, philosophy, which is motivated by a love for wisdom, itself is not possible without desire. It takes little reflection to conclude that the conventionally just life embodied by Cephalus is really not that attractive, and that whatever problems accompany the life of injustice

subsequently championed by Thrasymachus, it at least has an energy and vitality to it that suggests an attachment and commitment to life.

More importantly, Socrates's initial exchange with Cephalus highlights a particular problem for persuasion. Resistance to persuasion does not have to take the form of active opposition. There are a variety of factors that make an audience unavailable for persuasion, and being comfortably situated can close a character as fully as being gripped by a blind and tyrannical passion. Some audiences are unavailable for persuasion simply because they do not care to undertake the kind of work necessary to engage in philosophical exchange or they don't see the point of such labor.<sup>3</sup> That is a recalcitrant fact made clear by Socrates's failure to engage Cephalus in a discussion about justice. As soon as Socrates initiates the discussion on justice, Cephalus takes that as his cue to depart the conversation. Precisely because justice is not a practical issue in his life, Cephalus feels no need to engage in a philosophical discussion about justice. While he acknowledges that someone who did not possess his wealth would have a harder time reconciling himself to the consequences of age, he is not particularly bothered by the state of affairs and seems content that, in his case, all has worked out well. Cephalus has absolutely no interest in investigating his situation or the implications of his situation.

If, as Socrates remarked, he enjoys talking to individuals older than himself so that he can learn what lies ahead of him, then Cephalus is not much of a guide. In fact, his easy embrace of justice raises questions. How does justice, as represented in Cephalus's conventional understanding, work for those who do not have the luxury of substantial wealth that shields them from the realities faced by most other people? How does one quell or handle one's powerful desires that cannot always be satisfied? How does a person think of and experience the simple fact of biological decline in which one can no longer pursue those things that are essential to a full life? Such questions have no interest for Cephalus. Whether the lack of interest in justice is the cause or the effect of Cephalus's current tranquility, this lack of interest is connected to Cephalus's diminished interest in this world. For him, the discussion of justice is not so much a question of how to conduct a life as it is an exercise in moral bookkeeping, as one settles accounts in preparation for a departure to the next world. This lack of interest in the present world is especially troubling, for Cephalus introduces what the dialogue considers as the standard and inadequate justification for justice: being just is beneficial to the person who is just—so being just is not really an ethical achievement as much as a self-interested and prudential calculation. If

Cephalus is a spokesperson for a conventional understanding of the value of justice, then the defense of justice is in serious trouble.

Although Cephalus shows little interest in investigating his situation, his conversation does lead him to link justice to a primal fear—a fear that does not emerge in the normal course of life but becomes more pronounced the closer one comes to death. As death approaches, a fear of retribution—a fear that had been repressed—becomes a greater presence in one's life. The poets' words, which were heard but did not register, reverberate as death approaches and causes anxiety. Apparently, the nearness of death gives force to a cultural inheritance that does see injustice as an enduring problem. As people approach the end of life, they become more concerned with the injustices that they may have perpetrated. Since we have every reason to believe that Cephalus's life has been one of moderation and not one of self-indulgence or injustice, we cannot believe that he is troubled because of deliberate past misdeeds. Rather, his anxiety over possible injuries committed suggests no one can escape being involved in acts of injustice. That fact does not prompt Cephalus to engage in philosophical inquiry but becomes a reason for him to be grateful that he has sufficient wealth to confront the problem. As Cephalus emphasizes, wealth is especially beneficial to people of good character because it provides them the means to redress wrongs and to achieve piece of mind. For him, the problem of injustice is a matter of discharging debts, and as long as one has the resources provided by wealth, it is a matter of insuring that the payments are made. Justice is philosophically unproblematic: it can be more or less defined, as Socrates suggests, pursuing the implications of Cephalus's observations as "truthfulness, and returning anything you may have received from anyone else" (331c). Such a definition suffices to satisfy any interest that Cephalus may have in the issue of justice.

But even this casual definition points to two substantial problems concerning justice. First, justice is not valued in itself. In Cephalus's account, justice is not pursued because of any inherent worth; rather, it is a response to fear. There is no sense that one is naturally drawn to justice. The best defense that can be offered for justice is that it has a utility. It is an instrumental and not a categorical good. Conceivably, for a character who is not subject to standard fears, justice, as conventionally understood, has no ethical utility, and instead, a concern with justice is evidence of an inferior character—it is a virtue required for someone who organizes a life in response to fear. This is a point not lost on Thrasymachus, who will subsequently argue that those with sufficient courage and intelligence have only

contempt for such an understanding of justice and conceive of the conventional understanding as evidence of the inferiority of most of humanity.

Second, since justice holds little interest for Cephalus, he is not interested in any intellectual jousting or even in defending his position. He has no interest in being persuaded that things are other than he has experienced them. Examining his understanding of things is a bother to him. Turning to the evening sacrifices to which he must attend, he excuses himself from the conversation. In this, he shows one way to avoid the unpleasantness of refutation: simply smile and leave. Polemarchus earlier suggested that Socrates could not persuade someone who chose not to listen. Cephalus's departure shows that this resistance to persuasion doesn't have to manifest itself as active opposition. Rather, a character resting comfortably in his life can resist persuasion by politely exiting a conversation and thus avoid any discussion that has even the slightest potential to disrupt his untroubled understanding. If the life of Cephalus (and by implication a life organized by moderation and an appropriate attentiveness to the official values of one's culture—that is, the moral life as normally understood) is to be defended or even examined, that task must fall to Polemarchus, who is involved with the present world.

As Cephalus's son, Polemarchus inherits the argument, and it is his responsibility to defend it. Put otherwise, the definition of justice—to do good to one's friends and do harm to one's enemies—is part of the legacy that Polemarchus has been bequeathed. It represents an understanding of justice to which well-behaved Athenians or metics would subscribe. If the basic principle of doing good to friends and harm to enemies is not quite the golden rule, it does seem on the surface to be a plausible common-sense approach that considers justice to be a matter of giving an individual his or her due. As Polemarchus makes clear, this understanding is not his or Cephalus's personal or idiosyncratic take on justice but an understanding that has its origin in a respected cultural source: the definition of justice has been promulgated by the poets (331d). What was suggested casually by Cephalus is now made explicit: there is an inherited cultural understanding about justice. The conventional view of justice is not merely a consequence of unmediated experience but of an experience that has been mediated through a culture that subscribes to a particular understanding of justice. Justice is a product of ideology. Specifically, Polemarchus traces the definition's pedigree back to Simonides (331d). If one wants to understand what justice is, one must consult what the poets have said about justice.

But if Polemarchus references Simonides, he does not directly quote



him, so we see neither Simonides's exact claim nor any reasoning that might support or justify that claim. This may well provide a paradigm for how an ethical understanding circulates within a culture. It is not that individuals deliberate about ethical values and then consciously adopt those values that withstand rational scrutiny; rather, they acquire them by a kind of cultural osmosis. They just take over the prevalent values. These values seem uncontroversial and are considered self-evident. However, for Socrates, the logic that justifies these values is not self-evident, so he asks what could Simonides have meant. It turns out that Polemarchus does not have a clear idea. And that is an important fact about the way in which a cultural understanding has been internalized. This understanding travels as a detached piece of discourse whose authority is not questioned but accepted as the equivalent of a fact. In everyday life, there is an unreflective and unnoticed rhetoric in operation. A cultural narrative is persuasive because it is simply taken over by the public. Polemarchus assumed that Simonides's poetry could be interpreted literally and has no inkling that it might be operating rhetorically. For someone like Polemarchus, as with his father before him, the ethical life is straightforward. To know what is right, one consults the poets who serve as the medium through which the culture's values are transmitted. That is how cultural narratives work as part of a pervasive normal rhetoric. As will become apparent soon, this mode of persuasion creates a shallow set of beliefs vulnerable to the most rudimentary of criticisms. Polemarchus is a character who does not know what he does not know.

If, as Socrates argues later, some poetry is dangerous because it can inflame desire or promote a destructive ethical code, Polemarchus's adherence to a discourse that he takes as both literal and authoritative shows that poetry can also be problematic because it can extinguish or forestall intellectual curiosity and encourage a passivity that precludes individuals from reflecting on their cultural inheritance. Such intellectual passivity may play a role in making those characters reasonable and decent people, but it also deprives them of any substantive response when others challenge the adequacy of the conventional understanding. In effect, it makes them slaves to their cultural inheritance; they are the prisoners in the cave. Further, as is evident once Socrates raises the most basic questions about this conventional understanding of justice, the definition is unstable and encounters difficulties as soon as it is challenged. This, in turn, suggests that whatever surface contentment may follow upon this definition of justice, there lurks beneath this surface a serious instability that puts the ethical core of a polis organized in terms of a conventional understanding of justice on very shaky ground.

Josiah Ober has argued that one of the most important contributions to democracy from thinkers who voiced antidemocratic positions is that these thinkers showed how values that were taken as natural were, in fact, cultural products:

Applying Austin to politics (something the philosopher himself, it is fair to say, seems not to have envisioned) leads to an emphasis on political power as control of the means of symbolic production. It points to rhetoric as a form of political action, and to criticism of established and generally accepted discursive contexts as a central project of political theorizing: Those in power will typically seek to create and maintain a stable context in which rhetorical statements by those designated as appropriate speakers will act in predictable ways. And they may go a step further, in suggesting that the prevailing discursive dispensation is in some strong sense "natural," or even "inevitable." Theorizing the relationship between context and felicitous speech (i.e. discussing and analyzing the relationship critically) points to the historical specificity and contingency of every context—including the discursive context in which the critical utterance or text is produced. . . . And, in this sense, critical political theory might be a genuinely revolutionary undertaking. (*Political Dissent*, 38)

Ober's observation applies well to Polemarchus: he is a character who has been shaped by his uncritical acceptance of an ideology perpetuated by the normal operations of rhetoric. What makes this unreflective holding of conventional values particularly troubling is that it is oblivious to its own containment. It is not so much that Polemarchus's views are incoherent or indefensible, for they could conceivably be defended by someone who held them more reflectively; rather, Polemarchus reveals the fundamental weakness of the conventional defense of justice—it sees itself as embodying a natural and unproblematic understanding. For those who believe it, conventional morality is self-evident.

The weakness of conventional morality becomes clear as soon as Socrates begins exploring what is meant by paying someone what is owed him. Whether Polemarchus has learned Simonides's views from some sort of rote memorization or by some other means is not certain, but it is clear that there is a shallowness to his understanding of justice. He accepts uncritically the authority of those poets. Such an acceptance argues for a kind of persuasion in operation, but it is one that has not been integrated into an ethical or political understanding that has deep and stable conviction. It

appears that the poets' education has not equipped Polemarchus to think about justice. When this account of justice is challenged, he is easily flummoxed and cannot defend this foundational cultural value.

Socrates does not attack the views on justice that Polemarchus attributes to Simonides. Instead, he asks Polemarchus a basic question: What do the poet's words mean? "'Well,' I said, 'Simonides is a wise and inspired man. It is certainly not easy to disagree with him. But what on earth could he have meant by this remark? Polemarchus, I have no idea'" (331e). As Socrates makes clear, a literal reading of Simonides's precept cannot handle the case that Socrates had just put to Cephalus of whether it is right to return to someone something due him if that person is no longer in his or her right mind. Polemarchus's mode of ethical accounting is not complex enough to acknowledge that our responsibility to others is more nuanced and complicated than a simple principle of paying all legitimate debts. Socrates holds out the possibility that the ethical principle of paying everyone what is owed him or her may provide the foundation for justice, but he contends that the principle's meaning is not self-evident and needs to be interpreted.

Polemarchus is more than ready to join in a hermeneutical inquiry, and he immediately proposes a slightly refined version of the original definition: what is owed to friends is to do them good and not harm (332a). So justice does not involve a simple obligation but requires one to ask what is owed to a friend, to ask what is in the friend's best interest. Socrates pursues this interpretation and asks how this understanding of justice applies to enemies, and Polemarchus provides a traditional answer: what is owed to enemies is harm. This allows Socrates to advance the conversation by suggesting that Simonides, as a poet, disguised his definition of justice (332c). Socrates does not elaborate why a poet would disguise a meaning but the simple fact that poetry cannot be read literally establishes the point that a cultural inheritance is available to a person only if that person is willing to do the work of questioning the reasoning behind the poetic statements. This is to argue for the rhetoricity of culture. An ethical inheritance comes to an audience figured and requires that audience to take an active role in investigating what the words mean.<sup>4</sup> Understanding cannot simply be transmitted; it must be earned. But as the cases of both Cephalus and Polemarchus show, more often than not, the understanding of a cultural inheritance is not earned and people merely assume they understand it. This means that their ethical foundation is grounded on sand. Even so, Polemarchus represents a serious advance over Cephalus. When the ethical incoherence is brought to his attention, he is willing to engage in a collaborative inquiry to understand what he thought he had previously understood.

To get at Simonides's meaning, Socrates asks Polemarchus to answer for the poet. Polemarchus's task is to take responsibility for the discourse that structures his ethical world. Socrates gets Polemarchus to agree on Simonides's behalf that the question of what is appropriate is a question of professional knowledge (332c–d). He provides a series of examples from medicine, cooking, and sailing, arguing that each of these arts, through its knowledge, allows its practitioner to provide the art's recipient with the requisite good. The examples lead inexorably to the question, What is the subject matter governed by the art of justice? Polemarchus offers the reasonable supposition that the concerns governed by justice are war and alliances (332e). Since Polemarchus had inherited his definition of justice from Cephalus and Cephalus's implicit defense of justice was in terms of its utility, Socrates offers a series of examples intended to challenge the utility of understanding justice in this way. Socrates asks if there is no war, is the just man then of no use, and Polemarchus acknowledges that that cannot be the case. He offers that its utility in times of peace resides in its governance of contracts. Socrates raises questions about this by suggesting that justice so understood has no positive knowledge to offer those in business and that other arts with knowledge of the nature of particular objects or activities govern the making of money. So justice has no apparent utility.

Socrates goes on to make what at first must appear to be a very odd or frivolous argument—namely, that one who knows how to benefit someone also knows how to injure that person (334a–b). Since justice involves knowing how to safeguard money, it must also entail knowing how to steal it. So justice is potentially a type of theft. Underlying this absurdity is a very serious point. The absurdity of the conclusion raises the question as to how knowledge shapes purpose. If one truly understands justice, then it is not open to that person to be a thief because such a person would understand why thievery was counter to justice. Knowledge, or at least a certain type of knowledge, cannot be merely an instrumentality that is ethically neutral. Even more importantly, Socrates's frivolous conclusion suggests that an understanding of justice that sees its worth primarily as a function of utility has somehow missed the point of being just. At this point, Polemarchus confesses he no longer knows what he means: "Though personally, I don't any longer know what I was saying. But one thing I do think still, and that is that justice is treating your friends well and your enemies badly" (334b). It is not clear that any progress has really been made here, and Polemarchus's confusion is not necessarily an advance toward understanding. While he confesses that he no longer knows what he is talking about, he also acknowledges that he still believes what he believed before his discussion

with Socrates—namely, that justice involves “treating your friends well and your enemies badly.” Socrates has managed to create confusion but he has not achieved persuasion.

Socrates next suggests that Simonides’s definition of justice might have originated with someone of great wealth who thought he had great power. Polemarchus agrees readily with this suggestion, but because Thrasymachus disrupts the conversation at this point, the implications of this suggestion are left undeveloped. However, by suggesting that the definition of justice originated with the wealthy and reflected their belief that money bestowed great power on them, Socrates opens the possibility that the conventional understanding of justice, far from simply encoding a set of cultural values, represents the values of a particular segment of a culture, even as they are interpreted as if they represent the values of the culture as a whole. In this, Socrates appears to be anticipating Thrasymachus’s argument: justice is what is in the interest of the powerful. The common understanding of justice serves the interest of the powerful by providing ideological cover for the operation of power. Put another way, when people unreflectively adopt the current understanding of justice as if it represents an account of how people naturally perceive their interests, they unintentionally promote the interests of those in power and actually work against their own interests. This is how ideology operates. One task of the *Republic* is to undo the self-evidence of an ideological understanding that sees itself as simply reflecting the way the world naturally is. Since the operations of power are disguised, people do not understand how their conception of justice works to their disadvantage. The contradiction that structures their life is not apparent to them, so they believe they are naturally drawn to injustice and they see justice as something that is imposed on them as an unpleasant necessity.

This contradiction is not the only problem disclosed by this conversation. In what must seem to be a paradox, it is Polemarchus’s openness that creates an obstacle to a genuine persuasion in which the new beliefs and desire could endure. Polemarchus is not a defensive character and is amenable to answering Socrates’s questions and investigating the implications of the definition. But this, in itself, points to a major problem for rhetoric. Does Polemarchus’s willingness to follow indiscriminately Socrates’s criticisms and proposals suggest that he may be a bit too amenable (Blondell, 178)? He too quickly cedes authority to Socrates, transferring the authority that he had originally given to Simonides to Socrates. Polemarchus seems willing to allow Socrates’s questioning to almost immediately dismantle the interlocutor’s reasoning, as well as, without serious resistance, an understanding of justice that presumably was an important part of Polemarchus’s ethical

and political outlook. Reeve offers insight into some of the difficulties for the Socratic enterprise that Plato highlights through this exchange with Polemarchus: "Polemarchus shows that far from improving the youth, the elenchus is likely to corrupt them" (9). This, of course, Plato is going to identify in Book 6 as a major problem for philosophy. If philosophy undercuts the inherited and accepted moral code, it becomes a potentially corrosive practice. Unless the elenchic dismantling of beliefs held unreflectively can be offset by a positive effort that establishes a more secure foundation for ethics, philosophic conversation is in danger of engendering a skepticism that undermines any discourse seeking to persuade someone to be ethical. It is helpful to read Polemarchus as a cautionary character. He exemplifies one way in which a reader should not read a Platonic dialogue. If readers are not to repeat the mistakes of Polemarchus, they need to figure out how to challenge Socrates appropriately and make him earn his authority.

Socrates's discussion with Polemarchus allows Plato to accomplish two important things. First, it allows Plato to prepare his readers for his later discussion of poetry in Books 2 and 3. Polemarchus seems to have read poetry in a non-rhetorical way. He simply has detached Simonides's conclusions from the poem and assumed that they can be treated straightforwardly as ethical guides. Socrates suggests that Simonides may have presented his understanding in figures, and that one of the tasks of his readers is to read his poem figuratively and not literally. This leads to a second point. The dialogue's readers should not commit the same mistake as Polemarchus. If they are to understand Plato's position on justice, they will need to attend to the dialogue as a work of rhetoric. This is not because Plato has a fixed position that he is trying to disguise, but because a rhetorical reading prevents an earned belief from being collapsed into a truth. It is a way of acknowledging that the discussion of justice is not an inquiry into an object that is capable of being known with certainty but rather it is an ongoing exploration of what our language about justice reveals about our values and commitments. Ultimately, we need to take responsibility for our readings.

Blondell argues that the presence of Thrasymachus in Polemarchus's house "suggests that his philosophical allegiance is uncertain" and "this gives his conversation with Sokrates a particular educational urgency" (175). Blondell's point is a good one, but it needs to be modified. Polemarchus is not really uncertain about the value of justice, even if he doesn't know what he means by justice. He does not appear to be a character at an intellectual crossroads, nor does he give any indication that he is seriously considering a position such as the one that Thrasymachus will soon lay out. In fact, he intervenes on behalf of Socrates during the conversation between Socrates

and Thrasymachus. It is more helpful to see his role as pointing to a serious problem for persuasion. An earlier comment by Blondell is especially helpful:

Like his father, Polemarchos represents the kind of popular ethical outlook that is a principle target of *Republic* as a whole. Both embody the threat of the conventional and the commonplace, of unthinking deference to authority, and of self-interested loyalty to self, family, and friends, as enshrined in, and reproduced by means of traditional poetic education (175).

The difficulties posed first by Cephalus and then by Polemarchus point to one of the fundamental challenges for philosophical discourse. Cephalus is uninterested in it and Polymarchus, despite his openness to philosophical inquiry, lacks the intellectual rigor to participate well in a philosophical conversation. Together, Cephalus and Polemarchus show the ways in which a popular understanding of ethics based in everyday experience and promulgated by a specific culture is seriously vulnerable to debunking. In their naïveté they represent the public that an ambitious rhetor, such as Thrasymachus, can manipulate. So Book 1 sees the discussion of justice beset by two major challenges: the complacent confidence of a conventional understanding and the cynical manipulation of that understanding by rhetors committed to an alternative view of human nature, one that sees human beings as naturally aggressive and sees this natural aggression as the form of a genuine justice in which human beings ruthlessly pursue self-interest.

## II

Thrasymachus's entrance into the discussion marks a decided shift of tone. He inserts himself into the conversation as if he were a "wild beast at its prey" (336b). He intends to expose Socrates as a fraud who substitutes a certain verbal trickery for a serious challenge to conventional thought. He voices an understandable frustration at the exchanges between Socrates and Polemarchus that in their amiability lack rigor and boldness. He immediately charges Socrates with operating in bad faith and refusing to say what he believes. For anyone who has read a Platonic dialogue, there is a certain resonance in these charges, as Socrates can, at times, be coy and withhold understandings that he does possess and to which he is committed. If Cephalus fails to be a productive interlocutor for Socrates because he is indifferent to ideas, Thrasymachus is his opposite: he has a passionate in-

vovement with ideas. His self-love and desire for acclaim may partially fuel this passion, but Thrasymachus is clearly a character who fashions himself as an intellectual and as someone superior to the common run of humanity precisely because he is smarter than they are.

Most importantly, Thrasymachus is a rhetor. However much his position can be read as reflecting the quirks of his personality, it must also be read as representative of a particular professional approach. Cephalus's and Polemarchus's obliviousness to the way that the culture's circulating narratives have shaped their beliefs argues that a greater sophistication is required if the conversation about justice is to make progress. Rhetoric, as the art that theorizes speech and power, needs to engage the issue explicitly. Justice is a concern of rhetoric, and Thrasymachus brings to the conversation an awareness of the ways in which speech operates in the interest of power. Not only does he advocate for a radical and unconventional view of justice, but also his profession connects that view with an understanding of how persuasion works. In this, he contrasts sharply with characters like Cephalus and Polemarchus. The ethical and political values of father and son are derived primarily by their role as audiences, as characters who have been shaped by the transmission of traditional cultural narratives. Although unaware of the ways in which their culture's rhetoric operates, they have been significantly determined by that rhetoric. Thrasymachus, on the other hand, appreciates rhetoric's potential for providing agency to those who do not naively subscribe to a culture's values or its dominant narrative. As a professional rhetor, he sees his role as transforming the city's cultural or political life or at least as deliberately using his rhetorical art for his own ends. For all of his self-proclaimed intellectual daring, he is not so much a revolutionary as he is a character who understands and can exploit the ways in which an unreflective adherence to an inherited understanding leaves an audience vulnerable to an actor who understands how power operates in a city.

As a rhetor, Thrasymachus has been trained to use speech and to use strategically the commonplaces and unreflective cultural values to obtain power. The art in which he takes great pride allows him to influence an audience such as Polemarchus because he can trade off of their unreflective embrace of cultural givens. They are sheep to be shorn. For Thrasymachus, justice is not a natural phenomenon but a linguistic construction. In place of a naive conception that justice embodies in a common sense way our obligations to other people, Thrasymachus sees justice as serving the interests of the superior few. He believes his linguistic sophistication and innate talent enable him to effectively face reality and not be deluded by ethical



pieties that pass for wisdom. Thrasymachus's important advance is to no longer take a particular culture at face value but to question that culture. Julia Annas notes: "Now undoubtedly Thrasymachus is an important opponent. And yet he, and the sophists in general, do have the virtue of questioning what people have been brought up to accept. To that extent, they are intellectually liberating. If the result is skepticism, maybe the moral is not that we should refuse to think, but that we should think a little deeper" (9). The practice of rhetoric allows Thrasymachus to challenge the inevitability of the status quo and to reimagine the world as a place for significant human agency.

With the appearance of rhetoric, the problem of justice undergoes a radical shift. Thrasymachus speaks for (indeed, he celebrates) rhetoric as manipulation, arguing that its importance resides in its capacity to promote injustice. Being just is no longer a question of responding to a felt obligation toward others, as it was with Cephalus and Polemarchus, but appearing to be just is now understood as an important resource for social manipulation. An artful manipulation enables the effective pursuit of socially generated resources that can be appropriated for the satisfaction of large and unruly individual desires. Rhetoric is what allows aggression to disguise itself as justice.

The challenge that Thrasymachus poses to Socrates is how to get rhetoric to understand itself differently. In addition to educating philosophers about the necessity of being rhetorical, this dialogue is intended to educate rhetors about the true nature of persuasion and to develop an art that does not achieve its results through manipulation. Not surprisingly, Thrasymachus resists this understanding violently, for the identity of rhetoric, as he understands and practices it, is at stake. While sharing Thrasymachus's view that the conventional understanding of justice is a product of ideological mystification, Socrates disagrees radically with Thrasymachus's assumption that justice, as popularly understood, is simply delusion and that real justice is achieved when power realizes its aims. Challenging a view of human nature that assumes that everyone is naturally drawn to injustice, he argues instead for a human nature shaped far more by the force of culture and education. Even more than Thrasymachus, Socrates views human nature as a product of rhetoric, although he would argue that this rhetoric need not be, and often is not, the product of a deliberate artistry. Instead, a more unconscious and pervasive rhetoric operates through the cultural transmission of commonplaces—commonplaces that circulate on their own, although they do receive official cultural support. For Socrates, human nature is not experienced in its originality because it always and only comes

as a cultural artifact. Only by recovering this lost sense of human nature as shaped, in part, by culture can individuals ever develop a psychologically and politically healthy sense of justice. If justice is to be defended, Socrates must offer an understanding of rhetoric and its cultural embeddedness that can meet this difficult challenge. Socrates must educate Thrasymachus, the professional rhetor, about persuasion and about the particular nature and necessity for a philosophic practice of persuasion—a necessity located in an original misapprehension of human nature that is then validated by a culture's self-understanding.

Thrasymachus is not an ideal candidate for education. Certain of his own understanding and impatient with the recital of what he considers as platitudes, he begins by accusing Socrates of duplicity, charging that Socrates's success at confounding his interlocutors results primarily because Socrates has chosen to ask questions rather than undertaking the more difficult task of developing a positive position. Thrasymachus challenges Socrates to state what he believes justice is, but this is not intended as a serious challenge. When Socrates protests first that Thrasymachus should not be angry at him and Polemarchus, for any mistakes that they were making were unintentional, and second that it is unfair both to demand of Socrates that he give the definition of justice that he thinks is right and to forbid him in advance to put forward one of the commonly considered definitions, Thrasymachus abandons his concern with getting Socrates to say what he actually thinks and instead puts forth his own definition of justice. It is evident that Thrasymachus had no real interest in what Socrates might have to say about justice. What he wants, instead, is to offer what he considers to be a provocatively daring definition of justice, one that will cause the audience to admire his brilliance. He offers a brief and blunt definition: "Justice is simply what is good for the stronger" (338c). The rest is stuff and nonsense. Rhetoric is practiced for the advantage of the rhetor. It is one way in which power is pursued and also in which power operates. Equally, for Thrasymachus, rhetoric is an art of self-display. Thrasymachus is his own hero.

But precisely because it is an art of self-display, Thrasymachus has made available to Socrates a self that can be examined. In place of admiration, Thrasymachus gets the deflating response of a request for clarification (338c). To explain his position, Thrasymachus offers an analogy that will be central for the dialogue. To explain how individuals understand justice, he looks to how cities are governed and argues that the laws are made by the powerful for their own benefit (338e). The constitution of the city can explain the constitution of the individual. Each type of city legislates in the way that accords best with the interests of the powerful in that city.

However much cities may differ in their constitutions, they participate in a human impulse that is natural and universal: all pursue self-interest. But if that impulse is natural and universal, then the particular instances of justice are not. Justice is neither universal nor natural; instead, it is a conventional order adopted by those in power. Hence, it assumes one form in a timarchy, another in a democracy, and yet another in a tyranny. Still, this is only a surface difference. What rhetoric, in the person of Thrasymachus, understands is that justice is conventional—it is the name given to cover the operations of power.

Thrasymachus's clarification provides Socrates with a point upon which the two can agree: both believe that justice is good for the person who possesses it. They disagree, however, on whether that applies to all people or only the people who are stronger. The discussion of power is framed as a discussion of the nature and consequences of professional knowledge. Socrates first challenges Thrasymachus's position by arguing that if rulers can make a mistake about where their true interests lie, then a contradiction is possible in which the stronger (the rulers) order the weaker to pursue actions that are, in fact, not good for those in power. Thrasymachus responds and says that when a craftsperson is truly operating according to the principles of his craft, that person cannot make a mistake. So the ruler who is ruling truly will always pursue his own interest. Seizing on the analogy of craft, Socrates argues that each art is devised not to serve the self-interest of the artist but rather to benefit the object of the art: the purpose of medicine, for example, is not to benefit the doctor but the body of the patient. So the art, which is stronger because it possesses a specific knowledge, serves the interest of the weaker.

Undeterred, Thrasymachus offers another analogy with which to understand the true operation of justice—that of the shepherd and his sheep (343b). However much the shepherd may care for his sheep, his ruling purpose is to use his sheep for his advantage. Rulers do not rule ultimately for the advantage of their subjects. Whatever benefits they may confer on the subjects are part of a larger plan to take full advantage of the subjects for the rulers' own interests. For Thrasymachus, the average person who believes in justice is simple-minded. When the just compete with the unjust, the unjust always win. The only qualification to this claim is that the unjust person must have "the ability to be selfish on a large scale" (344a). For those who are not naive, the highest and most admirable and most desirable form of human achievement is tyranny. The tyrant is the person who can act on his own interest and acquire whatever he desires. Tyranny represents the dream of unfettered agency in which there is no gap between desire and the

achievement of desire. It is the dream of becoming a god. Further, Thrasymachus contends that all people aspire naturally to be tyrants: "Those who condemn injustice do so not through fear of practicing it, but through fear of experiencing it" (344c). What passes conventionally for ethical behavior is really cowardice. Again, scale is important. Thrasymachus is not arguing for petty crime but for an ethics that recognizes and values those individuals who are willing and able to act on a grand scale and to live the full life to which all humans aspire. His is an ethics of absolute freedom.

But the image of the rhetor as hero brooking no opposition is undercut by Thrasymachus's own actions. After giving this passionate retort to Socrates, Thrasymachus is ready to depart. The others, however, forcibly prevent his leaving. This use of force to continue the conversation points to a major problem for persuasion. If force is needed, in some instances, to supplement persuasion, the mere use of force raises problems for the both the adequacy of persuasion and the defense of justice.<sup>5</sup> So the questions are: How does a philosopher induce an interlocutor to continue participating in a collaborative inquiry when such participation becomes personally uncomfortable? How does a philosopher persuade an audience to remain open and engaged with an activity that is trying to persuade it of something that at some level, and that level is very near the surface, it does not know what it thinks it knows? At issue is the possibility of philosophy constituting or reconstituting an audience. This can be especially difficult when the audience may very well not want their current understanding disturbed. Cephalus's and Thrasymachus's impulse to quit the discussion suggests that this is a structural problem for philosophical discourse, a problem that requires a rhetorical solution, if a solution is even possible.

Thrasymachus's rejoinder to Socrates is instructive: "'How am I to persuade you?' he asks. 'If you are not convinced by what I said just now, what more can I do for you? Do you want me to sit here and cram the argument in with a spoon?'" (345b). So the question is how do you persuade someone? Again, force seems to be necessary if persuasion is to take. Socrates, however, offers two different possibilities: stand by what you have said or, if you change your ground, do so publicly. At this point, Socrates is committed to the position that persuasion is something that can happen only if an idea or position withstands public scrutiny. He believes that the public interrogation of a position is the only way to reach a stable and certain understanding that can qualify as persuasion. For Socrates, reason takes the place of culture in providing a secure and earned ground for a belief. Through the rigor of refutation, a genuine persuasion will arise. It appears as if refutation is the way to effect persuasion.

Socrates examines Thrasymachus's analogy: the shepherd (like the ruler) attends his sheep (his subject) for the benefits that they provide him. Socrates argues that Thrasymachus has departed from the true sense of the shepherd's, and hence the ruler's, purpose. When one acts as a shepherd and is constrained by that art, one's action is guided only by what is in the best interest of the sheep. When he considers the benefits that he might derive from the sheep, he is no longer operating according to the art of the shepherd but as a businessman. This is true for all of the arts, including ruling. The question becomes: what benefit could possibly induce one to accept the role of ruler and act to benefit others? As Socrates puts it, what could persuade those people most suitable to rule to undertake this task? (347b). He assumes that anyone, who is truly suitable to rule, does not have an inherent interest in ruling and is driven neither by a sense of public responsibility nor by personal ambition. More troubling is that Socrates does not seem to consider that justice itself would provide a motive to rule. He seems to consider justice as something unpleasant and that acting justly is done reluctantly, even by those who value justice. So Socrates seems to be subscribing to the popular understanding that justice is not a value in itself and hence not a significant source of motivation. For purposes of the argument, he borrows Thrasymachus's earlier claim that we are all moved by self-interest and proposes that the only payment persuasive enough to move a good person to rule is his self-interest in fearing being ruled by someone worse. In effect, he has stood Thrasymachus's argument on its head.

The debate over justice leads to a meta-discussion about the possibility of persuasion. Socrates seeks an argument that is persuasive to Thrasymachus. At one point, Socrates asks Glaucon: "Do you want us to try and find some way of persuading him that he is wrong?" (348a). In response to this question Socrates formulates the conditions necessary for a successful persuasion. He suggests that the standard rhetorical confrontation of resolving an issue by offering opposing speeches directed toward judges is cumbersome, at best. He proposes instead that the most effective way to persuade someone is to locate a point of agreement between the parties and then explore the implications and consequences of an agreement that is genuinely shared. In such an enterprise, the rhetors become both advocates and judges. Presumably such an agreement will be genuine and stable because it is consistent with and builds upon beliefs that the parties actually have. This persuasion is compelling because it speaks to genuine beliefs, which the parties internalize and with which they reconstitute themselves. This is the method of refutation. So the refutation proper of Thrasymachus begins.

Thrasymachus, however, does not suffer from the normal incoherence

that haunts the conventional views of justice, so he poses a particular challenge for a Socratic refutation. He is clear that justice, for him, equals noble simplicity, and although he doesn't say it, this description certainly fits Cephalus and possibly Polemarchus. Injustice he labels as "good judgment" (348d). Socrates comments that there is a certain consistency to Thrasymachus's position that does not make him vulnerable to the contradiction that structures the lives of most people who believe that people are naturally drawn to injustice:

If you said that injustice was profitable, but nevertheless admitted, as most people do, that it was wickedness, or something to be ashamed of, we would be able to reply along conventional lines. As it is, however, you're obviously going to say that it is good and strong, and credit it with all the qualities which we used to attribute to justice, since you don't shrink from classifying it with goodness and wisdom. (348e–349a)

If he is to refute Thrasymachus, Socrates must show how this understanding of justice as good for the stronger is equally self-defeating.

Socrates produces three arguments. First, that as in all artistic practices, those who truly understand the art are constrained by the inherent excellences that they pursue. Musicians, for example, seek to be more musical than nonmusicians but not more musical than other musicians. This contrasts with the unjust person who seeks to outdo both just and other unjust people, always seeking more for himself. The just person, like the musician with the nonmusician, only seeks to best the person who is unjust. Second, Socrates argues that a truly unjust city would be fully chaotic and incapable of any concerted action, as its members would prove incapable of working together. So any form of action or power requires a commitment to some justice. Finally, Socrates argues that each object has a particular and controlling purpose, and the particular purpose of the soul is "management, or ruling, or decision-making, and all these sorts of things" (353d). If a soul is to achieve its particular excellence, then it must rule well. This ruling well means being just, which they had earlier determined to be the excellence of the soul. So the good soul is the just soul, and if this is now the agreed understanding of what constitutes a genuine good, then injustice cannot be a good. That is not simply a conventional sentiment, as Thrasymachus originally claimed, but it is logically entailed by the argument.

Although Thrasymachus grudgingly acknowledges that Socrates has confounded him, his very concession refuses to credit Socrates's argument as persuasive. Instead Thrasymachus makes it clear that he is not convinced

of the rightness of Socrates's argument, admitting only that "according to your argument, a just man will have the good life and the unjust man the bad one" (354a). Thrasymachus's disavowal of the persuasive force of Socrates's argument is paradigmatic. Like many of the characters who fall victim to Socratic refutation, Thrasymachus, in his truculent agreement with Socrates, signals a feeling that Socrates has outsmarted or tricked him rather than having shown that his position really is untenable.<sup>6</sup> What Socrates has failed to do is genuinely persuade Thrasymachus.<sup>7</sup> Silence is not the same thing as agreement. And Thrasymachus is not alone in his skepticism. Socrates himself voices dissatisfaction with his performance, admitting that "the result of our discussion is that I'm none the wiser" (354c).<sup>8</sup> So rather than signaling a victory for Socrates, his refutation of Thrasymachus discloses a serious problem with Socratic refutation as a resource for effecting change. If, as Alexander Nehamas claims, "the elenchus, then, works only through persuasion," the failure of the elenchus puts Socratic persuasion in peril (45).<sup>9</sup>

But the failure of the elenchus does not end Thrasymachus's education; rather, it occasions his move offstage. Although no one is restraining him anymore, he does not leave the conversation but instead remains and listens actively to the dialogue that follows. He becomes part of the audience for the dialogue. And as Socrates will mention explicitly, the subsequent discussion is intended, in part at least, to provide Thrasymachus with arguments for those times in the future when Thrasymachus will again discuss justice and its worth (498d). The movement from an interlocutor who would be educated through the process of refutation to an audience member who is to be educated through his watching and listening to an intellectual performance signals that the *Republic* is introducing a new approach to Socratic education. Since refutation failed, Socrates will be forced to adopt a new approach—an approach that is inherent in the dialogue form. Plato will turn to mimesis.

The object imitated is persuasion and not justice, *per se*. The virtues that need to be learned for a just society are those that make a genuine persuasion possible—one needs to learn how to speak and also how to be an audience and listen. Like the *Odyssey*, a philosophic conversation will be a journey, and like the *Odyssey*, the journey holds serious potential dangers that must be negotiated. The dangers are not those of physical destruction or transformation but a descent into cynicism and the adoption of a toxic narcissism that sees intellectual life not as offering productive solutions to ethical and political problems but merely as a confounding of public opinion. It is the descent into a life of contempt.

The failure of Book 1 inaugurates a movement away from approaching philosophy as a process that seeks greater clarification through the intense personal interaction of the elenchus to seeing philosophy as a rhetorical process that seeks to persuade an audience through an extended conversation. This change represents a major shift in the rhetorical operation of philosophy. A philosophic rhetoric engaged in refutation that seeks salutary consequences primarily through a negative process of showing an interlocutor's incoherence has been found inadequate and needs to be replaced or, at least, seriously supplemented by a philosophic rhetoric that has the positive task of inculcating new and productive beliefs in its audience. This is an immensely more difficult task for philosophy. If justice is to be persuasively defended, a new form of heroism needs to be offered, and this new form of heroism needs to define the values appropriate to a culture in which justice can be valued as an end in itself. And to the extent that this mimetic representation of an act of persuasion makes claims to be adequate to the present reality, it needs to acknowledge its limitations while still offering the possibility of a new heroism. In doing all of this, the mimetic representation exemplifies what is required of a serious act of persuasion that seeks to address a fundamental ethical or political problem. Plato is about to develop a theory of rhetoric that connects persuasion to justice. The reformed rhetoric must discover or invent the arguments needed for a philosophic discourse to be adequate to a world that will continue to insist on the inherent desirability of injustice. To counter this persistent belief in the innate desire to be unjust, a philosophic rhetoric will need to reconstitute its audience so that it moves beyond an unreflective embrace of an inherited understanding of reality and moves toward an understanding of reality that allows its members to escape a slavish acceptance of the given as if it were unproblematically the truth. If Plato's reform of rhetoric in the *Republic* is to develop a resource that can make philosophy persuasive to those who reject it, then he must make clear why persuasion is an inherently philosophical concern and not simply a matter of locating effective strategies. Plato needs to show that a philosophical rhetoric must be not only theoretically possible but also genuinely practical. If he can do this, he can provide an account of the necessary friendship between philosophy and rhetoric.



## Glaucón's Request for a Persuasive Argument

As Book 2 opens, Socrates confesses that he thought the conversation was over and that he had made the case that "justice was something better than injustice" (368b). But as becomes clear quickly, Socrates's refutation of Thrasymachus has failed and, most importantly, it has left untouched the claim that injustice is superior to justice.<sup>1</sup> For Glaucon, this failure is a failure of persuasion. He does not attack the logic of the argument; rather, he draws an important distinction. He asks Socrates: "Do you really want to convince us that it is every way better to be just than unjust, or is it enough merely to seem to have convinced us?" (357b).<sup>2</sup> At issue is what constitutes genuine persuasion, and how one achieves it. Glaucon's challenge makes persuasion into a fundamental issue for philosophy. It turns out that Thrasymachus, for all of his bluster and self-importance, does not represent the serious and structural threat to the viability of justice as a central political concept for democracy. The challenge to a defense of justice does not reside in some theoretical or cynical threat posed by professional rhetoric but is embedded in the rhetoric that has shaped everyday understanding. The deeper problem that Socrates is about to confront is rooted in the near universal belief that people do not really desire to be just. This belief has resisted all past and current efforts to persuade a democratic population that justice is an intrinsic good. It is the core belief that people naturally value injustice and are just only because they fear the potential aggression of individuals who have superior intelligence and ambition that Socratic persuasion must confront and transform. The goal of Socratic rhetoric must be a cultural revolution.

## I

The belief that injustice is naturally more desirable and beneficial than justice is deeply rooted; it cannot be eradicated simply by showing some confusion or inconsistency within its advocate, Thrasymachus. Put another way, the dispute over justice cannot be considered as merely a disagreement between rhetoric and philosophy; rather, the persistent belief in the superiority of injustice to justice points to the current inadequacy of both practices to address an important practical issue. This issue requires Socrates, as the representative of philosophy, to rethink the way in which philosophy interacts with the public. The extent of philosophy's failure to be persuasive is clear in the responses of Glaucon and Adeimantus. They are sympathetic to an argument that justice is superior to injustice but have not been persuaded by Socrates. They know the force that this belief about injustice has on the general public, and they understand that the general public is convinced that it is human nature to desire injustice. Given the prevalence and rootedness of this belief, Socratic refutation by itself cannot be the discursive approach that leads to a genuine persuasion. If there is to be a genuine persuasion, Socrates must speak more effectively to what people actually believe and desire. The defense of justice is linked inextricably to the possibility of discovering a new form of persuasion—one that genuinely addresses people's actual beliefs and is powerful enough to get people to change those beliefs and to alter their basic desires.

Unlike Thrasymachus, who had only contempt for the public's view of justice, Glaucon appreciates the reasoning behind the common view that injustice is superior to justice. Thrasymachus considered the public primarily as an audience to be manipulated, and, as a result, he had a shallow understanding of them. For him, the relationship of rhetor to audience was that of master to slave. In contrast, Glaucon is interested in engaging the public discussions about justice but finds himself unable to discover or invent a discourse with which he can defend or praise the values that are important to him. He seeks a rhetoric that can speak meaningfully to the general public. He recognizes that the general public's understanding is reasonable and supported both by the way that everyday events play out and by a cultural inheritance that, in part, transmits this understanding of the world. He seeks a rhetoric adequate to understand and address the world as it is. This rhetoric would move people from an intellectual slavery to the possibility of a reflective citizenship. The important and productive disagreement, then, is not between rhetoric as professionally practiced and philosophy but between the rhetoric of everyday discourse and philosophy.

If philosophy is to be rhetorically meaningful, it must be able to engage and transform everyday discourse.

To make clear the gap between the common understanding of justice and Socrates's position, Glaucon sets out three types of goods: those sought for their own sake (enjoyment, for example), those sought for their own sake and for the value of their consequences (thinking, seeing, health, etc.), and those that are unpleasant but beneficial (taking medicine would be a good example). Socrates places justice in the second class—it is both sought for its own sake and for its consequences. Glaucon points out that this view differs from the common view, which does not consider justice to be a good in itself but to derive whatever value it does have from its beneficial consequences. The significant gap between the common view and Socrates's understanding of justice is grounded in a belief about what we naturally desire: where Socrates believes that we are naturally drawn to justice, just about everyone else believes the opposite. If he is to be persuasive, he must show people that they are fundamentally confused about what they actually desire. This is the kind of claim that a public would instinctively resist. If people have confidence in anything, it should be in the knowledge of what they actually desire. Individuals would seem to be in a privileged place and have an important authority in reporting what they feel and desire. Socrates must persuade the general public that confused and erroneous beliefs have corrupted their desire, and this corrupted desire masks itself by appearing to be natural and, even more, by feeling natural. If Socrates is right, then the common person not only has misunderstood the world but also is moved by corrupt feelings that have the force of appearing natural. The average person is in a situation of deep alienation, and an argument trusting only to the force of logic will prove ineffective with such an audience. If philosophy is to be meaningful, it has to develop a discourse that speaks effectively to a deeply grounded value system that derives from personal experience and, as such, possesses an authority that is a powerful alternative to reason. As Frede points out,

Given the subject matters Socrates and Plato are particularly interested in, a special difficulty arises. Beliefs about these subject-matters, like virtue, reality, justice, evil, do not form relatively small, isolated clusters; they form sheer endless chains which, and this is of equal importance, determine, or help determine, our whole life and the life of the society we live in. We are brought up with them, they help to form our character and our general outlook and attitude. They help to determine where

we see our interests, they shape our ambitions. To revise beliefs which are so deeply interwoven with the fabric of our life in such a way as to achieve and maintain consistency is extremely difficult, in part because it means, or at least might mean, a basic change of life. (215)

Only with Glaucon's restatement of the audience's fundamental belief in the natural appeal of injustice does the depth of the problem of defending justice become apparent. But Glaucon does not attribute Thrasymachus's failure to make the best case for injustice solely to Thrasymachus. He believes that Socrates also bears some responsibility for the failure. He accuses Socrates of mesmerizing Thrasymachus: "I think Thrasymachus too readily allowed himself to be bewitched by you, like a snake being charmed by a snake-charmer" (358b). Glaucon is raising a serious problem for Socratic persuasion.<sup>3</sup> However much Socrates may represent himself as committed to following the results of argument, his victory over Thrasymachus does not appear to be the product of a rigorous application of reasoning. When seen from the perspective of rhetoric, Socratic refutation is anything but a disinterested application of reason. In a Socratic refutation, the emotional state of the audience plays an important role, as is evident in both the anger and frustration that Socrates often provokes. And what might look like agreement, even if it is a forced agreement, turns out to be something else. In the case of Thrasymachus, he gave up the argument not because he believed that Socrates had made the stronger case but because Socrates managed to induce shame in him.<sup>4</sup> He was not persuaded, just embarrassed (Rosen, 38). Socrates's refutation merely confused its opponent, and that confusion is only temporary and leaves untouched the core of the argument for injustice. Because it did not provide a genuine rejoinder to the argument for injustice, the argument between Thrasymachus and Socrates has to be redone.

If the argument is to be redone, then the public needs a spokesperson to represent their position at its strongest. It is Glaucon who, as an advocate for the public's position, brings qualities essential to a philosophical conversation: he is rigorous, willing to challenge Socrates, open to a compelling argument, and appreciates the force of the common understanding about justice.<sup>5</sup> He, along with Adeimantus, can, on behalf of the public, challenge philosophy in the person of Socrates to offer them an account of justice that is genuinely persuasive. Glaucon's taking over the argument from Thrasymachus moves it from an unproductive squabble between an eristic rhetoric and philosophy and transforms it into a search for a rhetoric adequate for

a philosophy seeking a political impact. Whether he fully understands the implications of his challenge, Glaucon is, in effect, seeking a revolutionary discourse.

O'Connor provides a helpful discussion of the importance of Glaucon and Adeimantus as the primary audience for Socrates's discourse. He argues that the rhetoricity of Socrates's discourse "is not just a question of what arguments are made, but of what sort of man would make a particular argument, or accept it, or long for it. Indeed, Socrates virtually begins his conversation with the brothers by saying he would respond to their arguments differently if he had a different view of their character (368a–b)" (55). While I agree with O'Connor's point, I read the character of Glaucon quite differently from him. He sees Glaucon as a character particularly drawn to (and equally resisting the pull of) tyranny: "Glaucon wants to loathe tyrants, but he feels their fascination, and he is the potent if reluctant heir of the conception of tyranny proposed (in Book 1) by Thrasymachus and attacked by Socrates" (66). I see no evidence that Glaucon is to be singled out for harboring any particular desire to become a tyrant. I think it makes more sense to take him at his word as someone who values justice but finds himself unable to defend it in a way that he finds satisfactory. On my reading, the appeal of tyranny is not limited to Glaucon but is present in all who live in a democracy. So if he experiences that desire, it is because he is a representative citizen of a democracy. That is one of the qualities that makes him philosophically interesting.

Glaucon demonstrates to Socrates the rationality of the common understanding that injustice is truly valued by everyone. First, he explains the common view of justice and how it arises; second, he shows how the practice and public praise of justice are to be understood as something that the general public believes is unavoidable and in which they engage against their will; and finally, he shows the reasonableness of this position, given their view that the unjust man has a better life than the just man. Where Thrasymachus attributed the public's hypocrisy on injustice to their timidity, Glaucon stresses the reasonableness of the public's understanding. For him, the disingenuousness of political speech and action is not evidence of the contemptibleness of the public but rather reflects its understanding of the world and embodies a practical response to this world. Viewing the public this way makes them available as a potential audience in a way that was not possible under Thrasymachus's view, according to which the public's inherent inferiority preempts the possibility of addressing them seriously. Glaucon assumes that it is possible to discover a discourse that can impact the public. He wants to answer the pervasive understanding that

injustice is superior to justice by being able to address the reasonableness of this commonly held and nearly universal position. What he knows is that the common understanding is, in fact, powerful in its persuasiveness and that every previous attempt to make the case for justice has failed.

## II

The case for injustice is founded on the premise that humans are inherently aggressive: "Doing wrong, men say, is by its nature a good—and being wronged an evil—but the evil of being wronged outweighs the good of doing wrong" (358e). The narrative of civilization is one in which aggression is displaced by fear. Experience teaches people that if they want to avoid the greater evil of being wronged, they must curtail others' ability to wrong them. Justice originates in this compromise between a fundamental desire to do whatever one wants (a dream of absolute freedom—this is the dream of being a tyrant) and a fundamental fear of having no control over one's situation (a nightmare of powerlessness—this is the nightmare of being a subject of tyranny). Political life, consequently, is structured on an inherent frustration of basic human nature and endures as an uneasy and unpleasant solution to a worse alternative. If a person of sufficient power—a true man—were to appear on the scene, he would be naturally led to trample on this compromise and give reign to a fundamental desire that has been repressed and frustrated. His very nature would require him to wrong others; to do otherwise would be to violate who he was. This is, in fact, the argument that Callicles makes in the *Gorgias* (482c–484c). What separates the true man from the rest of humanity is not the desire that drives him, for all are moved by that desire. Rather it is the ability of the true man to act successfully on what all feel. In this, he acts as a true representative of the human race. He is what all aspire to be.

To prove the universality of the desire for absolute power, Glaucon turns to the story of Gyges. Through his possession of a magical ring, Gyges receives the gift of invisibility, which allows him to pursue any desire without the fear of retribution. He embodies the fantasy of absolute power—the ring has made him the equivalent of a god. Freed from the normal fear of being held accountable for his actions and consequently suffering injury at the hands of those whom he has harmed, Gyges can take whatever he wants. Since he is no longer constrained by a fear of retaliation, he naturally asserts himself. And as Glaucon points out, if Gyges did not do this, people would regard him as seriously defective, even as they praised him for his virtue: "Anyone who came into possession of the kind of freedom I have de-

scribed, and then refused ever to do anything wrong, and did not lay a finger on other people's possessions, would be regarded by observers as the most pathetic and brainless of creatures—though of course in public they would praise him, lying to one another because of their fear of being wronged" (360d). There is, then, a split between what people say and what they actually believe, and the force of the Gyges story is that it both undermines any conventional praise or defense of justice and lays bare a deep desire that cannot surface in its true form but must be displaced by another narrative to quell a basic anxiety about powerlessness. Justice is a lie that people tell themselves to feel better about lacking the courage to pursue their true desires. A civilized human is a diminished human, and the lie that covers this truth is given credibility in a purported allegiance to justice.

The tale of Gyges foregrounds the important role of appearance in the argument for justice. To assess the real value of justice, one must examine whether a just life that did not appear just would still be valued. To make that assessment, Glaucon offers a thought experiment: he contrasts the life of a completely just person with that of a completely unjust person. Glaucon draws the portrait of an unjust person who has the skill to accomplish his goals, who understands what is feasible, and who has the ability to mask injustice and appear just. For such a person rhetoric is essential. Rhetoric's ability to shape appearance allows the perpetrator of injustice to evade any responsibility for his action. In its ability to manipulate appearance, rhetoric is, or could be, the equivalent of Gyges's ring, and it is not a stretch to read the story of Gyges's ring as a figured defense of rhetoric as a source of political power. The source of rhetoric's power resides in its ability to deceive through the manipulation of appearance. Through its ability to deceive, rhetoric provides the possibility of effective persuasion: "He must be capable of using persuasion—so that if any evidence of his wrongdoing is brought against him, he can talk his way out of it" (361b). If for some reason this rhetoric is not effective, then the person must be able to use force appropriately. But of the two, rhetoric is the preferred mode of proceeding. This rhetoric resembles the manipulative discourse endorsed by Thrasymachus. It can either pay obeisance to surface values of the community and argue that the rhetor's actions are just, or it can appeal, in a veiled way, to the public's fundamental, if unspoken, admiration of injustice. In either case, rhetoric offers its practitioner agency at the expense of the audience. Glaucon's narrative provides a powerful and attractive, if negative, image of the rhetoric and persuasion that Socrates needs to counter if philosophy is to be an effective political discourse.

In keeping with the centrality of the consequences of appearance as the reason most people resign themselves to a just life, Glaucon constructs his example of the completely just person by denying that person the benefit of appearing just. The example of the just person, if it is to support the case that justice is a good in itself and not good because it represents an alternative to a worse evil, must deprive the just person of any beneficial consequence deriving from a reputation for acting justly. Justice must truly be its own reward. In this, it contrasts with injustice, which is not so much its own reward, but considered to be the source of all goods. In this manipulation of appearance, the triumph of injustice becomes a paradigmatic example of rhetorical abuse or effectiveness, depending upon one's ethical outlook. Glaucon has, in effect, presented what the common view considers as self-evidence of the superiority of injustice over justice. He has made a powerful and coherent case for injustice.

After acknowledging the difficulty of the task that Glaucon has set him, Socrates is about to respond when Adeimantus interrupts him. This interruption, subsequent complication, and ultimate reconsideration of an issue take on a rhythm that occurs throughout the dialogue and plays an integral role in developing an understanding of justice more powerful and more persuasive. These interruptions and reconsiderations repeatedly call attention to key moments in the argument and force the argument to address seriously the complications that must be addressed if Socrates's defense of justice is to be adequate to the complexities that attend justice in the real world. Plato is aware of a danger inhering in any philosophical or theoretical argument: there is an appeal to tidiness, to finding satisfaction in an argument that is logically consistent, even if that argument distorts the complexity that it is supposed to explain—behind the appeal of intellectual tidiness is the assumption that mind is larger than world. The dialogue's repeated responses to the complexity and complications that its argument encounters is a rhetorical strategy that allows it to earn authority by showing an awareness of the genuine difficulties confronting any defense of justice. The argument's foregrounding its awareness of the seriousness of the challenge and subsequently of the radicalness of the solution is necessary if Socrates hopes to address an audience who is convinced that the superiority of injustice is self-evident. He has to earn an authority not so much with Glaucon and Adeimantus—they believe in the superiority of justice—but with the rest of the population for whom they are advocating. The foregrounding of complications is an important reminder and recognition that the common understanding of the superiority of injustice is not simply a



mistake or a rationalization for doing whatever one wants but is founded on a reasonable, if wrong, interpretation of human nature that has the authority of everyday experience to back it up.

Adeimantus's comments underline the cultural rhetoric at play in what seems to be the occurrence of a self-evident desire. His particular complication points out that, believing in the natural appeal of injustice, people have not simply extrapolated from everyday experience or from some self-examination of what they honestly think they feel, but that a cultural authority has contributed to the understanding of the superiority of injustice by the very ways in which it has advocated for justice. If Socrates is going to get the public to reconsider its understanding that people naturally desire injustice, then he must contend with an inherited narrative that is itself confused about justice and has inadvertently strengthened the view that people are naturally drawn to injustice. Adeimantus makes the case that a culture's understanding of justice is shaped by acts of persuasion: some of these are at the level of family or other current authorities; others are embedded in the culture's official interpretation of justice as it is transmitted by the poets, among others. Whatever its intent, the official endorsement of justice is, in fact, a strong argument for the superiority of injustice. Adeimantus starts with what fathers tell sons. They encourage them to be just "not, I take it, because they value justice by itself, but because they value the approval it brings. If they appear to be just, they argue, then this reputation will bring them public office, marriage, and all the benefits Glaucon has just enumerated, which the just man gains from being well thought of" (363a). The culture does not value justice in itself, only the consequences that come from appearing just: the appearance of justice creates cultural capital, for it creates a public image for the person appearing just that then is effective in enabling that person to be awarded the goods and acclaim that follow upon being publicly hailed as a just individual. One does not necessarily have to be hypocritical but simply clear about why he or she should be just. It is for the reward. This, of course, guts justice of any real value (justice becomes, at best, some sort of prudential calculation), and it effectively eliminates justice as an end in itself.

It is not only current authorities—parents and others—who give the advice to act justly for the benefits it can provide; the poets have given a public voice to this advice. Adeimantus argues that Homer, Hesiod, and Museaus support the value of justice by arguing the gods reward the pious. This argument concedes that justice should be valued not for any inherent worth but because of what one can get from acting justly. The dissemination of this misunderstanding of the worth of justice by the poets means

that a serious defense of justice needs to address the political role of poetry since poetry has played a significant role in a large-scale cultural misperception of justice. Poetry establishes or transmits the commonplaces that circulate in everyday rhetoric. In its capacity as rhetoric, poetry naturalizes culture. So poetry, as it is normally practiced, needs to be reinvented, and a new poetry must foster a true understanding of the value of justice and provide new models for just behavior. To defend justice, Socrates has to reform poetry. Even more, if he is to counter poetry's influence, he needs to become a poet of a different kind and lay a new foundation for the cultural legacy of a new heroism in which justice is appropriately embodied.

Adeimantus points out that justice needs to be promoted in terms of its beneficial consequences because all agree that it is inherently unpleasant and difficult. This harkens back to Glaucon's representation of the common view of justice: it is a good reluctantly sought, requiring onerous and distasteful actions, and most people would, if they could, avoid these actions. Adeimantus argues that all—the everyday authorities and the poets—share this view of justice as something that is inescapably unpleasant: "In their praise of self-discipline and justice, they all sing with one voice. They regard them as a good, but as one which is difficult and laborious, whereas self-indulgence and injustice are pleasant and easy to follow; they are shameful only in the reputation they bring, and by convention" (364a). The poets are complicit in this understanding, for they argue that if one has the resources, then he need not fear retribution for wrongdoing from the gods because he can appease their wrath through his sacrifices.

Adeimantus then asks a reasonable question: If the public support of justice does subvert itself, what should be the reasonable response of a smart and capable young person? It only makes sense to discount the surface argument and embrace the stronger truth that is repressed: "What effect do we think they have on the minds of the young when they hear them—the able ones, those capable of flitting, as it were, from opinion to opinion, gathering information on what sort of person to be, and which way to go, in order to live the best possible life?" (365a–b). His point here anticipates a dynamic that appears in Books 8–9. A cultural authority that is not grounded in a genuine understanding of the value of justice undergoes a transformation and decline from generation to generation. In the absence of a stable understanding of justice, how justice is understood is a continually evolving or devolving process in which a repressed desire erodes existing authority and redefines central ethical terms so that they reflect back the unstable understanding of the rising generation. What justice appears to be is continually changing and, to the extent that the process means an ever-wider latitude

for desire to pursue injustice, it supports a process of social and political decay. Adeimantus draws the obvious conclusion: if one can appear just while being unjust, then that individual will get all of the benefits that follow upon the recognition of acting justly and not have to undergo any of the unpleasantness (365b). The argument affirms that what is important is appearance.

Having made the case for the value of appearance, Adeimantus admits that it is not easy to control appearance. The person seeking to be unjust while appearing just has two important resources. First, there are secret clubs and societies that can aid the unjust person. But even more, there are teachers of persuasion. The main resource for those who would be unjust but appear just is rhetoric. A skilled speaker can persuade both people and gods. This is to return to a point made previously by Thrasymachus. A tough-minded thinker understands he can master or enslave such an audience by his skill in managing appearances. Those committed to rhetoric see the world as inherently plastic and as capable of being shaped to promote their purposes. This understanding recognizes the connection between persuasion and power. The skilled rhetor operates with the accepted commonplaces about justice and uses them to the speaker's advantage. Just as important to a manipulative rhetoric is the fact that the unjust person successfully lives out a fantasy of absolute freedom that is part of everyone's core identity. If all desire the power of injustice and the rewards that follow, then even if they cannot openly or even consciously applaud the effectiveness of this manipulation, at some level they must be drawn to it and admire it as a way of acting that they would pursue if they were capable of it. The power of rhetoric speaks to everyone's secret ambition.

Given the agreement of "most people and of the experts," that if one can receive all of the benefits of a life of "injustice coupled with a counterfeit respectability" (366b–c), Adeimantus asks another obvious question: "In the light of all these arguments, Socrates, what could induce anyone with any force of personality, any, financial resources, and any physical strength or family connections, to be prepared to respect justice, rather than laugh when he hears it being recommended?" (366c). Adeimantus argues further that even those who genuinely believe in the value of justice do not blame those who are drawn to injustice because they understand "no one really wants to be just" (366d). Any success that civilization has in damping down the desire to be unjust is doomed to be both limited and temporary because it violates human nature.

Adeimantus has not so much made the case for injustice as he has indicted the defenders of justice for having failed abysmally to persuade any-

one that justice is a genuine and positive good. He includes Socrates in this long tradition whose defense of justice has had the unfortunate consequence of inadvertently supporting the case for injustice:

The reason for all of this is simply the observation which prompted the two of us to inflict those long speeches on you, Socrates. It is this. There is no shortage of people like you, my admirable friend, who claim to be supporters of justice, starting with the heroes of early days, whose words have come down to us, right up to people of the present day. None of you has ever condemned injustice or recommended justice except in terms of the reputation, prestige, and rewards they bring. Nobody has ever yet, either in poetry or in private discussion, given a sufficiently detailed account of each in itself, when it is present with its own force in the soul of the person possessing it, undetected by gods or by men. No one has shown that injustice is the greatest of evils the soul has within it, or that justice is the greatest good. (366d–e)

The defense of justice has failed to show the inherent worth of justice and that failure is fatal. If justice is primarily valued for what it brings and is seen as an inherently unpleasant activity that people would avoid if they could, and if injustice can show that it provides someone with the reputation for justice without that person having to be just, then the argument to be unjust is compelling. The only reason not to be unjust is concern over whether one is sufficiently skilled and daring to be able to create an effective appearance that belies his purpose and actions. Rhetoric, as theorized by Thrasymachus, is the most rational response to the world as it is.

The failure of the standard defense of justice to be persuasive has led to the current climate of suspicion. According to Adeimantus, the failed defense has persuaded people that an inherent human tendency to be unjust necessitates a constant vigilance, a vigilance that destroys trust: "If that were what you had been persuading us from our earliest years, we would not now be keeping an eye on one another, to guard against injustice" (367a). The failure to internalize justice as an inherently valuable quality means that people need to construct an external set of constraints. Thrasymachus is right: laws are what the weak resort to in a desperate effort to thwart the natural impulses of those with large souls and keen wits. The law and the inherited cultural works are a testament to human weakness and suspicion.

Adeimantus makes the consequences of this suspicion explicit. Had the defense of justice been persuasive, individuals would behave very differently. If, currently, everyone who examines his or her own uncensored de-

sires believes that they are moved by the inherent appeal of injustice, then they rightly are on guard lest someone, similarly motivated, see an opening and seek to take advantage of it. Adeimantus holds out the possibility that such an understanding is not inevitable. If people could be genuinely persuaded of the value of justice, not only would they behave differently, they would also understand themselves differently. They would focus their attention on cultivating justice. If people had been persuaded of the value of justice, then "each man would be keeping an eye on himself, afraid that by doing wrong he might admit the greatest of evils to share his abode" (367a). Understanding the value of justice, people would self-police. Their primary concern would not be how to restrain the behavior of others but how to insure that their own behavior was aligned with what justice demanded so that their soul would secure the goods that it naturally sought.

Adeimantus is clear that he and Glaucon need to make forcefully the argument that Thrasymachus attempted because it is the argument that has, in fact, persuaded most people. The brothers are aware of the inadequacy of the standard response to this argument. They view Athens as a city in crisis. The surface endorsement of justice carries no real weight with anyone; all secretly harbor a desire to be unjust. This desire has been untouched by any of the previous arguments. If anything, it has been confirmed. Glaucon and Adeimantus know that if justice is to be defended and basic attitudes changed, a radically new and more powerful defense needs to be discovered. That is what they seek from Socrates. Adeimantus is explicit as to what is needed for a genuinely persuasive defense of justice:

Don't just demonstrate to us by argument that justice is something more powerful than injustice. Tell us what effect each of them has, just by itself, on the person possessing it, which makes one of them something bad and the other something good. You must strip them of their reputations, as Glaucon recommended. You must remove from each its true reputation, and give it a false reputation. Otherwise, we shall say that you are not defending justice, but the appearance of justice, and that you are not condemning injustice, but the appearance of injustice. (367b–c)

Argument by itself is inadequate, for even if it is successful, it leaves all the preexisting beliefs in place. He makes the point again that any defense of justice that depends upon an appeal to the importance of appearing just in public concedes the argument to Thrasymachus. If the general public is to be persuaded of the value of justice, then they need to see justice in an entirely new light. Given what they have been repeatedly told is important

about justice, they are right not to place a high value on it but, at best, to see it as an unpleasant burden and to be on constant watch on how to throw off this burden. For such a city, the maintenance of justice must always be unstable and precarious, as the only thing holding the society together is the weakness of its people.

### III

It is worth asking why it is Glaucon and Adeimantus who take up the argument from Thrasymachus and challenge Socrates to make a genuinely persuasive case on behalf of justice. If, as Glaucon claims, it is not his opinion that the unjust man has a better life than the just man but that it is the views of the people, why is he assuming the role of spokesperson for a position that he does not hold? Ruby Blondell suggests that, as a dramatic device, Glaucon's disavowal of the position he argues for allows the dialogue to establish the value of "intellectual disengagement" (190). Since these are not Glaucon's and Adeimantus's actual beliefs, the arguments can be explored without generating the resistance that follows necessarily when characters see central beliefs or positions that almost always cut to the core of their identity being attacked. The brothers' identity is not staked in a way that is often a major obstacle for Socrates when he seeks to refute a particular interlocutor. Although she does not draw this conclusion, her analysis confirms that the dialogue's narrative structure arises in response to the rhetorical ineffectiveness of the Socratic elenchus. The brothers' lack of commitment to the position (such a commitment is a core requirement for the elenchus to work) frees up the discussion for a more rigorous scrutiny. Further, since the position that Glaucon and Adeimantus raise is attributed to the general population, any results of the discussion should have a larger application. Structurally, Plato's choice of Glaucon and Adeimantus transforms the standard Socratic refutation into something that looks more like a cooperative communal inquiry. G. R. F. Ferrari argues that Glaucon and Adeimantus are "quietists" (*City and Soul*, 13), young noble Athenians who have chosen to respond to what they see as the corruption of Athens by withdrawing from active participation in that life. As Ferrari notes, quietism is less a way of life than a reaction to current political corruption. As such, there is a question whether such a life can be maintained. Although Glaucon and Adeimantus do not subscribe to the vulgar understanding of justice, they do not really have anything to put in its place. Presumably, a successful argument for justice by Socrates would provide them with an important principle with which they could order their lives, even in a corrupt

world. For Stanley Rosen, Glaucon's eroticism and spiritedness and Adeimantus's sobriety and virtuousness represent qualities essential for the just city, so together they comprise an ethical presence necessary for the investigation of the just city. Further, their capacity to argue positions that they do not believe but whose intellectual force they can acknowledge makes them candidates for philosophy, which requires an openness to investigate all viable positions (68–69).

All three of these explanations are helpful in defining the role of Glaucon and Adeimantus, but there is a further and more important reason. Plato has given them a particular history that emerges as they speak. Glaucon challenges Socrates out of a genuine frustration. He is well aware of the standard defenses for justice. He and Adeimantus can tick them off like items on a list. They have been in or have listened to these kinds of discussions before, and the discussions have created their own form of *aporia*. Glaucon and Adeimantus are not convinced by the discussions but are, to use Glaucon's phrase, at a loss at how to respond to these arguments. If the standard Socratic refutation targets the incoherence within an individual's beliefs and values and is part of a larger process of self-knowledge, the problem of justice reveals a cultural or political incoherence. It is not that particular individuals are confused about who they are but that a city and the individuals within it do not genuinely believe in the values that ground and are necessary for the city. Socrates argues later for the value of a noble lie, but what he encounters in the existing city is a widespread, if unintentional, deception in which the citizens endorse a value—justice—in which they really do not believe. The current city is *de facto* living an ignoble lie. This is not a healthy situation.

The many negotiate this situation simply by not thinking about the apparent contradiction of arguing for justice while secretly believing the superiority of injustice and are content to accept a life structured by a value in which they don't believe. But those who do value a principled existence can neither accept the unreflective and unprincipled intellectual compromise of the many nor develop a satisfactory response to it. Hence, characters like Glaucon and Adeimantus are at a loss. Their situation is structurally similar to interlocutors who have been reduced to confusion by the Socratic *elenchus*. They no longer know what to say, and are in need of the assistance of philosophy. They do not share Thrasymachus's open contempt for the many, but they find that they are uncomfortable with what passes for common wisdom. The defense of justice is a practical problem for them, and precisely because it is a practical problem, they need philosophical guidance to move beyond understandings that are limited by the common wisdom.

So the *Republic* is organized to provide Glaucon and Adeimantus with the resources to make the case for justice in the larger public discourse. That is, the dialogue is organized as the rhetorical education not only of Thrasy-machus but also of Glaucon and Adeimantus. Because they feel currently unable to answer an argument with which they disagree, they hold any argument that Socrates develops to a standard that genuinely addresses the common view. If the dialogue is to convince them, as Ferrari rightly claims, to become active participants in public life, it is not because they are being groomed for any public position but because they will be able to make a philosophical argument available to the public in a way that is currently not possible. They are learning how to speak persuasively. They are receiving an education that will allow them to become effective rhetors in a democracy because they can challenge the standard, unreflective, and ultimately unsatisfactory defense of values that are foundational for a democracy.

The philosophical reach of this challenge is evidenced in the strategy of the dialogue. Socrates cannot respond directly to the popular conviction that if there were no other obstacles involved, individuals would naturally seek the unjust life. To reconcile the fact that people believe themselves to be drawn naturally to the unjust life with his contention that, given the nature of the human soul, people are or should be drawn to the just life, Socrates needs to develop a psychological theory that explains how people could so thoroughly misunderstand themselves. He must show that the appeal to nature is a suspect appeal. Socrates must demonstrate that what people take as natural inclination is, in fact, a product of a cultural construction and that souls are never available to people in an innocent or pre-political state but are always products of the culture into which someone has been born. As the dialogue will argue, people are educated by those poems that are their common inheritance and that have, in complex ways, helped shape what they find desirable.

If people are to understand why justice is valuable intrinsically, they need to understand better how their souls are structured. The argument for justice needs to be grounded in a psychology that runs counter to people's felt experience of the world and raises questions as to the self-evidence of that experience and its authority in argument. People need to be persuaded that they must discount understandings and desires that they think and feel as native to them. Whatever defense Socrates mounts, it has to be counterintuitive; and while counterintuitive, it will also, if it is to serve the purposes of Glaucon and Adeimantus, need to be practical. If people are to be persuaded that they need to be led intellectually to a new understanding of the soul, they need this understanding to redirect their energy and



commitment (their spiritedness) to this understanding, and they need to be erotically drawn to what this understanding discloses. The argument will be successful only if people come to desire to be just, knowing full well that the world is unjust. If they are to be persuaded that justice is something that they should value intrinsically, then the things that they desire have to change and, without the intervention of external force, their eros has to be redirected to a new object. For Socratic persuasion to work, his audience requires a psychological makeover, and, to accomplish that makeover, this dialogue itself must become the new form of rhetoric, one that is deeply poetic and thus capable of drawing its audience erotically to justice.

This need for a new understanding of the soul also suggests that it makes sense to look at the *Republic* itself as an instance of rhetorical education, one that seeks to be adequate to the actual psychological complexity of human beings. Rather than reading the dialogue as a blueprint of how to change souls by a prescribed educational program and social engineering, it is more productive to look at the rhetorical action of the dialogue as an enactment of persuasion that provides guidance on how to use poetry rhetorically to effect practical political and individual change, to the extent that such change is possible. And to the extent that readers are drawn into the effort at persuasion, the dialogue educates them on how to interrogate works of cultural rhetoric.

If we read Book 1 and Glaucon's and Adeimantus's challenges at the beginning of Book 2 as creating the context for the major discussion of the *Republic*, then it is difficult not to conclude that this is a dialogue in which Plato deliberately raises persuasion as a central concern. The failure of Socrates's refutation of Thrasymachus was particularly instructive, for it suggested that professional rhetoric was incapable of engaging in a productive conversation with philosophy. Rhetoric, as embodied in Thrasymachus, lacked the power to theorize its own agency. Although some of the responsibility for the failure can be attributed to Thrasymachus's limitations, it is clear that Socrates also has to bear some of the responsibility. He failed to persuade anyone present, even those sympathetic to justice, that justice is superior to injustice.

Book 2 puts persuasion front and center. The brothers' challenge is a request for philosophy to articulate a discourse that is effective with the general public. They are asking Socrates to take the place that rhetoric vacated when Thrasymachus was silenced. In asking for a discourse that is effective with the broader public, the brothers are also relocating the problem of justice. The assumption that injustice is superior to justice is not simply the belief of the class of professional rhetors. However ethically problematic

these rhetors may be, the more important challenge to justice lies in the unquestioned and firmly rooted common belief that people are naturally drawn to injustice and only the fear of punishment and the value of appearing just inhibit them acting on this natural desire. The currently existing defenses of justice have made political discourse into a cynical exercise in which no one, who is not naive, actually believes what he or she says. This is a serious discursive crisis even if it is mostly tolerated as a shared recognition of the emptiness of political speech. The problem for philosophy and for a non-manipulative rhetoric is how to address this belief in a way that could allow the public to rethink how it conceives of itself. If such a rhetoric were possible, it would be a resource for providing the public with agency, allowing the public to examine core beliefs and reconstitute itself.

There are two obstacles in particular Socrates must address because both have played a major role in persuading the general public that injustice is superior to justice and that humans have a natural desire to be unjust. The first of these obstacles is the way in which the culture has transmitted and inculcated its values. Whatever its intention, the poetic tradition from Homer to the tragedians has represented justice and human and divine motivation in such a way that the defense of justice has actually undermined belief in the worth of justice. What the poets and others have persuaded people to believe is that being just is unpleasant and that justice, in itself, is of no or little value. What is valuable is the appearance of justice. Such an understanding is an implicit endorsement of the value of hypocrisy; it provides a reason to seek instruction in manipulation. It assumes that at the core of public discourse is an unspoken collusion and that such discourse is inherently fraudulent.

The second source of persuasion arises from what might best be called the authority of introspection. When people look at what they actually desire, they find that they are drawn to injustice. This desire does not feel as if it is a social or cultural construction; instead, it feels as if it were a native impulse. People may pay lip service to justice but their allegiance to justice is merely a surface allegiance. It is required as part of an inherited orthodoxy in which no one believes and which is continually discredited as soon as one looks honestly at what he or she desires. If Socrates is to make the case that people actually value justice, he will have to persuade them that they are wrong about something over which they would seem to have unique and unequivocal authority. Surely, if someone knows anything with certainty, it is how he or she feels about something. To show that such understanding is wrong is a major challenge to any theory or practice of persuasion.

Plato has deliberately created a significant rhetorical challenge for Soc-

rates and for philosophy. If philosophy is not to be meaningless and discounted as naive and ineffective, it needs to become rhetorical. This does not mean adapting the current methods of professional rhetoric; these methods are not intended to address the types of difficulties that Plato has uncovered. Rather, philosophy needs to seek a theory and practice of rhetoric that can ground a genuine political speech. Plato has thus established criteria for judging the success or failure of the *Republic* as a discursive act. Is the *Republic* genuinely persuasive to a democratic public about the inherent value of justice? If it is, then how are we to account for Socrates's suggestion at the end of Book 9 about the futility of political action and consequently of the intelligence of focusing on self-cultivation (592a–b)? Such a conclusion would seem to concede that philosophy is not able to persuade the general public. If this is so, then Socrates has failed to meet Glaucon's challenge to provide a genuinely persuasive defense of rhetoric. But if we are not to take Socrates's conclusion of the futility of politics as a straightforward claim, what authorizes us to do so and why has Socrates made such a claim? At the very least, one can conclude that Plato sees genuine persuasion as both an important and a vexed issue.

## Confronting Obstacles to Persuasion

If there is to be a genuinely persuasive argument on behalf of justice, the democratic, nonphilosophic public has to change radically the ways in which it thinks about itself. The perniciousness of the casual manner in which cultural practices and values are unconsciously internalized comes out in the contrast in Book 4 between the need for someone to have a first-hand experience of disease if that individual is to be a good doctor and the need to protect someone who is to be a good judge from a similar exposure to criminal behavior (408d–409d). For the doctor, an experientially based understanding is essential for a full knowledge of the body and how to treat it. But for the judge, contact with criminality is not informative but corrupting. Such experience of criminality is deceptive because it can feel as if it provides access to a motivation that is a simple product of nature, and it obscures the ways in which that nature has been shaped by a cultural environment.<sup>1</sup> The assumption that internal states such as desire are naturally what they are prevents individuals from seeing the ways in which the common understanding is shaped by a psychological corruption that causes people to misperceive their own motivation. As Christopher Rowe remarks in his discussion of the analogy of the cave, “So we, the bulk of humanity, are apparently nature’s empiricists—except that, strictly speaking, we’re not even that, because what we see in front of us is no more than shadows. (We *think* we’re empiricists, if we think about it at all, but that’s a different matter)” (57).

This mistaken sense of our being empiricists is most apparent in the common belief about what constitutes wisdom.<sup>2</sup> As Socrates explains, the need to protect those potential judges from an early exposure to wrongdoing arises because such an exposure has the unfortunate consequence of giving a person a false sense of the natural appeal of doing wrong. Such an

interpretation of human motivation leads one to believe that justice is, at best, an external constraint forced on people to curtail a natural desire. In effect, a too-early and critically unexamined exposure to wrongdoing provides the basis for an understanding of justice as something that violates human nature. If one grants this common experience authority, the argument on behalf of justice is already lost. Those experiencing the world in an unreflective way are not in a position to understand how their experience is corrupt. If corruption is the norm, then it doesn't appear to be corruption. Socrates argues that the corrupt person, when he examines his own motivation, will, as a good empiricist, generalize to what all people think and feel, and that person will, in his clear-eyed view of the inherent drive in humans to criminal behavior, congratulate himself as being someone who is genuinely wise:

The person who is knowing and distrustful, with a long history of wrongdoing of his own, who regards himself as a criminal, but a clever one, can cope with people like himself when he meets them. His wariness makes him seem knowing, because he has the model of his own behavior to refer to. (409c)

To understand what motivates themselves and others, people naturally treat themselves as a representative model, and they use themselves as the standard to measure the behavior of others and to evaluate what constitutes appropriate behavior. Judging this way, people have little awareness of the ways in which their motivations have been shaped by the internalization of the culture's values. If anything, they feel that the culture either accurately or inaccurately embodies the values that are natural to them. In this, it is not so much that they are wrong but that their understanding is incomplete. They need to be educated so that they no longer believe that the soul's desires are a simple spontaneous product of an autonomous and natural being. They need to understand how even something as apparently private and individual as the desires of a soul have been shaped by a culture and are never encountered in an innocent form. If they are to understand themselves, then the privilege they accord to their motivation as they experience it must be undermined. They must understand education (*paideia*), in its broadest sense, as the way in which a culture, either consciously or unconsciously, shapes souls.<sup>3</sup> If Socrates is to help Glaucon and Adeimantus persuade the people of the value of justice, he needs to develop an account of the soul and show how it is fundamentally shaped by the internalization of culture. He must, in other words, demonstrate that people's understanding of themselves is rhetorically mediated, and he must critique culture as

a rhetorically driven process. He must show persuasion is part of the fabric of everyday life.

## I

Anyone seeking to make an argument that depends, in part, on the nature of the soul has a problem. How does one investigate an entity that cannot be seen?<sup>4</sup> The soul that we seem to be able to access through introspection is, if Socrates is right, a corrupt and distorted version of what our soul is.<sup>5</sup> That difficulty is compounded by a second problem: if the soul that individuals encounter is a soul already determined in part by the culture in which it has been constituted, is it possible to see the soul in a state prior to its cultural determination? How does one persuade an audience of unreflective empiricists to be open to an understanding of the soul that is, for them, counter-intuitive? How does one mount a rhetorically effective philosophical challenge to the authority of everyday experience?

Socrates is explicit about the problems that his inquiry faces. He frames it as a problem of vision:

The enquiry we are undertaking is not a simple matter. If you ask me, it requires sharp eyesight. And since we are not clever people, I think that we should conduct our search in the same sort of way as we would if our eyesight were not very good, and we were told to read some small writing from a bit of a distance away, and then one of us realized that a larger copy of the same writing, apparently, was to be found somewhere else, on some larger surface. We would regard it as a stroke of luck, I think, to be able to read the large letters first, and then turn our attention to the small ones, to see if they did say the same thing. (368d)

What allows us or Socrates to recognize the shared text of the smaller and larger letters? He attributes it to good fortune, but that assuredly cannot be the reason. For if one had such difficulty reading the small letters, how could that individual see that the small letters share a common text with the larger letters? On the other hand, if the two sets of letters share the same text, the larger letters would be superfluous for understanding the text since the small letters are already legible.<sup>6</sup> Difficulties multiply.

To meet those difficulties, Socrates opts for a self-conscious analogical investigation of justice in the soul. He proposes to understand the soul by means of a rhetorical figure; the understanding of the soul that emerges will be a rhetorical understanding. To understand justice in the soul, Soc-

rates looks to justice in the city. But Socrates's choice immediately raises a question: What justifies this analogy? Why should anyone grant Socrates's claim that the two members of the analogy share something that makes the understanding of one of those elements productive for the understanding of the other? Stanley Rosen notes: "No proof is ever given of this isomorphism [between city and soul], which is instead a basic assumption that governs the entire discussion of the founding of the just city" (70). And Ferrari points out that the analogy of soul and city rests on a metaphor that was not in circulation in ordinary speech at the time:

It would not have been a metaphor familiar to Plato's audience from their cultural heritage. Certainly, it is not foreign to that heritage to conceive of psychological forces either as being in control of a person or, more rarely as being in control of other psychological forces. But that control is not depicted as political. (*City and Soul in Plato's Republic*, 62)

Socrates neither justifies the logic of his metaphor nor does he appropriate an available and accepted way of framing the relationship of city to soul.

Ferrari argues that Plato wants us to see his analogy as something that we need to question:

The proportional correspondence between city and soul is something Plato writes into the *Republic*, and he tries to ensure we see him writing it in. Because he brings it off by employing suggestions, interruptions, and diversions for the brothers' side, and cautious phrasing on Socrates' side—because he does it this way rather than having Socrates develop a straightforward and committed argument—he is in effect saying to us: "Be careful, now, with this city-soul analogy of mine. Don't swallow it whole. Certainly you should examine it on its merits; but do not *simply* examine it on its merits. Ask yourself why I chose to introduce it without justification. I chose to introduce it; I had my reasons; but I did not tell you my reasons. So think about what they were." (41)

In effect, Plato wants to remind us that the analogy is an analogy—that it is a rhetorical figure and does not give one certain knowledge. We should be skeptical about this analogy and remember that we are dealing with a model with which to think about the soul.<sup>7</sup> If the figure discloses, it also conceals.

If Ferrari is right that Plato wants us to look critically at the analogy of the city and the soul and not to accept it as self-evident, it is not accurate that Socrates provides no justification for that analogy. Socrates justifies

this analogy with what looks like an incredibly casual claim: "We say [*pharmen*] that there is justice in an individual, but also, I take it, justice in a whole city" (368e). Adeimantus agrees that we do say this. If this analogy is initially plausible, it is because we have authorized a similarity between the city and the soul through our ordinary speech. Even if we do not have a clear understanding of justice, we predicate the same quality with respect to both cities and individuals. So we must recognize that in some way, even if we cannot state it yet, cities and individuals share a property. At this point, all Socrates needs is an agreement that this is what we do, in fact, say. He is not forcing the similarity; rather, he is recognizing an understanding that is embodied in common speech and hence has the authority of common practice. Stanley Rosen makes a similar point: "We assume this [that we will find justice in the city we construct] because we already know from our experience of cities that they contain justice. That is to say, we already know what justice is; otherwise we could not recognize it when it appears" (71). There is undoubtedly circularity to this understanding. Still, we can credit the purpose of the analogy as seeking to help us hold in a new way something that we already believe.

Having established that in ordinary speech justice can be predicated of both individuals and cities, Socrates must show this shared predication allows individuals to understand better the nature of the soul. But that is not what he does. Instead, he applies the example of big and small letters to the city and the soul, arguing that the best way to understand the more obscure member of the pair is by exploring the more readily apprehended member: cities are bigger than individuals, so it is easier to explore the larger and apply what one learns to the smaller. At first glance this appears to be a very problematic and literal application of size and sight to city and soul. But Socrates doesn't actually tie size to sight. What he says is that justice is larger or greater (*meizon*) in the city and hence easier to apprehend or to examine closely (*katamathein*) (368e). The purpose of looking at the city is not literally to see justice because the city is physically larger but rather to explore the operation of justice in the city as a way into the operation of justice in the soul. There is something in the city that makes it more available for an inquiry into justice than would be possible if the inquiry started with the individual. Socrates does not explicitly say so, but the assumption must be that the forces operating in the city are more readily available for apprehension. Also, and more importantly, one cannot literally see a soul. An investigation of justice in the city that focuses on external and observable behavior would presumably allow one to grasp what justice in the soul is. Socrates underlines the tentativeness of his operation by cautioning that



they need to see if “they [the smaller and larger letters] really did say the same thing” (368d). Any theoretical conclusion must be validated against experience.

The peculiar nature of Socrates’s analogical investigation is evident in his choice not to look at any particular existing city. He makes the investigation into a conceptual inquiry by exploring the logical conditions required for a city to come into existence. Presumably all existing cities suffer from the same type of corruption as the individual souls, so they are not a promising field for exploration. But in what way is a conceptually founded city larger or greater than an individual soul? Certainly, it could be argued that the very complexity of the city makes it more difficult to locate justice there than in the individual. Ferrari argues that we fundamentally misunderstand the intent of the analogy if we see it functioning as a vehicle that allows Socrates to use the city to make discoveries about the soul:

It [the city and soul analogy] is not genuinely heuristic, no matter what Socrates may suggest to the contrary (434d–e; a passage to which we shall return). As an analogy it is genuinely illuminating, in the way that metaphors can be. But we are not to imagine Plato listing in one column what seems to be the fundamental types of good and bad constitutions, then performing the metaphorical calculations that will produce the corresponding types of good and bad individual, wondering all the while what will turn up in the other column. Nor should we imagine him trying it the other way round. The various matches are too clearly tailored to fit in advance. What Plato uses the analogy for is not discovery, but communication with the reader. (81)

If this is right, then the analogy functions rhetorically and not epistemologically. It is intended to help Socrates’s listeners (and Plato’s readers) understand the individual’s psyche differently by a process of defamiliarization. It offers a perspective of the soul that is different from either the internal investigation of introspection or the external observation of empiricism.

The analogy is important for another reason. It shows how philosophy operates rhetorically: it is a mimetic representation of an effort at philosophic persuasion. Analogical discourse is what the philosopher must use to communicate with the nonphilosophic public. To be effective rhetorically, the philosopher does not need to lead the majority of people through a dialectical investigation.<sup>8</sup> Instead, he must find a way to communicate to the public what dialectical inquiry has taught him.<sup>9</sup> To anticipate the parable of the cave, the analogy of city to soul is the type of discourse that one who has

seen the Good uses to help others break free of the chains of shadow appearances. If Socrates outlines in great detail the education that someone must undergo to become a philosopher, Plato does not incorporate that education into the *Republic*. The *Republic* does not offer a mimetic representation of dialectical education; it offers, instead, a mimetic representation of a philosophical rhetoric. As a rhetorical act, the dialogue seeks to persuade its audience of a counterintuitive truth. If the dialogue's audiences are to break free from the containment of an unreflective understanding handed down by cultural tradition and validated by the surface appearance of everyday life, they need to understand how they have been constituted by these forces. If one thinks of philosophic rule as not simply imposing the understanding of philosophy on a public, which would make that city, at best, a place of benign slavery and not a place of either freedom or justice, then philosophic rule must involve the reconstitution of individuals through the use of a rhetoric. This rhetoric must acknowledge the reasonableness of everyday wisdom, then call it into question, and finally it must provide an alternative vision sufficiently compelling that individuals are willing to rethink what they took as self-evident.<sup>10</sup> This type of political rule is a form of guidance. The self-consciously rhetorical presentation of a theoretically constructed figure is intended to begin the process of providing such guidance by allowing an audience to see differently what they considered to be a self-evident fact of experience. In this rethinking, they take the first step in breaking the chains of the shadow appearances that have left them ignorant of who they actually are. It is a counter-empirical move.

Socrates offers a supposition to see if his audience, in this case Adeimantus, agrees: "'Very well,' I said. 'The origin of a city lies, I think, in the fact that we are not, any of us, self-sufficient; we have all sorts of needs. Can you think of any other reason for the foundation of a city?'" (369b). The investigation follows a pattern established in the earlier aporetic dialogues: two interlocutors agree upon a statement representing what the discussants believe. The agreed-upon belief provides a place to begin and from which to test the belief and its implications. The statement that the origin of a city lies in our not being self-sufficient, however, is not simply a description, nor is it politically or conceptually neutral. One could imagine a Thrasy-machus, not currently silenced by chagrin, denying that true men are not self-sufficient and arguing that while lesser people may band together to meet their needs, that rationale does not apply to those who have large souls. When Adeimantus and others accept the statement that the origin of the city resides in individuals not being self-sufficient and consequently in needing others, that concession has already taken the argument a long way

in its eventual defense of justice. By agreeing to this statement, Socrates's interlocutors have committed themselves to a political discourse that posits mutuality as a foundation of political life.

## II

For the participants in the *Republic*, political life fundamentally implies a relationship with others. When people call a place a city, they mean that it is an organization of individuals bound together for the satisfaction of the needs of those members, recognizing that these members cannot satisfy all of their needs by themselves: "Different individuals, then, form associations with one person to meet one need, and with another person to meet a different need. With this variety of wants they may collect a number of partners and allies into one place of habitation and to this joint habitation we give the name 'city' don't we?" (369c). The city develops as a natural extension of human insufficiency and draws on the potential residing in human diversity. The city is, as Socrates says, a product of our needs. To understand the implications of this basic fact, Socrates and Adeimantus work through consequences of necessary association to satisfy needs. This allows them to sketch out a model of a city that is not influenced by the accidents of history. This model should disclose the necessary structure and relationships of the defining elements of a city that arise in response to human needs.

Both Socrates and Adeimantus have a fairly restricted sense of human needs, limiting them primarily to a concern with what is necessary for survival: food, clothing, shelter, and the few things that support these needs. Such a city acknowledges and capitalizes on natural difference, and it understands that not all actions within a city can occur simultaneously and be coordinated. By incorporating diversity it maximizes the production of goods, as each does what he or she does best. This primitive city is minimal and self-regulated by natural limits. Its citizens, having their basic needs met, live a contented and healthy existence. They do not have to contend with overpopulation, poverty, or war (372c).

Socrates asks Adeimantus where in the city are justice and injustice. Adeimantus is not sure but proposes that justice may be "some sort of need which those elements have of one another" (372a). Socrates thinks that this is a promising answer, and suggests that they explore it. In this minimal and natural city, justice is a second-level need—a need that is necessary if primary needs are to be met and the city and its citizens are to survive. So understood, justice is not a complex matter. It certainly is not a philo-

sophical issue, for one could determine what was just by asking the simple question of whether a particular action furthered the elements of the city acting together. This being the case, the minimal natural city does not look as if it will be particularly instructive in providing a rich enough discussion of justice to allow an understanding of the concept of justice adequate to the world in which we actually live. This city is too minimal. For the model to be genuinely instructive, it needs to be sufficiently complex to mirror the world in which people live. The inherent danger of theory is that it makes things too simple.

Voicing a complaint that must seem reasonable to most of the dialogue's readers, Glaucon interrupts the discussion, protesting that Socrates and Adimantus have authored a city of pigs (372d), a city concerned only with allowing people to meet their animal needs. Such a city does not consider that there may be other human needs. Precisely because this minimal city has an inadequate sense of human need, justice cannot be a philosophical issue for it. It is highly unlikely that conflicts would arise that would necessitate any serious reflection.<sup>11</sup> Simple calculation would be able to handle most conflicts, and if it failed and there was some sort of unequal distribution of goods to meet needs, then the city would perish soon and nature would have resolved the issue.

Glaucon's proposed luxurious city acknowledges that in creating a civilization humans have not simply organized themselves to meet basic needs but have transformed themselves, creating a life that goes beyond bare existence. The creation of new needs, however, is philosophically and psychologically important. How do we determine which needs further the progression of the human spirit and which corrupt it? As pleasures and pains multiply and also intensify, is it possible that rather than advancing and creating new opportunities for human richness and growth, civilized individuals have departed from their potential and become something that looks like a sick and unnatural animal? If the urban or the political is an important human creation—one that both involves a continuity with our nature and at the same time goes beyond that nature—how can it be determined whether this creation is promoting growth or enslaving people in hurtful and dissipative pursuits? Given this uncertainty and potential conflict, the city of more than minimal needs may well have stumbled on to a problem of locating, discriminating, and ordering needs, and such a problem is philosophical and productive in defining the importance of justice.

Socrates welcomes Glaucon's intervention as helpful in the search for justice: "If we look at that sort of city, too, we may perhaps see the point where justice and injustice come into existence in cities" (372e). Glaucon

is attuned to the importance of eros; he is moved not simply by need but also by desire.<sup>12</sup> Such a person contends with a different set of issues than someone who inhabits the healthy but minimal city constructed imaginatively by Socrates and Adeimantus. With this turn to the luxurious city, desire becomes part of the equation and, as a result, the world becomes more artificial and resembles more closely a historical city such as Athens. The character for whom justice is a live issue is the one who seeks an account of justice that works in the world as he knows it, and that world, for the dialogue, is fifth century BCE Athens, which is a cosmopolitan city and not a self-sufficient rural community.

Glaucon's city still originates in need. Need, however, is no longer a simple product of necessity. The expansion of opportunity means the nature of need changes. Civilization has fundamentally changed human nature. Many human needs cannot be traced back to a concern with what is necessary for survival. The creation of wealth has created both more and new needs. And as Socrates's quick summary of the luxurious city shows, the organization of this city brings into being genuine needs, and they must be met if the luxurious city is to be maintained and prosper. In the luxurious city, the concern is with creating the opportunities that allow humans to flourish and addressing the unintended consequences that follow from this expansion of opportunity.

Socrates rattles off a list of what must be introduced into this luxurious city: cooked dishes, furniture, perfumes, courtesans, painting, interior design, hunters, and all kinds of artists. This city is marked by an increase in the quality, quantity, and diversity of goods available. In this city, leisure is a feature of life. People seek out beauticians; there is work for chefs; a service industry arises to assist people with their normal activities or take over these activities and free people up to enjoy their leisure. But it is also a city in which people now have a need for doctors. There was no need for doctors in the pastoral city. But medicine is a genuine need in this new city. One cost of opulence is that health no longer follows simply from living an ordered and moderate life controlled by the need to survive. The relation of the body to nature has been altered. The pastoral city offered what looked like a spontaneous harmony between humanity and nature, and as a consequence, health was a simple by-product of this naturally balanced life. Detachment from a more natural environment makes health something that must be deliberately attended to. The observation of these new challenges to health doesn't have to be taken as a criticism of the new city, just a recognition that it generates a new kind of need. Harmony is no longer a necessary consequence of living in tune with nature, but now must be

a product of deliberate effort. In the pastoral city, order seems to follow as long as the residents abide by the rule of doing the one thing at which they are particularly proficient. If they do, then there is a natural balance. In the more elaborate city, this balance is achieved through consciously and deliberately creating and maintaining an order. It is a human and not a natural achievement.

This is most apparent in the final need that Socrates mentions. If the city is to maintain its opulent way of living, it needs to expand its territory and, in all likelihood, defend its own territory from neighbors who seek to expand their wealth. The appearance of the luxurious city has, thus, stumbled on another crucial complication that was not part of the model of the pastoral city. There is now a recognition that there are other cities, and with the existence of other cities, there is competition and the possibility of conflict. The isolated pastoral city had not given this aspect sufficient attention. Human organization is no longer understood to spontaneously produce harmony; rather, it has created conflict. In their search for justice, Socrates, Adeimantus, and Glaucon have discovered the origin of war. The possibility of war creates another need: the city needs a guardian class.

Unlike the artisan classes or individuals that arose in the pastoral city, the guardian class is not tied to production and does not exchange goods in the marketplace. The entrance of a guardian class not only attests to the increasing complexity of the city but also introduces a potentially disruptive element into this new order. As Socrates sketches out the natural abilities and dispositions of a guardian, something new enters the city: *thumos* (spirit) (375b). The person who is a genuine candidate for guardianship is moved naturally by a fierceness or aggression. Presumably *thumos* did not simply enter human psychology at the inception of the luxurious city but was always part of that psychology. This suggests a nostalgia at the heart of the vision of the pastoral city, and it discloses a desire to see a human nature in which genuine conflict could not arise. So it appears that the theorizing of the pastoral city was based in denial, as the simplified organization of the pastoral city suppressed that fact of aggression as a basic component of human psychology.

The recognition of *thumos* fundamentally alters the picture of human psychology and the relation of that psychology to political organization.<sup>13</sup> Political planning must now be deliberate, and it must assist in the creation of a personality that is artificial, one that is not simply an extension or development of natural ability. The natural marketplace is insufficient to constitute the nature of the guardian in a civically beneficial way. The guardian's nature poses a fundamental challenge to the city: how does the city

create a class that retains its fierceness toward those that might threaten the city yet remains gentle to the inhabitants of the city? What is to prevent a naturally aggressive person from directing that aggression against the community rather than using it to defend the community? This, of course, is what Thrasymachus claimed was the right and natural behavior of a superior nature. So if a person of strong natural spirit is truly to serve the interests of the city, then his aggressive nature cannot be allowed to develop unchecked. Nor can this nature simply be repressed, for that would lead not to health but neurosis.<sup>14</sup> A true guardian cannot be a product of nature but rather must be a product of social husbandry. If the city is to be protected, then it must develop an educational training that cultivates two apparently opposite traits (fierceness and gentleness) and bring them into an effective harmony that creates the class of guardians that serves the city.<sup>15</sup>

Socrates enumerates the qualities that they should look for in a potential guardian: he should be “a lover of wisdom, spirited, swift, and strong” (376c). With the guardian class, philosophy enters the city, not as something pursued for its own sake but as a necessary element in the education of the guardian. Philosophy is the source of gentleness and serves the city as the essential counterweight to aggression. Its purpose is primarily ethical—it has a role to play in constituting the character of the guardian. Education needs to bring into a harmony two powerful forces within soul, with philosophy controlling *thumos*. Absent education, an undisciplined *thumos* would bend reason to its own predilections, necessarily eventuating in tyranny. If philosophy is not needed in the pastoral city, it is a political necessity in the luxurious city.

It turns out that the education arising to meet this need may help Socrates, Adeimantus, and Glaucon locate justice. Socrates asks, “Will looking into that question [the question of the form of the guardian’s education] be of some use to us finding the answer to our main enquiry, which is how justice and injustice enter the city?” (376d). Adeimantus is convinced that it will. Justice as a human achievement arises from the foundational need to balance opposing drives within the city (and, by extension, within the individual)—drives that can be brought into harmony, although they do not spontaneously compose themselves in that order. The current popular understanding of justice as something not inherently desirable involves a fundamental misunderstanding of the cultural nature of justice. People may be right that they do not spontaneously desire justice, but the reason is not that they are drawn naturally to injustice but that the desire for justice is a cultural product. They have misunderstood what kind of desire the desire

for justice is. The origin of this desire is lost when one develops a notion of human psychology that argues from a set of brute desires as those that should be accorded status as natural human desires. What Socrates's discussion of the city has discovered so far is that the fact of political organization separates humans from a pre-political existence and that being a political creature creates a developed psychology different in kind from that which drives a proto-human being. In other words, the need to incorporate aggression appropriately into a personality essential for a city (or civilization) reveals that human psychology is necessarily a product of culture.

### III

Socrates has located how culture shapes basic beliefs and desires. Culture functions rhetorically, and the issue is whether it should be permitted to be shaped by an unreflective rhetoric or by one that has been deliberately adopted to create an appropriate and stable civic character. Traditional education is less a product of a cultural self-consciousness than it is an unreflective, if well-intentioned, effort at political self-preservation. Over time this education becomes naturalized and its historical origins lost. Its authority is, nonetheless, quite powerful. The act of deliberately designing an education calls this authority into question and demands that it justify itself and become reflective. This demand has tremendous consequences for the forms and practices that comprise the new education.

Socrates's first concern is with the temporal order of education. Since an identity is shaped early in a thing's existence, this "is the time when each individual thing can be most easily moulded, and receive whatever mark you want to impress upon it" (377b). To direct the growth of the soul, this education must begin early. This principle acknowledges that what has been taken as the manifestation of a natural and innate psychology is, in large part, the product of a culture.<sup>16</sup> An individual's environment contributes significantly to who that individual becomes. If the guardians are to be advantageous to the city, then their growth has to be a product of a deliberate education that seeks to make an individual who identifies appropriately with the interests of the city. A rhetorically informed education should preempt any later questioning of the city's ethical authority. A rhetorical understanding of how culture operates structures the city's institutions so that no occasion can arise in which the rightness of the arrangement can ever be called into question. The loyalty of the guardians is not the product of an argument but the consequence of their being shaped so that their percep-



tions, desires, needs, and thoughts are in harmony with their role as protector of the city. This education has two parts: on the one hand, music and poetry, and on the other, physical training. The music and poetry come first because they have the essential function of shaping the psyche of the guardians. The physical education subsequently contributes to and reinforces this psychic identity, insuring that the guardians have attained the physical conditioning necessary to carry out their role.

This education leads to Socrates's infamous suggestion that a serious education for the guardians requires the jettisoning of most of the work of Homer, Hesiod, the tragedians, the comedians, and many other poets. At best, he suggests, traditional education was rhetorically naive. The destructive consequences of this naïveté are manifest in the ways in which the young are unintentionally corrupted. Socrates has two concerns, both of which arise not from a quarrel with the purpose of traditional education (which also seeks to achieve an ethical constitution of the citizens) but from the consequences of that education on the young. First, much of the inherited poetic tradition tells stories that portray the gods and heroes falsely, encouraging young people who hear these stories to draw the wrong conclusion that such behavior is appropriate. The aggression and other instances of passions and desires being out of control are taken by these young minds as accounts of how they should think, feel, and desire. In this way aggression is naturalized and amplified. An uncritical worldview thus enters the soul and, masked as if it were the natural way to think, feel, and desire, it assumes, in the soul, a false authority. People mistake fundamentally who they are. Further, to the extent that there is no control over the dissemination of these tales, individuals are exposed to them differently and develop as individuals who do not necessarily share a common psychological constitution but are loyal primarily to themselves and their own interests. What makes the control of poetry especially important is that "the young are incapable of judging what is allegory, and what is not, and the opinions they form at that age tend to be ineradicable and unchangeable" (378e). Because the young have not yet had a rhetorical education, they cannot recognize a rhetorical figure for what it is. They are subject to a literalism that does not allow them to gain critical purchase on what is being said.

In consciously prescribing the content of the poetic education, Socrates is attempting to address the rhetoricity at the heart of human identity. Too often rhetoric is viewed as operating at a later stage on adults who already have fixed identities and is seen as appealing rationally, ethically, and/or passionately to these identities. Socrates understands that education is fun-

damentally rhetorical, and education employs such rhetorical devices as figures and images that work as models to inculcate values. These values, in turn, shape desire. Education persuades the young what the nature of the world is as an affective and desirative object.<sup>17</sup>

Socrates says that the poets “must not try to persuade [*peithein*] our young men that gods can father evil deeds, or that heroes are not better than men” (391e). Citizens are constituted through persuasion that shapes how these people see the world—it creates a political and cultural hermeneutic felt by the citizens as a natural and unmediated way of looking at the world. The rhetoricity of understanding is forgotten or repressed, and what should be understood as an interpretation is treated as a fact. A major reason for the current disvaluing of justice can be traced back to the cultural narratives young men have consumed and that have shaped them to be unaware of their own corruption. Such corruption needs to be challenged in two ways: first, by acknowledging the rhetoricity of education and then by developing a competing rhetoric that offers an alternative view of the gods and heroes. Whatever one may think about the desirability of a seriously restricted curriculum of only positive examples of divine and heroic behavior, the more important insight is in the deep rootedness of belief.

It is worth pulling back for a moment and commenting that while the *Republic* ostensibly argues for a certain kind of rhetorical constitution through a specifically prescribed curriculum, what it offers its readers is, in fact, a different kind of education embodied in the mimetic presentation of an extended act of persuasion. Presumably, Plato intends this kind of education or rhetorical constitution for the actual readers of the dialogue—the readers who have already been subjected to the cultural influences that Socrates would undo or minimize. In allowing people to reflect on the role of rhetoric in the transmission of a culture’s ethos, philosophy supports a kind of freedom by educating its readers about the rhetoricity of human discourse—a tale is a tale and not simply a truth.

The *Republic* persistently complicates our understanding of persuasion and shows how essential persuasion is to the constitution of both selves and cities. Socrates’s investigation of education as rhetorical practice argues that the power of discourse resides not only in the capacity to present certain behavior as desirable but also in the mode of imitation. Socrates believes that we are shaped by mimesis: we, often unconsciously, internalize models of behavior offered to us.<sup>18</sup> What Socrates seeks to channel is the way that mimesis “if long continued from an early age, becomes part of a person’s nature, turn[ing] into habits of body, speech, and mind” (395d). Over

time, these aspects of mimesis play a significant role in shaping the ethical and political constitutions of individuals and citizens; mimesis naturalizes culture.<sup>19</sup>

As is sometimes noted, Plato in the *Republic* does not follow the rules for mimesis that Socrates and Glaucon prescribe for the education of the guardians. This should not be surprising. The *Republic* is not intended as a text to be used in the guardians' education. For one thing, it has a different audience. Its audience has heard and incorporated psychologically the tales of the poetic tradition. Plato is not trying to use the *Republic* to inculcate a set of habits in this audience on the assumption that they are in a similar place to his imagined audience of young and innocent proto-guardians. Rather, he is trying to get them to see themselves differently and to understand how their beliefs have been shaped. If the *Republic* is a mimetic poem, its subject is persuasion. It needs to constitute an audience who can rethink its cultural heritage and value justice in a radically new way. However much Socrates might specify what is necessary for a guardian, Plato's concern is with the constitution of an audience that can be shaped by a philosophical rhetoric.

Socrates identifies persuasion as one of the guardians' two essential activities. He imagines the guardians acting both as rhetors and as audience:

Plus another mode for someone engaged in some peaceful, voluntary, freely chosen activity. He may be trying to persuade someone of something, making some request—praying to a god, or giving instructions or advice to a man. Or just the opposite. He might be listening patiently to someone else making a request, or explaining something to him, or trying to get him to change his mind, and on that basis acting as he thinks best—without arrogance, acting prudently and calming in all these situations, and being content with the outcome. (399b–c)

The mature and educated guardian is not someone who unreflectively follows orders. The guardians are not intended to be human robots. Their education is not to deprive them of freedom but to make them capable of a productive political freedom by freeing them from the possibility of a conflict between self and city. While obedience is certainly an important part of their civic responsibility, they are expected to speak and listen to others. In fact, their education is designed to allow them to be an audience in ways that the current citizens of a corrupt city cannot be. The guardians have been shaped by a deliberate rhetorical education to be a more effective community of rhetors.

The importance of a rhetorically informed design to education emerges

fully in a remarkable claim by Socrates. Having reformed the education of the guardians, he realizes that “without meaning to, we have purged the city we said was too luxurious” (399e). A purged city is a rhetorically re-constituted city. In such a city, the guardians are shaped by the belief in the absolute goodness and immutability of the gods and by the belief that good men necessarily act heroically. The guardians desire only to be good and hence they are loyal to the good of the city. Their native spirit, their *thumos*, is wholly in the service of the city, and the potential threat of division posed by a strong and innate drive for aggression has been eliminated by an internal psychological structure, one that sublimated aggression by directing it toward the service of the city.

This process of forming a soul's nature takes place over time and is deeply dependent upon the quality of its environment. One needs to surround those souls with graceful art, graceful buildings, and even well-designed objects.<sup>20</sup> This deliberately designed beautiful environment is necessary if a city is to avoid having citizens, and in particular guardians, who desire what is ignoble: “We don't want them [the young] browsing and feeding each day—taking in a little here and a little there—and without realising it accumulating a single large evil in their souls” (401c). The shaping of a soul is both continuous and unconscious. The soul takes in and incorporates the qualities of its environment and is constituted in such a way that it reflects the qualities of that environment. Socrates stresses the importance of a deliberately developed poetic education. This psychological process occurs at a pre-conscious or subconscious level. Socrates has a developmental model of psychology in which the psychological life of the adult is not simply a natural growth or unfolding of an innate potential but rather is the developed and embodied constitution of a living thing in response to its environment.<sup>21</sup>

Socrates compares this incorporation of the noble and beautiful into the soul to learning letters: exposure to the beautiful and noble creates an ethical literacy. Those who have incorporated these qualities into their souls can read the world as a text writ large and appreciate what is beautiful and equally what is ugly. If desire is an essential feature of the luxurious city, then exposure to a civic environment which is noble and good should shape this desire and create guardians who spontaneously recognize and desire the noble and beautiful. So it is not simply *thumos* that must be channeled into a productive tract by providing it with appropriate models and balancing it with gentleness, but also *eros* whose drive must be directed to civically appropriate objects by its exposure to and nurture by that which is beautiful and noble. In such a city, *eros* would not be a disruptive force but a factor reinforcing a beneficial political character. It is evident, at least for the time

being, that eros would pose no threat to the city. This is, of course, psychologically too tidy. Even as Socrates and Glaucon celebrate this love of the noble and good and conclude that the point of a poetic education is to culminate in the “love of beauty” (403c), they recognize the threat of disorder posed by eros. In their praise of self-discipline, they contrast it to a sexual drive that they label as more insane (*manikoteran*).

Spirit (*thumos*) is shaped by culture. Its development is complicated, and spirit can easily stray into destructive paths. If the education has the effect of weakening the spirit, it can make it “unstable—easily roused by trivial things, and as easily extinguished. People like this become hot-tempered and quick to anger rather than spirited; they are full of discontent” (411c). In such a case, *thumos*’s potential is not realized and becomes an atrophied version of itself. The person becomes trivial, unhappy, and unpleasant. Or if a person neglects a poetic education and devotes himself solely to physical training, such a person may appear decisive and brave but, in reality, is unreachable by rational argument and his life degenerates into one of “ignorance and stupidity, without grace of rhythm” (411e). A person so constituted only knows how to resolve a conflict by violence. Such a person is no longer open to persuasion.

#### IV

Socrates concludes his account of the education of the guardians and turns to the question of how to sustain order in this city. This is a tacit acknowledgement that the education that they have just designed is, in itself, insufficient to maintain civic order. The continual need for extensive control is a reminder of how precarious the civic order is and how liable and likely it is that such an order cannot be maintained permanently. Decay is inevitable, and the question is not one of maintaining a civic order permanently but of putting in place a process that most effectively retards decay, understanding that any human order—even the most artfully constructed—eventually succumbs to dissolution since it cannot possibly control all the contingencies that threaten its order. Although the education of the guardians is essential to the establishment and preservation of the city, it cannot by itself sustain the city. The city must have a way to choose rulers who can insure that its order is maintained.

The ruler must be devoted to the city, so emotional attachment to the city is a key criterion for determining who is the best ruler (412c–d). If the ruler loves the city, the gap between public and private interest is unlikely to develop. The city that can choose such rulers will have selected those

who can best promote the city's stability because the city has structurally insulated itself from the corrosive effects of private interest. Those guardians who manifest an unassailable love for the city form the pool of potential rulers. The city must observe these potential rulers over time to make sure that their love for the city is firm and cannot be shaken (412e).

The implications for rhetoric are significant. For Socrates, individual psychological structure is a function of belief. Beliefs can be lost for two reasons: when we have a false belief, we lose it with our consent because we come to understand its falsity (413a). But we also lose true beliefs, and when we do so, it is without our consent. We lose true beliefs without our consent when they are taken from us by theft, magic, or force (413b). The erosion of true belief challenges the assumption that the truth of a belief guarantees its stability. Magic and force offer parallel threats. Pleasure and fear are magical because they trick people into giving up true beliefs and turning from what people know as true to an interpretation that reorganizes the world so that it accords with what they want, regardless of whether it is true. Magical thinking offers one an understanding of the world as the way that one wishes the world to be, and reality is simply banished. When one loses a belief because of force, wish is not involved (413b). Rather, one is simply overwhelmed. In pain or in grief, there is a breakdown that feels as if it is externally imposed on the psyche. Unlike in magic, which involves some cooperation on the part of the individual, pain and grief are states that feel as if they are imposed from the outside. In their imposition they challenge the authority of the person's beliefs by exhibiting a world indifferent to those beliefs.

Theft works differently. Socrates lists two instances of theft: a person can have beliefs stolen when that person is talked into abandoning a true belief or when the person simply forgets what he or she believes. It is through theft that both rhetoric and the daily busyness of life impact belief, for both can cause a belief to be lost. This loss is analogous to a theft, since the belief is taken from a person and the person is not aware at the time that the belief has vanished. If true beliefs can simply be forgotten, this argues that in the normal course of living people can lose sight of what they know. The loss of belief does not have to come through unsettling experiences or deliberate acts of deception; it can happen as a matter of course in daily life. Finally, true belief can be taken away when people are talked into changing their minds. Persuasion is to be counted as one of the potential sources of political disorder. Rhetoric has the potential of being more powerful than truth.

Socrates poses three tests to determine the rootedness and stability of belief (413c–d). First, from childhood on, potential guardians should be

given a variety of tasks that could divert them from their purposes as guardians. These potential guardians should be continually observed to determine which ones remain steadfast. Second, the guardians should be tested through various trials that require them to endure pain and hardships. These trials would determine whose beliefs are held so firmly that they do not waiver even when it might be in the individual's interest to abandon or deny them. Third, they must test the guardians by exposing them to danger and then pleasure to see if they stand firm and reflect the values that have been inculcated through their poetic education. Those who passed these three tests would be candidates for rulers; the other guardians would now be called auxiliaries.

But even these elaborate tests prove insufficient to insure the stability of the city. There is a recalcitrance to this tendency to become disordered, or at least the persuasive value of order is not fully self-evident. Socrates does not trust a city, even one that is constituted by a rationally guided education, to embrace wholeheartedly the plan that is in its best interest. To insure that the best are chosen as rulers and that all accede to their selection, Socrates proposes that he and Glaucon, the city's founders, tell the citizenry a deliberate fabrication, one that will disguise the selection process and make it appear as the natural consequence of a divine plan (414b–c). This proposal is important for two reasons. First, it reminds us again that the achieved order of the city is precarious and that even the best education does not insure that a city will be well governed and orderly. Second, the act that is necessary to insure the seamless succession of order is an act of rhetoric. Socrates does not seek to impose order externally by force; rather, he opts for persuasion:

I have to try and persuade first of all the rulers themselves and the soldiers, and then the rest of the city, that the entire upbringing and education we gave them, their whole experience of its happening to them, was after all merely a dream, something they imagined and that in reality they spent that time being formed and raised deep within the earth—their selves, their weapons and the rest of their equipment which was made for them. (414d–e)

This myth of autochthony disguises the origin of the city, which was human need and the insufficiency of humans to meet their needs by themselves, and replaces that origin with a tale alleging that the citizens are bound together by a natural and genetic bond of mutuality—they are all the progeny of a common mother. This raises two questions. First, why

can't the city accept its origin in human need? Second, does Socrates really believe that the myth that he proposes could actually persuade people that they have been fundamentally mistaken about their upbringing and have taken for a truth that which was a dream?

The answer to the first question would be that if one thinks of the city as originating in need, then one would view the city primarily as an instrumentality to satisfy needs of the individual, and that perspective would conflict with one that sees the city as a human organization constituted by participation of all in a common identity. The second question—why propose a course of action that Socrates has no serious faith in its being practical—needs to be reframed a bit: what issues does the myth raise that must be addressed by any theory that hopes to be adequate to the difficult problem of maintaining a civic order in which some people are elevated to positions of power over others? How does one get the public to accept such decisions and without the unfortunate and unintended consequence of producing faction? The myth argues that the selection process must be disguised and not be seen as a humanly created instrument to maintain a human order. The narrative that holds the city together has to be one in which the civic order reflects divine intent manifesting itself without human assistance. The myth addresses the genuine problem that people in power naturally favor their own. There is a continual pressure to corrupt the process of succession, and the myth provides a public narrative that justifies the current political order as a meritocracy. It argues that loyalty should not be to one's family or offspring but to the city as a whole. Indeed, this problem of loyalty to one's biological family is so strong that Socrates eventually proposes doing away with the family altogether to insure that natural, but politically subversive, loyalties do not transform this radically reconstituted city into a traditional aristocracy. As soon as the decisions in which some are selected as guardians are made, it could easily happen that some become disillusioned and no longer conceive of a necessary coincidence between their interests and those of the city. They could come to believe that their worth is not recognized, so they should use their talents to pursue their needs and desires. At that point, the civic fabric begins to unravel. There is a fundamental irony at the core of political life: the need to secure order has the likelihood of producing faction.

Socrates ends the myth with a prophecy which functions as an admission that contingency will ultimately undo the human effort to maintain the humanly created order. He concedes that the god has prophesized that "the end of the city will come when iron or bronze becomes its guardian" (415c). All human order is temporal, and even a theoretical model of an ideal



city cannot finally evade the consequences of temporality. The myth, then, ends up returning to one of the fundamental problems that confronts the dialogue: any human order is ultimately governed by time and contingency and there cannot even be a theoretical guarantee that good or just behavior will necessarily bring good results. The theoretical difficulties are not so much failures as the serious rediscovery of the challenges faced by those who value justice.

Because the temptation to pursue private interest can never be permanently suppressed, the city must organize all aspects of the guardians' lives to minimize the possibility of private interest occurring and corrupting them. If the character developed by their education is to be maintained, their lives as guardians must be constructed in such a way that they have no sense of the private. They must live in a communal situation and have only minimal and absolutely essential private property. Socrates says that their houses or storerooms can be entered at any time. The lives that they live must be fully transparent. As Adi Ophir has noted, Socrates's construction of the guardian's quarters as a common space and his rule that they be open for inspection at all hours day and night can be read as addressing the problem of invisibility that Glaucon raised in his myth of Gyges: "The openness of space in the guardians' zone is not the result of a disintegrating system of power, nor is it peculiar to the power of an invisible Gyges. The possibility of a Gyges, but also of a system that makes Gyges an extreme case of transgression, is uprooted" (81). If human nature cannot be fully reformed by education, then it might be held in check by a set of arrangements that structurally suppress the occasions upon which a private interest may arise.

*Thumos* is something that needs to be controlled and directed. Without a proper education that is supported by a carefully organized life—a life whose every aspect is under the city's control—there is a natural tendency for aggression to follow private interest and to seek mastery over others. If this is so, then the public's opinion that people are naturally drawn to injustice seems right. Socrates may be right that this desire can be muted or amplified by a particular culture, but it appears that its fundamental orientation can never be redirected. Justice is an ongoing concern for people, as they seek to constitute themselves in the image of an ideal, and that ideal is not grounded in a basic human nature but in human possibility. Justice is not a natural occurrence but a human achievement.

There is an even larger problem that looms for Socrates's argument. In his and Glaucon's design of the Kallipolis, it was assumed that the problem of justice could be handled adequately as a problem of order and control. Philosophy might play a helpful role in clarifying the role of culture, but

once that has been accomplished, the problem of justice could be turned over to political technicians who, as good engineers, would keep an intelligently designed machine running well. Ruling well would be basically pulling maintenance on the machine. Socrates has carefully downplayed the role of eros in human motivation, but his young interlocutors will soon question him about this.<sup>22</sup> Eros will force Socrates to move beyond a technical response to the problem of justice and to look to philosophy as a resource for reconstituting desire.

The end of Book 1 and the beginning of Book 2 show the Socratic elenchus to fail rhetorically, but the new and innovative theoretical defense of justice offered in Books 2 and 3 has also disclosed some serious difficulties for Socratic persuasion. Each of these failures contributes to a large advance as Socrates and his interlocutors question and challenge their own discoveries. These challenges themselves demonstrate a possible resource for persuasion. They demand that if a discourse is to be persuasive, then rhetoric and reality need to line up. An elegant work of rhetoric is still subject to the pressure of a complex reality. The revisions and digressions of the *Republic* respond to this pressure as they seek to address adequately this complexity. If the argument of the *Republic* is to be persuasive, it can accomplish this only if it can transform the way that individuals understand the world. Persuasion is a complicated process of guiding one from a rhetorically naive position to an understanding in which that person is fully aware of his or her rhetoricity and hence able to take responsibility for himself or herself in a new way. For such an individual, theory is emancipatory and makes a praxis that is both revolutionary and more adequate to the world in which people live, even as it recognizes the limits of its own agency. The mimetic representation of a genuine persuasion responding to a political problem that can only be meaningfully addressed through philosophical inquiry offers a form of heroism both appropriate to and deeply needed by a democracy.

## The Limits of Persuasion: The Residual Force of Culture and the Unruliness of Desire

As Stanley Rosen, among others, points out, the *Republic* departs significantly from its own proposed plan to control civic discourse:

Neither Socrates nor Plato would be able to dwell within the just city they describe, without sacrificing an essential element of their nature. The *Republic* could not be published in the just city that it ostensibly recommends, nor could Socrates conduct the investigations among the guardians that are designed to move them to critical thinking about the human soul. (4)

Where the Kallipolis is designed to maintain an established order, the *Republic* is designed to persuade its three audiences—Glaucon and Adeimantus; the nonphilosophical audience for which, at present, Glaucon and Adeimantus have no persuasive defense of justice; and finally the readers of the dialogue—that they need to change radically their understanding of why justice is valuable. While much of the organization of the Kallipolis is explicitly intended to eliminate the possibility of innovation, the *Republic* is a self-consciously innovative discourse.<sup>1</sup>

The magnitude of innovation is registered in the dialogue's need to revisit and amend its emerging argument. The dialogue does not so much cast off earlier conclusions but complicates them and offers a more fleshed-out account of its claims.<sup>2</sup> Socrates characterizes this as a process of encountering a series of waves. Socrates is swimming against a tide: the anticipated opposition to his arguments does not so much arise from a concern with the logical force or adequacy of his arguments as much as it manifests itself as either an interlocutor's uncertainty about a Socratic claim or an imagined audience's incredulity with what Socrates said or implied. Innovation be-

gets resistance. The sources of this resistance are various: some of the resistance to his argument arises from Socrates's rejection of the deference given to aristocratic values and ideas and some from his transgression of democratic commonplaces.<sup>3</sup> At issue is not so much the correctness or validity of anything that Socrates has proposed but its persuasiveness. There is a gap between the way in which Socrates sees the world and the way that it appears to just about everybody else.

Even if a nonphilosophic audience does not hold its beliefs in a reflective way, these beliefs are connected to each other. The dialogue's awareness of the potential danger of undermining a system of beliefs is evident when Plato has Socrates explain that if someone too young is introduced to dialectic, it can have the corrosive effect of undermining the entire structure of belief (537e–539a). To examine fundamental beliefs is a high-risk business: it involves not only dismantling those beliefs but also pursuing the more challenging task of putting new and more secure beliefs in their place. For the argument of the *Republic* to work, its audience needs to be introduced over time to its more radical claims.

The disclosure of the argument through multiple revisions is strategic. The challenges often come as delayed reactions and occur at those points in the conversation when Socrates is about to conclude a discussion. The surface agreement gives way as doubts force themselves forward. Having considered the idea for a while, the audience is now troubled by some of the implications of the proposed changes. It is as if the interlocutors must digest a claim for a bit before they realize that they either don't understand fully its implications or are troubled by what they take those implications to be. The interruptions in the flow of the argument serve as a countermovement to theory's efforts to close the conversation prematurely by glossing over difficulties or troubling implications in its model city.<sup>4</sup> Plato uses these interruptions to call attention to places in which the persuasiveness of the argument is or should be in doubt. These challenges are Plato's way of warning his readers that his argument has not yet earned its authority and should be questioned.

## I

The opening of Book 4 parallels the opening of Book 2: each book begins with an interlocutor challenging a Socratic resolution of an issue. The opening of Book 4, however, directs a rhetorical challenge at the adequacy of Socrates's constructive efforts. Adeimantus complains that the reformed education and relatively ascetic lifestyle proposed for the Kallipolis's guard-

ian class are not likely to make those guardians very happy. Adeimantus's comment reveals a couple of things. First, it indicates he continues to adhere to an aristocratic ethics, so he has a difficult time imagining the worth and reasonableness of a political arrangement not leading to material benefits for the elite who preside over the arrangement. If one can assume that Adeimantus is not speaking merely for himself but as a representative of his class, then Book 4 opens with the reservations an aristocratic elite would have to the newly proposed political order. This is a problem for the design of the Kallipolis because Socrates's argument for justice depends upon the aristocratic class reconceiving its role in the city and, in particular, reconceiving the reasons that would induce one to seek power. Given the current ethical constitution of the city in which those who seek power are motivated by the pursuit of goods that result from ruling, Socrates's proposed innovations are unappealing. The proposed defense of justice requires the interlocutors to rethink their fundamental values. If Glaucon and Adeimantus originally thought that they were requesting an argument enabling them to defend values they held but which they had not been able to defend satisfactorily, then Socrates's defense has had the unintended effect of calling into question whether they understood what was involved in being just. The brothers want a defense of justice independent of its external advantages, but are bothered when the defense of justice appears not to entail material advantages to those who pursue justice. Adeimantus's comment reveals that Socrates's Kallipolis has not proven to be genuinely persuasive. However attractive it may be in its daring reimagination of a rationally ordered political existence, its theoretical innovation and logical consistency have not dislodged the hold of the current culture's values.

Secondly, Adeimantus's concern with Socrates slighting the happiness of the guardians brings the discussion back to a fundamental tension for any political organization. Can public and private interests be harmonized, even theoretically?<sup>5</sup> If the nature of private interest is to pursue goods or advantages that belong exclusively to a particular person or class, can a character or class that is not defined by such an interest be imagined? Given the psychological makeup of humans, is a guardian class as imagined by Socrates even possible? Socrates at first suggests that this problem can be addressed by persuasion, but ultimately he acknowledges that compulsion is required. How one understands compulsion has significant consequences for how philosophical persuasion is understood. Is justice achieved by the imposition of force or by the operation of deception still justice?<sup>6</sup>

Socrates reminds Adeimantus that their goal was to construct a city in such a way that the city as a whole, and not one particular class, was

the happiest city possible, for that is the city in which they would be most likely to find justice (420b–c). If the guardians are offered a version of happiness in which the performance of their duty as guardians leads to their accumulating private property, that conception of happiness will undo the character of the guardians and transform them from effective public servants into individuals who use their public position for their private benefit. If the rulers have private property, justice will no longer be the founding principle of the city. Private interest invariably and inevitably corrupts. This pull of the private is so strong that it continually threatens political life by providing a motive for the inherent movement toward tyranny. This harkens back to Thrasymachus's claim in Book 1: all rule is for the benefit of the rulers.

However much the masses may come in for criticism in the *Republic*, Plato is clear that it is the rulers and not the people who are the source of corruption in a city. Much of the arrangement of the Kallipolis is concerned with preventing the rise of a ruling class that will harm the city. This addresses a structural problem: there is a need for an unequal distribution of power in the city, but unequal distribution creates the potential for that power to be used for the advantage of the powerful. The structural requirement for ruling a city—the unequal distribution of power—creates a fundamental challenge for justice: those who hold power cannot rule in such a way that they benefit materially from their rule. The apparently natural drive to satisfy private interest must be eliminated by an educational system that creates guardians who are moved exclusively by public motives. Socrates's carefully structured life for the guardians is his effort to transform human psychology and eliminate private interest as a motive force for that group.

Socrates argues that as the founders of the city, they should persuade the guardians that their purpose is to promote the happiness of the city as a whole and not the happiness of a particular class (421c). So the Kallipolis originates in a rhetorical action. But it is reasonable to question whether this apparent turn to rhetoric is intended seriously, and whether Socrates is trying to persuade the guardians or whether he is creating a set of conditions in which choice has been eliminated structurally. The need for noble lies would seem to support a view that the city is neither founded on nor maintained by acts of genuine persuasion. The acts of persuasion within the Kallipolis are less an occasion for independent judgment and more an effort at ideological reinforcement in which a publicly constituted truth is shored up by discourses intended either to affirm its rightness or to disguise political manipulations—manipulations that are well-intentioned but nonetheless manipulative—by misrepresenting choices and portraying them as the con-

sequences of either necessity or contingency. In the Kallipolis, it is not the citizens who are just but the city. The citizens are, in effect, well-cared for prisoners. It is a cave in which a more wholesome spectacle is shown on its big screen than in the current city, but it, nonetheless, remains a cave in which vision is rigidly restricted—the chains are deliberate and not accidental.

Disorder is a persistent threat to the city. When asked to identify the source of a city's corruption, Socrates offers a succinct reply: "Wealth and poverty" (421d). If cities are generated in response to human needs, it seems as if there is no natural ecological balance (with the exception of the city of pigs) in which the satisfaction of need sets limits to the production and consumption of goods. Unless there is political intervention, wealth inevitably develops, and corruption follows. The guardians need to be on the alert to prevent economic disparity and the accumulation of wealth from entering the city "without them noticing" (421e). If the economy were allowed to develop naturally, it would undo a political order. Political order must be a product of a vigilant, conscientious, and deliberate effort at maintaining a balance that has a natural tendency to degenerate into a class antagonism.

Where Thrasymachus imagined a powerful individual driven by a natural ambition and energy taking control of a city, Socrates is less concerned with this type of usurpation and more concerned with a banal source of political transformation. He sees political life as subject to something like the second law of thermodynamics: order is always falling into disorder. The force driving this disorder is the unequal distribution of wealth, which transforms public order into an order of protected private interests. The only way to prevent this natural move to disorder is to shape and control human motivation in such a way that private interest is eliminated as a motive in those that rule. This enormous task can be accomplished only by creating a new shared narrative that would create a public ethos. Poetry, not law, is the source of political stability. Socrates assures Adeimantus that the city whose citizens are properly educated will not really require an extensive legal system (if it had such a system, that would be evidence of its failure). The important resource for civic order resides in the education of the guardians (423e), for the stability of the city depends upon the creation of a public character for the guardians. A carefully designed education eliminates the temptation to act on behalf of private interest, so the city does not have to legislate restraints on this interest. Socrates says that their "regime will be a kind of virtuous circle" (424a). If the education can be put in place, the city, more or less, perpetuates itself.

To insure that this education does consistently preserve the city, the

one thing that cannot be permitted is innovation. Innovation introduces disorder and can lead to the city being "destroyed accidentally" (424b). The city is imperiled less by the threat of external takeover and more by the ways in which the consequences of innovation cannot be controlled and undermine the carefully constructed order. Political corruption is not primarily a consequence of a mistaken *logos* or even of an aberrant or radical thought; rather, it is a consequence of the natural expression of private interest that, if left to develop on its own, sets in operation a series of judgments that undo political order. Consequently, political corruption cannot be countered by argument but must be precluded by a poetry that fosters the directed growth of a certain order of motivation. Political stability is a consequence of correct ethical constitution. Once this new education has been put in place, and it has been stipulated that the city should abide by the degrees of Apollo regarding sacrifices and other services provided to the gods and the rules governing the burying of the dead, the city can be considered as founded (427d).

## II

Socrates now returns to his initial task of providing a genuinely persuasive account of justice by working through his city/soul analogy to develop an account of the nature of the soul. The point of founding a city in theory was not to provide guidance on how to found an actual city based on this theoretical model, but to develop a model that could be used as a resource for gaining insight into the soul. It was the deliberate use of a figure to enable an audience to grasp better an entity (the soul) that could not be apprehended directly through the senses. Socrates is not so much conducting a psychological investigation through this rhetorical figure as he is making the soul available to his audience so that its members can understand how they have mistaken themselves. To return to Ferrari's insight, the analogy is undertaken for rhetorical purposes. The abstractly drawn image of the city allows Socrates to present a figured understanding of the soul. Following the logic of the figure, the soul, like a city, has diverse elements that have the potential to be organized into a hierarchic order necessary for psychic stability and purposive and coordinated action. To accept the city/soul analogy is to accept a certain way of viewing the soul so that justice can be seen as something crucial to the individual. It is an essential move in an effort at persuasion.

Socrates provides a brief list of qualities that a well-ordered city would possess: wisdom, courage, self-discipline and justice. While this is a reason-



able list, he provides no explicit argument for why these four qualities and only these four qualities are what should be expected in the well-ordered city. No one challenges this list, but that does not mean that it should be considered as a self-evidently correct account of the qualities that follow upon the right ordering of a city. I mention this not to criticize the list but to point out that it cannot be treated as a definitive account of the city. Clearly, this is not an effort at dialectic. Socrates identifies the first three qualities and the remaining quality should be justice. Again, he does not justify this way of proceeding and explain why wisdom or courage or self-discipline is more easily recognized than justice. One is left to assume that, for some reason, justice is more difficult to recognize and that it cannot be seen initially on its own. All of this should make a reader cautious about the conclusions reached through this analogical discussion. There is little of the rigor necessary for a philosophical inquiry. Authority is based in an agreement that is never questioned or challenged.

Socrates explains that wisdom and courage are located in the guardian class, for this class makes the important judgments for the city. Shaped by a poetic and physical education, its members are so constituted that they can resist the corrosive pull of pleasure, pain, fear, and desire in order to do what is best for the city (428b–430c). In contrast, self-discipline is not restricted to one class but a property of the city as a whole; it involves the willingness of the guardians to accept the responsibility for ruling and the willingness of the rest of the population to be guided by the rule of the guardians, a rule defined by wisdom and courage (430d–432b). Justice as the remaining quality turns out to be the principle that makes the functioning of the other qualities or civic virtues possible. The principle that each class follow its particular occupation and follow only that occupation is what guarantees the possibility and the stability of the well-ordered city—it is the principle structuring the hierarchy (432b–d). So justice is not simply one of the desired civic virtues; it is the virtue that makes the other virtues possible. Justice, as an inherently public and not a private concern, defines political existence. This explains why traditional defenses of justice have failed and were doomed to fail. Traditional defenses of justice were fundamentally mistaken about what justice was. These defenses tried to defend a public motive by showing its advantage to private interests—they sought to defend an end in terms of its utility as a means. This created a compromised argument that placed the ultimate authority in advantage defined in private terms and conceived of no inherently public values. But for Socrates, political stability depends upon there being values that are inherently public. It is the pos-

session of these values that define rulers who are fit to rule, educated as to the requirements for rule, and psychologically constituted so that they are moved by public and not private interest. The entire complex theoretical structure of the Kallipolis is to provide the best defense possible against the natural and inevitable assertion of private interest.

For Socrates, there are two great threats to the city, both internal (434a–c). The first is when a class or member of a class, misled by their success in their own area of expertise, believes that they are entitled to rule the city. The second is when a guardian not up to the task of ruling is appointed to rule. In each of these cases, justice is undone, not so much because of a deliberate attempt to be unjust but because of an inability to see where the true interests of the city lie. Good intentions by themselves are not sufficient to allow one to achieve justice; one must be moved by a feeling of public interest and able to recognize how best to pursue that interest in a given situation. If the principle of justice is expressed as the rule that each should follow his or her own occupation, the larger concern behind justice is that the interest governing the city be one based on an understanding of those goods and of their relationships to each other that are necessary if a city is to be a unified whole that can effectively serve the appropriate needs of all of its members.

Given this understanding of the city, Socrates and Glaucon should now look to the soul as a purposively organized hierarchy. But even as they embark upon this inquiry, Socrates cautions Glaucon that the conclusions that they have reached lack precision and that there is another way of proceeding that provides a clearer understanding of the soul (435d). This is Plato's way of signaling that this immediate discussion of the soul is inadequate. This initial account of the soul proves to be another instance of theory being too tidy. What Socrates has failed to address in his present representation of the soul is the serious power of desire.<sup>7</sup> But any account of justice that fails to account for the important presence and force of desire in human life must provide a domesticated and deluded view of human nature.

As Socrates unpacks the analogy of city/soul, the heuristic value of the analogy comes into force. Socrates wants his audience to reconceive their psychic lives by looking at the soul functionally. The analogy guides the way in which he locates the parts of the soul. To conduct this inquiry, Socrates starts with what is most basic to psychic life: he looks at desire (437d–439a). The logic of desire is to seek fulfillment and to persist until fulfillment is achieved. As soon as one recognizes this logic, it is possible to locate a second element because humans do not always simply act on their

desires. If that is so, then the logic governing desire requires that there be a blocking force in the soul. Socrates identifies this force as rational calculation (439d). So there are at least two separate parts to a soul: desire and rational thought. The model of the city suggests that there should be a third element that corresponds to the guardian class. If the analogy is correct, then the soul should have a spirited element (a *thumos*). The question is: is this *thumos* distinct from desire? Through the story of Leontius, Socrates shows it is possible for spirit and desire to come into conflict (439e–440a). So there are three elements to the soul.

The good and well-ordered soul should correspond structurally to the good and well-ordered city, and using the analogy of the city, one should be able to locate wisdom, courage, self-discipline and justice in the soul. The rational element is responsible for wisdom. Courage results when the spirited element is appropriately educated so that it understands itself to be subordinate to the rational element and supportive of its efforts. The proposed education of Books 2–3 is directed primarily at the *thumos*. The approved-of stories are intended to shape and direct the *thumos*. This education is ethical and not philosophical. If the education of Books 2 and 3 departs from a traditional education in its choice of stories that are permitted, it does not differ substantially from the manner of that education. The goal of this education has been to shape and strengthen the *thumos* so that it is sufficiently powerful to help reason control and govern desire. *Thumos* has a role to play in preserving psychological order; wisdom certainly guides the pursuit of psychological well-being, but the key element is self-discipline, as would be expected in a model focused on the civic role of the guardians. Since desire is “the largest element in the soul, and, left to itself, the most insatiable where material goods are concerned” (442a), there is a natural movement by desire to enslave and control the other elements of the soul (442b). This is simply the logic of desire: desire is naturally indifferent or not cognizant of anything other than the drive to satisfaction. Desire is constitutionally incapable of providing a principle with which to rule. Reason needs *thumos* to keep desire in line.

Plato reminds his readers that he is offering them a mimetic representation of an act of persuasion. He has Socrates caution Glaucon that the model of the just city gave them an image of the just soul:

So this principle, Glaucon—that if you are a shoemaker by nature, you should confine yourself to making shoes, if you are a carpenter you should confine yourself to carpentry, and so on—really was a kind of image of justice. Which is why it was so useful to us. (443c)

Socrates does not justify the image in terms of its accuracy but in terms of its utility—it allows an audience to understand better the principles involved in a defense of justice. A just soul, then, is to be seen as an entity in which the rational element rules with the assistance of the spirited element and in which desire allows itself to be ruled by the rational element. In the just soul, as in the just city, there is a purposive hierarchy in which each element performs its function and only its function. Civic order is analogous to psychic health, and the logic of the analogy argues that justice should be understood in terms of its fundamental contribution to this health. Thus, the discussion of justice has been relocated from a concern with external reward to a concern with the necessary virtues for psychic well-being. The analogy functions, in part, to prevent someone from confusing external correctness with what justice really is; rather, the just city is to be read as an image of an order that is internal to the individual. An externally correct performance is not necessarily an instance of justice. Fear or calculation of advantage (the two reasons most often cited in support of acting justly) may produce obedience, and this obedience may look like justice (indeed, it does to most people) but it is not justice, and it should not be equated with justice.

The rhetorical purpose of Socrates's analogical investigation into the soul is now clear: he wants to relocate the discussion of justice and to distinguish justice from what most people take justice to be. One key goal of the analogy is to change the basic terms of the argument so justice is no longer defended as a means to another end. While a just action may (or may not) advance a private interest or lead to a private advantage, the reason to be just cannot be reduced to the pursuit of interest or advantage. This has been the fundamental misunderstanding at the heart of the traditional and unsuccessful defenses of justice. What these defenses failed to see was that justice was something different in kind than interest and advantage. But this could only be seen if a more complex account of human motivation and of the nature of the soul was developed. Once that account was available, then justice could be evaluated in terms of its contribution to the foundation and maintenance of a unified psychological constitution. Socrates is developing a defense showing that there is an important reason to be just, but it does not involve a standard calculation of cost and benefit. He is relocating the argument from external advantage to internal order:

But the truth is that although justice apparently *was* something of this kind, it was not concerned with the external performance of a man's own function, but with the internal performance of it, with his true self and his own true function, forbidding each of the elements within him

to perform tasks other than its own, and not allowing the classes of thing within the soul to interfere with one another. (443c–d)

In using his city/soul analogy, Socrates's primary concern was not to specify roles for the citizens but to disclose the elements and dynamics that govern the soul.

### III

Because the discussions of political order and psychological order are intermingled, it is easy to assume that there is a fundamental continuity between the two orders. And the role of education points to the important interconnection between culture and soul, but one should not collapse one into the other. No political order is simply an expression of the psychological constitution of its citizens, and the soul of an individual citizen cannot be simply absorbed into the larger order of a city and merely reflect that order.<sup>8</sup> However much city and soul are entwined, they are not reducible to each other. Neither in theory nor in practice. The analogy discloses an important tension. The truly just individual is just because he or she has a well-constituted soul in which the parts function as they should because they are ordered in a harmony. In the Kallipolis, just individuals are not just because they understand what justice is and are motivated by a desire to be just; rather, their actions and attitudes have been shaped by beneficial lies by the city's leaders. The justice of the Kallipolis is a justice for the city, but it is not a justice that is the property of the individual. In fact, the Kallipolis is not designed to make just individuals. It is designed to make a just city, and a just city turns out not be populated by just individuals but rather to be ruled by individuals who are charged with maintaining order and are authorized to use deception to eliminate choice from that city. The intent to foster the growth of just individuals belongs, rather, to the *Republic*, and it will turn out that those just individuals inhabit a democracy.

If Socrates's analogy is intended primarily to serve as a theoretical model allowing him to locate justice in the soul, he needs to address explicitly and in more detail the model's implications for the lives of the citizens of the Kallipolis. Where Socrates would like to downplay the radicalness of his theoretical model, his audience wants him to discuss it more explicitly and thoroughly if they are to commit truly to what his argument will discover (449c–d). They want to test the adequacy of the theoretical model by pursuing its practical consequences. When Adeimantus and the others raise the issue of what Socrates means by saying that women and children will be

held in common, they are not necessarily objecting to his characterization of the city, but they want to understand more fully what it means and to what they are agreeing. Given the major restructuring of human relationships necessary for the Kallipolis, it is reasonable to explore in greater detail the implications of such a restructuring if Socrates's argument, with its radical rearrangement of existing institutions, is to earn its authority.

Although Adeimantus is the spokesperson for the group, others, even Thrasymachus, are genuinely interested in understanding the full import of Socrates's theoretical model (450a). They are trying to understand the consequences of reorganizing the lives of the guardians when these lives are defined by a new psychological order in which the guardians are moved only by public interest. Socrates's interlocutors want to know, in particular, what it means to hold things in common (449c–d). This concern is connected to another concern to which Socrates has given insufficient attention. He has underemphasized the importance and recalcitrance of desire in human life. His theoretical rearrangement of human psychology assumes that the sublimation of desire can be handled primarily in terms of the consequences of an ethical education in which reason and spirit collaborate to direct and control desire. Again, this theoretical resolution is too tidy, and if Socrates's argument is to be persuasive, then he needs to credit desire with the force that it has in most human lives. If the Kallipolis cannot address desire as it operates in the lives of most people, then the theoretical model is defective and, as such, cannot provide assistance in explaining the operation of justice in the individual soul. So what might appear in the dialogue as a digression goes directly to the authority of the model.

Any account of human psychology has to give eros its due. When addressing practical concerns, erotic necessity can prove more powerful than mathematical necessity. There is a natural persuasiveness to eros that can challenge the most powerful of artistic rhetorics (458d). This makes desire a fundamental concern for any theory of persuasion, and especially for one seeking to reorder radically the basis of human motivation. Any political theory that assumes that eros can be managed effectively has a tough case to make. At the very least, such an argument must acknowledge that it may not be possible to suppress eros fully or even to contain it by a carefully orchestrated management of human relationships. This goes to the question of whether the Kallipolis is possible, even in theory.<sup>9</sup>

For Socrates's Kallipolis to be even theoretically possible, the city must intervene into and transform basic human relationships. These relationships have been shaped by the natural occurrence of eros, by the contingency of time and place, and by the family as the basic social unit. Socrates

intends that the city control these erotic and familial relationships. But not only are the traditional relationships between men and women and parents and children to be altered, traditional roles in the city are to rethought and natural ability and aptitude are to replace gender as the ground that determines one's role in the city. It is not that men and women will now move across traditional boundaries and assume each other's roles but that women will no longer be excluded, simply on the basis of gender, from important public roles. The nurture of children will now be a civic responsibility, and the city will organize the care and education of these children. Children will be raised collectively rather than as members of particular families. The goal is to create a citizenry whose primary identification is with the city as a whole and not with particular elements of the city. Again, the effort is to eliminate the occurrence of private interest by psychologically eradicating that interest through the creation of an environment that does not allow such an interest to develop or prosper.

Socrates begins his extended response to Adeimantus's challenge with a caution that may seem *pro forma* but is not. He mentions that his concern in undertaking this discussion is not so much that he will make a fool of himself but that he will injure his interlocutors by leading them unintentionally into an untruth (451a). While this can seem to be simply a disingenuous disclaimer, there is good reason to take it more seriously. As Socrates explains later, theoretical discussions can themselves be corrosive and dissolve traditional understandings—understandings that, whatever their problems, do stabilize a society (537e–539c). A toxic skepticism is always a danger when traditional values are subjected to a rational criticism that may not be able to replace the emotional bonds and loyalties that a culture has developed over time with equally compelling new civic bonds. The danger of a partially persuasive theory or philosophy is that it accomplishes its negative task of debunking accepted truths but is unable to accomplish the more difficult task of providing a new justification for value. This failure produces a cynicism that encourages a self-interested behavior. The irony is that the attempt to imagine in theory the conditions necessary for an effective public interest may end up furthering the operation of private interest in the city. Socrates is aware that he is opening Pandora's box. Plato's recognition of this kind of danger is one of the reasons that persuasion is important philosophically; a failed philosophic persuasion, or a partly successful philosophic persuasion, or a successful refutation can end up encouraging and supporting the cause of injustice.

To explain what it means to hold things in common, Socrates turns to another analogy: he compares the guardians to watchdogs. His analogy al-

lows him to look at the assignment of roles prior to the intervention of a culture. Both male and female dogs can and do occupy the role of watchdog. Gender does not determine which dogs are most suitable for this role, and all dogs intended for this role receive the same training. This analogy argues that what are taken to be the natural roles for each gender in a particular society are a product of that culture and not of nature. That being so, it is not unnatural to treat men and women the same when that is appropriate. What looks like a radical rearrangement of culture and a violation of nature is, in fact, a recovery of what is natural.

As reasonable as this argument is, Socrates also knows that it will strike most people as absurd (452b). He mentions how this proposal would invite ridicule by the comic poets:

Well, now that we have brought the subject up, we mustn't be afraid of all the standard jokes we'd hear from humorists if we introduced changes of that sort of physical exercise [in which men and women exercised together naked], in musical and poetic education, and particularly in carrying arms and riding on horseback. (452c)

What he has located here in his anticipation of providing fodder for the comedians is a major point of resistance. Any proposal that runs counter to accepted understandings and practices is vulnerable to the charge that it is wildly out of touch with reality. At issue is not the logic or validity of the argument but its persuasiveness. A genuinely innovative proposal must clash with the commonplaces that embody the authority of the current culture. When the challenges to the commonplace involve rethinking gender roles and also create a potential discomfort about sex in the audience, then they raise even greater difficulties. A response that is only theoretical does nothing to address this situation. The question is, How does one preemptively defuse the possible ridicule provoked by the proposed innovation?

Socrates's strategy is to point to past innovations that, at the time, struck people as absurd. This is an argument about the rhetoricity of culture. Socrates's larger point is that innovations frequently produce resistance, but that this resistance can give way if the utility of the innovation becomes apparent. It is possible for function to trump culture, especially when a society understands the serious value of such a reform. The particular innovation that Socrates has to defend is his proposal that men and women exercise together naked. He argues that attitudes about exercising naked, although they may appear to be spontaneous and natural expressions of a sense of modesty or appropriateness, are cultural and subject to change. What ap-



pear to be unmediated responses to a situation are, in fact, determined by the accidents of a particular culture's history. The accepted practice used to be that men could not exercise naked, and it was only after the Cretans and then the Spartans adopted this new way of exercising, that it became clear it was more functional for men to exercise naked (452c–d). The utility of the innovation silenced the ridicule, for the activity no longer seemed preposterous but rather more natural. Socrates argues that the same logic should apply to the new exercise arrangements between men and women.

While this logic may be impeccable, it is still an open question as to whether the audience will credit it or whether it will persist in seeing the suggestion as preposterous. That is the rhetorical challenge that Socrates faces. When an audience responds with laughter—the reaction that Socrates imagines provoking in response to his revolutionary idea to not restrict the office of guardian to men only but to admit qualified women—it means that the argument must strike his audience as absurd and its author as standing outside normal understanding. Such a speaker appears to his audience as a fool and as having no appreciation of reality. For this audience, Plato has inadvertently written a comedy that can serve as a companion either to Aristophanes's *The Clouds* or to his *Ecclesiazusae*. As a potentially comic caricature, Socrates is in danger of being sneered at as the prototype of an out-of-touch intellectual. If he cannot forestall that response and address the apparent absurdity of his claim, any authority he might have had would be undermined and the possibility of persuasion would, thus, be foreclosed.

Persuasion is rarely accomplished through one speech or conversation, for a single argument, especially if it is counterintuitive, is hard-pressed by itself to prove sufficient to the task of moving a firmly grounded central belief. Such belief involves a network of convictions that develop in relation to each other and over time. The length of this dialogue is not accidental; it is dictated by the difficulty of the rhetorical task. To change fundamental beliefs requires extended discussion and multiple revisiting of points—attending to reservations and confusions that are necessarily produced when the rhetor leaves normal discourse and seeks to shift an audience's fundamental paradigms.

As Socrates is developing his preliminary response to challenges that men and women should, when appropriate, be treated the same, he pauses for a brief meta-discussion on the inadvertent slide into disputation (454a–b). As he did in his earlier caution about the danger of his unintentionally misleading the audience, Socrates uses this aside to address another problem that is central to persuasion. Here, he flags the difference between productive and unproductive disagreement, and he points out that people inadver-

tently fall into unproductive disagreement when they allow a discussion to become a competition. This is an inherent temptation within a rhetorical exchange. At issue is the need to distinguish genuine and productive disagreements from those that are merely verbal. It is easy to allow disagreement to become not a resource for further collaborative investigation and clarification but to become an occasion for triumphing over an opponent. This makes it imperative not to become trapped in a contest of verbal distinctions but to seek out conversations that locate and address meaningful distinctions. Since disagreements do not come already identified as either those requiring a serious response or those trading off of irrelevant surface differences pursued primarily for the sake of victory, the nature of disagreement is a fundamental problem for rhetoric. Rhetoric is always trying to avoid slipping into eristic. If change is to happen, then the rhetor and the audience need to see themselves working together on a common project, and not as antagonists seeking victory. The constitution of a just public may need private conversation. These conversations may provide situations where understanding can be put at risk and reexamined, and the most productive political discussion might occur among friends. If this is so, then public debate is not exclusively the area that furthers serious thought in political matters. The conversation imitated in the *Republic* argues for the importance of a kind of political speech and participation in political life that many may not have understood as being political. Without denying the importance of frank public speech and deliberation, the dialogue suggests that serious conversations among friends may be a better and more productive way to examine critically the fundamental values and commitments that shape the political constitution of individuals and cities.

Socrates uses the meta-discussion on eristic to establish a way to proceed that is intended to prevent the discussion from turning into a point-scoring contest (454b–d). In determining who should be a guardian, the relevant factor is natural ability, and these natural abilities are distributed equally between men and women. Those women who possess the natural aptitude and ability to be a guardian should receive the same training as men who possess those aptitudes and abilities. Thus, it is not the proposed practices in the Kallipolis that are absurd and unnatural but those of the current city (456c). In his inclusion of women as guardians, Socrates is not proposing the violation of nature but is arguing for an arrangement that will allow natural distinctions to emerge and flourish. His theoretical model has turned out to be a less artificial city than the current city of Athens, and equally it is the one that promotes nature rather than represses it. Because this arrangement is in line with nature, it has turned out to be a wise

arrangement. So despite any initial resistance, this is not a ludicrous proposal. Socrates has addressed the first wave that threatened to overwhelm his argument.

But if Socrates has managed to establish the minimal credibility for his proposal that qualified women should be groomed for guardianship, underlying the unease at this proposal is the larger concern that Socrates still has not credited eros with the force that it does have in most people's lives. David Roochnik has made a compelling case that Books 5–7 represent Plato's revision of Socrates's tripartite model of the soul:

Kallipolis, with its tripartite class system and the psychology it generates, represents an excessively arithmetical regime. It represses Eros and is too rigid, too dominated by the dictates of calculation. It is negated by the interruption of Eros at the beginning of book 5. As a result, the second wave of the dialogue is erotically charged from the outset, and books 5–7 significantly advance beyond the limitations of books 2–4. (68)

Roochnik argues that the original tripartite model of the soul artificially separated the soul into three distinct parts, and at the same time it had the effect of making desire into a "non-soul." Roochnik points out that as Socrates was about to develop this model of the soul, he warned that it was an open issue as to whether the soul was composed of parts (as the model was about to claim) or whether it operated as a whole. This warning turns out to be prescient, as the return of a repressed eros suggests that a model in which parts mechanically influence each other is inadequate to capture the fluid interrelationship of elements in the soul. And further, these elements cannot be fully distinguished. Roochnik notes that philosophy itself is only possible for Socrates because desire moves the philosopher to pursue reason. As soon as desire is taken seriously, it can no longer be treated primarily as an inconvenient fact about humans that can be addressed through the combination of an educational program that strengthens *thumos* and a skillfully deceptive set of politically governed occasions for sexual liaisons. Socrates may be right that human nature is malleable, but there are limits to this malleability.

If left to its own power, eros is indifferent to civic order. However much something like virtue may have a role in sexual attraction, eros is driven by physical attractiveness, the accidents of proximity, and a variety of other features. Its motive force is not concerned with the promotion and maintenance of any humanly made order but simply in its own satisfaction. It is governed by biology (possibly mediated through culture) and not logic or

ethics. Most importantly, if left to its own operation, it inevitably creates bonds and loyalties that are private and individual rather than public and civic. An unchecked and unrestrained eros will, as a simple consequence of its natural operation, undo Socrates's civic order. It will occasion competition and divided loyalties. And, as noted earlier, eros in a straightforward competition is more persuasive than logos or ethos. To address the problem of eros, Socrates proposes a set of arrangements that permits the expression of eros, but that expression is to be directed stealthily by the rulers. If reason cannot best desire when they conflict, Socrates hopes that reason can preempt this conflict with desire by harnessing it to promote civic purposes. A potential source of civic disorder would then be transformed into a key source of political stability. The dialogue's apparent hope is not so much that desire can be educated as its direction can be predetermined by veiled arrangements that give necessity the appearance of accident and that allow artifice to appear in the guise of nature.

Plato is aware of the enormity of this task, as is evident when Socrates acknowledges that the mere fact of proximity is sufficient to provoke sexual attraction (458d). Eros is moved in part simply by contingency. Since the city cannot permit haphazard sexual encounters, it needs to figure out ways to orchestrate these couplings so that they best promote the city's interests. The city's leaders must make plans that control the sexual lives of the guardians without the guardians knowing it. Presumably the guardians would not voluntarily cede this authority to the city. Socrates does not even suggest that the leaders make an argument to the guardians that these arrangements are the best—the best for the city or the best for the guardians. Apparently, the leaders have no confidence that desire will heed reason. Eros ultimately has only one loyalty—its own satisfaction. For this reason, the leaders have no qualms deceiving the guardians by rigging games and lotteries so that the matches that the leaders want occur (459d–460b). Also, special favors are to be granted to those guardians who distinguish themselves in battle or other arenas. In this way, chance and not the leaders will be blamed for any disappointments or frustrations.

The extensiveness and the complexity of this ongoing deception argue that it could not possibly work. Initially, Socrates has asked that the question of feasibility be delayed until later, but it seems highly improbable that such a convoluted plan could work and that no one would detect the hidden hands behind the arrangement. At some point, people would have to question the lucky fortune where certain people seem to prosper and have access to desirable sexual partners while others either have few or no satisfactory partners. Even in the subjunctive, this arrangement seems doomed.

Doomed or not, the arrangements are intended to solve three problems. First, there is an assumption that if nature is allowed to follow its own course, then human reproduction will be haphazard and lead to a decline in the quality of the offspring. If human excellence is to be achieved, it requires the active intervention of the state. Order is always threatening to dissolve into disorder. This continuing threat alone should alert any reader of the dialogue to the impossibility of the Kallipolis. Socrates's portrait of this ideal city is followed immediately in Book 8 by the acknowledgment that the fabric of the city is fated to unravel. Second, this arrangement is also an acknowledgement of how difficult it is to prevent the inadvertent occurrence of private interest or private loyalties. Since children are removed from their parents and raised collectively, a calendar has to be set up so that mating and subsequent births can be ordered in such a way that one will generically know that group of guardians are not biologically related to one, so potential incest will be eliminated. Even if such an arrangement could achieve an unlikely success and prevent biological parents and children from discovering their biological connection, it can do so only by introducing distinctions in terms of groupings by dates of birth. That, in itself, works against an undifferentiated loyalty to a single public interest. Groups will form; division will occur. Third, and most important, the arrangement acknowledges that politics cannot fundamentally alter the force of desire. Rulers may or may not be able to direct this force through a skilled and veiled manipulation, but desire is a fundamental part of human nature.

Socrates is not primarily interested in creating a sexually repressive culture; he simply wants to intervene and manipulate desire for the betterment of the city. He wants to stabilize the consequences of desire. In those situations in which there are no consequences, he is indifferent to how individuals conduct their sex lives (461b–c). For example, when one is past childbearing age, then those guardians can have sex with whomever they choose (as long as they fall outside the time bans when their children would have been born). Such sex is politically inconsequential. It is not so much sex itself as the consequences of sex that Socrates wants to control. The accidents of eros are new loyalties—loyalties in which attachment may be greater to the private than to the public—and innovations resulting from possible deterioration in the breeding stock. Interestingly, Socrates does not consider the possibility of unplanned couplings leading to new and unimagined human possibility. The Kallipolis is not intended to promote human progress but to maintain an order that can keep *thumos* and eros in check.

Socrates understands the power desire and affection command in human life. They either bind people together or pull them apart, and as such, they

raise concerns that are at the very heart of political life. At issue is whether the city is one or many. Socrates is explicit about the importance of this concern:

Well, then, can we think of any greater evil for a city than what tears it apart and turns it into many cities instead of one? Or any greater good than what unites it and makes it one? (462b)

Earlier Socrates had argued that it was the unequal distribution of wealth that eroded the city's common identity. Now he revises that discussion and argues that civic identity is dependent upon the ways in which pleasure and pain operate in the city. The ethical education that is to insure the stability of the Kallipolis cannot work if it simply produces a shared understanding. The more important sharing is affective. If the Kallipolis is to succeed, then it must be a community of shared pains and pleasures. There must be a common affectivity in which all participate. Affection, which is the source of the greatest danger to the city, turns out to be the foundation of its most enduring identity. A city that is not attentive to the role of affection in the lives of its citizens is condemning itself to instability. Affection can naturally produce fragmentation, as events impact people differently. If the world is a place where people have private lives, then inevitably they rejoice and grieve over different things. Common occurrences such as a birth, a death, an illness, or a success are felt differently by those who are closer to the people affected than by those who are more distant or who have other ties. The simple events of life contribute to the loss, or joy and enrichment, of a shared world.

To counter this inevitable movement to division Socrates would alter radically the nature of the family. If children are raised in common, then the bonds between particular parents and children do not occur. Instead, both parents and children share in bonds of general affection—biological attachment has been transformed into a common political identity. Socrates sees this change as eliminating the destructive dichotomy of "mine" and "not mine" (462c). The new self-understanding would be in terms of "ours" and "not ours." The new community would be a community of shared pleasure and pain, and its members would react instinctively in the same way to events that impacted any of them. If the original hypothetical origin of the just city was in a shared need, the foundation of that city will be in shared feeling. What brings people together is not what keeps them together, and an economic entity can endure only as an affective entity. Politics involves the deliberate redirection of eros and pathos from their natural occurrence

among individuals to a mediated occurrence that replaces the strong particular connections among individuals with a less intense but more generalized feeling for the city as a whole. The oneness of the city is an emotional oneness.

The reason, then, that the Kallipolis outlaws private affective or erotic relationships and holds all women and children in common is to create the community of shared pleasure and pain. In attempting to downplay this innovation, Socrates was not so much trying to avoid a discussion of sexual conduct as he was trying to minimize the extent of the change that would be required to make a city just, even in theory. The originally proposed elimination of private property for the guardians proved insufficient to found and maintain the Kallipolis. A more radical change was required, and the family had to undergo a profound transformation from being the basic unit of private life to being a public and shared form in which all participated. The natural force of eros and the subsequent loyalties that it engenders have been selectively directed into a communally shared set of feelings that preclude the occurrence of private interest. There is now a shared emotional identity and not simply a public spirit that arises by default when private property is eliminated. This shared emotional identity is what will stop the rise of private interest and private property.

But the radical transformation of current political life and the equally radical reshaping of the individual psyche if the Kallipolis is to be possible makes the question of feasibility even more pressing. The possibility and stability of this city seem so precarious. Socrates's elaborate system of control provides evidence of the force of contingency. So much of the city's organization seems designed to channel natural forces that ultimately can't be fully controlled. If Socrates's fundamental reordering of public roles and private relationships may have managed to dampen down the potential ridicule provoked by his new theoretical model, the feasibility of that model still needs to be argued convincingly. Socrates must address the practicality of his theoretical proposal: is such a city possible? His answer—that for this city, or any city that would avoid the suffering that currently besets all existing cities, we must turn to the philosopher and demand that he or she assume the position of ruler—will create even more difficulties for his defense (473c–e).

## The Argument for Philosophy

When Socrates finally and reluctantly addresses the question whether the Kallipolis is possible, he must defend what he knew would be his most controversial claim:

There is no end to suffering, Glaucon, for our cities, and none, I suspect, for the human race, unless either philosophers become kings in our cities, or the people who are now called kings and rulers become real, true philosophers—unless there is this amalgamation of political power and philosophy, with all those people whose inclination is to pursue one or the other exclusively being forcibly prevented from doing so. Otherwise there is not the remotest chance of the political arrangements we have described coming about—to the extent that they can—or seeing the light of day (473d–e).

If there had been any doubt that a genuine defense of justice requires a revolutionary discourse, that doubt has now been eradicated. As Rosalyn Weiss points out, this turn to philosophy is not merely the working through of the consequences of the Kallipolis, but is something new: “Philosophic rule, however, initially formed no part of the plan for the new city and so was not simply an underdeveloped idea in the way that other aspects of the Callipolis were” (44). The defense of philosophy is framed explicitly as a rhetorical problem—one that arises from the need to address an imagined outraged popular audience (474a).<sup>1</sup> The entire section in which philosophy is defended is presented as a dramatized effort at persuasion. It turns out that the persuasive defense of justice depends upon a prior persuasive defense of philosophy. Socrates is fully aware of the general population’s low estimation of philosophy (487c), and his discussion of philosophy is a self-



conscious rhetorical act designed to mollify an angry audience and to transform that anger into calmness.<sup>2</sup> This defense functions as yet one more version of Socrates's *Apology*, which seeks to change the public perception of philosophy's contribution to politics.

The imagined opposition to Socrates's claim that philosophers should rule is presented as instantaneous, intense, and likely to become violent. Glaucon imagines an audience so provoked by Socrates's claim that they are moved to assault him physically:

Really, Socrates! Here is what you can expect after a suggestion like that. You're facing a large and ugly crowd. The cloaks come off—practically hurled off. They're stripped for action. All that's needed is a weapon, any weapon, and they'll have launched themselves at you, bent on mayhem. (474a)

This response should be troubling, especially in retrospect when Socrates characterizes the popular audience as "easy-going and unmalicious" (500a). Weiss sees this imagined response as a projection by Glaucon of "his own dismay and alarm" to the proposal (16). But there is little to suggest that this is a projection of Glaucon's personal anxiety about the proposal or anything other than a straightforward register of Glaucon's anticipation of a popular reaction. Certainly, Socrates takes this as a problem rooted in popular perception. The question is: what in Socrates's proposal about philosophy has so outraged a normally reasonable audience that they spontaneously become violent?

Socrates makes clear that he does not hold ordinary citizens in contempt and that he is not talking about the practice of philosophy as they know it. His rhetorical strategy is straightforward: it is to demonstrate that he is not advocating for the condition that produces the anger (the apparent argument that those who are useless or harmful be given absolute authority in the city) but proposing a course of action that can easily be confused with the despicable practice which has appropriated the name of the honorable practice. He needs to argue that the current popular understanding involves a misperception of philosophy. He must establish the nature of the philosophy that he is advocating and explain why philosophy is currently useless and why people are correct in seeing those who claim to be philosophers as harmful. Finally, he has to make a case for the utility of philosophy. This necessitates a complex argument that raises questions about its own persuasiveness.<sup>3</sup>

Socrates's defense of philosophy rests ultimately on an appeal to nature: "The portrait of them [philosophers] will make possible a defence which demonstrates that some people are naturally fitted to both grasp philosophy and to be leaders in a city, whereas other people are not equipped to grasp it" (474b–c).<sup>4</sup> Such a claim must seem to be an unpromising foundation for an argument to calm anger, but it is essential to the defense of justice. The current separation of philosophy and politics is itself an argument for the present state of corruption: two capacities that should naturally go together now exist separately. Socrates's task is to get his audience to see what philosophy is and then explain why that which should occur naturally—the conjunction of philosophy and politics—has failed to do so. His hesitation in undertaking this task is understandable. He must persuade an audience that the world in which they are living is fundamentally out of line with nature—so much so that they do not even understand how unnatural their lives are.

## I

Socrates does not justify philosophy initially in terms of its epistemological or ethical superiority; instead, he starts from a property that philosophy shares with other human engagements. Philosophy is a form of affection. This again argues for the importance of desire for the dialogue; desire is the one quality common to all people. Socrates argues that a genuine love is one in which the affective relationship is with the class as a whole. A person's engagement with the whole class of objects of a particular kind determines the nature of a person as a particular type of lover. Eros fosters an orientation to life. To be an erotic creature is to be drawn to a certain way of living that responds to and seeks to fulfill that particular passion. In this fact of erotic orientation, the philosopher does not differ from other lovers. What differentiates the philosopher is the object of his or her love. The philosopher loves wisdom.

Socrates argues that those in love have "an insatiable appetite" (475c). The philosopher is a person moved by a natural inclination—a desire to love something—and this desire directs his or her actions. In being moved by a desire that shapes their lives, philosophers, then, do not differ from other people. The philosophers do not choose the objects of their love; rather, they respond irresistibly and naturally to the presence of that object and organize their lives around the pursuit of that object. If philosophy may eventually be identified as a human action that is drawn to the divine, Socrates identi-

fies the philosopher as one of a series of natural types. Love reveals one's nature. In being moved by the things they love, philosophers are just like everyone else.

Glaucon raises a concern about this quality of erotically pursuing wisdom as a basis on which to distinguish the philosopher from others, for there are others who are fascinated with learning and whom one might not want to designate as philosophers. In particular, he cites those spectators who are passionately drawn to the theater and who have an insatiable appetite for the spectacle that is theater. Glaucon's choice of example is not innocent. It points to the lover of learning as a spectator, as a member of an audience. What separates the philosopher from the lover of the theater is not the fact of spectatorship—both are spectators; it is the object that they are drawn to gaze upon that makes the difference. Socrates asserts that the philosophers are "spectators, but spectators of truth" (475e). The contrast between lovers of spectacle and philosophers helps us understand appropriate and inappropriate ways to read the dialogue. If the dialogue is read so that it stays on the level of mimetic entertainment, then the dialogue is not read rhetorically. To read the *Republic* rhetorically requires a reader to go beyond the surface and to understand the issues that the surface text both represents and distorts.

The dialogue is continually calling attention to persuasion as an issue. In responding to Glaucon, Socrates foregrounds the potentially limited persuasiveness of the argument that he is about to offer: "It's not at all easy to explain—to anyone else. But you, I think, will accept the following argument" (475e). Socrates does not explain why Glaucon is the particular audience for this argument or why others might have difficulty with it. But after Socrates has developed the first phase of the argument, he lets us know one source of resistance. He will be claiming that his argument may offend people by appearing to discount what they know as being only belief (476c–d).

According to Socrates, what distinguishes the theatergoer from the philosopher is the theatergoer takes the appearance of the many at face value and cannot see behind or beyond appearance. The theatergoer does not apprehend the one (the form) that is itself not an object of sense but informs the common identity in its manifold of appearances. Living in a temporal world of changing appearances, the theatergoer assumes that the connection between the various individual members collected under the manifold that provides the basis for their unity as a class is a loose one of resemblance. For Socrates, the logic of resemblance is evidence that the theatergoer exists in a dreamlike world, one not governed by the necessary connections

that support reality but by the associative and occasional connections that shape the world of dreams. The difference between the lovers of theater and lovers of wisdom is not necessarily that the lovers of wisdom are more intelligent (they may be or they may not be) but that they are drawn naturally to a different object than the lovers of theater. Their souls are naturally drawn to seek the one in the many where the souls of the theatergoers are transfixed by the ever-changing spectacle of the many. These theatergoers are exemplary representatives of the prisoners of the cave. They feel no need to go beyond that spectacle but are satisfied with it.

Socrates looks to how one who loves the spectacle of the world might respond to this argument: "Suppose the second man gets angry with us, the man we say believes and does not know. Suppose he challenges us, and says we are wrong" (476e). Socrates then explicitly raises a question about the possible rhetorical effectiveness of his argument: "Will we have any way of winning him over and gently persuading him, without telling him how unhealthy he is" (476e)? The persuasion that Socrates seeks is gentle persuasion. The serious rhetorical challenge is to convince an audience to abandon a system of beliefs and desires that have worked more or less effectively in the world and to replace it with beliefs that must seem counterintuitive. A rhetoric that is in service of a revolutionary position is by its very nature an exercise in non-normal discourse and must assume that it will be met with both resistance and misunderstanding. If it is to be effective with its audience, it must figure out how to present its case gently so that it allays resistance rather than amplifies it.

Socrates offers three definitions to explain to the theater lovers that they do not possess knowledge. Socrates and Glaucon agree that we can know something; we can believe or have an opinion about something; or we can be ignorant. If something exists, it can be a candidate for knowledge; if something does not exist, then the person who thinks he or she knows about that thing is ignorant; and if something is in between the existent and the nonexistent, then a person can have a belief or an opinion about it. Having established these three definitions, Socrates is in a position to explore the understanding of the theater lovers. He focuses on the claim of the theater lovers that beauty is plural by arguing that a thing can appear to have contrary qualities. It can be beautiful or ugly, or heavy and light, or any of a myriad of other contrary qualities. Consequently, people's evaluative standards vary, and that variance suggests that the appearances of beauty are not true and stable existents but something that can both be and not be. These appearances are thus not the real existents, and something else that endures must be. These appearances are things between that which truly exists and

that which does not exist. Hence, they are objects of belief and not objects of knowledge. The theater lovers take pleasure in and enjoy appearances but do not apprehend the unity that subtends the multitude of appearances.

The tentativeness of this claim is registered in the use to which Socrates puts that argument. For Socrates, the upshot of the argument's conclusion is rhetorical and not epistemological: he has aimed not to establish a set of epistemological distinctions but to move a resisting audience to a more friendly position. "So, we shan't be giving offence if we call them lovers of opinion or belief, rather than lovers of wisdom? It won't make them very angry if we describe them like that?" (480a). The point of this discussion was to reduce the audience's anger. Socrates acknowledges that there may still be a bit of residual anger, but presumably the audience is no longer in its original state of intense rage. At this point, he has been careful not to argue for the superiority of knowledge over belief or opinion. All he wants to establish is that there are meaningful ways to distinguish philosophers who are lovers of knowledge from the spectacle lovers who are drawn to the theater by distinguishing the objects that naturally draw their affection. This is an act of description and not evaluation, and that is why Socrates believes that it should not provoke resistance and should, to some degree, mollify anger.

Socrates acknowledges the account of philosophy that he has just produced has limited value. "Personally, though I think it could still be made a lot clearer if it were the only thing we had to talk about, and if there weren't a large number of topics still needing explanation before we can see how the just life differs from the unjust" (484a). He is underlining the point that this is an inadequate account of philosophy. He has not sought to show what philosophy is; he has only tried to address the important preliminary concern that the audience, in their anger, not reject out of hand the proposal that suffering can be eliminated in the cities only if philosophers rule. The previous discussion was rhetorical and not philosophical. For the present, Socrates feels that he and Glaucon have been sufficiently persuasive that he can now list the attributes of the philosopher. The philosopher has a natural love of learning and consequently is a lover of truth. He is also self-disciplined, not mean-spirited or small-minded, does not regard human life as important and hence has no fear of death. He is not a charlatan, coward, or contract breaker. He is not unjust but gentle and neither unsocial nor savage. Finally, he is quick to learn, has a good memory, and is not unmusical or unrefined. Having completed this list, Socrates concludes that even Momus himself could not object to philosophy so conceived (487a).

This declaration is followed immediately by a substantial objec-

tion by Adeimantus. This Platonic irony calls attention to unpersuasiveness of Socrates's argument. Adeimantus's objection functions as a meta-commentary on the rhetorical failure of Socratic discourse. He gives voice to a far-reaching skepticism that has not yet been acknowledged but is an important element in the popular resistance to Socrates's argument. He challenges not only Socrates's particular claims but also the genuine effectiveness of his rhetoric in general. He directly challenges the legitimacy and stability of Socratic argument; he asserts that it is not persuasive; and he makes clear how seriously out of line Socrates's account is with the reality that most people encounter. It is an important objection, and worth quoting at length:

No one could possibly argue against what you've said so far, Socrates. But I know what happens to people who at one time or another have listened to the things you've just been saying. As they see it, their lack of experience of question and answer allows them to be led just a little astray by the argument at each stage. But then when all the little things they've said are collected together at the end, it reveals a major error and contradiction of what they said originally. They are like beginners playing draughts against experts. By the end of the game they find they are trapped, and have no move they can make. In the same way these people find, by the end of the argument, that they are trapped and have nothing they can say in this rather different kind of draughts which uses words instead of pieces. But it does nothing to convince them that the truth is as you say. I say this with our present discussion in mind. I can imagine someone saying at this point that although he can't challenge the answer to any particular step in your questioning, in real life he can see that the majority of those who go in for philosophy—not the ones who dabble with it as part of their education and then give it up at an early age, but the ones who spend much longer on it—turn out to be extremely odd, not to say thoroughly bad. Even for those we regard as the best of them, the effect of the way of life you recommend is to make them useless to their cities. (487b–d)

Adeimantus has finally given voice to the suppressed objections of the many. He makes clear why people don't believe Socrates, and why the vanquishing of an opponent or a position has no practical consequences.

Adeimantus grants that no one could challenge the conclusions reached by the Socratic method. But even if they are right, these conclusions are deeply suspect and have no force. The problem is not logic but persuasion.

The many can and do discount the conclusions because they feel that these conclusions are the product of a more experienced and craftier veteran of argumentative discourse prevailing over a less experienced opponent. The contest was fundamentally unfair, pitting an amateur against a professional, so the outcome does not represent a real victory. The fact that his interlocutors end up in a place where they cannot make an effective answer to Socrates is not taken by them as evidence of the rightness of his position but as a consequence of his superior skill in playing the game. The result is that Socrates fails to persuade them; silence does not imply agreement.

This failure of Socratic persuasion is compounded by another important factor. The many have firsthand experience of a reality Socrates does not seem to acknowledge. If he is to change people's perception of philosophy, then he has to take far more seriously the ways in which philosophy appears and is practiced in the city. Any theoretical account that cannot speak to reality as experienced is *prima facie* a rhetorical failure. All such an account does is confirm for the general population that the theoretician is remarkably out of touch with the world in which all other people live. Given that, there is no reason to take seriously anything that such a theoretician might say. It would be either useless or harmful. By calling explicit attention yet one more time to the failure of Socratic discourse, Plato is making it as clear as he can that if Socratic discourse is to accomplish its task of defending justice, then it must develop a rhetoric that credits the legitimacy of the popular resistance to philosophy. He is stating philosophy's need for rhetoric in the starkest terms possible. It is not enough for Socrates (or Plato) to make a theoretical defense of justice and of philosophy; to be successful, those defenses must also be persuasive to the nonphilosophical audience which, in this dialogue, is made up of the citizens of a democratic city.

Socrates's defense of philosophy must start again, taking more seriously the views of the many. As a new point of departure, Socrates acknowledges that he thinks that the views of the many about philosophy are true (487e). To explain how this can be, Socrates turns once again to an analogy. Even here, Plato works at a meta-level, having Adeimantus comment teasingly and, with a slight sarcasm, express mild astonishment that Socrates is using an analogy, as if this were not Socrates's normal way of proceeding. This is one of the ways in which Plato underscores that analogical thought is fundamental to the *Republic*. The analogies work by moving from the structure of the known to a similar structure of the unknown; they are Socrates's mode for allowing his interlocutors and the many, in general, access to understandings that initially run counter to their experience and understanding of the world. They function rhetorically as a Socratic strategy for

getting people to see differently. By calling attention to them, Plato is alerting his readers to one way that a rhetor may negotiate the significant gap between revolutionary or non-normal discourse and the normal discourse of everyday. Socrates makes it clear that the analogy is constructed specifically to meet rhetorical needs:

The best of the philosophers find themselves, *vis-à-vis* their cities, in a situation so awkward that there is nothing in the world like it. To construct an analogy in their defence, you have to draw on a number of sources, like painters painting composite creatures—half-goat, half-deer—and things like that. (488a)

The analogy makes clear that the awkwardness in the philosopher's situation has no equivalent for any other person. It seems fair to assume that Socrates participates in this awkwardness, and that the analysis he offers of the philosopher's situation is applicable to himself. So analogy is a strategy consciously pursued by Socrates, one that allows him to use a rhetorical figure to communicate the insights of philosophy to the nonphilosopher. In defending philosophy through the analogy that he is about to offer, then, Socrates also elucidates the challenges faced by his own discourse.

Socrates's analogue for the city is an unruly ship. The ship owner is a stand-in for the rulers of the city, and these rulers are presumably the democratic population, a population distinguished by several characteristics: they are "somewhat deaf and rather short-sighted, with a knowledge of sailing to match their eyesight" (488b). The citizens resist good advice, and this resistance is compounded because they are not good at understanding where their true interests lie. The sailors represent those elements in the city that seek to control the owner. They assume that the owner is incapable of learning, so they are prepared to convince him by other means. There are three available means: persuasion, violence, and narcotization (488c). Special status is accorded to the person who is good at persuading the owner, and the other sailors call such a person "a real seaman, a real captain, and say he really knows about ships" (488d). These masters of persuasion are, of course, the sophists or rhetors, and their power is based not in any knowledge of what it takes to govern a city but in their understanding or attunement with what the citizens want to hear. Such rhetoric is a force in everyday political life and is esteemed by the audience. If the philosopher cannot find effective ways to address that audience, then it doesn't matter if he has a superior understanding because that understanding will not be credited by his audience. So it should not be surprising that as the



analogy develops, Socrates claims that anyone who cannot persuade the citizens is considered useless by them. That is exactly the current situation with respect to philosophy. It also argues that a defense of philosophy must show philosophy's utility and demonstrate its practicality. If Socrates is to do this, then he cannot speak merely as a philosopher because philosophy as a discourse is not persuasive for the citizens. The philosopher must become a rhetor.

Socrates argues that the philosopher is in a situation similar to that of a doctor. Professionals are not responsible for petitioning patients to allow themselves to be treated by the professional; that responsibility lies with those who are ill or who need to be governed. This is a semi-effective rejoinder. It may locate a moral responsibility for the audience, but if one follows out the analogy just a bit more, one could say that while it is not the doctor's responsibility to petition patients so that they submit to the rule of medicine, the doctor does have a serious responsibility to speak about what constitutes good health in a way that makes this understanding accessible. It is not self-evident when a patient should seek a doctor's help; not all illness manifests itself with obvious symptoms. Surely, one responsibility of a doctor is to inform people what constitutes a symptom that is worthy of attention. Precisely because the general audience misunderstands the value of justice, it is imperative that Socrates try to make them understand what is at stake in the defense of justice. This is especially the case because philosophy is not simply viewed as useless but as pernicious. If those who are true philosophers are unwilling to establish a public presence because their discourse is not credited by the general public, there are others who would fill this vacuum by assuming the name of philosopher. Socrates must account for the damage done in the name of philosophy. He then explicitly reminds Adeimantus that it was the failure of the theoretical portrait of philosophy to square with actual experience that brought the charge that the theory was not persuasive (490d). That is why Socrates must start again to define in a persuasive way the true nature of the philosopher.

## II

The public sees a corrupt version of the philosopher. This faux philosopher need not be a conscious charlatan; his corruption is something to be expected as the normal course of affairs in a city that does not understand the worth of philosophy. At work here is a failure to understand the role of culture in shaping nature: a corrupt environment contributes significantly to the growth of a corrupt philosopher, but that growth appears natural, so

the corrupted version of philosophy is understandably considered to be an accurate portrait of philosophy. This situation is as much a problem for philosophy as it is the for the city's perception of philosophy. What Socrates is arguing is that there is a circle: in a well-ordered city, a true and uncorrupt philosophy develops, and this true philosophy then has an authority with the citizens who allow that philosophy to rule. But if the city is not well-ordered, the most likely and most prevalent form of philosophy will be a corrupt version, and, in turn, this corrupt version will further the disorder in the city by seeking to use the city for the deformed philosopher's corrupt ends. So how does a genuine philosopher intervene in this self-replicating process and transform the political order and the current practice of philosophy? That question poses one of the major rhetorical challenges of the *Republic*.

One consequence of living in a corrupt world is that the very traits that should be a source of excellence for a philosopher become qualities that make the corrupt version of philosophy even more fearsome. Traits like courage and self-discipline, when put to the service of a corrupt individual, make that individual even more effective as a corrupt actor. As Socrates puts it, "So it stands to reason that in an adverse environment the best nature will come off worse than an inferior nature" (491d). The potential excellence of someone with a philosophical nature creates a vigorous individual, but that energy is now directed to corrupt ends. Such a person looks very much like the noble man whom Thrasymachus held up in Book 1 as a model of a truly magnificent human being. What he understood was the largeness and power of that person's nature; what he didn't understand is that the version of that nature was not a natural expression of excellence but a corrupt and culturally mediated version of excellence. The tyrant had not really risen above the accidents of historical circumstances but rather had been determined by those circumstances and was ignorant of the ways in which he had been determined.

Socrates takes pains to clarify that this corruption is a structural feature of the political organization and not the consequence of a deliberate and nefarious cooption by some group. He specifically asks the question: "Or do you go along with the general view? Do you think some young people are corrupted by sophists? Are there any individual sophists who do any corrupting worth talking about" (492a)? If the current commonplace is to attribute any corruption of talented youth to the sophists, Socrates wants to dismiss this idea as fundamentally mistaken. Such a view postulates in a simplistic fashion that a few mendacious teachers can shape a segment of the population so successfully that they can then influence the course

of political life. This comforting narrative treats corruption as outside the norm and as something that can be attributed to the moral failure of a small (and for the most part, foreign) class of individuals. Presumably, if one could suppress or control this group, corruption would be eliminated. Socrates dismisses this belief as naive.

For Socrates, the city itself is the source of corruption; in other words, corruption is a structural feature and cannot be eliminated by scapegoating a particular group. There is a dynamic of political influence far more important and far-reaching than the teaching of any particular sophist. The disconcerting truth is that opinions and values are not intentionally shaped by anyone but acquire their force by the repeated declarations of the public: "In the assembly, or in the lawcourts, the theatre, or on active service, or any other general gathering of a large number of people. They make a tremendous din, shouting or hammering their disapproval and approval—grossly exaggerated, in either case—of the things that are said and done" (492b). The size and enthusiasm of the crowd work to shape belief. The potential philosopher is not corrupted by a version of the crowd's values but by a caricatured version of those values. Civic discourse operates in a peculiarly distorted medium in which whatever reality may initially have been represented and possibly controlled by the discourse is replaced, without the deliberate or conscious effort of anyone, by a fantasized and extreme version of those beliefs. The torrent of this highly charged discourse sweeps all before it. There are no choices being made; rather, an event is simply occurring.

Socrates adds that if the force of public opinion somehow fails to sway the individual, then the force of physical threat is employed. But it is clear that such threat is not the primary reason that the potential philosopher is corrupted. Unless a particular person is fortunate enough to benefit from some sort of divine protection that preserves the philosophical nature, this constitution by public discourse cannot be resisted by anyone. The important and troubling opposition is not between sophistry and philosophy, but between philosophy and a public understanding that inexorably determines the nature of its audience. This public discourse is a property of no one in particular, but it is, nonetheless, everywhere present. It exists as a discursive fact of the city—one that has its own momentum.

The public, of course, does not understand its own situation. According to Socrates, the public sees itself in competition with the sophists for the control of political rule. The position of the sophists is ambiguous: they are both blamed by the public for corruption and also hailed by the public as wise. Socrates argues that far from opposing public sentiment and understanding, the sophists share it. Their effectiveness with the public arises

from their ability to give back to the public its own beliefs, a mirroring of beliefs and values that leads the general public to call the sophists wise (493a).<sup>5</sup> In confirming the public in their understanding of who they are, sophistic wisdom functions as a mode of psychological and political comfort. Socrates likens the sophists to the handlers of a large and powerful beast:

It is rather like someone keeping a large, powerful animal, getting to know its moods and wants, how to approach it, how to handle it, when and why it is most awkward and most amenable, the various sounds it is in the habit of making in different situations, and the sounds which soothe it or infuriate it when someone else makes them. (493b)

The sophists' understanding is empirically based and acquired over time. And it is effective. It generates an ethical language in which good equals that which gives the crowd pleasure and bad equals that which annoys the crowd. It is helpful to see the sophists not as intentionally debased political thinkers easily dismissed as ethically compromised individuals. They are communication theorists who believe that persuasion is simply an empirical matter of determining what works with the public. But the need for Socrates's defense of justice arose specifically because normal discourse, one that was empirically based, failed to discover a genuinely persuasive account of why one should be just. The rationale for a philosophical defense of justice is that philosophy is needed as a way to think about a set of fundamental questions that do not admit of persuasive empirical investigation. One of philosophy's important tasks is to challenge the adequacy of existing paradigms.

As good empiricists, the sophists take the world as it appears and feel no need to investigate the beliefs and vocabularies they inherit. Because their sole concern is effectiveness, and, consequently, they equate the good with what gives the crowd pleasure and the bad with what irritates it, the sophists don't need to ground their basic ethical terms in some larger understanding. The distinction between persuasion and manipulation is meaningless for them, for such a distinction serves no purpose in their way of proceeding. The only question is how the speaker gets the crowd to do what one wants. For the sophists, this makes rhetoric a technical discipline. In seeing the crowd as an animal to be appeased, the sophists function to domesticate desire and, although it is not their intention one way or the other, they foreclose the revolutionary potential of desire. Desire is not seen by them as a force that persistently drives one forward but rather as something that must be managed. Because the sophists' power resides in their abil-

ity to give back to the public a flattering mirror image that confirms the public's understanding of itself, change is not possible. Whatever it may appear to be doing, sophistic discourse does not lead or direct public opinion; rather, it follows that opinion and maintains the status quo.

The normal operation of public discourse and the sophistic interventions work together to preserve the authority of appearance. This has two important consequences for philosophy. First, because the general public operates only at the level of appearance, it cannot be philosophical. Second, "people who *are* philosophers will inevitably be unpopular with them" (494a). An obvious question follows: Is it possible, then, for a philosopher to discover a rhetoric that would permit philosophy to have some sort of purchase on public opinion and persuade an audience of the truths that philosophy has discovered? The *Republic* is aware of the importance of this question and has chosen to foreground it dramatically. It understands that, as a dialogue, it must provide an answer to that question, if philosophy is to be anything other than a deeply limited and esoteric activity and, as such, incapable of genuinely persuading anyone of the value of justice. For this dialogue simply not to self-destruct, Socrates has to make the case for a viable philosophical rhetoric. That will be the task of the remaining books.

Before undertaking that task, Socrates returns to the problem of the corruption of philosophy. In addition to what might be labeled the passive cultural opposition to philosophy, there is a more overt and active effort at coopting those with philosophical natures and convincing them to put their talents and energy to work on behalf of the city and its current values. Socrates imagines family and friends of the would-be philosopher doing all in their power to persuade this young person to join them in their own civic efforts. He suggests that these people will use flattery to bring the young person over to their side, and that one consequence of this flattery will be that the person will develop an inflated sense of his own self-worth and become consumed by a corresponding ambition (494c–d). By provoking and feeding an ambition that turns destructive and eventually harms the city, the general public actually contributes to the corruption that they abhor. Further, this public actively opposes and persecutes anyone who has the temerity to explain to this person the genuine value of following a philosophic life (494e). Given all of this, it is highly unlikely that those possessed of the innate talent and disposition for philosophy will pursue philosophy and far more likely that these natures will become corrupt and subject to an ambition that, in its deluded sense of omnipotence, ends up injuring both the person and the city.

Finally, the places of those who abandoned their natural attraction to

philosophy are filled by those who have no affinity for philosophy. This group has appropriated the name of philosophers. Its members are attracted to philosophy for whatever prestige it still maintains, even though they are not equipped to engage in the philosophic life. Since they are not able to pursue wisdom, all that they can bring forth is an illegitimate version of wisdom. Sophistry is their contribution to the city.

The forces of corruption are so overwhelming and nearly impossible to resist that philosophy endures more as a matter of contingency and luck than as a consequence of a natural ability to resist this omnipresent corruption. This is evident in the cases that Socrates mentions of those who have somehow managed to persist in the philosophic life. They owe this to such accidents as having the good fortune to have a political career be interrupted by exile; being a great mind born in a small town and not subject to the pressure of acculturation as it might have been in a larger city; or having the paradoxical luck of ill health that prevented someone from participating in political life.<sup>6</sup> Finally, there are those very few who, like Socrates, have received a divine sign. Socrates offers little hope that this ragtag group of misfits would be able to persuade the many that the majority view is, at best, simply mistaken, and, at worst, mad. In his metaphor of the philosopher as a person falling into a den of wild animals and refusing to participate in their activities, Socrates again emphasizes the violence and threats that are brought against philosophy (496d). Retreat and self-protection seem to be the only reasonable responses to this intractable and violent situation.

But even as he mentions this obvious solution, Socrates remarks that it is a deeply unsatisfactory response. Such a retreat is a lesser version of what the philosophic life should be; it is one in which philosophy has not realized its purpose: "And yet [living] a life here pure, free from injustice and unholy actions, and depart[ing] with high hopes, in a spirit of kindness and goodwill" (496e) is not "the greatest achievement either—not without finding a political system worthy of him" (497a). The highest form of philosophical existence involves participation in politics. When philosophy exists only as a process of self-cultivation, it is a diminished and unnatural version of itself. So Socrates has laid bare two hard truths: there is a deep and abiding resistance to genuine philosophic practice, and there is an inherent need and obligation for philosophy to contribute to political life. The question is, Can these two truths be reconciled?

This reconciliation is a high-risk operation, and Socrates frames the question not so much in terms of preventing injury to a philosopher but in terms of preventing the city from being injured by philosophy. He bluntly states the challenge as an apocalyptic question: "How a city can handle phi-

losophy without being destroyed" (497d). The harm results not from any deliberate malice but from an embedded misunderstanding of how the practice of philosophy should be conducted in the city. The current practice in which philosophy is pursued in childhood and then abandoned when the young person encounters the most challenging aspect of philosophy—its immersion in reasoned argument—creates, at best, a sort of dilettante who conceives of philosophy as a leisure activity. It becomes a practice bereft not only of rigor but, more importantly, of passion. Devoid of any utility, this version of philosophy has become a form of cultivated recreation. Philosophy should be encountered and cultivated in just the opposite way: childhood should focus on physical development, and only when one is sufficiently mature should he or she begin a serious engagement with philosophy.

Ademinatus remarks that once again Socrates has given an answer sure to provoke strong resistance. Adeimantus cites Thrasyarchus as an example of the vehement disbelief that Socrates produces (498c). Socrates's response is important. Rather than defend his position, Socrates chides Adeimantus for trying to make trouble between him and Thrasyarchus, claiming that the two have now become friends (498d). That, of course, is an exaggeration. While Thrasyarchus has certainly dropped his overt opposition to Socrates, and his continuing presence suggests a willingness to listen, there is little to suggest that he feels friendly toward Socrates. Clearly, he has become engaged with the argument. Earlier he joined with the others to request that Socrates provide a fuller explanation of what he meant by holding things in common (450b), which suggests that, at the very least, he was listening actively to Socrates. But it is not clear that Thrasyarchus has moved beyond interest in seeing how the argument eventuates. Socrates, however, now makes a point of including him in the audience. Socrates makes it clear that he welcomes Thrasyarchus, the representative of rhetoric, as a member of his audience, and that he is someone whom Socrates is trying to address and persuade: "We're not going to relax our efforts until we either persuade him and the others, or give them a bit of a helping hand for the moment in some future life when they find themselves in the same sort of discussion" (498d).

### III

Socrates is trying at this point to shape the future practice of rhetoric, or, at least, to provide it with some needed assistance, or possibly to broaden what is considered the appropriate domain of rhetoric. Socrates labels his

efforts as an attempt at persuasion. He is instructing rhetoric on how to speak when it addresses a particular set of issues, issues that are involved in the defense of philosophy and justice. This suggests that prior to Socratic instruction, rhetoric did not know how to speak to these issues. The other remarkable aspect of Socrates's claim is his suggestion that Thrasymachus and others will at some future date find themselves involved in discussions of this type. This would seem to imply that Socrates (and Plato) is fully aware that the *Republic* will not settle the issues of philosophy and justice. These are recurrent issues, and for this reason, it is imperative that we learn how to speak well about them. This also suggests that if there is a certain stability to philosophic conclusions, these conclusions are still subject to further questions. It may be a feature of a philosophical problem that it does not lend itself to a definitive and final solution. The point of philosophic conversation is not to bring an inquiry to an eternally fixed conclusion, not because it does not value such conclusions, but because its conclusions will always confront a world that resists them and that world itself is not fixed and stable. Because the world is unjust and because people neither understand, nor value, nor are passionately drawn to philosophy, the defense of justice and philosophy must be an ongoing conversation.

Presumably, as the world changes, the defenses of justice that might have satisfied it earlier will no longer work quite as well. Their loss of persuasive force does not arise from any limit or error in the argument but from the change in circumstances that can undermine their relevance. Socrates not only has no illusions about the possible success of a philosophical rhetoric but also deliberately underscores how limited that possibility is. His continual comments about the difficulties that his argument encounters are not excuses for his having attempted to avoid certain hard issues; instead, they illuminate clearly the extensive resistance to philosophical discourse and ultimately show how such resistance provides one of the most important reasons to undertake that defense.

If one needed a reminder of this difficulty, Socrates follows up his comments about his purpose of assisting Thrasymachus with a straightforward declaration of the failure of conventional philosophical discourse to persuade the public:

Mind you, it's no great surprise if people aren't convinced by what has been said, since they've never seen the fulfillment of our prophecy about philosophy—they may have seen plays on words, the sort of verbal similarities which are created artificially, but not the ones that occur naturally, as this one did. (498d–e)



For a philosophical rhetoric to have a chance of being persuasive, that rhetoric must arise from a set of natural circumstances. Again, this is the problem of contingency. The rhetorical crisis that provoked the dialogue turns out to be a stroke of good fortune. The defense of justice is a real and practical issue for Glaucon and Adeimantus, so there has been a natural discovery of a need for a philosophical conversation. This may be one way of understanding what compels someone in the cave to turn toward a philosophical inquiry. The failure of normal discourse compels some, although certainly not all, to strike out on a philosophical investigation. Initially, these individuals are not drawn into a positive pursuit of the philosophic life but are led to it because they find the current and inherited understandings unsatisfactory. They do not so much seek to become philosophers as they endeavor to resolve contradictions or address gaps in their own thought.

Socrates now suggests two reasons why people have not been persuaded that the vision he has developed of philosophy is the true one. First, people have never seen a person who completely matches virtue in word and deed. Second, they have not spent enough time listening to discourses that are motivated by a love of wisdom and that seek truth. What they encounter instead are “clever, combative arguments whose aim is prestige and competition, whether in the lawcourts or in private gatherings” (499a). Since the first of these possibilities—the encountering of a person who in word and deed is fully philosophical—is remote at best, the only real hope for the general audience is that they have the good fortune to encounter philosophical discourse. But what most people encounter as philosophic discussions are the aggressive squabbles pursued because of ambition and a desire for victory. To the extent that they only hear this eristic discourse, they have no reason to grant or even to understand the value of philosophy. Put another way, the case for philosophy (and for justice) cannot be put in purely philosophical terms. Plato understands this, and the *Republic* exemplifies how a philosophical rhetoric can be true to the practice of philosophy while making the achievements of philosophy available to a polis, acknowledging fully that it cannot radically transform that polis to conform to an image of a rationally ordered model.

Socrates holds open political transformation as a distant theoretical possibility, but his discussion makes clear that he does not really entertain any hope that it would actually happen. To begin with, philosophy itself seems incapable of initiating the change; rather, it would have to take advantage of “some chance event” (499c) that would compel the philosophers to take charge of the city. Describing it in those terms emphasizes the fact that the philosophers are not even seeking to promote change. If events

move the change forward and force philosophers to act, then they will act only if compelled. So nothing in the current political scene, or any political scene that could be reasonably imagined, supports the ascendancy of philosophical rule.

As pessimistic as such a conclusion sounds, Socrates does not pursue a pessimistic line. Instead, he offers a genuinely positive view of the general public as audience. The situation is not hopeless; the opposition to philosophy is not so recalcitrant. Socrates cautions against creating a false view of the general public as merely irrational and oppositional:

That's all very well for you, but don't be so hard on "most people." If you can avoid being antagonistic towards them, if you encourage them, and remove the prejudice against philosophy, they will think differently. You have to point out the people you call philosophers, and define the philosophical character and way of life in the way that we have just defined it, so that they don't think you are talking about the people *they* regard as philosophers. Or are you going to say that even if they do look at things in this way, they still won't think very differently, or give very different answers? Can you imagine anyone showing aggression or malice unprovoked—anyone easy-going and unmalicious, that is? I'll answer for you, and say that while I suppose a nature as unfriendly as this may occur in a few individuals, it does not occur in the majority. (499e–500a)

This is a robust defense of a general audience, one that sees the average person as potentially open to a philosophic rhetoric if that rhetoric does not put the person on the defensive. Socrates acknowledges that there is a minority of people who are inherently oppositional, who are unreachable in their rigidity, but they are a small minority. The fact that philosophy has yet to make an effective defense of itself, then, cannot be attributed to an audience who is determined to be unreceptive to argument.

To underscore that the distrust of philosophy should not be attributed to some implacable hostility on the part of the general public, Socrates argues that the blame for philosophy's current problematic reputation can be laid squarely at the feet of the faux-philosophers (495d–496a). He sees them as inescapably combative and as having continual recourse to personal attacks. Although these eristic characters may claim the title of philosopher, Socrates argues that their conduct belies that claim. The true philosopher's concern is not an immediate squabble, but the larger engagement with those images and ideas that disclose the orders that underlie the appearances in which we first encounter the nature of the universe. Rather than being a combat-

ant scrambling for power, the philosopher is moved to act as a political craftsperson. The political mission of philosophy is the constitution and maintenance of a city and citizenry who reflect as far as is humanly possible the rational order of the universe (500c). Politically, the philosopher is to be understood as a mimetic artist.<sup>7</sup>

As with any craftsperson, the good that organizes this particular art is not the advantage of the craftsman but the excellence of the produced artifact. This aspect speaks to the issue of compulsion. If the philosopher is a mimetic artist, then the rules of his or her craft compel or determine what is possible. They compel the artist logically; no one is required to be a philosopher, but if that person chooses to pursue philosophy, he or she is not free to pursue it any way that they want. If they disregard the legitimate constraints of philosophic practice, then they cease to be philosophers. The philosopher is not moved to enter politics to pursue personal advantage. Rather, politics is a domain in which the philosopher can practice his craft, but for that practice to be possible, the domain—the city and its citizens—need to be willing to cooperate. In the absence of this genuine cooperation, the philosopher cannot practice his or her craft. And if a philosopher mistakenly believed that he or she could impose order on an uncooperative city, then that would be a doomed enterprise, for any imposed order (any utopian model such as the Kallipolis) that was not appropriately internalized by the citizens would fail to reflect genuinely the rational order of the universe. Whatever surface similarities there may be, a well-behaved slave is radically different from a responsible citizen: it is the difference between an external and an internalized order. In the absence of persuasion, a person might be compelled to conform with rules that promote justice, but the person would not be just, only obedient. But if the philosopher, as a philosopher, cannot compel order without violating the nature of a true and just order, then the philosopher must use persuasion as the one available means to achieve this true order. Philosophy's obligation to be politically relevant requires it to locate genuine sources of persuasion.

Socrates is fully aware of how difficult it is to discover such a rhetoric. The good nature of the audience is not sufficient to give Socrates confidence in their rhetorical availability. Instead, he argues that it is necessary to erase the history and the culture of the current citizenry and make a fresh beginning:

They [the philosophers] would take as their slate a city, and the character of human beings. They would begin by wiping it clean, which would be far from easy. All the same, you should be in no doubt that they would

differ from other draftsmen in refusing, right from the start, to have anything to do with any individual or city, or draft any laws, until they were either given a clean slate or had cleaned it for themselves. (501a)

This is a remarkable claim. In effect, it negates what had appeared to be Socrates's earlier acknowledgment that the people were capable of listening attentively and noncombatively to an argument that the philosopher should rule. This premise—that the slate should be wiped clean—argues that it is not possible for there to be a gradual and progressive change of belief about what a just city requires. It seems to deny the efficacy of persuasion. And it assumes a fundamental gap between the people at present and the proposed people of the future. A serious tension is developing between Socrates's attempt to calm and eventually persuade his audience of the rightness of philosophic rule and his assumption that such rule is possible only if the audience is other than it is. If this tension is not to prove fatal to Socrates's attempt to calm the audience, then, at some point, he will have to explain how a philosopher might clean a slate without resorting to violence.

Despite the serious problems arising from the idea that the philosopher as "constitution painter" must somehow wipe clean the current slate, Socrates, nonetheless, remains concerned primarily with the question of whether he has successfully assuaged the imagined resistance of the audience. He asks Adeimantus if these imagined people who were fiercely opposed to philosophy are now calming down (501c). And Adeimantus answers that "if they are sensible, they'll be calming down a lot" (501c). The conditional nature of this reply should immediately caution any reader about the success of Socrates's efforts at persuasion. If Socrates believes that the general public has "become wholly amenable and persuaded" (502a), he undercuts the credibility of such a belief and suggests that the agreement might have another source: "That way they will agree with us out of shame if for no other reason" (502a). If the imagined audience agrees out of shame, then they have not been persuaded. Far from providing evidence for the success of an argument, shame indicates just the opposite. An act of persuasion has inadvertently become an act of combat, and that is precisely what Socrates does not want to happen if philosophy is to operate truly.

Socrates may not be as confident of his success as he initially appears. He concludes by saying: "So the position we seem to have reached is this. Our arrangements are the best, if only they could be put into effect, and while it is difficult for them to be put into effect, it is not impossible" (502c). That is a very weak conclusion. If anything, it argues that Socrates has been able to stave off, barely, the accusation that what he is proposing is fully un-

realistic. But it is also important to note that while the charge of difficulty or impossibility seems to be directed at the project of implementing a version of Kallipolis, the difficulty and near impossibility that Socrates has been addressing is the likelihood that an imagined nonphilosophic audience would even be willing to listen to a proposal that it considers to be either ludicrous or offensive. What Socrates has been trying to do is to create the possibility that his proposals will not be peremptorily dismissed. He characterizes this attempt as a struggle to a conclusion (502d), and certainly as the argument has been represented by Plato, it bears the marks of that struggle. One can imagine that even if an audience has been persuaded to be open to the possibility of philosophic rule, that audience could not agree to the rightness of such a proposal yet, for it has still not been demonstrated that the philosopher is, in fact, the superior character that Socrates has claimed. He must produce a rhetorical defense of philosophy that translates a practice beyond most of his audience into a set of terms and images that allow the audience the opportunity to understand that practice sufficiently so that they can see its potential contribution to political life and the necessity of allowing it, even if at secondhand, to shape them as citizens. If justice is to be one of the defining qualities of their citizenship, then Socrates will need to discover a rhetoric that can bridge the gap between the practice of philosophy (which is necessarily the province of the few) and the role of philosophical insight in political discourse, which is essential if justice is to operate in the city.

## A Rhetorical Account of Philosophy

As Socrates's struggles to get a nonphilosophical audience to not dismiss philosophy out of hand as a useless or pernicious activity has revealed, philosophy's abiding rhetorical challenge is to persuade a nonphilosophical audience of the value of a practice in which they are incapable of participating. To provide his audience with some appreciation of this practice, he now turns to an account of dialectic. To practice philosophy is to engage ultimately in dialectic, and, according to Socrates, one pursues dialectic only after a rigorous course of study has prepared a mature person to undertake this difficult form of inquiry (536d–537d). Given this understanding of dialectic, Socrates cannot provide access to philosophy by engaging the nonphilosophic audience in dialectic. Not only would that be a futile exercise; but more importantly, it could be politically corrosive. Near the end of Book 7, Socrates is explicit about the genuinely injurious consequences of exposing a person who has not been adequately disciplined in philosophy. Such exposure leads to an ethical nihilism (537e–539c). So Socrates cannot and should not communicate what philosophy is to a nonphilosophic audience by pursuing dialectic. He must find another way to effect persuasion.

If a nonphilosophic audience cannot possess philosophy's understanding of itself, that does not mean that it would not be responsive to images of philosophy that allowed the audience to understand philosophy's worth. These images could create an authority for philosophy and make philosophy as available as it needs to be for a nonphilosophical audience to become open to further argument about the need for and rightness of philosophical rule. Accordingly, what the *Republic* offers is not the actual practice of dialectic but an image of that practice. Plato's most famous discussion of philosophy—his image of the cave—needs to be understood not as an instance of philosophic practice but as an effort at persuasion aimed

at a nonphilosophic audience. In its presentation and defense of philosophy, the dialogue is not dialectical but rhetorical.

## I

To educate a nonphilosophic audience about the practice of philosophy is also to make the case for the promotion of philosophy in the city. For if the founding of the city depends upon the good fortune of either a philosopher assuming rule or a king becoming philosophic, no city could endure if it was so deeply dependent on accident. There has to be a better way of promoting the development of philosophic natures. Accident must give over to deliberate planning, and a political culture that values philosophy must be consciously created and preserved through the efforts of the founders of the city. If the just city is to perpetuate itself, then the production of philosophers must be insured by the institutionalization of a set of practices that promote and support the growth of philosophical natures. Philosophy must be transformed from a naturally occurring individual development into a deliberately shaped cultural constitution. This is, at best, a dicey proposition, as once again the effort to control contingency spawns a structure whose very rigidity and complexity render it unworkable (and possibly undesirable) in the everyday world in which people live.

Socrates does not blink from following where the argument leads, and that argument leads him to embrace boldly a claim that he was reluctant to advance earlier for fear that it would provoke opposition (503b). He now asserts unequivocally, "If we want guardians in the most precise sense of the word, we need philosophers" (503b). Complexity immediately asserts itself, and Socrates follows this assertion with a very straightforward statement of how difficult it is to find these philosophers. The philosopher's nature is not singular but a synthesis of two distinct propensities that move an individual in very divergent directions. On the one hand, the pursuit of philosophy requires a nature possessed of "a love of learning, a good memory, intelligence, quickness of wit, and everything which follows from those qualities" (503c). But such natures, precisely because of those qualities, are prone to be scattered and incapable of the steady and disciplined application equally demanded by the practice of philosophy. On the other hand, natures that are steadfast are often "immovable and unteachable, as if they had been drugged" (503d). The true philosophic nature must combine the positive qualities of each of these natures while avoiding their negative propensities.

Socrates adds one of his interesting comments that should alert readers

that the account of philosophy about to be presented is shaped, in part, by the limitations of its intended audience. As Socrates reminds him, Glaucon had been satisfied with the original account of the testing required to determine who were the best candidates for guardianship. Socrates says that he felt that this version “fell short of complete accuracy” (504b), but did not push matters because it seemed to meet Glaucon’s needs. Glaucon cheerfully agrees that what Socrates had originally developed did, in fact, satisfy his concerns, and apparently still does. This raises a question of how far Glaucon can go in the pursuit of a full understanding of what is involved in living a philosophic life. Although smart and well-intentioned, Glaucon may not possess a philosophic character. The dialogue shows him as courageous, erotic, and moved by a sense of honor, and that suggests that he may be a character best suited to be a guardian but not a ruler.<sup>1</sup> If so, then the account of philosophy that Socrates is about to develop is cast toward an immediate audience, who, although sympathetic to the cause of philosophy, is not fully capable of engaging in philosophy. In providing his account of philosophy, Socrates must figure out a way to make dialectic understandable to a character who ultimately cannot fully understand it. So it is not just the general public but also Glaucon who requires Socrates to become rhetorical and to engage in an imaginative act of translation that employs images to allow this audience to glimpse better what it cannot finally understand fully.<sup>2</sup> If Glaucon is more sympathetic to philosophy than the general public, he, nonetheless, shares the limitations of the general audience.

Socrates’s rhetorical challenge is to create an earned trust in his audience. They need to obey rulers, even if they do not fully understand them. This cannot be a blind or forced obedience because that would make the people slaves rather than citizens. Nor can it be manipulation because then the rule of philosophers would not rest on the audience’s cooperation with this just rule. Such a way of proceeding would again deprive the population of citizenship, except in name only. Instead, a Socratic discourse making the case for philosophic rule must seek to be genuinely persuasive, for only a rhetoric of that kind could lead to a reasonable and voluntary agreement with an authority that has earned the citizen’s trust. Presumably, this is an authority that will need to be maintained by continually meriting that trust. If so, then rule in the just city is deeply dependent on rhetoric. Philosophers will have to learn how to speak appropriately to the citizenry. If a potential philosopher needs an example of how to speak about philosophy to a nonphilosopher, Socrates now provides one. The discussion of philosophy in the *Republic* functions both as a persuasive account that allows



a nonphilosophic audience to appreciate the potential contribution of philosophy to a city and as a rhetorical education for philosophers, instructing them in how to make philosophy intelligible to the nonphilosopher.

The *Republic* is intended for those who do not (or not yet) understand the true nature of philosophy. This audience of nonphilosophers contains, at least, two types of individuals: those who either lack the passion or ability to become philosophers and those who currently are not philosophers but who can be moved to desire to pursue the philosophic life and are capable of enduring its rigors, if they understand better the worth of that life. The dialogue thus has to serve two different audiences. It has to encourage those with potential to be philosophers to pursue philosophy, and it has to explain to those who will not become philosophers what philosophy still has to offer them.

For Socrates, the movement toward philosophy begins when the mind encounters puzzles that cannot be adequately resolved through an empirical investigation, thus requiring one to go beyond an explanation rooted in data derived from the senses (523b–524b). The discussion of the good is paradigmatic of the discussions that give rise to philosophical inquiry. Two competing understandings of the good circulate among the citizenry. The more prevalent view is that the good equals the pleasurable, while the more sophisticated position argues that the good is knowledge (505b). But when those who hold this second view are pressed to say what this knowledge is, they are flummoxed and end up asserting that it is knowledge of the good and hence their definition is circular and does not advance our understanding. On the other hand, those who define the good in terms of pleasure acknowledge that there are some bad pleasures, so they contradict themselves. Socrates points out a particular and peculiar property of the good. With respect to all other values, many people are content to accept the appearance of them in place of the real thing. They are satisfied with the appearance of justice or the appearance of beauty (505d). It is absurd to believe, Socrates contends, that anyone would rest content with accepting only the appearance of the good. This is a claim about the synthesis of logical and psychological necessity that governs the good. Socrates argues that whether people actually know what the good is, they are nonetheless always trying to obtain it. It would be absurd for someone to say that he or she was deliberately pursuing something that they did not consider as good. It is not so much that this behavior would be wrong as it would be incomprehensible, for any account that could be offered to explain it would require bringing the good back in as the directing purpose. Even if people do not know what

the good is, they are necessarily drawn to it. So the good is conceptually necessary to explain the fact of motivation. Still, the fact that it is a conceptual necessity does not mean that people grasp the concept of the good clearly, a condition that creates a set of abiding consequences. In the absence of knowledge of the good, the utility of all other values becomes problematic. If there is to be satisfactory knowledge of, say, justice, one must know what the good is. The current unsatisfactory state of the normal discussion of justice is proof of that and has necessitated the long discussion in which Socrates and Glaucon and the others are engaged. Both the good and the just are puzzles that give rise to further investigations; they are places from which philosophical inquiry can begin.

The founders of the city, if it is to be a genuinely just city, need knowledge of the good. Consequently, Glaucon asks Socrates to give his account of the good. Socrates's reply is important because it makes clear that the ensuing discussion is not an instance of dialectic but the presentation of a rhetorical figure that will allow Glaucon and others to acquire some understanding on what dialectic is. Socrates is not teaching Glaucon dialectic; he is teaching Glaucon about dialectic—that is a significant difference. Socrates is clear that he cannot provide an account of the good because, while he may have opinions on the subject, he does not have knowledge (506c). Socrates explicitly puts aside the question of the good, explaining that it seems too much for the present discussion (506e). He is not discussing the good; he is offering what he calls a “child of the good” (506e). This discussion is a deliberately rhetorical act that provides a series of images of the good—images that collectively give the dialogue's audience a more nuanced and complex opinion of the good.

Socrates takes pains to clarify what he is about to do, warning Glaucon and others that he might very well unintentionally mislead them. This is an important caution. Socrates is aware of the ways in which his images might be misread. In particular, the danger is that someone could assume that the rhetoricity of the discussion is merely incidental and could be discarded and that something approximating an understanding of the good is possible independent of its rhetorical frame. Socrates fears this outcome and wants to preclude it. He does not want an act of genuine persuasion to be collapsed into a claim of knowledge. Put simply, an image of philosophy is not philosophy; it is a rhetorical presentation of philosophy. If Socrates's images are to have benefit, then one needs to see them as acts of rhetoric. They must help the audience make more sense of the fundamental desire that makes human motivation intelligible, namely the desire to apprehend the

good. The beliefs and figured understandings can then become important resources in generating a genuinely persuasive defense of justice—one that has force even if it cannot claim a final grounding in knowledge.

## II

To effect this complex rhetorical operation, Socrates returns to an earlier moment in the discussion that provides a way into the epistemological status of a rhetorical image. He reminds Glaucon they had agreed earlier that people call many things beautiful or good, but there is a single form of these many appearances that allows people to recognize the commonality among the diverse appearances (507b). The many are discerned through the senses, and especially the sense of sight, while the one cannot be apprehended through the senses but is only accessible through thought. Focusing specifically on the faculty of sight, Socrates uses the nature of seeing as an analogical path into the ways in which the good would be recognized. He and Glaucon analyze sight as requiring three elements: a faculty of sight, things to be seen, and light as the medium which allows the faculty of sight to behold those objects that can be seen (507d–508a). The most important source of light is the sun, and the ability of sight to see “it receives from the sun as a kind of grant from an overflowing treasury” (508b). Socrates is ready to make his analogy explicit:

This is what you may take me to mean by the child of the good, which the good produced as its own analogue. In the world of thought the good stands in just the same relation to thinking and things which can be thought as the sun in the world of sight, stands to seeing and the things which can be seen. (508c)

Analogizing sight to thought helps one understand how thought apprehends its particular objects. Like the sun, the good makes possible the connection between the faculty of thinking and the objects of thought. The good is that which makes the universe intelligible. This intelligibility is not a product of human thought but rather the thing that permits human thought to operate meaningfully. In the same way that the faculty of sight could be present but meaningless in the absence of either the sun or the objects of sight, so thought would be meaningless without the presence of an independent intelligibility and objects of thought. The good is the independent intelligibility. So neither thought nor the objects of thought can be equated with the good. When Socrates describes the good as the cause of truth and

knowledge, he is not making an empirical claim about cause and effect but pointing to a condition necessary for thought to be meaningful. Socrates is led to characterize this condition largely in negative terms, saying what it is not (509b). There is a necessary haziness to this image of the good. But even if Socrates cannot say exactly what it is, he can demonstrate that it has to be. Put another way, Socrates does not engage in dialectic here; instead, he uses rhetoric to provide a reason to undertake dialectic for someone who is a philosopher. At the same time, he offers the nonphilosopher a way to begin to grasp some of the complexity involved in coming to terms with a desire that moves us all. At the very least, the nonphilosophical audience should now be alerted to what they don't know. This takes us back to the danger to which Socrates originally alluded. He is concerned that the nonphilosophical audience will rest content with the image and assume that they understand what the good is. If that happens, then Socrates will have unintentionally defrauded them.

At this point, Plato provides one of those wonderful minor exchanges that help illuminate larger issues in the dialogue. A little overwhelmed by the discussion of the good, Glaucon blurts out: "What a miraculous transcendence" (509c). Socrates, trying to absolve himself from the imputation of grandiosity, replies that he should not be blamed because it was Glaucon "who compelled me to tell you what I thought about the subject" (509c). This protest hints at how one might compel a philosopher. Socrates is claiming that Glaucon compelled him to pursue an inquiry farther than he was inclined to. What compelled Socrates was simply a request for further knowledge. This type of compulsion contrasts with what was required earlier to prevent Thrasymachus from leaving the conversation. In that instance, the threat of physical force was required. But Socrates requires no such inducement. Rather, as a philosopher, he finds a reasonable request compelling. Reason persuades the philosopher, and in this way, a voluntarily chosen action is reconciled with what is felt as a necessary action. Since Socrates is genuinely interested in his young interlocutors, he feels compelled to honor their requests and to try to answer their questions and address their concerns.

For Socrates, philosophical conversation originates in questions and concerns as they arise in the normal course of events. Socrates recognized the justice in Glaucon's claim that it would be wrong for one who had some understanding to deny that understanding to someone seeking it. That was a compelling argument, and it persuaded Socrates of the rightness of Glaucon's request and of the necessity for Socrates to meet it. It is important to keep this in mind later on when Socrates raises the issue of compelling

the philosophers to rule the city, for it suggests that there may be a form of compulsion that is different from physical violence or undue social or personal pressure. Indeed, it is reasonably clear from Socrates's own conduct that neither physical force nor the need to conform is compelling. The issue of compulsion is only hinted at this point, and the primary focus remains Glaucon's request for Socrates to complete the image that he has been constructing. Socrates agrees, but again cautions that this image necessarily and unintentionally fosters misrepresentations. Constructing a fully accurate image is not a matter of will. Something in the represented object resists complete and accurate representation in the image.

The image of the sun leads Socrates to a second image, the divided line. He offers this image to help his interlocutors grasp more readily the nature of the good and the relation of the intelligible to the sensible. Starting from the position that there are things seen and things understood, Socrates constructs the image of the divided line. The sensible section of the line is divided into objects and images of those objects. The intelligible section of the line is divided into concepts that develop by using the sensory objects as images (for example, one uses the image of a triangle as a particular instance to explore the properties in general of a triangle) and into ideas or forms that no longer depend upon objects used as images. This image of the divided line represents an advance over the first image of the sun. It is more elaborate and it makes explicit the relation of the sensible to the intelligible. Further, it not only provides a visual counterpart to the worlds of sensibility and intelligibility but is also structured as a set of proportions. It employs some of the resources of mathematical thought that are the entry-way to philosophical practice, and provides evidence of the way in which mathematical thinking can further clarity. Accordingly, the rhetorical development of images is progressive, leading an audience to a more complex appreciation (although not a final or secure understanding) of the good.

Although presented as a static image, the line provides a map of intellectual progress. Offering both a spatial and temporal approach to the good, it brings together structure and history. The line advances the discussion of the good in another important way: it functions as explicit reflection and commentary on how images work. In effect, it educates its audience on how to read the rhetorical presentation being offered to them and reminds them once again of the epistemological status of the products of rhetorical practice. The line explains both the important continuity involved in an inquiry and, at the same time, emphasizes the distinctive types and levels of comprehension.

The line as an image achieves two difficult rhetorical ends. First, it pro-

vides an economic presentation of the complex relationship of sensible and intellectual apprehension. Second, it offers an easily retainable account of this complexity. While not presented as a dialectical development, the image of the line, nonetheless, demonstrates the ways in which the mind progresses as it moves from image to object to idea. The major distinction in the line is between two sections that are unequal: "the one representing the category of the seen and the one representing the category of the understood" (509e). Employing the central binary of original and image, the line is structured simultaneously as both a series of distinctions and a series of relationships. The mapping of the segments of the line becomes an argument for the productivity and danger of images.

The discussion of the section mapping out those things that are seen begins not with objects but with images. The things that are ontologically prior (the objects that exist and can be comprehended through sense data) apparently are not what are initially encountered as individuals orient themselves in the world. Rather than beginning with originals and then seeing how images of those originals develop, the process of comprehension originates with images. Socrates identifies these images as "in the first place shadows, and in the second place reflections in the water, or any dense, smooth, shiny surface" (510a). This account of images suggests that our conception of the world does not actually begin with something like straightforward encounters with sense data. First sight is not innocent; rather, accurate empirical investigation of the world requires the recognition that one's original experience of the world is mediated through images that both reflect that world and also distort it. However much we are empirical observers, we are, from the very beginning, immersed in a history, one that initially shapes what we see. Figure precedes any observation, so the world we as we know it is already shaped by the operation of rhetoric, even if we can't trace this act of rhetoric back to a specific rhetor. A residual presence of past rhetorical action shapes our perceptions from the outset. The first task of attempting to understand the world better thus is to recognize how past rhetorical acts operate and to distinguish the world of sensation from the rhetorical characterization of that world. Images shape our initial impression of the world, and the process of working through, discounting, and employing images is a central component of intellectual growth. We begin in the world as naive rhetors, and the question is whether we remain trapped in this rhetorical naïveté or whether we can become reflective practitioners of rhetoric.

Images also prove to be the important connection between the sensible and the intelligible, and when used properly they are the medium by which the mind transcends the sensible and begins to understand the intelligible.

If we first perceive the world through images and then manage to distinguish image from original through a disciplined investigation that proceeds from sense data to the identification of the actual objects of sense data, then these newly identified objects are, in turn, used by us to begin to make sense of larger orders that structure the sensible world. The laws that govern the world of sensation are not themselves apprehended through sensation. Instead, the objects of sensation become a new source of images with which to think (510b). Rather than viewing the objects of the world primarily as the things that exist, an inquirer uses these objects as images in order to think about an order that underlies them. He thus no longer attempts to comprehend sense data but now seeks meaning by using objects as images as an aid to discovering the laws that govern the existence of those objects. One draws a triangle, for instance, not because the drawn triangle itself is of interest but because it allows that inquirer to comprehend the various relationships that are possible between the angles and sides of a triangle.

Once these relationships are understood, the image can be abandoned as no longer necessary for thought to proceed. Socrates explains that thinking at this level is a process of proceeding from assumptions to an origin or first principle. The final intellectual act would be one that had no recourse to image but was simply a process of the mind working from origin or first principle using the forms or ideas alone. This is the realm of understanding—it is a moment of pure contemplation. It has transcended the accident of the thinker's historical and physical location, and is a mode of thought that is outside time. Moreover, it is a realm outside of rhetoric—it is the only moment of pure philosophy. In the divided line, Socrates has provided a structural and imagistic template for the process of intellectual ascent undertaken by the philosopher. And having provided this static snapshot of the order of the world, he will reframe the image and offer an extended narrative as alternative account of this order. Where the divided line made sense of the world in an image that was primarily spatial, the allegory of the cave will translate that geometric image into a temporal event.

The image of the divided line makes clear the path that must be traversed when one moves from conjecture to understanding, but it provides no guidance on how one might actually proceed on that path. It does not explain the practice of philosophy. The discussion of the cave provides the needed image of philosophic practice. Following the logic of the divided line, this image is the conscious use of objects—creatively assembled here—to allow an audience to get purchase on an idea that is not immediately available to them in the abstract. The allegory deliberately uses figure to accomplish the rhetorical end of persuading an audience about the underlying structure of

reality, a structure that cannot be grasped by the senses but that can be useful for the mind when it attempts to think about forces that shape meaning in human life. Further, the allegory of the cave allows Socrates to address one of the dialogue's most significant challenges by explaining how it is possible for individuals to be mistaken about so many of their beliefs that have arisen naturally and that seem self-evident. The most famous discussion of philosophy is a rhetorical act, one aimed at a nonphilosophic audience.

Although the allegory of the cave is transparently the use of a figure to help an audience understand a complicated situation, it is worth emphasizing that Socrates is engaged in a rhetorical effort as he attempts to enlighten his audience about the nature of philosophy. Practicing philosophers would not need an allegory to help them understand what they are doing. Since they already understand the practice of philosophy, they would have no need for an image. For them, such an image would be, at best, superfluous. Again, if and when the philosopher achieves a momentary vision of the Good, that is an act of pure contemplation, and it is a moment of unmediated vision. As the myth suggests, these moments do not necessarily or even usually endure, but they are the culminating moment of philosophy. They represent the moments of philosophy that are non-rhetorical. To communicate some sense of the force of these moments, the best that the philosopher can do is to represent them analogically through a figure. An imagistic account of philosophy makes sense only for a nonphilosophic audience. The most immediate members of the nonphilosophic audience are Glaucon and the other interlocutors, but they are not the only audience. Plato framed the middle section of the *Republic* as an extended effort to explain philosophy not just to his current group of interlocutors but to the larger audience of nonphilosophers, whose reservations about philosophy prompted Books 6 and 7.

With the allegory of the cave, Socrates expands his image of the divided line into a condensed epic in which a protagonist escapes from slavery, ascends to a higher reality, and returns as a savior—although he is not immediately or easily recognized as such. The allegory of the cave not only explains the philosophical life but also establishes the heroism of that life. The philosopher becomes the new epic protagonist who should rule because he embodies the virtues that make the noblest city possible. As an epic quest, the allegory of the cave establishes the legitimacy of philosophic rule—it is the tale of a humble and reluctant king who is moved by a sense of social responsibility to assume a burden of leadership for the benefit of a people.

Elaborating on the central dichotomy of the sensible and the intelligible in the divided line, the allegory of the cave shows the consequences



of that dichotomy for everyday life. Through the image of the inhabitants held rigidly in place by chains, Socrates characterizes perception as a politically shaped process. The allegory does not specify who enchained the inhabitants, so we are not led to see their fettered state as a consequence of some act of aggression or control. We are simply to understand that they are chained—it is given to us as a situational fact. The human situation is one in which people are compelled to witness a spectacle in which images are taken for objects because a particular kind of perception is enforced and an alternative and more accurate vision is precluded. A fundamental aspect of our nature, in other words, is to misperceive the essential rhetoricity of the human condition. The inhabitants in the cave should remind us of those who loved to go to the theater, for they were spectators enthralled by the continuous and fluid spectacle of the theater. These spectators, like the inhabitants of the cave, have no reason to raise any question about the obvious reality of what they see. Unless there is an external intervention, the internal consistency of these worlds precludes questions about the authenticity of what is seen. The inhabitants of the cave are thus oblivious to the chains that bind them; either they have become habituated to the presence of those chains or they have never noticed them to begin with. In either case, the inhabitants are not free but fail to understand the deprivation of their freedom and rest comfortably in their constrained existence.

In encountering the world as the images of objects, the inhabitants in the cave represent characters operating as if the bottom half of the divided line fully represented reality. Again, it is important to emphasize that the apparently natural initial situation is not one of simple empirical contact with the sensible world but one in which that contact is mediated through images. What is taken as the natural and uninfluenced brute contact with reality is, in fact, a product of rhetoric—it is a figured representation. The fact that there is no rhetor to be found does not make the situation any less rhetorical; instead, it emphasizes the ontological pervasiveness of rhetoric—we start by encountering a world that is an image of a world. We are shaped at our most basic by rhetoric.

The movement to freedom from this unreflective determination by the operation of a rhetoric is the result not of persuasion but of compulsion. The event is narrated in the passive. The potential philosopher is not seen as an originator of the movement that becomes the ascent; rather, it is something that happens to him: “When one of them was untied, and compelled suddenly to stand up, turn his head, start walking, and look toward the light” (515c). Entry into the philosophic life is not so much a choice as it is a response to a demand. Weiss has commented on the implications of Socrates

describing the movement toward philosophy beginning in compulsion. She contrasts this origin with that of the currently existing philosophers discussed in Book 6 who were drawn to philosophy by a love of wisdom and with that of Socrates who was moved to pursue the philosophic life by his daemon. She argues that “the reason the philosophers need to be compelled to turn their gaze on the Good is that they don’t want to see it; they want, once again, what the Cave has to offer” (75). These philosophers appear to be philosophically deficient philosophers. The fact that they are compelled to undertake their ascent would suggest that they are not really driven to philosophy by a desire for wisdom. But I don’t think that they necessarily have to be read in this way. Instead, it is equally plausible that Socrates is registering the force with which a cultural understanding contains an individual.

To suggest that there needs to be an event that leads one to see an accepted understanding as significantly inadequate does not argue that a person lacks a love of wisdom; rather, it argues that the person’s current and unreflective love of the world that has been shaped by the inherited cultural images is directed at the wrong object. What causes the person to become dissatisfied with the world as it has been rendered imagistically by his or her culture and to abandon that world as an appropriate object of desire is not some ungrounded intellectual interest but an experience in which there is a gap between what the world has been said to be and how it is experienced. In the experiential gap between the representation of the world and the experience of the world, the world becomes a puzzle. And because it has become a puzzle, someone with a philosophical nature feels compelled to try to solve it. Others simply choose to live with the contradiction or explain it away. Or in the most problematic cases, they become the nihilists that Socrates discusses later.

Socrates does not explain why the inhabitants of the cave become free of their chains. His silence on this point suggests that the reason for the pursuit of wisdom is less significant than the fact that the journey of philosophy begins as an escape from servitude. The scope of this escape cannot be fully understood at the beginning by the one who finds himself or herself free. If anything, the escape is a register of contingency. One possible source is suggested later when Socrates discusses the way in which puzzles arising from incompatible appearances or understandings of appearance of sense data provoke a person to go beyond the given of sense data and seek a deeper reconciliation in thought (523b–524b). But that connection is not explicitly drawn here. What is clear is that the decision to start the journey into the philosophic life is not to be understood as a personal choice by a

particular person. Since the potential philosopher was unaware of being enchained, that person could not have acted out of a desire to be free or to be enlightened. The motives that may later direct a philosophic life cannot be equated with the reason for having originally chosen that life. The original cause resides outside of the conscious mind of the person. All that can be said is that the person was compelled to proceed in a certain way. This turning toward philosophy is both accidental and necessary.

The compulsion is not exclusively experienced at the beginning of the journey. As Socrates recounts the ascent, he emphasizes the confusion and pain that are a necessary part of the ascent, and he again speaks of the potential philosopher as being "forced to look at the light itself" (515e). If the divided line might have given the mistaken impression that the progress from image to object to belief to idea was fairly straightforward, the narrative account of the ascent makes it clear that the ascent is just the opposite: the potential philosopher resists the journey, longs to return to what is still viewed as the real world, but is compelled to continue on the journey. Presumably, what compels the philosopher to continue this unpleasant journey is that the unsolved puzzle is intolerable. Even if the philosopher does not understand why he or she must proceed, given who they are, they cannot abandon the journey. The journey does not appear to be the product of desire for or love of truth. Such an affective relation to truth certainly develops later, but it is not the motivating force for entering the philosophic life.

If a love of wisdom is the defining feature of the philosopher, it doesn't have to mean that this love was the initial and originating reason to become a philosopher. After all, how could one be said truly to love something when he or she has had little or no experience of it? It makes more sense that a love for wisdom would arise as part of an appreciation for the value of wisdom that develops out of one's experience of the search for truth. At some point, the desire for wisdom would then become the driving force, but that would represent the moment of transformation when a proto-philosopher had been reconstituted as a philosopher. Only after the potential philosopher has acclimated himself or herself and been able to see that this world that has been opened up is the true world and that the world of empirical experience is a shadow world will this person, now a philosopher, appreciate the worth of this new world. That, of course, creates the major rhetorical challenge for philosophy. If the value of philosophy can only be appreciated by those who participate in philosophy and have had their vision of the world fundamentally altered by their participation in the philosophic life, how can these philosophers speak persuasively about the worth of this vision to those who have not experienced it? If the value of philosophy is ex-

perientially based, it cannot be accurately communicated to someone who has not experienced it. That rhetorical gap is not fully bridgeable.

But philosophy's rhetorical problems are not limited to the impossibility of communicating the true worth of the philosophic life to a nonphilosophic audience. Once the philosopher has ascended to this truer vision, the return to the shadow world is difficult. The rhetorical failure to communicate philosophy's self-understanding is complicated by the philosopher's learned inability to participate naturally and innocently in normal discourse. The philosopher needs to acclimate himself to the darkness, and, as Socrates points out, such a person is likely to appear a fool. The epic journey of philosophy is always in danger of becoming the bathos of comedy. Hence the two responses with which Socrates often deals—laughter and anger—for those are the ways that people respond to fools. And to return to the central concern of the dialogue, the defense of justice, Socrates notes that “if before he [the philosopher] can see properly, or can get acclimated to the darkness around him, he is compelled to compete, in the lawcourts or anywhere else, over the shadows of justice or the statues which cast those shadows, or to argue about the way they are understood by those who have never seen justice itself” (517e), then the philosopher appears not to know what he is talking about.

This problem helps explain, in part, why the discourse about justice has been so dismal. When most people talk about justice, they apprehend only its shadow. Those who have seen real justice, on the other hand, are inarticulate and unpersuasive because they can no longer comfortably participate in normal discourse and have yet to discover or invent a way to bridge their vision with the normal experience of everyone else. One of the major contributions of the *Republic*, when read as a mimetic presentation of an effort at genuine persuasion, is to exemplify how a philosophic rhetoric might proceed. It demonstrates how to speak persuasively when one returns to the cave. It argues for a philosophical rhetoric that employs images to allow its audience to begin the process of transcending those images. That is how one should understand the Kallipolis—it is a rhetorical figure whose construction functions in a complex act of persuasion. The instruction in persuasion is offered not as a series of mechanical rules or a set of effective strategies but as an artful action that philosophers can internalize and that can “give them a bit of a helping hand for that moment in some future life when they find themselves in the same sort of discussion” (498d).

That Socrates has provided a rhetorical account of philosophy and not a dialectical or philosophical account of philosophy is again apparent in the qualification that he offers as he sums up the allegory:

That is the picture, then, my dear Glaucon. And it fits what we were talking about earlier in its entirety. The region revealed to us by sight is the prison dwelling, and the light of the fire inside the dwelling is the power of the sun. If you identify the upward path and the view of things above with the ascent of the soul to the realm of understanding, then you will have caught my drift—my surmise—which is what you wanted to hear. Whether it is really true, perhaps, only god knows. (517b)

The allegory embodies Socrates's surmise or hope (*elpidos*). This surmise or hope is not groundless. At the very least, it corresponds to what was said earlier in the discussion. But Socrates is pointedly not claiming that it is true. He deliberately creates questions about the truth of this account, claiming that only a god knows. He further qualifies that claim by adding "perhaps." None of this is to take back what he has just presented. It is intended, rather, to emphasize that the figure presented in the allegory is a rhetorical construction. It does not provide knowledge of philosophy, for that knowledge is possible only for a philosopher who has been fortunate enough to share in the vision that is the province of the gods, perhaps. If a philosopher has been able to contemplate the Good, he can attempt to give some sense of that experience through a figure. This is the best that he can do. The figure cannot provide the nonphilosopher with a knowledge that can only be obtained after a rigorous discipline of dialectic that culminates in contemplation, but, through a figure, the philosopher can convey what such an experience would be like. That is what the cave does. As a figure, it makes sense of the concerns that have arisen in the discussion. Put sub-junctively, if there were people who had experienced such a vision, then it would make sense to put them in charge of the city because, having seen the Good, they could make decisions that were directed by that vision of the Good and would thus best promote the interests of the city. Plato's image of philosophy represents an aspiration of what philosophy might become; it is intended to create a desire to be philosophic or at least a receptivity to listen to the discourses of individuals who have progressed in their efforts to be adequate to the rigors of the philosophic life.

## Compelling a Philosopher

For the first six books of the *Republic*, persuasion and compulsion existed in an uneasy relationship. Alexander Nehamas provides a clear account of what is at issue:

It may be true that in the individual case, devotion to contemplation is not easily distinguished from justice conceived as psychic harmony: a life of contemplation involves the harmony of one's various desires. But in the case of the city as a whole, the analogy fails. For it is no longer clear that the philosophers' contemplation of the Forms is compatible with their role as rulers. Why should the philosophers, whose best activity and happiest life consist in the contemplation of the Forms, return to the public life required of the rulers of the city? If contemplation and justice as psychic harmony are one, would we not commit an injustice if we took them away from the one activity for which they are best suited? Is Plato conceding this point when he writes that we must "compel" them to become guardians (521), that this is not something they will do willingly? (327)

If the Kallipolis depends upon a group being required to rule, against their will and to their personal detriment, then it would be a fatal admission by Socrates that the city structured to be the most just city possible is dependent upon a crucial and fundamental act of injustice. Further, if order is to be maintained, this act will need to be repeated on a regular basis. The obvious question is, Why don't the founders first attempt to convince the philosophers to rule by seeking to persuade them? Such an approach would seem to honor the need to treat them justly. Why is philosophy resistant to

persuasion? In the absence of such persuasion, it looks as if the just city will be possible only if it engages in a continuous series of unjust acts.<sup>1</sup>

This contradiction suggests the project of the Kallipolis is impossible, even theoretically, because it cannot free itself from the necessity of injustice. Socrates recognizes this difficulty, so he wants to try to establish that compelling philosophers to rule is not an act of injustice toward them. He argues that the philosophers in the Kallipolis will be shown that they have been able to follow the philosophic life only because the city has made it possible for them to do so. Hence, they are indebted to the city, and it is just that they pay the city back for the life it has made possible for them. But if such an argument makes a case for the justice of compelling philosophers to rule, it is a troubling argument, for it looks very much as if Socrates is embracing a version of justice that Polemarchus first put forward in Book 1, and that, at the time, Socrates found to be inadequate.<sup>2</sup> Things get worse. If Socrates is right that the philosophers need to be compelled to be just, he also seems to be conceding the rightness of the popular belief about justice that Glaucon originally put forward—namely, that justice is unpleasant and no one is voluntarily just. Finally, if justice is compelled, then the person is not just, even if his or her actions externally conform to what justice requires. At best, such a person would be obedient.<sup>3</sup>

## I

The problem of compulsion arises because someone fortunate enough to have a vision of the Good would, in Socrates's account, have no desire to return to the everyday world, and that person would certainly have no desire to rule in that world: "Can you agree with me, then, on one further point? It's no wonder if those who have been to the upper world refuse to take an interest in everyday affairs, if their souls are constantly eager to spend their time in that upper region. It's what you'd expect, presumably, if things really are like the picture we have just drawn" (517c–d). The experience of philosophy does not in itself lead someone to feel an obligation to contribute to the city. Before Socrates raised this issue, it might have been reasonable to assume that someone who truly understood the Good would also understand both the value and necessity of justice. The practice of philosophy, however, does not lead the philosopher initially to feel a larger obligation to the rest of humanity. Weiss points out this unsettling consequence: "There are simply no textual grounds in Book 7 for concluding that the experience of seeing the Good is profoundly transformative, that it makes the philosophers in any way more solicitous or more generous men" (87). But this is

not quite right. These philosophers have been transformed profoundly; they have lost whatever attachment they had to the rest of humanity. From the standpoint of a normal person, induction into philosophy has to appear as a major loss. And this loss cannot be dismissed as the misunderstanding of the uninformed. The serious embrace of the philosophical life marks a break with the affairs of everyday life. Philosophy is experienced initially as a form of self-cultivation.

To the extent that the transcendence of the everyday is an integral moment of the philosophical experience, the key relationship for the philosopher is with the divine.<sup>4</sup> Having stumbled into an apprehension of this superior form of existence, the philosopher is transformed and no longer affectively connected to the human world. To the transformed philosopher, such a world must seem pedestrian and not worth serious attention. On the other hand, the new world of divine vision would be experienced as the overcoming of a deep alienation and the recovery of a truth that one had not realized as even being there. Once the philosopher was truly engaged in philosophical practice, there would be no motive to draw this philosopher back to the mundane world of politics. Philosophy would seem to entail no political consequences, and it does not seem to promote any sense of political responsibility.

Weiss has demonstrated just how troubling this account of the constitution of philosophers within the Kallipolis is. As she argues, these philosophers do not seem to be moved by a sense of justice (81). There is a disturbing absence of normal social feeling in these philosophers, and they are or have become indifferent to the rest of humanity:

Philosophers who need to be ordered to rule show themselves to be not only less generous than Socrates but also shamefully more selfish than philosophers who would rule so long as they could preserve their moral integrity and secure the people's support—the philosophers of Book 6. Book 7's philosophers, despite facing no adverse conditions—no danger of corruption, no belligerent subjects—indeed, despite having been cared for and educated by their city, are unwilling to do the city's business; they have no intention of giving up a life that approximates or replicates life on the Isles of the Blessed (519c). (89)

However distressing this response is, it should not be surprising. The education proposed in Book 7 is remarkable for its omission of any moral or political component. It is an education designed to promote and reinforce the growth of an untainted rationality, and that rationality is conceived



primarily as an abstract exercise in logos. Both ethos and pathos are given short shrift. The ungenerous philosopher is what is to be expected from such an education. This philosopher differs significantly from Socrates. This proposed education certainly does not reflect the way in which Socrates himself has made whatever philosophical progress he has made. In the dialogues, Socrates's progress involves talking with Athenians.

The curriculum that he designs for the Kallipolis need not be taken necessarily as the ideal or the only way to become a philosopher. It is better read as a curriculum and pedagogy designed to solve problems particular to the Kallipolis. In part this philosophic education is designed to eliminate the force of private interest in human life to prevent the rulers from governing for purposes of their own advantage. It turns out that eliminating the private has the unfortunate consequence of also eviscerating a sense of common feeling for others. These philosophers have been educated in a way that insures that they are oblivious to the pull of the political and have only limited interest in their fellow humans. It is hard not to see this philosophical education as promoting an abnormal and contorted growth. The solution of one political problem (the desire to rule for personal advantage) has created another (potential rulers who are not moved by a concern for the welfare of others or even have an interest in others).

In response to this anticipated oblivion of the philosophers to any political obligation or demand on them, Socrates makes a demand that appears to be not only unjust but one of the most unjust acts imaginable:

It is up to us, then, as founders of the city, to compel the best natures to get as far as that study which we said earlier was the most important—to make the ascent, and view the good. And when they have made it, and seen all that they need to see, we must not allow them to do what they are allowed to do at the moment. (519d)

The founders must compel the philosophers not only to return to the everyday world of the city but also to assume responsibility for the rule of the city. Glaucon immediately protests: "That seems very unfair! Are we going to make them live a worse life when it is in their power to live a better one?" (519d). Although Glaucon is no philosopher, his protest represents a response that a philosopher could be imagined to make, especially if the philosopher, in his or her capacity as philosopher, felt no obligation to the city. Being compelled to return to the city and to occupy oneself with the trivial and frustrating details of political rule must seem to someone who has just had the good fortune to arrive at a divine vision both cruel and unjust.

Socrates initially justifies this action of compelling the philosophers to rule by assuming the perspective not of the philosophers but of the founders of the city. The argument appears to be simultaneously political and philosophical. Politically, it is an argument about the responsibilities of philosophy; philosophically, it is an appeal to the logical necessity of reciprocal obligations. The founders do not regard the value of philosophy to reside in the richness of its practice and in its recovery of the most humanly rewarding life. They do not see philosophy as philosophers see philosophy. Instead, they view philosophy in a more utilitarian way: they are concerned with philosophy's usefulness to the city. Socrates reminds Glaucon: "The law does not exist for the exclusive benefit of one class in the city. Its aim is to engineer the benefit of the city as a whole" (519e–520a). For all of their purported intellectual advance, these philosophers look like and function primarily as enlightened technocrats. Their education has succeeded in eliminating a destructive private ambition and has possibly made these philosophers aware of the ways in which attention to practical matters diminishes the satisfaction particular to pure intellectual pursuits, and so this education has shaped a potential ruler who has the clinical detachment necessary to rule with an unbiased reason. But the education has failed the philosophers morally, for it has not inculcated any genuine concern for others. Having constituted these philosophers, the founders now need to construct an argument whose rightness, as a matter of reason, will compel these philosophers that they are obligated to assume the roles for which they were designed. Having educated the philosophers in such a way that they are not moved by ambition or the normal operation of affection, the founders now need to fill that vacancy with a sense of responsibility arising from the dictates of reason.

If Socrates initially described the founders' approach to the philosophers in terms of compulsion, he did not indicate what form that compulsion should take. While it might be understandable to assume that compulsion would involve the use of external force, whether it takes the form of violence or simply of an overwhelming pressure to conform, such force does not exhaust the possibilities. In fact, rather than issuing an order to the philosophers, Socrates imagines engaging them in a discussion. Apparently, for a philosopher, argument as a form of persuasion has the force of compulsion. Indeed, argument seems the only force capable of compelling a philosopher. If one takes Socrates as paradigmatic for a philosopher, his life provides ample evidence that neither violence nor potentially overwhelming social pressure is capable of compelling him. The force of argument, on the other hand, is one of the authorities that he does respect and that can compel him.

The other obvious authority is the divine command as issued through his daemon. So if someone who is not divine is to compel a philosopher, that person must make a persuasive argument because, for a philosopher who is solely moved by reason, a persuasive argument is necessarily compelling. The philosopher educated by the Kallipolis is moved exclusively by reason, and so he or she must freely consent to the dictates of reason.

Socrates offers an argument based on the rule of reason, framing it explicitly as an argument from justice. As one of the founders, he does not intend to have his city originate in a foundational act of injustice. He does not reluctantly agree to what he considers to be a violation of the value that makes the city possible, as if it were the only way to guarantee the Kallipolis; rather, he founds the rule of the city on the demands of justice: "There will be justice in what we say to them [the philosophers] when we compel them to look after and guard what belongs to other people" (520a–b). His argument rests upon the legitimacy of an obligation incurred because of a debt. If the practice of philosophy developed independent of a city, it would have no obligation to serve the city because it owed that city nothing. The philosopher could justly remain a private person, organizing his or her life as a continuous gazing on the forms. But those who are fortunate enough to become philosophers in the Kallipolis owe this possibility to the city, which has provided them with an extensive and well-thought-out education that was essential in enabling their growth as philosophers:

"It is fair enough," we shall say to them, "for philosophers in other cities not to take a share of the work in these cities. Their philosophy is a spontaneous growth, which arises despite the institutions of the particular city they live in. And what has developed naturally, indebted to nobody for its upbringing, is entitled to be unenthusiastic about paying anyone for its upbringing. But with you it's different. We produced you as guides and rulers both for yourselves and for the rest of the city—like leaders or kings in a hive of bees. You have been better and more fully educated than the rest, and are better able to play your part in both types of life. So you must go down, each of you in turn, to join others in their dwelling-place." (520b–c)

The demand that philosophers take their turn as rulers in the Kallipolis is compelling because it is founded on an obligation that is just.

Is this a compelling argument? It relies on a definition of justice that Polemarchus first offered in Book 1: "That it is just to pay everyone what is owed him" (331e). Socrates had raised questions about the adequacy of that

definition. He did not reject it necessarily, but he felt that it was too broad and that the definition needed greater precision. He pointed out that the simple fact of paying back or returning what is owed to another cannot in all cases be an instance of justice because there are cases in which the repayment of a legitimate obligation would be injurious to the other party. The mere fact of obligation was insufficient by itself to make an act just. Justice cannot be a mechanical process that has no regard for the complex and contingent circumstances that may impinge upon any acquired obligation. What did emerge, however, from the earlier discussion was the recognition that a just person does not deliberately injure anyone, friend or enemy, but seeks to treat all others in a way that does not harm them (335d). If that is a legitimate understanding of one aspect of justice, then Socrates's argument to the philosophers needs to be heard by the philosophers as a demand that is compelling because it follows from who they are. The vision of the Good is ethically transformative, and those who have seen the Good and hence pursue the philosophic life necessarily understand and value the other virtues, one of which is justice. But if they genuinely understand the value of justice, they will necessarily reconstitute themselves in a way in which justice is a definitive aspect of their new philosophic self. If the philosophers are just, they must act justly, and in this case, justice demands that they contribute appropriately to the preservation of the institutions that make the philosophical life possible. The argument is less of a demand that a debt be paid as it is an effort to make explicit what philosophers must do if the practice of philosophy is to remain viable and not fall back into a precarious dependence on accident for its preservation. Even more, it involves a recognition that if the philosophers were to refuse to rule, then they would be guilty of contributing to the injury of the city and its citizens. Glaucon concludes that this argument is compelling and that the philosophers "can't possibly refuse. It's a just demand, and they are just people" (520e).

He then adds a further thought that unintentionally complicates the argument on behalf of justice: "But they [the philosophers] will undoubtedly approach ruling, each one of them, as something unavoidable—just the opposite of the people who rule in every city at the moment" (521a). If the philosophers follow the dictates of justice and assume rule, then they are required to hold an office for which they have contempt (521b). This would seem to confirm the view of the general public that justice involves doing unpleasant things, things that would be avoided if the person were not compelled to do them. While it may not be unjust to compel the philosophers to rule, it now appears that justice is an inherently unpleasant activity. Socrates and Glaucon do not really work through this wrinkle,

but they should address it because it undermines the entire project of demonstrating that justice is desirable in its own right. Socrates and Glaucon seem to feel the pressure of this problem and respond to it by decreeing that after the philosophers have fulfilled their obligations to the city, they will be allowed to return to the philosophic life and will also be duly honored by the city—all of which would be a kind of compensation for the unpleasant activity of ruling.

This argument from compensation seems to me to be an inadequate response to the problem of a compelled just act being unpleasant, especially since Socrates had originally claimed that justice “is in the finest class, which is to be valued by anyone who wants to be happy, both for itself and for its consequences” (358a). This earlier characterization of justice makes it reasonable to ask whether it is possible to derive gratification from an activity that one would not have chosen, if choice were possible, but has been compelled to undertake. The best possible answer to this question is found in the way in which philosophy is enacted in the dialogue. If the dialogue is read as a mimetic action in which a philosopher is compelled to respond to the just demands of a nonphilosophic audience, then Socrates’s actions demonstrate the rewards that accrue to a philosopher engaged in making the understanding of philosophy available to a nonphilosopher. The dialogue does not show him rapt in a private vision, contemplating the forms; instead, it portrays him as a responsive leader of a discussion shaped by both the interests of the interlocutors and the accidents of the conversation. One cannot observe Socrates in action and conclude that this is unpleasant and distasteful behavior even if it is a conversation that he feels compelled to undertake. As a philosopher, Socrates is not bound to his interlocutors only by a set of abstract or theoretical responsibilities flowing from his self-understanding of himself as a philosopher. He is genuinely interested in the characters with whom he is talking, and he experiences genuine satisfaction as the conversation progresses, as his interlocutors ask him questions, as he puts questions to them, and, most importantly, as he expands their vision. If the philosopher is compelled to rule through an act of persuasion, the conversation mimetically presented in the *Republic* may serve as a model for how persuasion and compulsion are reconciled in philosophic practice. In their practice of rhetoric, the philosophers rule justly as guides in a conversation, and a genuine pleasure emerges from this rule.

One final question remains about the need to persuade and compel the philosophers to rule. Why don’t they understand this need themselves? Shouldn’t the exercise of philosophy, if it has arisen through the institutionalization of a particular curriculum by the just city, lead philosophers

on their own to discover their just obligation to the city? The necessity of making this argument to the philosophers would suggest a serious flaw in their education. The dialogue does not address this question. It begins with the model of a philosopher who has become philosophic in the absence of support from any city, and it assumes that model as the paradigm for all philosophers. Since the accidental philosopher is a product of private life, philosophy appears to be an inherently private activity. But, as Socrates says elsewhere, philosophy that remains predominantly a private practice is a lesser instance of philosophy. Rather than considering philosophy as a private endeavor as the natural state of philosophy, it might be better to see that version of philosophy as a corrupt form. It may be that the more natural form of philosophy is one that is nourished by a political cooperation and that, in turn, feels compelled to support that political life. If that is the case, then the founders' argument may, in fact, be an argument that the philosophers voice to themselves. What is represented in the dialogue is an internal conversation within philosophy in which it recognizes its currently corrupt state and finds a compelling reason to escape the traps created by that corruption. Or possibly the argument has led Socrates to realize that the institutionalization of philosophy has created a situation that requires the intervention of the leaders of the city to serve as a counterpressure to the internal movement of philosophy to seek and rest in contemplation. Philosophy only becomes political in response to an appropriate demand from the citizenry. One is drawn to philosophy not because he or she is seeking political advancement or being moved by political ambition or seeking self-protection (as Socrates argued in Book 1); rather, what compels one to become a philosopher and to sustain the difficult journey that is philosophy is an intellectual restlessness provoked by puzzles. The philosopher is primarily an intellectual and not a political actor, but as an intellectual actor, the philosopher is responsive to arguments that make the case for the legitimate claims of others on him or her. The philosopher becomes politically active in response to human need.

If this seems like a convoluted understanding of philosophy, it is helpful to remember that it is an account of philosophy intended to explain to a nonphilosophic audience the peculiar and privileged authority that should be granted to philosophy to rule. Socrates is clearly trying to make the case that the philosopher does not seek power and will not be corrupted by power. Since Socrates does not and cannot bring the interlocutors or the readers inside the practice of philosophy as the philosopher would engage in it, he must present that practice in a way that makes it available to a nonphilosophical audience. The dialogue simultaneously educates nonphi-

losophers about philosophy and teaches philosophers how to address a non-philosophic audience. It is rhetorical in both of these pursuits. If there is any doubt that the action mimetically presented in the *Republic* is rhetorical rather than philosophical, Socrates presents in summary form a brief account of the curriculum required for a philosophical education. Since the dialogue itself does not engage in such a curriculum, it is reasonable to conclude that the purpose of the dialogue is not to produce philosophers of the sort who are constituted by the Kallipolis, or even to do philosophy as dialectic, but to make philosophy understandable to a nonphilosophic audience as part of its larger effort to offer a genuinely persuasive defense of justice. That is to say that the dialogue functions as poetry and not as philosophy—it does not engage in dialectic but offers a narrative of persuasion and images of philosophy. It is a work of rhetoric making the case for the relevance of philosophy to political life.

## II

Socrates argues that the curriculum of Books 2 and 3 intended to produce guardians cannot be the curriculum needed to produce the philosophers who eventually become the rulers. The earlier education was primarily ethical—it was designed to use immersion in appropriate poetic and physical education to create citizens who had the character of guardians, who had been emotionally reconstituted so that their identity was civic rather than personal. But a philosophical education is, above all, an intellectual journey in which a person is progressively directed from the world of sense data to the world of pure intellectual activity. While initially it may employ particular objects from the world of sense data as images that aid thought, this education is organized so that these images will be discarded as the student progresses and they will be replaced by ideas. The education reaches its highest plateau when thought operates only at the level of pure idea. That is the realm of genuine philosophy.

Socrates provides a quick account of this educational process: the student would move from arithmetic to plane geometry to solid geometry to astronomy to harmonics and ultimately to dialectic. As Christopher Rowe has argued,

Plato is working with Socrates, now, in the written text, to educate humanity at large. Plato's Socrates *is* the prisoners' guide, and we unenlightened humanity are the prisoners (the cave simile was always about 'our nature'). Of course Socrates will shortly be laying out a radically new

educational programme for the budding rulers of Callipolis, the 'beautiful city' that he, Glaucon, Adimantus and the rest are in the middle of putting together. But this is no more than an attempt to put into terms of a draft curriculum, to institutionalize, a process to which we are already being subjected in the very act of reading. (61–62)

While Rowe is right to see Socrates occupying the role of guide to us readers as prisoners of the cave, he is wrong to assume that Plato is involving us in the processes of a philosophical education. A philosophical education would begin with arithmetic and proceed through the various primarily mathematical disciplines until the student's intellect was sufficiently developed that it could sustain the rigors of dialectic. This is a process that cannot be circumvented, and to the extent that it is an educational ladder, steps cannot be skipped. If that is true, then Plato cannot have intended the *Republic* to be an effort at philosophical education of this kind. Rather, it is instrumental in two ways. First, it is an advertisement for philosophy. It is a rhetorical work trying to persuade those who have the potential to become philosophers to undertake the arduous task of pursuing philosophy, even though one is not a member of the Kallipolis. Second, it seeks to persuade a nonphilosophic audience of the rightness of a philosophical approach to justice.

Socrates is clear that he does not expect his audience—either his immediate interlocutors or his readers—to engage in dialectic. When Glaucon asks Socrates to explain to him the power of dialectic, Socrates responds: "My dear Glaucon, you will not be able to follow me that far—though not for any want of enthusiasm on my part" (533a). This is an explicit statement that they have not been doing dialectic but that Socrates has been providing his various audiences with an image of dialectic: "From now on what you would be seeing would not be an image or model of what we are talking about, but the truth itself—at least so it seems to me" (533a). This final qualification suggests that even Socrates himself cannot claim with certainty that he has achieved a full philosophical vision. He feels that it is incumbent on him to be clear with Glaucon that the image provided is one derived from Socrates's own perspective and not a simple copy of the truth.

Dialectic in the *Republic* necessarily remains vague and abstract. As readers we are not instructed in dialectical thought; we are, instead, informed about dialectic. We don't learn dialectic, but we learn things about it. We know that it is the discipline that moves from thinking with assumptions to proceeding from first principles. We know that "dialectic finds the eye of the soul firmly buried in a kind of morass of philistinism. Gently, it



pulls free and leads it upwards, using the disciplines we have described as allies and assistants in the process of conversion" (533d). Socrates's discussion of dialectic should provide reasons for us to rethink the self-evidence of sense data. That in itself is no small thing. Once we understand that the world we inhabit is shaped by past rhetorical acts to the extent that sense data itself comes to us in the form of a mediated experience, we should be receptive to arguments allowing us to act with a self-awareness of the rhetoric of such a world.

Having argued what dialectic must be, Socrates returns to the image of the divided line and redescribes the line not in terms of types of objects, but in terms of intellectual operations. From the top to bottom, the activities are knowledge, thinking, belief, and conjecture, and the two larger divisions can be labeled understanding and opinion—understanding is concerned with being, while opinion is concerned with becoming. A dialectician, then, is "the name you give to the person who grasps the explanation of the being of each thing" (534b). To the extent that the dialectician wishes to communicate a sense of this understanding to the non-dialecticians, the dialectician must become a rhetor, for there is no way to understand what the dialectician understands without becoming a dialectician. The dialectician offers his audience not knowledge but a particular type of persuasion, one deeply dependent on both offering and discounting figured expression.

Socrates is aware of how fraught the practice of dialectic is, and he thinks great caution must be exercised in determining who is encouraged to pursue dialectic. That awareness alone should argue that the *Republic* does not consider itself as offering its readers instruction in dialectic. Socrates prefaces his discussion of who should be exposed to dialectic by reiterating the danger if dialectic is undertaken by the wrong type of character:

"This is an area where we have to proceed with great extreme caution," I said. "If the people we introduce to an education in such an important branch of knowledge and such an important discipline are sound of limb and sound of mind, then justice will have no fault to find with us, and we shall be the saviors of our city and its regime. But if we introduce people of a quite different character, we shall achieve entirely the opposite result, and expose philosophy to a further flood of ridicule." (536a–b)

This caution arises from Socrates's understanding that the current disfavor of philosophy is, in large part, a consequence of permitting people who were not suited to philosophical labor to have access to philosophy. A philoso-

pher who seeks to explain philosophy to a nonphilosophical audience necessarily walks a rhetorical tightrope.

Socrates is equally explicit about the way in which someone should be brought into a philosophic education, and his comments provide further evidence that persuasion and compulsion, when considered in relation to philosophy, need to be understood in a particular way. When the young are introduced to an education aimed at making them philosophers, they should not be forced into study by a compulsory curriculum (536d). Such compulsion is antithetical to what is necessary for a free person to learn. Behavior that is compelled by force—and this must mean external force—is appropriate for someone who is treated as a slave. If the philosophical education is to support the development of a philosophical ethos, it can have nothing to do with external compulsion. Instead, the education should begin in play and use games that nurture natural aptitudes. It is reasonable to assume that practices considered injurious or without real value for the soul while it is undergoing education would be equally troubling for the soul after it completed education. If that is the case, when the rulers compel the philosophers to return to the practical business of running the city, this cannot mean that they use external force. The only option that makes sense is that they present the philosophers with an argument that the philosophers find compelling. What drives philosophers is reason: because the philosophers understand and honor reason, their following the dictates of reasoned argument is both voluntary and mandatory. No one externally forces them to credit the argument, but, because they have constituted themselves out of a respect for reason, they find the conclusions of reasoned argument persuasive. Reason compels their assent.

Socrates ends his discussion of what is needed for a genuine philosophic education not with a celebration of the achievements of this education but with a sharp reminder of the serious corruption that arises when the philosophical education is prematurely terminated. When this happens, “its students are filled with what I suppose we’d call contempt for the law” (537e). This contempt is an inherent danger for someone who enters the intellectual life. Philosophy, it turns out, is a high-stakes intellectual game; when it succeeds, it is politically advantageous (in fact, politically essential), but when it fails, it is politically destructive.

Socrates explains this danger with a short narrative in which a child who is brought up in a wealthy and influential family is informed as a young adult that he or she is not actually a child of those parents. This narrative frames the issue as one of disillusionment and realization that an inheri-

tance felt to be legitimate and natural has been shown to be otherwise. The narrative does not suggest that the parents love the child any less nor is there any implication that the parents had any ulterior motive in deceiving the child; instead, the narrative focuses on a rupture in the child's respect for its parents. In a similar way, young people exposed to a philosophical education and to the practice of dialectic are led to question the natural authority of the city and its laws. The inability of the current political discourses to provide genuinely persuasive defenses of the city and of the culture's values opens the young to the influence of cynicism and to the faulty and harmful conclusion that since the culture cannot defend these values, these values must be groundless. The only reasonable way to organize a life, then, is to seek to maximize pleasure.

The plight of the shallowly educated or incompletely educated person takes the dialogue back to the problem that first occasioned this long discussion. At the heart of Glaucon's and Adeimantus's initial challenge to Socrates was the realization that the legitimacy of the culture's values was undermined by the very way in which it defended them. The appropriate response to such defenses was either apathy or contempt. Much of the population retreated to a desultory obedience of laws, and in their obedience signaled their smallness and cowardice. Those who had a more exalted vision of themselves became arrogantly contemptuous of both the law and the majority of the citizens. At the time, these contemptuous young people seemed to have acquired their contempt by listening to rhetors like Thrasymachus. It now appears that philosophy, or an incomplete adherence to the full rigor of dialectic, is also an important source of political corruption.

Socrates urges great care and attention to the selection and education of those who are being groomed to be philosophers. Such people must be devoid of the narcissism of those who only dabble in philosophy. They must not be moved by any regard for public reputation or for individual advancement. Their education should eliminate the private as a distinct source of motivation. The philosophers' education should lead them to see a world through a perspective shaped by a genuine understanding of value, and that perspective cannot be a narrow one of private interest. Because the philosopher understands justice, "their most important and demanding guide will be justice. They will serve justice, watch over its growth, and in this way keep their city on the right lines" (540e).

The elevated tone of this conclusion is immediately undercut by a proposal that raises serious questions as to the possibility of their ever being such a city. In order to have a population amenable to philosophic rule, Socrates suggests the city must send anyone over the age of ten to the coun-

tryside and start over with a population that has not yet been contaminated by currently existing practices, values, and discourses. This proposal has rightly occasioned outrage. But it must be noted that it is not offered in such absolute terms. Rather, Socrates says that it would be the “quickest and simplest way for the city and regime we were talking about to come into being” (541a). It is a theoretical solution that avoids the messiness of addressing any actual city and explaining how to get from that city to the Kallipolis. Such a dodge has to suggest that the practical difficulty of persuading most of the current citizens of the desirability of philosophic rule is nearly impossible to overcome. And that is a problem. For if Socrates is to provide a genuinely persuasive defense of justice to Glaucon and Adeimantus, that defense must speak to the actual world in which they live. Why should one be just if the Kallipolis is, for all practical purposes, only a theoretical construction that embodies philosophy’s dream for an orderly world free from the messiness that is everyday life? The question becomes even more pressing as Socrates next surveys the actual options and frames this survey in a narrative of inevitable descent into tyranny. The return of philosophy from the ascent of theory is a greater challenge than the rulers of the fictional Kallipolis could have imagined. But if philosophy is to be responsible and to support justice, that is the world that it must seek to influence.

## A Genuinely Persuasive Defense of Justice?

In Book 7 Plato uses the allegory of the cave as a figure to offer a utopian vision of philosophy. That utopian vision is followed immediately by a theoretical discussion of a historical reality intended to discount the possibility of a utopian solution. The design of the final third of the *Republic* makes evident the centrality, inevitability, and importance of instability in political life. The collapse of the Kallipolis in Book 8 signals that the philosophical education outlined in Book 7 is unlikely to be realized. So if philosophy is to exist, it will apparently be as the accidental and precarious enterprise that Socrates described in Book 6. If there is to be access to the philosophic life, it will either be because of accident, divine selection, or acts of rhetoric that challenge the misperceptions of philosophy and disclose the possibility of a philosophy that can have an appropriate role to play in a political world in which a radical and complete transformation is not possible. Paradoxically, the impossibility of the dialogue's surface theoretical project argues for the larger importance of the *Republic*. The structure of the dialogue's narrative makes it clear that the *Republic* is not proposing an impossible action but presenting an image of philosophy, one that envisions a practical role for philosophical discourse in the actual world in which people live. For the *Republic*, philosophy becomes politically consequential by representing itself in a new rhetorically aware form of literature that can guide individuals as they seek to reconstitute themselves as just in an unjust world.

This, however, is not the way that the *Republic* is usually read. George Klosko, for example, argues that, in the *Republic* and other middle dialogues, Plato despairs of persuasion as a political resource:

The evidence strongly indicates that, by the time he wrote the middle dialogues, Plato's own position on the possibilities of moral persuasion

had come to be similar to Aristotle's. I believe that it is his realization of the limitations of persuasion that led Plato to manipulate the dramatic action of works such as the *Gorgias* in the fashion that I have noted. This same realization bears fruit in the new political theory presented in the *Republic*. The political theory of the *Republic* grows directly out of the rejection of the view of Socrates, and this is an important theme in the work. (*The Development of Plato's Political Theory*, 59)

According to Klosko, Plato realized that if the philosopher as moral reformer was to succeed in reshaping society, the philosopher must have political power and be able to impose a moral order on a population unable to achieve self-discipline on their own (61). There is clearly much evidence in the *Republic*, and especially in the conclusion to Book 9, to support such an interpretation. The ending of Book 9, with Socrates's recommendation that those interested in being just should eschew any effort at participation in political affairs and retreat to a private life, can be interpreted as a straightforward statement of political despair. The question is whether the ending should be read this way or whether it offers a more nuanced understanding of the possibility of meaningful action in a world unlikely to undergo radical transformation.

O'Connor provides a helpful rejoinder. He argues that there are two contending moods in the *Republic*, which he labels "reformist" and "escapist" (69–70). While acknowledging that the ending of Book 9 would indicate that Socrates settles on escapism as the only viable option in the world as it is, O'Connor adds, "I believe it is a mistake to let Plato's escapist mode eclipse his more positive valuing of politics" (70). He concludes that Plato, at least, imagines a possible political role for a reformist in a democracy (87). I would simply add that there is no reason to assume that rule or legislation are the only options available for someone interested in political reform and that the *Republic* provides evidence that a philosophical work that seeks to be effective rhetorically with a nonphilosophic audience may also have an important role to play politically. A philosopher may exercise political rule by persuading citizens to reconstitute themselves as just individuals.

Rosen challenges such a view and questions whether persuasion could actually be politically effective: "If wisdom is to rule, it can only be through force and lying. But the philosopher is poorly equipped to develop a rhetoric that is suited for political purposes, and even if he were well equipped, reliance upon speech alone would lead sooner or later, and sooner rather than later, to a degradation in political rhetoric: in other words, to the creation of ideology" (395–96). Rosen's point is an important one, but I would take

it in a different direction. What the *Republic* warns us is that there is not a stable understanding that can insure the continuance of a just city. I see this as a warning that rhetoric is always in danger of deterioration into a misunderstanding of persuasion as a claim to knowledge. Plato is alert to this danger, and it is precisely in response to this structural problem that he seeks to articulate the basis of a philosophical rhetoric.

In trying to understand the troubling ending to Book 9, it is important to remember the rhetorical crisis that prompted the *Republic's* extended narrative: Glaucon sought a genuinely persuasive defense of justice, not a plan for a revolutionary reform of the city. He wanted a revolutionary rhetoric. Understanding the rhetorical character of Platonic philosophical discourse may open up the possibility that philosophy's political contribution does not involve assuming the office of ruler but rather pursuing an important alternative practice—Platonic philosophy as a rhetorical practice may have a literary role to play in the imagining of human possibility. Rosen, himself, acknowledges such a rhetorical office for a Platonic philosophy: "The unification of theory and practice, or wisdom, is impossible. But this impossibility does not suffice to prevent philosophers from attempting to accomplish this reconciliation, because that is the goal of philosophy. Such attempts may take the form of actual political intervention, or the more subtle form of writing a revolutionary book that advocates the intervention of philosophy in politics" (355). So it is in the nature of philosophy to seek to ameliorate a situation that ultimately resists complete transformation. To effect such amelioration, philosophy turns to rhetoric as a resource to make available alternative ways of thinking about the current situation that call into question those understandings of justice that are accepted uncritically as simply the way things must be.

# I

The overarching narrative movement of Books 8 and 9 is one of inexorable decline. These books tell the tale of a descent into mayhem and chaos. The one apparent certainty for any political order is that it is unstable and always in the process of dissolving.<sup>1</sup> Socrates prefaces his discussion of the various regimes with what appears to be an inescapable fact of political life: "Is it a general rule that the cause of change in any regime is to be found in the sovereign body itself—when civil war arises within the group? That as long as the group, however small it may be, remains united, it is impossible for the regime to be altered?" (545d). Change is a consequence of internal tensions becoming manifest and ultimately transforming the constitution

of the regime.<sup>2</sup> As long as the regime remains united, it is invulnerable to change. The problem, which soon becomes apparent, is that no regime is capable of remaining united. The best efforts of the best-intentioned, brightest, and best-educated rulers are insufficient to maintain the order of a city. All regimes, including the Kallipolis, collapse. The long process of political decay is the triumph of accident and contingency. However capable of imagining and creating order the human mind may be, that order can and will be undone by the mere fact of contingency.

If, in theory, the necessary condition for a just society was the rule of philosophers, such a rule is fated to end. The tale that Socrates tells of the collapse of the Kallipolis begins not with a challenge by any ambitious or aggressive individual or class. It does not even directly flow from the unruliness of desire; rather, it begins as a simple problem of calculation.

Both for plants in the ground and for animals above the ground it is a fact that souls and bodies are produced or not produced when the cycles of begetting for each species complete their revolutions—short revolutions for short-lived species, and the opposite for long-lived species. In the case of your species, wise though the people you have educated as leaders of the city are, still they will not quite hit the mark when they apply calculation—together with observation—to their programme of breeding and birth-control. Success will elude them, and they will sometimes produce children they should not produce. (546a–b)

However skillful the rulers are at calculation, they inevitably make errors, and these errors are consequential. The fragility of the political order is striking. As Socrates tells the story, these leaders don't get their program of eugenics wrong by very much. But the tiniest of errors begins a reverberation that undoes the carefully maintained order. Once a disruption in the political order occurs, it sets in motion a chain of events that undoes that order. Decline is inevitable. And because the discussion of the political regimes functions analogically as a representation of the tensions within the ethical constitution of the individual, then not only are political regimes unstable but, more importantly, the ethical constitutions of individuals are unstable.

Books 8–9 map out the various forms that an unjust world can take (or, more correctly, the forms that a world that is not fully just can assume). And though Books 8 and 9 are presented as a discussion that works through the inherent logical implications following from the nature of political structure, their discussion is tied more closely to the actual world.<sup>3</sup> They may



be idealized and abstract types, but they are types that refer to and make sense of a political reality familiar to the dialogue's interlocutors and readers.<sup>4</sup> The most salient fact of this historical reality is instability: all order decays.

The narrative of the political regimes is the narrative of the natural triumph of injustice. Injustice may, on the one hand, represent a distorted and corrupt form of human political and individual existence but, on the other hand, this distortion and corruption does not appear to be the consequence of some sort of anomaly. We appear to be a species who naturally tends to be other than who we are, and we appear to be a species driven by an inherent pressure that, in turn, produces an instability which undermines any identity or constitution that we achieve. This is an important fact about us, and we need to understand it not as individual moral failure or even as political ineptness but as a structural feature of human existence. The problem of corruption and injustice does not originate in any ethical or political failure: rather, the descent into chaos and tyranny begins with an error in observation and mathematics. In the Kallipolis, eros has been fairly successfully sublimated and channeled. Whatever challenge eros may have presented seems to have been met through the skillful management of the city. What allows eros to emerge eventually as politically consequential is the inability of even the most skilled of mathematicians to control the program of politically sanctioned reproduction. Nature is ultimately too complicated for arithmetic.

Political disorder, however, is not a simple consequence of the increasing role of eros. In Socrates's narrative, eros does not emerge immediately and assert itself in the wake of the failure of calculation. The imagined consequence of this miscalculation is the production of characters lacking the appropriate predispositions necessary for a guardian. In particular, these people fail to have a temperament that allows them to understand and appreciate poetry, so they become slightly out of balance ethically (546d). Socrates imagines that this neglect transforms the city's hierarchy into an opposition. The commercial and martial classes initially clash and then arrive at a compromise. The martial class no longer possesses a constitution that is fully and exclusively public and because of which its members spontaneously see themselves as the protectors of the city. When private interest becomes a force in the life of the guardians, they become moved by an arrogance not formerly present: "The land and housing is to be divided up and owned privately, and they agree to enslave those who were previously watched over by them as free men, friends, and providers. They now hold them as serfs and slaves, while their role is to watch them, and conduct

warfare" (547c). These guardians are still moved by a sense of spiritedness, but one no longer tempered by a corresponding gentleness, nor necessarily guided by wisdom. Socrates sees such an elite naturally selecting characters with similar dispositions to rule and being moved by a "fear of putting the wise into positions of power—since the wise men it has are now complex, not simple and direct any more—a leaning towards people who are spirited, more straightforward and naturally cut out for war rather than peace" (547e–548a). No longer fully constituted by a military ethos, the nature of this new warrior class is more complex and fundamentally compromised. Moved by forces that it cannot publicly acknowledge, the class's identity erodes. They are the first of a series of unstable characters.

With the introduction of the private as a source of motivation, the issue of wealth intrudes itself on both the political and individual levels. The individuals in this newly constituted guardian class find themselves pulled in two directions. They still genuinely value honor, but honor and public validation for their civic service are not the only goods that attract them. They are drawn to money, even if they cannot acknowledge it publicly: "The value they put on money and their inability to acquire it openly, will make them mean with their money, while their desires and the secret pleasures they enjoy will make them extravagant with other people's" (548b). Because they cannot publicly acknowledge wealth as a good, they are moved by an internal conflict that they are incapable of addressing.

Their inability to frame and resolve this conflict points to the importance of persuasion as an individual and political resource. Socrates argues that these guardians are unable to address this internal conflict because their education did not proceed through persuasion but was a product of compulsion: "They will run away from the law like children running away from their father, since their education will not have been a matter of conviction, but something imposed on them by force" (548b). The crucial insight of the *Republic* is not that the philosopher must be given power or that political life is about power but that, in the absence of genuine persuasion, a system of values feels as if it is external and not a resource with which to address the problems that any person or city is fated to encounter. In the absence of genuine persuasion, there can be no integration and ordering of the goods, and even those goods that are real goods cease to be the guiding forces in an individual or a city. Persuasion is foundational for any individual or civic constitution that is stable and endures.

The instability of the timarchy and the timocratic man is particularly instructive. Socrates acknowledges that even though the timarchy is inferior to the Kallipolis it is, nonetheless, a relatively good city. If the timocrat

is less stable and more conflicted than the philosophical ruler, he is still a good person. But the goodness of both the city and the man are incapable of being sustained. His life is organized around honor, and he is protective, possibly hypersensitive, to issues involving honor. At least, he is in his youth. However forceful such a value system might be, it is also unstable, and Socrates imagines this person, as he ages, becoming more and more attracted to wealth. The full force of this movement manifests itself in the shaping of the next generation. The corruption of the son of a timocratic father begins with the complaints of his mother that the father's insufficient attention to money causes her to have less status in the community. This line of complaint is picked up by the servants in the household, and a redefinition of honor ensues. There is now an agreement that "people who mind their own business in the city are called simpletons, and regarded as of little account, while those who don't mind their own business are respected and admired" (550a). Through the inversion of the ethical vocabulary, the corruption of the son happens, and this inversion is not the product of forces that would normally be labeled as political but of tensions within the family.<sup>5</sup> Socrates's analysis makes clear the ways in which the political manifests itself in the private. One of Plato's important insights is that political conflict penetrates all aspects of an individual's life and, for this reason, it is a serious mistake to locate the political only in those aspects of a city directly connected to rule.<sup>6</sup>

In the emerging oligarchic character, valuing honor is now defined as being simpleminded. This redefinition makes the pursuit of honor not an instance of ethical integrity but evidence of a defect in understanding. Once honor and the pursuit of wealth have been redefined, then, as an ethical person, one would be drawn to pursuing wealth because that is what the good person does. In calling attention to this redefinition, Socrates is showing how a rhetorical operation shifts the meaning of the culture's understanding of what is ethical. This redefinition is not the deliberate effort of a few but a collaborative product of the many. Although not a consciously coordinated effort, it has the effect that such an effort would have. Actually, it has a more powerful effect because it does not appear to be an understanding limited to a particular group but to be a fact voiced by all. This gives it the appearance of being a description of how things are, and consequently it appears to rest its authority in nature. Without using the word *ideology*, Plato has Socrates pinpoint one of the ways in which ideology operates.

In his narrative of political and personal decline, Socrates does recognize a constant. Humans are creatures moved by their passions. Importantly, Socrates does not claim that passion is inherently a problem for people. The

problem is that in a disordered world, the proper object of passion is mistaken. This misunderstanding is the product of the ethical inversion that started with the original and inevitable miscalculation by the Kallipolis's rulers. This miscalculation began a process in which the soul was reconstituted. The problem—and it is an insidious one—is that this reconstitution is not felt by the person as an instance of decline or even of change; rather, it feels as if it is a natural expression of passion.

The unrecognized shift in the meaning of an ethical vocabulary acquires serious force as the timocracy declines into the oligarchy. The oligarchy is no longer much bothered by issues of honor; there is only one recognized good in the oligarchy: wealth. The tenuous unity of the timocratic city dissolves into an openly divided city. The oligarchic city is not one but two cities—a city of the wealthy and a city of the poor—that share a common location and exist in an uneasy relationship with each other. The wealthy feel entitled to rule because they are wealthy; for them, that is not an argument from or for class privilege but a recognition of the natural order. The self-evidence of wealth being desirable seems to them to be beyond dispute. It would seem insane to look at this valuing of wealth as a choice. No one values wealth because they view it as a choice that they have made; rather, it seems impossible and unnatural not to value wealth.

When viewed externally, the person who truly values wealth leads a life that can be considered well-ordered. But again the external perspective can be deceptive and what looks like an ethically responsible life is one shaped by fear and compulsion:

Isn't this a clear indication that when this kind of person has a good reputation in most of his business dealings, and is generally regarded as a just man, he is using something decent in himself to suppress by force other evil desires that he possesses? He does not persuade them that what they want is wrong, or use reason as a civilizing influence. He uses compulsion and fear, because he is afraid of losing the rest of this fortune. (§ 54c–d)

Whatever the appearance, such a person is not just. At best he is prudent, but even that is not fully accurate. At the core of this individual is an anxiety that shapes his behavior. The oligarch sees himself potentially under attack and consequently must maintain a continual vigilance not only over the external world but more importantly over his internal world. In its moderation an oligarchic city can appear to have much in common with Socrates's original city of pigs in which life was organized around meeting

basic needs and avoiding extravagance. But in the city of pigs, the imaginary inhabitants were at peace with lives organized around the challenges of meeting basic needs and satisfying necessary pleasures. There is no peace in the oligarchic city.

The serious unequal distribution of wealth necessary to create and maintain an oligarchy introduces a new element into the forces driving political and personal decline. The economy needed to create and maintain wealth alters the nature of desire. In addition to those desires that are essential to the normal operation of a life, a new order of desire is created by the anxious suppression of desire. Socrates argues that the oligarch's lack of education "gives him drone-like desires—some beggarly, some vicious—but that they are forcibly suppressed by his habitual cautiousness" (554c). Desire itself has been partially transformed. A new set of desires emerges, and they are no longer simply natural but are, instead a product of a culture that does not understand itself. Wealth has had the unintended consequence of altering the nature of desire, and of creating two new classes of desire—the beggarly and the vicious.

Oligarchy suffers the same fate as the Kallipolis and timarchy. Its central value proves unstable, and in the next generation, the self-imposed control of the oligarch over pleasure is defined not as thrift but as unsophistication and weakness. The drone-like desires spawned by the anxious thrift of the oligarch rise up and attack the legitimacy of that oligarchic organization. Key shifts occur in the ethical vocabulary:

Doesn't he [the son of the oligarch] then return to the land of the Lotus-eaters, and take up residence quite openly? If any help from his family reaches the thrifty part of his soul, those seductive arguments bar the gates of the royal walls within him. They will neither allow entry to the actual allied force, nor even admit an embassy of wise words, in a private capacity, from the young man's elders. They join battle, and the seductive arguments win. A sense of shame is classed as simple-mindedness, deprived of rights, and driven into exile. Self-discipline is called cowardice, heaped with insults and sent packing. As for moderation and economy, don't the seductive arguments persuade the young man that these are mean and parochial? (560d)

This process of ethical redefinition is essential to the process of decline. An ethical vocabulary not grounded in a reflective understanding of the Good is vulnerable to continual undermining, as those opposed to a current order appropriate and relabel the terms of the ethical vocabulary. Such a redefini-

tion of what is genuinely ethical is a hidden consequence of the unreflective rhetoric of daily life.

Socrates assumes that there is a fundamental human drive to pursue the good, and that this drive is always in operation. The reason people engage in self-destructive or self-defeating behavior is not that they seek to injure themselves but that they are moved by a vocabulary that embodies a distorted view of the good: "Insolence becomes sophistication, anarchy freedom, extravagance generosity, and shamelessness courage" (560e–561a). Socrates lays out the way that unreflective participation in the rhetoric of daily life leads an individual to reconstitute himself or herself ethically. Someone who embraces this newly revised vocabulary seeks to become sophisticated, free, generous, and courageous; and views people who act otherwise as naive, repressed, stingy, and weak. Since the vocabulary feels natural to them, they are not led to question it, nor are they in a position to defend it when it is challenged by a new perspective claiming to be a more correct understanding of nature. The particular and important shift as oligarchy declines is that the distinction between useful and useless pleasures becomes untenable. There is an equality among pleasures and no legitimate contending ethical vocabulary remains that would allow one to make meaningful distinctions among pleasures. Freedom has replaced thrift as the organizing value of the universe.

The decline of the oligarchy is connected to the rise of democracy, a shift that creates a complex situation for the dialogue. Given the narrative frame of Books 8–9, the emergence of democracy has to be read as the next phase of a descent into disorder and ultimately tyranny. Its embrace of an equality refusing to acknowledge any valid distinction between desires and pleasures that are productive and those that are indulgent is evidence of a serious ethical failure. But as ethically problematic as that might appear, it connects democracy to the most ethically desirable city. The foundation of a democracy in its valuing unnecessary pleasures should remind the reader that the origin of democracy parallels the origin of the Kallipolis. Both cities came into being when the value was recognized of pleasures and desires that were not strictly confined to a demonstrably utilitarian concern. Both cities seek conditions that allow humans to flourish, and as Socrates commented in Book 2, when they moved from considering the city of pigs to investigating the luxurious city, that it was in such cities they were most likely to find justice and injustice (372e). This is not merely a point of surface similarity. Socrates argues that anyone engaged in the type of inquiry in which he, Glaucon, and the others are conducting will find a democracy to be a good place to begin such an inquiry:

So anyone wanting to found a city, as we have just been doing, will probably find he has to go to a city with a democratic regime, and there choose whatever political arrangements he fancies. Like shopping for a constitution in a bazaar. Then, when he has made his choice, he can found a city along those lines. (557d)

Projects like the *Republic* are best fostered and may only be possible in democracies (Strauss, 133). Amid all of democracy's chaos, there may be a compensating intellectual richness. The fact that democracy contains all of the various political/ethical types that Socrates identifies would seem to argue that the analysis that he undertakes in Books 8 and 9 is particularly relevant to and intended for a democracy. In his discussion of the various ethical types, Socrates is mapping the political/ethical terrain of Athens.

Socrates is not an uncritical admirer of democracy or even an advocate for democracy. If he acknowledges that it is "probably the most attractive of regimes" (557c), this concession is not intended as a compliment. Democracy is the one regime that embraces and encourages or, at least, tolerates diversity, but this promotion of diversity is not necessarily a good for Socrates. First, it is not clear that the variety and diversity in a democracy are, in fact, instances of true variety and diversity. When Socrates characterizes a democracy as a coat of many colors and of "an infinite variety of floral decorations" (557c), he suggests that it is the kind of thing that would appeal to women and children. This is not praise. Second, Socrates's deep concern about disorder and the potential for an internal division eventuating in civil strife makes him cautious about diversity as a political value. It seems fair to say that if he were given the choice to argue which political regime was best in theory, Socrates would not choose democracy. But Socrates's concern is not to make the case for which regime is best in theory; rather, he is attempting to discover a genuinely persuasive defense of justice, one that works in the world as it is presently constituted. That world, for both Plato and Socrates, is defined by their citizenship in a democratic city. The dialogue is set in Athens and takes place in the Pireaus, a section of the city known for its tolerance and diversity. It is as citizens in a democracy that Glaucon and Adeimantus raise their concerns about a genuinely persuasive defense of justice.

## II

Of all the regime and individual character changes that Socrates charts in Books 8 and 9, the most important is the one from democracy to tyranny,

for that transformation is the only one potentially present in the current historical setting of the dialogue. Whatever theoretical interest there may be in the descent from Kallipolis to timarchy to oligarchy to democracy, there is little or no chance that any of these transformations are real possibilities for the city inhabited by Socrates, Glaucon, and the others. Tyranny, on the other hand, is a real possibility. The current appeal of tyranny is evident in Book 1. Thrasymachus embraced tyranny as something ethically desirable and argued that it represented a natural justice. An unreflective embrace of tyranny as the realization of the human desire for absolute freedom seems to be one logical endpoint to a democracy considering freedom to be the fundamental value. Tyranny can appear to be the purest form of freedom and the truest image of human flourishing. It imagines a world fully responsive to human desire: "Well, then, as I was saying just now, is it the insatiable longing for this good [freedom], and the neglect of everything else, which brings about a change in the regime too, and creates the need for tyranny?" (562c).

The shift from democracy to tyranny occurs when citizens embrace the dream of absolute freedom. Any proposed restraint is defined as an instance of slavery (563 d–e). In this embrace of absolute freedom, democracy is participating in a larger and inherent practice of ethical over-valuation. There seems to be a logic behind each of the regimes in which a partial good is elevated to an absolute good, and this logic creates the conditions for the destruction of that city and its transformation into another regime. For Socrates, this is a special problem for democracy, for the dream of absolute freedom invites and encourages what will become the nightmare of tyranny. One task of the *Republic* is to challenge the unreflective current political rhetoric that subordinates justice to freedom. Although it is not explicitly stated, one of Socrates's concerns is to prevent a democracy from becoming a tyranny. The *Republic* acquires serious political and philosophical force precisely because it understands democracy in a way that democracy does not understand itself. The *Republic* realizes a democracy that unreflectively embraces an ideology of freedom will not only misunderstand or undervalue justice but is also in danger of destroying the very freedom it values.

The drone-like desires, which originated in the oligarchy, reach their culmination in tyranny. Individuals no longer distinguish between types of desires. Socrates points to the momentousness of this shift by interrupting his narrative of the devolution of the regimes to revise his account of desire. The previous account of desire is no longer satisfactory to explain the force of desire in a tyranny. When a tyranny begins to arise, the binary of productive and luxurious desires is replaced by a stance toward desire that is no



longer bound by any sense of shame. A repression of certain desires that was apparently a cultural achievement and a prerequisite for any human order is now lifted. The liberation of desire means that desire is no longer answerable to any human system of values. Socrates uses the tale of a person who inadvertently tastes human flesh and is transformed into a wolf to register the enormity of this transformation. The world of fully liberated desire is no longer a humanly recognizable world. Absolute freedom turns out not to promote the fulfillment of human nature but to contribute to the loss of that nature. The tyrant is not a natural species but the product of a monstrous birth—he is not a natural phenomenon but a consequence of a political order in which wealth has disordered desire.

Nature did not produce the super-drone, nor was it a species that pre-existed the human condition. The super-drone, the tyrant, is a product of a political culture. If one returns to Socrates's narrative of descent, it can be thought of as the tale of the unintentional fostering of a potentially disastrous set of desires. The key moment occurs in the serious unequal distribution of wealth in the oligarchy. That inequality produces the drone: the drone-like desires are a cultural product. However, because they are an intimate part of the cultural fabric, they do not seem to be cultural products but rather natural expressions of desire. They appear as an instance of liberation. This is reinforced by the ethical vocabularies that are continually transformed to mirror these drone-like desires and become the justification for following them in good conscience. Part of the initial difficulty faced by Socrates in his defense of justice was that he had to explain how the desires that people honestly reported as their own natural feelings were actually not their natural feelings but products of a distorted and corrosive ideology in which they participated unawares. Only when tyranny begins to emerge does it become clear how a good person can be corrupted when brought inside a particular ideology and that such ideological inculcation is a normal part of the way in which a culture constitutes its citizens and provides them with an identity reflecting that culture's values.

That unconscious constitution of a corrupt soul is one of the reasons that the *Republic* must end its discussion of justice by an extended description of tyranny. Roochnik makes a persuasive case that the digression occupying Books 5–7 highlights the role of eros and leads dialectically to a necessary complication of Socrates's understanding of the soul: "Socrates, it seems, would have been glad to be done with the just city at the end of book 4. But he is brought back to it by his young interlocutors' concern with sex. His methodical sequence of topics has been interrupted by Eros (whose primary meaning in Greek is 'sexual desire'). As a result, the *logos* is 'set in

motion,' for it must be revised and expanded. It must never be forgotten that what follows, the famous central portion (books 5–7) of the *Republic*, is explicitly a detour or digression sparked by this unexpected intrusion of Eros into the conversation" (3–4). His argument seems right to me. Just as important, the digression and reconsideration of eros serves a related purpose. It allows Socrates to end his discussion of justice not with an account of philosophy that suggests philosophy as a resource to advocate against injustice but with a discussion of tyranny that renders philosophy problematic. Books 2 through 8 of the *Republic* are, in part, the necessary preparation if tyranny is to be understood properly. Whatever else may be in operation at the start of the dialogue, the one thing that Book 1 does not get right is the appeal and threat of tyranny. The pull toward tyranny is rooted in a desire that, although repressed in the current democracy, is, nonetheless, returning as the fantasy of absolute freedom. One of the purposes of Book 9 is to redescribe that fantasy as a nightmare.

In one of its most important insights, the *Republic* suggests that it is our nature as affective creatures which both defines our inherent longing for excellence and justice and leads us mistakenly to violate and contradict that nature. The attempt to use reason, and its ability to discover and create order, as the resource that will bring desire under control is a heroic effort, but one doomed to failure. If that were the whole story of eros, then the most fitting response to the human condition would be despair. But if eros is the principal disruptive force in the political world, it is also essential for the pursuit of philosophy, and Socrates will argue that philosophy can ultimately lead to an understanding of justice that sees it as a good, whether or not it brings external reward and recognition. In the allegory of the cave, the proto-philosopher is compelled by an unspecified agency to turn from the panorama of shadows and begin the ascent on the path leading to a vision of the good. Socrates does not say what compels the philosopher to turn away from the shadow world, but it is reasonable to assume that eros is essential to the dialectical journey. The turning away is not represented as a choice or as the outcome of a rational deliberation. It could be accident, but what accident, even if it were powerful enough to inaugurate the ascent, could be sufficient to sustain someone on a journey characterized as difficult and painful? The most likely candidate for a force enabling an individual to persist in the arduous task of seeking a vision of the Good would be desire. If so, it would have to be a desire not driven to seek a physical object but rather to pursue an intellectual or rational one, even if it does not understand why it is being moved or what the good is that draws it forward.

The study of philosophy shows that it is possible for desire to make

progress in freeing itself from the cultural and political ideologies that shape its pursuit of particular objects. Philosophy is not so much the overcoming of nature as it is the overcoming of a cultural interpretation of nature. More importantly, what philosophy offers is the possibility of redirecting desire, not through manipulation, not through political rearrangements of personal relationships, and not through calculation. In opening up the possibility of even a brief and unclear vision of the Good, philosophy locates a new object for desire. Philosophy allows and finally compels one to desire differently. For that reason, philosophy is the essential part of Socrates's new and revolutionary defense of justice. He is attempting to transform one's erotic orientation so that one desires justice. What Socrates understands is that a genuinely persuasive defense of justice for a creature who is fundamentally an affective being is meaningful only if it can change desire.

If Socrates is to defend justice, he must move the soul in a particular way that allows the soul to desire justice because it appreciates why justice is valuable. This reorientation of desire requires him to address the way in which cultural narratives are internalized and shape desire. Socrates is clear that no one deliberately has false beliefs about injustice (589c). The mistaken cultural narratives and the illusions that they foster are powerful and can only be dismantled by creating a stark contrast between the supposed consequences of unrestrained freedom and the actual misery it produces. If Socrates's portrait of the philosopher remains inescapably figured and ultimately vague, his picture of the tyrant, by contrast, is detailed and explicit. Socrates wants to shatter the public's understanding of the tyrant as a character whose life is marked by invulnerability and who, in his absolute freedom, embodies the ideal of human flourishing. He seeks to debunk the idea that the tyrant is someone who has managed to achieve a situation in which the world is fully responsive to his will. In the popular imagination, the tyrant's life is one in which desire encounters no obstacle to its satisfaction and no limit to its expression, other than the largeness of the tyrant's soul. To challenge this illusion, Socrates reveals a life lived in fear and uncertainty, unable to satisfy its desires, and void of any sense of freedom. This portrait seeks not only to provide a true picture of the tyrant but also to make the tyrannical life repulsive to anyone who views that picture.

As Socrates represents it, the descent into tyranny is a descent into madness. Although Socrates has previously provided parallel and corresponding narratives of how the various regimes and ethical types are destabilized, he explicitly comments that the tyrannical city is to be used as the vehicle that gives access to the tyrant's soul (579d). The tyrannical city is shaped fundamentally by the absence of trust. In the tyrannical city, there is a desperate

escalation of violence as a ruler who is paranoid, and who has reason to be paranoid, must actively suppress his subjects. He is engaged in a continual battle to suppress a population whom he has injured and who, if given an opening, would seek revenge on him for that injury. Rather than being in a position of security and invulnerability, the tyrant is increasingly dependent on his bodyguards. In the need to flatter them as a way to preserve their loyalty, he becomes not their master but their slave. The entire process is marked by exhaustion, as more and more resources are needed to secure loyalty in a relationship in which there is no intrinsic reason to be loyal.

In the tale of the ring of Gyges, invisibility gave Gyges the ability to escape detection, and that ability was crucial to his gaining and maintaining power. In Socrates's tale of the tyrant, secrecy is essential, as is disguise, but neither can produce invisibility. Even the most successfully manipulative rhetoric is limited, and such deceptive persuasion eventually has to give over to compulsion and force. In the tyrannical city, the ruler rules in constant fear, controls nothing, expends all the city's resources to no lasting advantage, and needs to keep the citizenry who promoted him to ruler in a condition of slavery. There is no freedom, and no desire is fulfilled.

That large picture renders the tyrant's soul visible. The tyrant's pursuit of absolute freedom makes him a slave of a misshapen and magnified set of desires which in their disorder frustrate any sustained satisfaction and create a craven individual moved by a set of forces he neither understands nor controls: "In which case, the soul which is ruled by a tyrant will also be least able to do what it wants—at any rate if we are talking about the entire soul. Despite itself, it will be forever driven onward by the gadfly of desire, and filled with confusion and dissatisfaction" (577e). Socrates explicitly identifies eros and tyranny and says that this is a connection that has been recognized traditionally when Eros is referred to as a tyrant. Desire, when it is freed from a guiding purpose or no longer held in check by a sense of shame, runs as if it were a machine out of control—no reason can be recovered to explain or order its motion, and no intervention can turn the machine off. From the outside, such a machine might seem a marvel of sustained activity, but that is an illusion, as the entire motion has no point—nothing is accomplished other than the expression of a frenetic restlessness, which is the form its madness takes. When one is able to see the tyrant, not as he represents himself, but as he truly is, the illusion of flourishing is destroyed:

If you know how to look at the entire soul, it is clear that he does not satisfy his desires in the slightest, that he lives in the greatest need and

in true poverty. His whole life through, laden with fear, he is a mass of uncontrollable pains and convulsions, if his condition is like the condition of the city over which he rules. (579e)

The tyrant, thus, is the unhappiest person, a condition that is true even if he escapes detection. Socrates has met part of Glaucon's and Adeimantus's earlier challenge and offered an account of tyranny that contradicts the claim that the completely unjust person's life is the happiest.

Socrates has two additional arguments intended to prove the superiority of the life of the person who is just. Both of these arguments take desire and pleasure seriously. They see justice not as an order accomplished through the repression of desire but rather one that enables its expression. The standard challenges to and defenses of justice have assumed that desire and justice were inherently at odds, an opposition that made justice unattractive in itself and unpleasant when it was undertaken. Socrates argues that justice and desire are compatible and then presents justice in such a way that his interlocutors and readers desire it. And they need to desire it in the world as it is. Revising his account of the tri-partite soul and seeing the soul as a unity whose identity is determined by its essential affective orientation to the world, Socrates presents the soul in terms of three types of desire and asks which of these desires leads to the greatest happiness. The soul is now represented as a fundamentally affective organism, and the question is which way of loving the world is most satisfying.

The soul as an affectively driven entity is drawn to three classes of goods: truth, honor, and a large amorphous class that Socrates labels as profit. The good that a person pursues shapes the identity of the soul as a lover. Accordingly, there are three types of lovers: lovers of wisdom, lovers of victory, and lovers of profit. Identity or constitution is a function of the dominant affection in the soul, for it is that affection that organizes the desires and determines the pleasures pursued and achieved by that soul. To determine which pleasures are superior, Socrates looks to three criteria: experience, reflection, and reasoning. Based on these criteria the lover of wisdom has the most pleasurable life, for only the lover of wisdom experiences all three pleasures, and the philosopher is alone in the use of reflection and reason. Socrates concludes that the philosopher is in the best position to determine what is the most pleasurable life, so the life of reason turns out to be the most affectively satisfying life. Further, since the philosopher values justice for its own sake, justice and desire need not be in opposition. When someone truly understands his or her own desire, that person will desire to be just.

Socrates argues that we should consider the other pleasures not as real pleasures but as shadow pleasures. If this is so, then part of our mistake about the authority of the pleasure that we experience is based in our misperception of our own internal states. Socrates identifies three possible states: one in which we experience pleasure, one in which we experience pain, and one in which our experience is neutral. He argues that those pleasures rooted in the body are not so much positive experiences as they are relief at the cessation of pain. For Socrates, true pleasure involves a relationship with a good that is permanent rather than the relief from a transitory situation of pain. Everything else is a version of a sugar high. The other pleasures are subject to deterioration: the love of honor slips into envy; the love of victory is replaced by an infatuation with violence and an increasing occupation by anger and bad temper.

Socrates caps this argument with an image of a compound creature that he uses to make the case for self-cultivation. From the outside, the creature appears to be one, but internally there are three creatures capable either of being brought into harmony or of existing in a state of civil war. The identity of this creature is a function of which element is in control. The three creatures are a man, a lion, and a many-headed beast, and they correspond to reason, spiritedness, and appetite as psychic forces. Socrates argues that the just person is the one in which reason supported by spirit rules appetite and controls which appetites are to be nourished and which left to wither. The just person is like an intelligent farmer, and psychic health is a matter of proper cultivation. The tyrant, by contrast, allows appetite to grow unchecked, leading to a distorted growth for both reason and spirit.

Having made his argument, Socrates now pauses to remind Glaucon and his readers that this demonstration has all been an effort at persuasion. He explicitly makes the point that the person advocating for injustice (presumably not the tyrant) has not deliberately and perversely argued for the value of pursuing something that is bad or that is less good. The response to such an error has to be a rhetorical approach that both disarms any anger or contempt that the person who believes in the natural appeal of injustice might reasonably have and opens such a person to reconsider a belief whose truth was considered self-evident:

Should we reason gently with him, then? After all, he's not getting it wrong on purpose. We could ask him: "Look at it this way, if you'd be so good. Couldn't we say also that the conventional views of what is shameful and what is praiseworthy have this as their basis? Praiseworthy actions are what bring the savage elements of our nature under the con-

trol of the human—or rather, perhaps of the divine—while shameful actions are what makes the gentle element a slave to the fierce.” (589c–d).

Having demonstrated that desire and justice are not naturally in opposition, Socrates undoes one final opposition of justice and freedom. He argues that freedom only becomes meaningful when the city and the soul are well-ordered. This order is not considered as the suppression of freedom but as a necessary component in the psychological development of the individual that equips him or her to be so constituted that they are able to use freedom:

“It is clearly the aim,” I said, “both of the law, which is the ally of all the inhabitants of the city, and of our own governance of our children. We don’t allow them to be free until we have established a regime in them, as in a city. We use what is best in us to care for what is best in the child, and we give him a guardian and ruler similar to our own, to take our place. Only then do we give him his freedom.” (590e–591a)

The example of guiding the growth of a child is instructive. The child does not naturally understand the value of order nor, left to themselves, would children be able to make effective use of the freedom they might have. The point of education is to induce an order. That is, it cultivates an understanding and an affective orientation to the world that enables one to be truly free and not simply unhindered by restraints. This order is a sense of justice, so justice is the precondition of freedom and not a restraint on genuine freedom. To be free, the individual must internalize justice.

Socrates does not specify how to use the Kallipolis as a guide. But if one has been alert to Socrates’s cautions not to collapse an image of the thing with the thing itself, then an interlocutor or a reader should see the Kallipolis as a figured image of justice. As such, this image allows for an understanding of justice that is not an empirical generalization from the current instances of what is claimed as justice. This understanding is shaped by an awareness that there is a rhetorical history behind these instances, and that the currently available images of justice have been unreflectively shaped. Given this understanding of the Kallipolis as an image of justice, the interlocutor or the reader should read the figured presentation of justice as providing some guidance that allows the interlocutor or reader to make an advance in the understanding of justice. At the same time this figured presentation also distorts what justice is. The image is distinct from the thing—its value inheres in the utility that it provides for advancing thought about justice so that justice is no longer seen as simply a necessary accom-

modation to an unjust world but as an alternative way to constitute oneself so that a person is not simply shaped by the world into which he or she is born. Someone who has understood Socrates would not seek to implement a plan of the Kallipolis but would, instead, be moved to think rhetorically about political life as a consequence of human choice and about alternative ways to organize politics that better promote human possibility.

Glaucon, however, does not read the figure of the Kallipolis or construe Socrates's narrative of political and personal decline rhetorically. He takes everything literally and so suggests that a person who is concerned with internalizing justice should avoid a life in politics. Socrates does not quite agree and answers: "He will be quite prepared to go into politics—in the city which is his own. But in his native country, baring some heaven-sent piece of good fortune, perhaps not" (592a). Glaucon concludes the just person would withdraw from political life since the city that they have founded exists nowhere (592b). Socrates agrees that the city they have founded may not exist anywhere. He adds, however, that a model of this city may be available within the individual and that this is the city in which the individual should engage as a citizen. He also adds the remarkable claim that it makes no difference if the Kallipolis exists or ever will. All of this makes for a troubling final exchange.

It is important to be clear that Socrates has not said that a just person, a person who has pursued philosophy and hence truly understands justice, should not participate in politics. In the concluding section of Book 9, he merely repeats his earlier point that such a person will have no role to play in political life unless a divine accident occurs that gives this philosopher extraordinary power, part of which would involve a citizenry who were willing to be ruled by such a person. Since this scenario is unlikely, it would seem to make no sense for the philosopher to engage in politics because he or she would be doomed to be ineffective. Although this apparent conclusion would seem to be a strong dismissal of politics, Socrates's point need not be read that way. It is possible to read this comment of Socrates as a recognition that the external imposition of a moral order as the basis of a just political society cannot work. Compulsion cannot create a just person or a just city. Neither a person nor a society can be made just by imposing justice on it. A just city is possible only when justice, as it is figured in the Kallipolis, is internalized. To internalize a rhetorical figure is not to treat that figure as a blueprint to be implemented; it is to use that figure to understand better how one has been constituted by a particular history and culture and how one can reconstitute oneself by reimagining and redescribing the self.

If one takes the dialogue itself as an example of how this process of re-



imagining and redescribing the self occurs, then that process is conducted not by some sort of introspection or by a retreat to a private existence that avoids politics but by engaging interlocutors who are moved to conversation because of genuine political and ethical concerns. As Socrates made clear repeatedly throughout Book 8, no one exists in isolation. It is not possible to arrange a life in which the public does not intrude. Humans are born into universes of discourse, and these rhetorical universes characterize the ethical understandings that are internalized by those born into them. This ethical constitution is seen over and over again as the children of the class that is currently in positions of power are drawn away from a strict adherence to that understanding by the presence of a competing but emergent discourse that leads the children to a compromised understanding. This inherent instability of political life is addressed partly, but never fully, by an education that seeks to perpetuate a particular set of values. This generational transvaluation of value is the drama of tradition confronting innovation, and tradition is always fated ultimately to lose, even if it resorts to the most draconian of methods to insure the triumph of its viewpoint. The logic driving that discursive universe is to greater and greater disorder.

If the narrative of Book 8 was not sufficient to prove that the retreat to a private life is not possible, the example of Cephalus should recall that such a life is also not necessarily desirable. Cephalus achieved peace in his life through the fortunate, but accidental, coincidence of having significant wealth coupled with the loss of eros. In such a world, justice is not felt as a serious problem, so the experience of that life is itself a distortion. Cephalus's retreat to a private life is not reprehensible but it is certainly without attraction to anyone who is interested in living a life that is vital or for whom philosophy is important.

To recognize that a philosopher is unlikely to rule is not necessarily to argue that philosophy has no political role. It is to recognize that philosophy's contribution to the current political world will not be achieved by an intervention that imposes an order on that world. That understanding of the problem of justice is a healthy recognition by philosophy of its own limits. But the fact that philosophy will not be the force that rules the city does not excuse philosophy from all political obligation. The *Republic* itself argues just the opposite. What necessitates the discussion in the *Republic* is the unsatisfactory and ineffective efforts of any of the current defenses of justice. Current political discourse cannot speak in a meaningful way to why one should be just. That rhetorical failure is a significant political problem. What is required is an alternative form of discourse, a new rhetoric, that can challenge the self-evident desirability of injustice and reimagine the

nature of the human soul in such a way that it can transform desire and reconstitute souls so that they naturally desire to be just. The attempt to defend justice leads a philosophical rhetoric to a new understanding of the political need for poetry.

It is an open question of how one would use the Kallipolis to order his or her own soul. The least likely way—and surely the most wrongheaded—would be to take this rhetorical figure literally and assume that it represents a true image of justice. If, however, one looks at the discursive act of constructing the Kallipolis, then the process of ordering a soul looks very much like the process of working through the complex consequences of translating an intellectual critique into an effective rhetorical image that has political consequences.

Book 9 ends with a concern for the politics of the self—the constitution of the self through the construction of an idealized and abstract and theoretical image of justice. The dialogue's extended effort at defending justice becomes a way to see the world as it really is and to avoid the misperception of a world that has been shaped by history. It is a nonempirical understanding of justice. This understanding does not really entail a retreat from politics as much as it creates a necessary precondition for any mode of life private or political. It locates the responsibility for such a life not in the state (as the Kallipolis would have it), but in the act of imaging the ideal (as the *Republic* does). It seeks to achieve a form of persuasion by presenting the self with an image that frees one to reconstitute himself and align himself with an understanding that is his own, that he has earned through an examination of the relevant concerns. It is a way of thinking that frees one from historical or cultural determination—persuasion is the activity through which a human born into history reconstitutes himself or herself as an ethical and political agent because that person assumes an appropriate responsibility for the self. As the process through which identity is constituted, persuasion also creates the possibility for autonomy. This autonomy is not an atomistic existence with no connections to others, but rather the possibility for self-rule, one in which justice is internalized and in which desire is reoriented toward justice. The life of this newly constituted individual stands in opposition to the inadvertent slavery that defined life in the cave.

Justice thus becomes a standard to guide persuasion in the creation of a harmonious and unified (a full/whole) person who can engage in a life in which human potential is realized. We are rhetorical artifacts—we do not exist naturally but we create ourselves through our images which allow us to glimpse what we can become. Plato tends to characterize this self-

constitution as an act of recovery—of freeing ourselves from the accumulated and unreflective images of human possibility that we inherit as members of a culture. It can look as if we are moving beyond culture back to a place of natural and uncontaminated innocence. But the effort of imagining suggests not a return so much as an attempt to use our values as a way to discover what it means to be truly human—a state that we have not yet experienced. In this way persuasion is future-oriented.

If one looks at the *Republic* itself as a mimetic poem, the action imitated is an effort at genuine persuasion. If previous epic poems took war as their focus, Plato is revising that tradition and arguing that the activity that defines the democratic city is persuasion. Justice is defended not by recourse to the sword but through the use of rhetoric. If a traditional aristocratic culture defined excellence in terms of military prowess, then a democratic culture requires a different understanding of a politically appropriate excellence. Power would no longer reside in one's ability to be a dominant warrior but in one's ability to speak effectively. Not surprisingly, tyranny is the dark underside of democracy—it is paradigmatic abuse of speech that perverts the public character of discourse and transforms it into a means with which to pursue private ambition and to enact aggression. In a democracy, the task of philosophy is to become rhetorical and make itself available to the citizens of a democracy, citizens who themselves are not philosophers. The extended effort at genuine persuasion adequate to the complex world in which the democratic citizen lives presents the new cultural and political ideal.<sup>7</sup> The heroic stature of this endeavor derives from the obstacles with which it must contend. But having written this poem about the epic struggle of a philosophical rhetor in his defense of justice, Plato must end this work by making sure that his interlocutors and readers understand fully what it means to be confronted by a mimetic work. He needs to offer a final caution about the ways in which his interlocutors and readers will be tempted to misunderstand this dialogue.

## The Rhetorical Office of Poetry

Socrates begins Book 10 by commenting on the rightness of one particular decision that he and Glaucon made in the founding of their imaginative city. He argues, surprisingly, that the correctness of their approach can be seen in the way in which they understood the impact of poetry: "'There are many reasons,' I said, 'why I feel sure we have gone about founding our city in the right way, but I am thinking particularly of poetry'" (595a). This turn to poetry must strike a reader as odd. The discussion of poetry has not been a focus for at least five books. And as the focus of a curricular discussion, poetry was superseded by an account of the philosophical education necessary to develop those who were truly equipped to rule. Why does Socrates consider the handling of poetry as the one reason worth singling out for the rightness of their approach in designing the Kallipolis? Book 10 will presumably make clear why this is so. Crucial to this explanation is a more detailed exploration of mimesis itself. But why is the defense of justice incomplete without an explicit and extended discussion of mimesis?

An understanding begins to emerge when one returns to the end of Book 9 where philosophy proved to be politically ineffective. Book 9 ends with a recognition of the inability of philosophy to be effective politically, at least if one uses the measure of active participation in political reform or rule as the standard by which to judge this effectiveness. In contrast to philosophy's apparent political ineffectiveness, poetry is politically powerful. Perhaps, poetry, if understood more fully, could allow philosophy to be effective politically. Nadaff suggests as much: "Plato seems to understand the transformative power of mimetic poetry as a necessary supplement that compensates for a fundamental lack in a strictly, abstract, conceptual philosophy" (4). More emphatically: "The failure of the philosophical logos produces the necessary return to the use of a poetic *muthos* as a mode to

speak seriously about that which dialectic cannot represent adequately. Socrates leans on the poetic for this: to forge an anacletic, not a compensatory, bond between the philosophic and the poetic" (129). If a philosopher uses poetry to provide a nonphilosophical audience with an image of justice, he might be able to further the desire to be just even if he could not give this audience knowledge of what justice is. By making justice an object of affection, a philosophical poetry could contribute in an appropriate and productive way to the political well-being of the city by creating within the citizens a desire to be just. Since mimesis presents images that have an affective charge, a philosophical poetry could reshape desire.

Ferrari argues that "for Plato there is no such thing as philosophical poetry, only (at closest) a poetic sort of philosophy" ("Plato and Poetry," 142). He goes on to say, "Philosophy is being portrayed as the inheritor of the role of poetry (and of other arts), not as its partner" (143). Naddaff, however, sees Plato as reimagining and reinvigorating the political role of poetry: "At the end of the *Republic*, mimetic poetry returns anew as politically and psychically useful. Its utility requires and permits the philosopher to appropriate the poet's voice and the poetic medium" (121). If one sees poetry for Plato as operating rhetorically, then these two claims need not be in opposition. Unlike the poet, the philosopher achieves his or her understanding through dialectic (and to that extent is significantly different from the poet), but to communicate this understanding to a nonphilosophical audience, the philosopher needs to employ poetry's resources. In doing so, he is operating rhetorically to help shape political culture.

Nehamas makes the helpful observation that the discussion of poetry in Book 10 allows Plato to expand his initial discussion of the role of poetry in the education of the young and to look at how poetry functions in the life of adults (256).<sup>1</sup> In Athens the performance of poetry had a civic function. Halliwell makes this connection explicit: "Part of the potency of poetry is located by Plato in its performance on public occasions where it functions as ideological rhetoric for the polis as a whole, and his attitude to tragedy may well be influenced by a sense of the phenomenon of *mass* emotion that prevailed both in the theater and, as a well-known passage of *Ion* indicates (535b–e), at epic recitations too" (61). Ferrari explains how the performance impacts the audience psychologically: "The theatricality of poetry does not reside in the poem considered as a stretch of language but in an aspect of the psychology of those who participate in the performance of that stretch of language (a description that includes the audience): namely, in their capacity for imaginative identification with what is to be represented" ("Plato and Poetry," 108). And Burnyeat makes clear that poetry played a

central role in Athenian democracy: "Athenian tragedy and comedy were intensely democratic institutions, both in ways they were organized and in their physical presence" (274). Athenians saw the public performance of mimetic poetry as political (Burnyeat, 275). Mimetic poetry was understood as functioning rhetorically.

# I

Book 10 is necessary because mimesis as a civic practice had not received adequate attention in the *Republic's* earlier discussions of poetry. Socrates's immediate concern regarding mimesis is that "everything [tragedy and all other mimetic poetry] of that sort seems to me to be a destructive influence on the minds of those who hear it" (595b).<sup>2</sup> He is more than willing to grant the aesthetic force of poetry but wants to understand how that force operates rhetorically to shape or misshape an audience. Even as he raises the problem of the destructive influence of poetry, he qualifies that statement. He says that poetry will be harmful to its audience "unless, of course, they have the antidote, the knowledge of what really is" (595b). Since Socrates is about to begin an investigation of mimesis, it would seem reasonable to assume he is both laying out the problem and providing the antidote.<sup>3</sup> Plato provides such an antidote because he is alert to the ways in which this dialogue may be misread and is attempting to help his readers avoid some of those ways. Nadaff argues that as a dialectician Plato was very much aware of movement from a provisional to a fixed understanding, so he was a consciously self-subversive writer. Like Rosen, she cautions about the ever-present danger that philosophy, without a protection of self-criticism, can find itself transformed into ideology: "Ultimately, Plato's own repressive logic is an ideological danger in terms of this final operation. But it is also relentlessly rigorous in how it creates an art that has the power to construct and deconstruct lived experience, to disturb and transgress established norms and modes of seeing and being in the world" (4). To make rhetorically aware readers, Plato must have Socrates explain to the interlocutors within the dialogue and, even more, to the dialogue's readers how poetry operates on them.

For Socrates, it is Homer, the teacher of Greece, who must be contested. As Socrates acknowledges, he himself has had "affection and respect" for Homer since he was a child. Poetry is powerful, and it creates deep bonds; it is not simply a matter of knowledge but of knowledge that is affectively charged. Jonathan Lear comments: "Its [poetry's] ability to draw us into such a world indicates that it is appealing to a primitive level of mental

functioning: Plato calls it a vulgar part of the psyche (10.603a). For Plato, poetry has a hotline to the appetites. It is able to bypass reason, the faculty which corrects false appearances (601b, 602d–603b), and go straight to the psychic gut" (240). As such, the understanding that mimesis creates cannot be refuted by a rigorous philosophical discourse. It is not something philosophy can banish easily or ever completely suppress.

To explain mimesis's power, Socrates distinguishes types of existents. He argues that for any made object there are three ontologically distinct types: the idea logically necessary for the identity of the plural and distinct made objects; the made object itself; and the representation of that object as it appears to an observer. The first object is the work of a god; the second of a craftsman skilled in a particular kind of making; and the third a version of the second object as it appears to an observer. The object made by the god is eternal and true. The object made by the craftsperson is a material embodiment of that object. Since no material representation can completely and accurately reproduce the divine idea, the made object both represents the idea of the god and necessarily distorts it. All made objects are particular realizations of the idea; hence, they inescapably involve the particular perspective of the craftsperson producing them. Any made object is always a version of the idea. Finally, the third object embodies how the material object appears to a particular viewer. This object is encountered from the outside and always again from a particular perspective. The objects, thus, participate in a hierarchy in which the object made by a god is true; the object made by the craftsperson is one remove from truth; and the object made by the artist reproducing the appearance of the made object is two removes from truth. Socrates and Glaucon label the maker of the object two removes from truth as an imitator (597e). Socrates adds that this is what the tragic poet as imitator will be.

The initial difficulty for artistic representation, then, is that its object is two removes from truth. The painter and the poet represent in their works the way the world appears to them. Assuming for a moment that their representations are accurate, they are nonetheless always limited by a particular perspective that is seemingly unaware of the roles history and accident have played in shaping both the object imitated and the perspective of the observer. There is an ontological naïveté in this type of art—it simply takes the world at face value and attempts to reproduce it faithfully. In effect, it holds a mirror up to the world, so that the world can see itself. Rather than calling attention to its particular position with respect to the object reflected, the mirror seems to offer assurance that the representation

is an accurate and faithful reproduction of reality and not an interpretation of reality. The mirror is an illusion in more than one sense. It presents an image of an image of the world, and, even more, it is product of a perspective that seeks to obliterate the idea that a perspective is involved. Accordingly, the mimetic work is experienced as a valuable representation of reality, and its audience is not immediately or naturally moved to reflect on this portrait other than to consider whether it lines up well with the world that they have experienced. Thus, mimetic art confirms the audience in its understanding of itself. As such, mimetic representation is an unintended form of containment.

Socrates imagines the audience as literal-minded. The audience believes the work of art is truthful because they see themselves reflected in it. Socrates calls such audience members simpletons who have “apparently come across a magician and imitator, and have been taken in by him” (598c). It is not necessary to assume that the imitator intended to deceive the audience; in fact, the imitator may well be as much of a simpleton as the audience. Socrates is not charging anyone with conscious deception, which would argue a case for simple ethical failure, but he is trying to explain the hold that mimesis has on an audience. In Socrates’s account, it is not the imitator who claims to be an expert on the particular object or action represented; rather, the audience bestows that title on the artist. Extrapolating from their experience of the mimetic work, the audience naively assumes that only somebody with a knowledge that embodied a real understanding of the object or action could have successfully rendered such an accurate version of how the world actually appears to the audience. This mistake should surprise no one. It is reasonable, if naive, of them to believe that if a work of art seems to represent accurately the world that they experience, then that is a work of art that shows genuine understanding of the world.

Were it simply a matter of mimetic renderings of couches and tables and such manufactured products that Socrates offers as examples of mimesis, this ontological concern might well seem overwrought.<sup>4</sup> But Socrates’s interest, of course, is poetry, and, in particular, epic and tragic poetry:

“Very well,” I said, “Now our next question concerns both tragedy and its mentor Homer. It arises out of the claim that tragedians know about all the arts, that they know about everything human—as it relates to virtue and vice—and everything divine as well. The good poet, they say, if he is to do a good job of creating things he does create, must necessarily create them with knowledge. He could not create otherwise.” (598d–e)



The audience assumes that in order for the poet to create a successful tragedy, the poet must understand the larger ethical issues enacted in the poem. Socrates challenges that assumption. If Socrates is right that all the artist does is hold a mirror up to the audience, then the artist need not have any understanding of the content that the mirror reflects. If someone were to attempt to defend poets by claiming that they are astute observers of the human condition, Socrates could agree and say that that is the problem. Their vision is tightly focused on this world, and the artists render that vision with a serious attention to detail. Mimetic poets are accurate recorders of a city's culture and history. There is definitely skill involved in this, but this skill is not dependent on understanding the nature of the objects represented. Art unintentionally becomes a way of giving the audience back its commonplaces. And it compounds this unintentional consequence by transforming these commonplaces and returning them to an audience that receives them as wisdom. The audience looks at the mirror, sees itself, and admires the beauty of the thing that it beholds there. The mimetic experience, as Socrates describes it, raises no questions and preempts what might have been productive questions. In its intellectual, ethical, and political containment, the mimetic experience rhetorically shapes its audience.

Although he does not explicitly argue that Plato in his criticism considers poetry as a rhetorical practice, Ferrari's observations lend strong support to a view of poetry as rhetoric and suggest why poetry as rhetoric is effective:

But what makes the poets so dangerous is that not only can they transport us into scenes, convey the feel of human behaviour, without being possessed of the understanding from which such behaviour would arise in life, but also since their images do indeed convey an accurate feel of the entire situation, and because they are composed in a medium—talk, primarily—not obviously distinct from that through which the actual situation would find expression, poets, unlike painters or craftspeople, can readily convince us that what they produce springs from a full understanding of the user's skill to which it corresponds. ("Plato and Poetry," 129)

Poetry is dangerous because it persuades the audience that its images mirror reality. The danger is particularly insidious because the poet is not perceived as acting rhetorically. Rather, the poet is considered as having reproduced an accurate image of the world as it is. The effect of this perception by the audience is that the poet's limited perspective is naturalized not as

an interpretation but as a moving image of how things really are. The audience's participation in a mimetic work of poetry thus becomes an exercise in self-confirmation, which is ultimately an act of self-containment. Ferrari captures this act of rhetorical self-containment by the audience:

Socrates also offers social considerations in support of the contrast between different types of skill and its metaphysical basis when he confronts the imagined objection that surely a good poet, such as Homer, simply could not compose fine poetry on his chosen topic unless he had some worthwhile understanding of what he was talking about (598d8–e5). Socrates' response is to suggest that "fine" poetry for such an objector is no more than poetry that is found convincing, and the objector is not allowing for the possibility that he has been too easily convinced—taken in by the appearance of understanding (598e5–9a4). ("Plato and Poetry," 129)

According to Socrates, the audience takes the fact of its being persuaded of the rightness of the representation as evidence of the rightness of the poet's understanding. The rhetorical operation of poetry is obfuscated by the audience's assumption that the poetry is not operating rhetorically. The issue of the poet's perspective is eradicated, and the poet's vision is treated as unproblematically reproducing in its images an accurate view of the world.

As Jonathan Lear has suggested, Plato opposes the practice of mimesis because, independent of content, mimesis operates in such a way as to enslave the audience: "The poet externalizes his appetites; but they form a cultural template which, when re-internalized, enslaves us all. Poet and tyrant ultimately enslave us, but while the tyrant enforces external compliance, poetic enslavement reaches inside the psyche and reorganizes it so that we remain unconscious of our slavery" (244–45). Through its capacity to enhance and intensify emotion, poetry offers its audiences images that feel true because of the emotional force that the audience feels. Socrates pursues this criticism first by suggesting that the painter can use color and shape to create an appearance that meets the audience's expectations as to what the object should look like. He then makes the analogy explicit and applies this critique to poetry:

The same goes for the poet, too, I take it. We can say that he colours his pictures of all these skills with his words and phrases, and that the only thing he knows anything about is imitation. The result is that people like himself, people who judge things on the basis of language, think

that what he has to say seems excellently said—whether he is using meter, rhythm and harmony to describe shoemaking, or generalship, or anything else. (601a–b)

The poet's entire skill resides in his ability to use language. The poet's ability to deploy his linguistic resources allows him to color the image and give it an emotional charge. What the audience loves in the mimetic object is not the truth it contains (even if that is what they believe they love), but they are infatuated with and by the affectivity of language. Socrates likens the audience's response to being under a spell: "Such is the power of bewitchment naturally possessed by the tools he [the poet] uses" (601b).

Socrates suggests that this spell does not endure. He analogizes the beauty of mimetic poetry to the attractiveness of a young face. With age, the effects fade and the beauty of the poem then is "like looking at them when they lose their bloom of youth" (601b). The effects of poetry are transient. This criticism, however, should remind one of how similar Socratic discourse and mimetic poetry are. Earlier in Book 6, Adeimantus had directed a nearly identical criticism at Socrates (487b–d). He had argued that Socratic persuasion was often transient, that the audience felt that they had not so much been persuaded as they had been brought under the spell of Socrates, and finally that when the spell wore off, they were skeptical of Socrates's arguments. The number of parallel criticisms that can be brought against poetry and philosophy may suggest that their quarrel is, in fact, a family quarrel. Part of the problem is that mimetic poetry and philosophy, or at least Socratic philosophy, look a lot alike. They both make claims for connection to truth; they offer themselves in some capacity as guides; they employ images and other rhetorical devices; and they are mesmerizing. For all of these reasons, Socrates needs to distinguish what he has just done from traditional mimetic poetry, which it so closely resembles.<sup>5</sup> Book 10 is Plato's recognition that his philosophical dialogue resembles mimetic poetry to such a degree that he explicitly needs to distinguish the two discourse forms and to criticize the limits of mimetic poetry.

To understand what poetry does, Socrates returns to the constitution of the soul and to the unreliability of empirical observation. That things can look both crooked and straight in water points to the fact that observation cannot be trusted on its own to provide accurate information about the world. These conflicting appearances produce confusion in the soul (602d). The authority of the conflicting appearance makes it difficult, if not impossible, to decide what is really there. The same problem arises from practices like "shadow-painting, conjuring, and all other arts of the same kind" that

exploit the soul's susceptibility to taking appearance at face value (602d). Human sensibility is an inadequate faculty to allow one to investigate the external world, if that is the sole faculty that an individual employs. The fact that one can state that this is the way in which he or she honestly sees the world does not mean that this perception of world is verisimilar. Because an experience feels true to the person having it does not mean the experience is true.

To counter the unreliability of empirical observation, people have developed measurement (602d). They use reason to correct any distortions or confusions among the sense data and to determine which data is reliable. The practice of measuring relocates the potential conflict between various appearances and reconstitutes that conflict as one between sensibility and reason. Rather than the conflict being between two elements in one faculty, it is now between two different parts of the soul. This conflict is exacerbated by those mimetic arts that are two removes from truth. Since these arts traffic in appearance, they strengthen those elements in the soul that are responsive to appearance. Simply as a consequence of the operation of this type of imitation, the authority of reason is diminished. Socrates says: "This was the point of agreement I wanted to reach when I said that painting—and imitation in general—operates in an area of its own, far removed from truth, and that it associates with the element in us which is far removed from intelligence—a liaison and friendship from which nothing healthy or true can result" (603a–b). Mimesis lends authority to a belief that experience can be taken uncritically as a guide. The consequences of such a belief were evident at the beginning of the *Republic* when Glaucon and Adeimantus made the case for injustice and linked the authority of that position to both the common perception of the world and the way in which the world had been represented in poetry. These two perceptions worked in collaboration to persuade people that it was a fact, supported by empirical observation and by the authority of the literary tradition, that people innately desired to be unjust. Imitation and uncritical empirical observation worked together to cause people not to understand themselves and to rest content in this misunderstanding, as if it were the truth.

Socrates makes explicit the connection of imitation to justice: "Imitation, we say, imitates men performing actions freely or under compulsion. As a result of their actions, they believe they have done well or badly, and in all these situations they feel pain or pleasure" (603c). The political or ethical understanding created by mimetic poetry is not simply a type of belief, whether correct or fallacious, but a belief that is affectively charged. Unlike the earlier example of the stick in the water, which was a matter of the un-

reliability of sense data, the understanding arising from mimetic poetry is one in which the audience is invested. The affectivity of the belief and the object of the imitation work together to help shape the audience member's sense of ethical and political identity. What might have looked like a problem of epistemology is really a problem of ethical or political constitution.

## II

According to Socrates, mimetic poetry contributes to an internal civil war. This conflict is apparent when Socrates considers the human response to grief. The good man is one who endures grief, responding with moderation to the pain he experiences. Moderation prevents the pain from dominating the good person and instead supports an appropriate form of expression. The presence of other people whom the person considers as equals provides support for the moderate response. The grieving person, in effect, sees himself as an actor performing before an audience, and the presence of the audience disciplines the actor's performance. Grief is never simply experienced; it is also always performed. Reason and custom assist in this performance. They provide the criteria upon which to judge the response to grief. This moderation is valued because it aids the healing process. It does so not because it represses the emotion but because it places the loss in perspective, and that perspective helps shape the emotion. In effect, it gives grief a form. Socrates argues that the healthy perspective to loss is to see the world as one in which people have limited control and in which their fates are determined very much as the result of a throw of the dice. Loss happens and there is a serious limit as to what human action can do to prevent that loss. Moderation allows a person to keep that inescapable fact in perspective. If a person can do this, then healing is able to replace grief. If not, the person's immoderate grief contributes to further psychological illness and pain.

But if reason furthers this healing, it does so in competition with that part of the soul given to uncontrolled lamentation. This part of the soul Socrates labels as lazy and cowardly. Returning to the earlier discussion of the unreliability of empirical observation, it seems that the irrational part of the soul makes the mistaken judgment that the present state of loss is not a temporary situation that will change but is now the essential nature of the world. Given that the world is defined by irreparable loss, all one can do is lament, and perpetual lamentation becomes a mechanism of self-containment. The person indulging in grief guarantees the continuing pain of loss, and then treats the continuing pain of loss as a register of what the world really is. Uncontrolled grief becomes a form of self-wounding. The

immoderate response to loss produces a disproportionate image of the world as loss, and treats this image as an accurate picture.

Socrates complicates this account by identifying the element of the soul that gives in to grief not simply as lazy and cowardly but also as fretful (604e). This part of the soul is histrionic and theatrical, making it a fruitful subject for mimetic representation. Simply in terms of its mimetic potential, lamentation offers a particularly inviting set of behaviors that can be dramatized and affect an audience. In this, it stands in stark contrast to the mimetic possibilities created by the just person whose behavior is expressed as calmness. Justice as a mimetic object is unpromising for two reasons. First, as Socrates contends, "the calm, thoughtful character, on the other hand, unchanging and true to itself is hard to imitate, and not a simple matter to understand if it is imitated" (604e). If mimetic poetry and drama, in particular, depend upon change, then the just character has limited dramatic potential because its constancy generates very little drama. Second, because there is little change and the just soul does not express itself in behavior that easily reveals its constitution, it is easy to misread the behavior of the just soul. Its moderation can be mistaken for passivity. All of this is compounded by the nature of the audience, which Socrates characterizes as both diverse and unfamiliar with what just behavior looks like. The audience is primed to misread the actions that they see.

The mimetic poet is not simply drawn to the fretful, but his work must offer a charged affectivity if he is to succeed with the public: "The imitative poet's nature is obviously not adapted to this element [calm] in the soul, nor is his wisdom framed to appeal to it. Not if he is going to be popular with the general public. His concern is with the fretful, variegated character, because that is the one which it is easy to imitate" (605a). Like the painter, the poet seeks those representations most vivid and, in terms of their mimetic appeal, most engaging. The art need not have a conscious intention to deceive, but to the extent that it seeks to maximize the appeal of its products, it strengthens those aspects of the soul responsive to and controlled by appearance. In this way, it inevitably furthers corruption in the soul (605c). It makes the soul less able to judge truly, and instead encourages the soul to cede authority to those elements that produce immediate and strong gratification.

This corruption is not limited to the general population. Socrates's most serious accusation is that mimetic poetry has the "ability to corrupt even good people" (605c). As Burnyeat observes, "If they [the poetic images] still retain a certain allure, that is because Socrates and Glaucon contracted a rival passion (*eros*) from the culture they grew up in. Only philosophical

theory can provide a counter-charm to the mimesis they adored and save them from slipping back into the childish loves of the multitude (607e–8a)” (294). The fact that philosophical theory cannot eradicate the passion but only counter it testifies to the rootedness of this passion and to the complex and extended effort that is required to make a serious change in the city’s understanding of itself. If the consequences of mimetic poetry could simply be attributed to the weakness of a nonphilosophical audience, then controlling the effects of mimesis could be considered as a practical difficulty. It would still be a serious problem, but it would not raise the difficulty of systemic corruption. The deeper problem is that mimetic poetry has an innate appeal to human beings. Jonathan Lear explains the powerful appeal of mimetic poetry, arguing that it “feeds our psychological hunger to take things in” (240): “For poetry encourages the irrational part of us to hold on to illusion in spite of reason’s correction. It establishes a split-off part of the psyche to which reason is not accessible. And that is why poetry cannot, for Plato, be just a stage in the developmental cave we work our way through” (240). Socrates includes himself among those who are moved by mimetic poetry. This is not a small concession—even the most philosophical natures are susceptible to the appeal of poetry:

The best of us, I imagine, when we hear Homer or one of the tragic poets imitating some hero is a state of grief, as he drags out a long speech of lamentation, or even breaks into song, or starts beating his breast . . . well, you know how it is. We enjoy it, and surrender ourselves to it. We follow and share the hero’s sufferings, treat them as real, and praise as an excellent poet the person who most affects us in this way. (605d)

One might have assumed that philosophy would have been able to inoculate a person against the affective appeal of poetry. But it cannot. All are drawn to representations of the human, and all respond with a natural sympathy. The audience may not experience the hero’s sufferings in exactly the same way that he does, but it does share in them. Ferrari argues that, for Plato, “a poetic performance (the image) engages its participants not simply in the look but, as we say, in the whole ‘feel’ of the human action it portrays; and since emotions and ethical attitudes are a crucial part of that action, by allowing ourselves to identify with what is depicted (by participating, that is, in the performance) we come in some sense to reproduce those emotions and attitudes, that ‘feel’, within ourselves—as opposed to reproducing or considering the look of a thing in a material image outside ourselves” (“Plato and Poetry,” 109). These emotions then have authority for us.

The mimetic experience creates an internal contradiction within the best people. Because they are good, they are ruled by reason and by the proven counsel of custom. But because they are human, they have an innate hunger for emotional experience:

Here we have this element which in one situation—in our private misfortunes—is forcibly held in check, though it has this hunger which can only be satisfied by weeping and wholesale lamentation, since these are the satisfactions this kind of thing by its nature desires. (606a)

It is this natural hunger for a certain kind of emotional experience—one which is intense and purgative—that the poet satisfies. If the roles of reason and custom are to control or diminish this hunger, they can, at best, only partially fulfill that role. The human is an affective creature, and if that nature can be modified, it cannot finally be completely altered. If it could, the result would be either a monster or a god, but not a human.

Socrates sees the threat of mimetic poetry as insidious. It is as if we intentionally, although not consciously, fabricate an excuse to satisfy a hunger we have otherwise disciplined. We justify this by arguing that we ourselves are not engaged in the actions but that we experience considerable pleasure in watching them: “It says the sorrows it is watching are another’s, and if someone else, who claims to be a good man, is grieving inappropriately, there is nothing for us to be ashamed of in applauding him and pitying him. We believe there is positive benefit, which is pleasure, and would not be prepared to lose that by rejecting the whole poem” (606b). For Socrates, this defense is a blatant rationalization. We argue to ourselves that it is acceptable to experience grief in the dramatized representation of lamentation, and we are led to make this argument because we feel pleasure in applauding and pitying the protagonist. We assume further that the experience of this pleasure has no consequence for us as audience. The audience believes that it can construct a border around the emotions experienced so that they don’t intrude into the self and begin a process of reconstituting that self. Mimesis offers the gain of pleasure without the negative of ethical compromise.

Socrates argues that most people cannot isolate the emotional response to a mimetic work and that they deceive themselves when they think they can: “It is given to few people, I suspect, to work out that the pleasure they take in what happens to others necessarily carries over into what happens to them. If they allow the faculty of pity to grow strong, by feeding it on the sorrows of others, it is hard to restrain it when it comes to their own sorrows” (606b). Socrates does not believe individuals can create walls in the



psyche that compartmentalize experience and emotion. For him, there is no such thing as the experience of an emotion without consequence for the overall health of the soul. He doesn't assume a simple process of corruption; rather, he suggests that there is a subtle shift in orientation and, as a result, certain emotions become more powerful than the person realized. His argument recognizes that if mimetic art did not impact its audience in some way, the audience would not be so powerfully drawn to it.

Poetry "feeds and waters these things [our desires, pains, and pleasures] when they ought by rights to wither away" (606d). In doing this, mimetic poetry makes its audience more vulnerable to the caprice of the world. Socrates's argument with mimetic poetry is that it increases its audience's tendency to be affected by experiences in which the audience loses control. What is not obvious to the audience is that once a person has constituted a life influenced by external events beyond that person's control, then that person has given over his life to the contingency of the world. When contingency controls a life, the person is simply driven by the events that befall him. In effect, he becomes a victim of the world's caprice. Socrates does not believe that anyone can control this caprice, but he argues for an internal constitution that lessens the impact of such caprice. It may be that a person's affectivity can be educated. If a person has a just appreciation of the world, that person can then love the world appropriately. Without such a just appreciation, the world must appear as tyrannical, as a power governed by whim and indifferent to human purpose.

Socrates wants to be clear that he is not hostile to poetry, and that he does not consider the poets as enemies. He offers Homer's admirers a chance to mount a defense on his and their behalf. He imagines them arguing that Homer is the educator of Greece and worth studying "both for our general education and for the management of human affairs" (606e). As far as Socrates is concerned, if Homer's defenders are guilty of anything, it is of being naive. They assume that because a poet is skilled in the use of language and an astute examiner of the human condition, poetry must be beneficial and wise. What these admirers don't understand is that reproduction of an uncriticized appearance helps confirm a poet's audience in their understanding of the world rather than enabling them to reflect on that understanding and determine what in it is true and what is merely a product of history or contingency. The more powerful the poetry, the stronger the containment in an interpretation.

Even so, Socrates opens a door for poetry to be readmitted into his just city. Scholars have disputed how serious this offering is, but there are some strong reasons to take it as a serious offer. Halliwell makes an apt observa-

tion: "This [Socrates's conclusion about poetry in Book 10] is not only one of the most elaborate statements anywhere in Plato of the conditional standing of the arguments presented. It is also arguably the most pronounced invitation ever issued to Plato's readers to continue the debate themselves, in dialogue *with* as well as within the work. To that extent it is a crucial stimulus to my own arguments throughout this book" (*The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 39). Halliwell, of course, is not alone in this; the *Republic* inaugurated a conversation about the political consequences of art that continues to today, and Jonathan Lear argues that "this is a challenge which it seems to me, we are only now ready to take up once again" (246). Socrates's invitation appears serious, as he says he will be a good listener and that it would clearly be an advantage if poetry is "shown to be a good thing as well as pleasurable" (607e). Homer's defenders did not understand that poetry was not being indicted for deliberately corrupting the city but for its participation in the audience's emotional constitution or reconstitution. This poetic constitution made the audience a slave to the caprice of the external world. Socrates admits that he too finds poetry pleasurable. In fact, he finds it beguiling (607c–d). That appeal, of course, is part of the problem. He makes it clear that a persuasive defense of poetry must not simply argue the case for poetry in terms of pleasure but in terms of its goodness for the individual and the city.

Socrates's complicated relation to mimetic poetry is paradigmatic for the problem of persuasion and desire. Although Socrates makes numerous appeals to reason, his initial respect and affection for poetry was not a consequence of having been persuaded of the value of poetry by some argument. To explain the effort required to break free from the thrall of traditional poetry, he analogizes himself and Glaucon to lovers. Their involvement with poetry is not some intellectual conflict. Like any lover, Socrates found that he was moved by his beloved. Socrates is acknowledging that, like just about everyone else, he fell in love with poetry. The primary bond between the philosopher and poetry was affective or erotic. The authority of poetry arose from the experience of poetry. Only after a prolonged examination of the problem of justice was Socrates able to interrogate this authority. There is no question that he loves poetry; the only question is whether this love is good for him. If it isn't, then he needs to break off the relationship.

Socrates goes on to argue further that the love he and others feel for poetry cannot be understood simply as something that is natural: "The love of imitative poetry has grown in us as a result of our being brought up in these wonderful regimes of ours, and this will predispose us to believe that she is as good and as true as possible" (607e–608a). This is additional evi-

dence of the way in which a political culture shapes desire and of the way in which the participation in that culture makes the desire feel natural. Desire is not simply a brute response; rather, it is a mediated form of affectivity that depends upon the particular values of a particular political culture. If one is a member of a political culture that values aggression and that sees any restraint as an unwanted opposition to freedom, then products embodying those values are attractive to an audience constituted by its valuing aggression. A hermeneutic circle is formed. Poetic works reinforce the values of the political culture, which are now held affectively and, hence, more firmly. That in a nutshell is the problem of injustice. Those who don't value justice are participating in a political culture in which justice is not a value in itself, and the mimetic products of that political culture mirror back those values. Any attempt to provide a persuasive defense of the value of justice is doomed in that culture unless the hermeneutic circle can be broken. The most effective way to break that circle is to appropriate mimetic poetry, to transform it by altering its relation to truth, and then to offer these new mimetic poems as a way to begin to alter how that political culture understands its values. An effective rhetoric that seeks to alter a political culture's normal discourse must use mimetic poetry. Such a rhetoric cannot simply offer competing poems; instead, it must ground this mimetic poetry in an authority outside the particular culture. If philosophy is to pursue successfully its rhetorical task of developing a genuinely persuasive defense of justice, it must revise the epic tradition. Plato must displace Homer. It turns out that the quarrel between philosophy and poetry is a lovers' quarrel.

Like all breakups this separation of philosophy from traditional mimetic poetry will be messy. The philosopher cannot easily break free from the relationship, and poetry in the Homeric tradition continues to have a hold on him. Socrates has the philosopher chanting to himself the arguments that he has made against poetry as a way of preventing poetry from regaining power over the philosopher's affection: "We shall recite to ourselves, as we listen to her, this argument we have put forward, as a kind of charm to prevent any relapse into our childish but popular passion. And this will be the spell we shall recite, that this kind of poetry is not something to be taken seriously, as something important, with some bearing on the truth" (608a–b). The affection for poetry is deep-rooted, and equally obvious, argument itself is insufficient to counter that affection. The troubled lover of poetry has to recite over and over again this talismanic line as a way of warding off the ever-present temptation. Even as Socrates rejects the appeal of mimetic poetry in the Homeric tradition, he reaffirms the affective power

of that appeal. The way to heal a disappointed love, a lost love, is with a new love. For the philosopher, this new love can be philosophy; for the nonphilosopher it must be a new mimetic poetry shaped by the understanding of the philosopher. Both disclose justice as a new object of desire.

The groundwork for this nonempirical mimetic poetry had been laid earlier in Book 10. Socrates, in his analysis of production, credited the craftspeople with making products one remove from truth and of genuine use (601d–602a). The founders of the Kallipolis seem to be in this exact situation. They have created an imaginative product—a mimetic artifact—that is not based on appearances of existing cities but rather is an image that is modeled on an ideal just city. It is, thus, one remove from truth and not indebted in any way to appearance or empirical observation. What may have seemed like a weakness of theory turns out to be a strength in terms of the ontological status of the image.

At the end of Book 9, Socrates had suggested that the Kallipolis offered a model that someone could internalize and use to constitute himself or herself as a just person, and, further, that it would be a useful model even if it proved to have no effect on the political organization of the historical city in which that person lives. But, as was noted, this is an unsatisfactory answer because Socrates's own analysis made it clear that no one can exist in isolation and that a political environment necessarily has consequences, even for the individual who seeks deliberately to constitute himself or herself as a just person. So the utility of the Kallipolis as a mimetic image must lie elsewhere. To understand this possible utility, it is helpful to remember that mimesis fosters the growth of emotion and desire. The problem had been that it fosters emotions and desires that Socrates considers to be potentially destructive. The Kallipolis, however, does not foster such destructive emotions. Instead, it does something that Socrates had argued was very difficult for a mimetic work—it provides an image of the just person. The usefulness of Kallipolis as a rhetorical figure resides in its allowing its audience access to an aspect of humanity that the audience could not reach through either empirical observation or an honest report of the audience's internal states. If mimesis functions by producing emotions and desires and by connecting those emotions and desires to the object imitated, then a philosophical poetry that produces an image of justice in the figure of the Kallipolis could direct emotions and desires to that image of justice. The Kallipolis's utility would be that it creates a desire for justice among the dialogue's interlocutors and readers.

If the Kallipolis as a rhetorical figure provides an effective image of the just person, the *Republic*, as a theoretical commentary on the difficulties

that confront the construction of such an image and of the need for such a revolutionary image, brings its readers inside the act of persuasion and mimetically represents what a genuinely persuasive defense of justice requires. As a work of philosophically mimetic poetry, the dialogue is also a work of rhetorical theory. This is a major contribution. At the beginning of the dialogue even those who valued justice conceded that no one naturally desired it. This was a reason for the failure of all previous attempts to develop a genuinely persuasive defense of justice. The dialogue's challenge was to provide such a defense. This defense required a revolutionary discourse that simultaneously offered an image of justice and reminded its audience that there is an unbridgeable gap between the image of a concept and the concept itself. The inherent danger for this philosophically mimetic poetry was that the figure of the Kallipolis would either be read literally or dismissed as fantasy or domesticated as irony, and the *Republic* would then be read as a blueprint for totalitarianism, as a naive work of theory, or as an act of despair about philosophy's ability to impact the political process. The purpose of the discussion of mimesis in Book 10 is to forestall these misreadings by instructing its audience on how to read rhetorically.

### III

Socrates completes his defense of justice by making a brief argument for the soul being eternal and for justice and the other virtues as the qualities that insure the soul of a good life, both currently and for all times. Given the current political culture, people misperceive the soul. Or they accurately perceive a corrupt and distorted image of the soul and assume that this image is a fair representation of the soul. Socrates likens people's current understanding of the nature of the soul to a viewer's inability to see the real shape of Glaucus because his current shape has been so disfigured by the accidents that have befallen him:

And all we have seen of it [the soul] is something like Glaucus who lives in the ocean, if people were to see him. They would no longer find it easy to make out the shape he started with, because some of the original parts of his body have been broken off, others have been worn away and completely eroded by the waters, while things like shells, seaweed and stones have grown on him. As a result, he no longer resembles his original nature. He looks like some kind of wild beast. It's the same with us, looking at the soul when it is afflicted with all these evils. (611d)

This explains why people can be so wrong about who they are and what they genuinely desire. The soul they see, either through introspection or empirical observation of it as figured in a body or an action, is a soul that has been distorted by a political culture.

Having defended justice and explained why people misunderstand their own desire, Socrates returns to the initial challenge for a persuasive defense of justice. All of the rewards that were initially given on the basis of appearance can now be allocated on the merits of the case: the gods will reward the just man, and people will esteem him. Socrates even goes so far as to say that when the just man is older, he can, if he chooses, hold political office. The discussion of poetry has thus created an opening that did not seem possible at the end of Book 9. The one thing that would make it both possible and reasonable for a just person to participate in politics would be if the political culture could change. It is just such a change that a mimetic poetry grounded in philosophy could make possible.

The dialogue's ending with a Socratic myth confirms the importance of a new kind of mimetic poem. Socrates closes the dialogue with the tale of Er, the son of Armenius. Er reports that the prophet charged with distributing the lots to the waiting souls locates the responsibility for that choice in the soul who is about to choose:

Your guardian spirit [your daemon] will not be given to you by lot. You will choose a guardian spirit for yourselves. Let the one who draws the first lot be the first to choose a life. He will then be joined to it by Necessity. Virtue knows no master. Your respect or contempt for it will give each of you a greater or smaller share. The choice makes you responsible. God is not responsible. (617e)

A person's moral compass is a consequence of the choices a person makes, and those choices are shaped by that person's ethical constitution. If one has a just character, one sees the world as a place in which to act justly, and if one has an unjust character, one is naturally drawn to injustice. It is not so much that one desires to be just or unjust but that being just or unjust, one desires in a certain way.

Character is not to be understood as some sort of innate disposition. It is, instead, shaped significantly by one's political culture. Education, in its broadest sense, is crucial. Socrates imagines the soul who is about to choose being offered a broad array of lives, and the soul's task is to discriminate among these lives, choosing the one that best allows the soul to flourish. If

individuals are to make these choices well, they need the right education. That education enables a soul to distinguish good lives from bad lives. It is a hermeneutical resource that allows a soul to read appearances and not to take the world at face value. Plato does not underestimate the difficulty of this choice, and, in effect, the myth argues that in the absence of such education one will, unless extremely fortunate, make a bad choice. The appeal of appearances is strong. In particular, the soul who would choose wisely should read the *Republic*: "He must take into consideration all the things we have talked about here today, comparing them with one another and choosing in terms of excellence of life" (618c). Only someone who has been appropriately educated to interpret the values of a particular political culture in a reflective way can choose well and put himself or herself on the true path of justice, which is the path of greatest psychic health: "Taking all of these things into consideration, he must be able to choose, defining the worse and better life with reference to the nature of the *soul*, calling that worse which leads the soul along the road to greater injustice, and that better which leads along the road to justice" (618d–e).

What is striking is how poorly the souls choose. Even though cautioned to be careful and not make a precipitous decision, the first soul is bedazzled by appearances and makes a disastrous choice:

When he had finished speaking, the person who had drawn the first lot came straight up and chose the greatest tyranny. In his folly and greed he did not look hard enough at what he was choosing. He had not seen that within its fate was included, among other evils, the devouring of his own children. When he did have time to look at it, he beat his breast and lamented his choice. (619b–c)

This soul vociferously denies any responsibility for its choice and seeks to blame the gods. This soul doesn't understand its contribution to its own fate. Plato has given the soul an interesting history: "He was one of those who had come from the heavens, and in his previous life he had lived in a well-ordered society. He had had his share of virtue, but it had been a matter of habit rather than philosophy" (619c–d). A soul who was not diseased or corrupt but who had previously lived a good life was drawn immediately to the apparent benefits of being a tyrant. Presumably, this is Plato's way of emphasizing the deep appeal of tyranny. Tyranny offers something that people naively think they want. The danger of tyranny does not reside in the off-chance that a few ambitious people are led to pursue their ambitions, but in what appears to be a widespread mistaken but attractive appeal. The

danger of tyranny is inherent in the human situation, and habit is an insufficient resource with which to resist that appeal. The soul who chose the life of a tyrant had previously lived a good, if unreflective, life, and that made it vulnerable to the appeal of tyranny.

Part of what made this soul who had been good in a previous life choose poorly is that it had been insulated from suffering. The soul owed its goodness to the lucky accident of living a life free from pain. This recalls the situation of Cephalus. Wealth or good fortune can make justice not seem to be a particularly difficult problem. The experience of suffering changes that. If suffering does not automatically lead one to understand the value and importance of justice, it does improve the likelihood that one understands better this value and its importance. The choice of the souls who have known suffering shows both that it can lead to a better understanding of justice but that it need not lead to such an understanding: "Most of those who came from the earth, having both suffered themselves and seen others suffer, were in no hurry to make their choice. For this reason, and because of the way the lot fell out, for the majority of souls there was an alteration between good and evil" (619d).

Even the study of philosophy does not finally guarantee that one chooses rightly. While it significantly increases the odds of making good choices, it cannot fully eliminate contingency:

If there is anyone who every time he enters this life here, consistently pursues philosophy in the right way, then provided the way the lot falls out does not put him among the last to chose, the chances are, if Er's report is correct, not only that he will be happy here, but also that his journey from here to there will be along the smooth, heavenly road, not the rough, terrestrial one. (619d–e)

Socrates's myth recognizes that there may be a combination of circumstances in which it is difficult even for one who is philosophically oriented to overcome the weight of those circumstances and maintain a philosophical composure. Still, the study of philosophy offers the best possibility of choosing well. Although contingency is a feature of human life, there is stability to the world. The myth acknowledges this: "For the most part the choice [of life] matched the character and habits of their previous life" (620a).

The myth ends not with the choice of a philosopher but with that of an epic hero. The final choice falls to Odysseus. Socrates claims one of Homer's most famous epic heroes and makes him the hero of a new tale. Socrates does not make him into a philosopher but he does frame Odysseus's choice



as one arising from the experience of hardship (620c). This experience persuaded him to abandon ambition and to choose a private life overlooked by others. The *Republic* ends with the choice of a nonphilosopher. The redefined epic quest is not for glory but for a life ordered by justice, which is a life guided by the desire to be just.

Socrates ends the tale of Er with the souls drinking the water of forgetfulness. Plato is making clear, in case any reader would interpret the myth in a too-literal-minded way, that the point of the tale was to provide insight into a key choice and to represent that choice in a way that shaped the reader's desire. Socrates has substituted mythic explanation for an account based in empirical reality, and his myth explains why he had to do so. The fundamental problem of trying to understand the human through any empirical investigation is that the work of political culture is masked, and it is mistakenly read as if the current values and desires are the product of nature. This is the false rhetoric of an empirical naïveté. Socrates must call this naïveté into question because it appears to the general public as wisdom. He has the equally difficult task of making a counterintuitive argument that will almost certainly enrage his audience. In making this case and in telling the tale that ends the dialogue, Socrates makes an argument for the emancipatory power of reason and imagination. This is the case for a philosophical rhetoric. He tells Glaucon and the others not that the story he has just related is true, but that "if we believe it we shall pass the river of Forgetting in the right way, without polluting our souls. And if we take my advice, we shall believe that the soul is immortal and capable of coping with all evils and all good, and we shall keep always to the upper way, doing whatever we can to practice justice with wisdom" (621c). So Socrates ends with a hypothetical: if one is persuaded by what Socrates has said, then that person will practice the just life.

Socrates has done more than make a persuasive defense of justice. He has shown the central importance of rhetoric to philosophy. He has given form to a problem central to philosophy—namely, how the philosopher should speak to a nonphilosophic audience so that its members can be benefited by the understanding of philosophy, even if they cannot engage in the practice of philosophy. The genuine difficulties surrounding the problem of justice created the need for a non-normal rhetoric, for a way of thinking and speaking about central political and ethical concerns that normal discourse failed to address persuasively.

If the *Apology* is Plato's defense of Socrates against the charge that philosophy is politically dangerous because it corrupts its audience, the *Republic* is Plato's defense against the charge that philosophy is useless and

has nothing to offer political culture. To be useful philosophy must become rhetorical. Plato redefines the role of rhetoric from being a strategic resource that deploys commonplaces to confirm already existing images of a political culture to being a source of radical change. This redefined rhetoric is no longer content to accept desire at face value but assumes that part of its task is to recover desire so that people can love the world appropriately. They can do so because they have been reconstituted by an encounter with justice that has enabled them to reflect on the worlds that they have inherited and currently inhabit.

## Philosophical Rhetoric

For Plato, persuasion is an activity intimately connected to philosophy's concern with and responsibility for guiding people in the care of their souls. It also presents philosophy with a major challenge. Nonphilosophic audiences, convinced that philosophy is, at best, useless, resist philosophic persuasion. Part of philosophy's ineffectiveness with a nonphilosophic audience can be traced back to that audience's perceptions or misperceptions of philosophy, but however significant these misperceptions are, the more important difficulties are rooted in the nature of philosophy. Because of the necessity of being moved by a love of truth and of the necessary rigor of dialectic, philosophy is a minority practice, and that minority is small. This leads to a stark choice: either philosophy reconciles itself to being an esoteric form of discourse persuasive only to a very limited number of practitioners and hence irrelevant to political life, or it discovers a way to speak to the multitude who are not philosophers. Given Plato's conception of philosophy's mission and its larger social responsibility, the choice is clear: philosophy must locate a rhetoric that enables it to translate its understanding into a discourse capable of persuading the nonphilosopher.

As difficult as it may be for philosophy to communicate with a nonphilosophic audience, it turns out that irrelevance is not the greatest problem confronting philosophy. If philosophical discourse fails to make itself available and useful to the nonphilosophic public, its techniques can and will be appropriated and misapplied by those who are not moved by a desire for wisdom but seek public acclaim and revel in undermining cultural authority. Philosophy so abused is socially and politically corrosive. If philosophy despairs of its ability to communicate with a nonphilosophic audience and retreats into private life, its departure is not merely a lost opportunity but, more importantly, an opening for those who would wrongly claim the

mantle of philosophy to subvert the beliefs necessary for the polis to continue as a meaningful form of communal order.

By Socrates's own admission, philosophical discourse is unlikely to effect a major change in how a nonphilosophical audience views justice. Although Socrates devotes a considerable effort to creating a vision of philosophical rule, the narrative he offers effectively undermines the possibility of such rule, arguing that the political relevance of philosophy need not and cannot be met if the role of the philosopher is restricted to that of ruler. This conclusion, however, does not necessarily demonstrate the uselessness of philosophical discourse to political life; rather, it suggests that if philosophy is to be politically meaningful, it will, in all likelihood, not accomplish this by a direct intervention and reform of the current political structure. That is why understanding the mimetic import of the dialogue is crucial. If one looks not to what Socrates and his interlocutors design but to what they, in fact, do, then serious conversation becomes an important political resource. Through their participation in a mimetic presentation of an act of persuasion, the dialogue's readers are brought inside that act and experience the complexity and tentativeness that are central features of philosophical persuasion. Philosophy's contribution to political life—and it is an essential contribution—is to guide citizens as they investigate and defend values foundational for political life. These intellectual and literary acts of investigating and defending foundational political values are what make philosophy politically meaningful. To fulfill its social mandate, philosophy must become not legislative or executive but rhetorical.

For Plato, being rhetorical involves internally reconstituting an audience—the audience within the dialogue and the audience of the dialogue's readers. As its title, *Politeia*, suggests, this is a dialogue about constitution. In the *Republic*, political reform begins with changing the nature of desire. Philosophy does not have to take control of the state to change the operation of desire as part of the necessary psychological reconstitution of the citizens; rather, it must accomplish a far more indirect task of transforming political life and possibilities by genuinely persuading the citizens of the inherent value of justice so that they desire to be just. In the absence of such a transformation, justice will never be a force that contends seriously with private interest. The rhetorical failure of the Socratic elenchus in Book 1 makes it clear that logic alone cannot accomplish this transformation. If an argument leaves an audience's psychological constitution unchanged, the audience simply reinterprets the argument in a way that deprives it of any force. The intellectual cogency of an argument does not in itself guarantee its persuasiveness. This type of naïveté is what doomed

Socrates's refutation of Thrasymachus. For an argument to persuade an audience, it needs to change how the audience desires. To effect such a change, philosophy must acknowledge the audience's beliefs and desires are part of a larger complex structure of received wisdom. Only by changing the larger structure of received wisdom can philosophy alter beliefs and transform desire.

If this need for larger structural change creates serious difficulties for philosophy, it is also what makes philosophy essential to political life. Plato is acutely aware that certain political concerns, such as the defense of foundational political values, can only be undertaken by a radical discourse like philosophy because only such a discourse can interrogate both received cultural wisdom and the masked operation of that wisdom as it manifests itself in beliefs and desires that, although shaped by culture, are felt as natural. Further, the dialogue emphasizes temporality and its consequences for political stability or instability and recognizes that any understanding of justice can never be fully stable, and consequently, the philosophical conversation needs to be ongoing.

The organization of the dialogue as a search for a genuinely persuasive discourse argues that the suitable rhetorical form for a philosophy seeking to ground foundational values is a reinvented epic poetry. As the discourse through which Greek culture transmits its core political values, epic functions as the rhetorical form through which civic identity is created and preserved. To accomplish its complex task of reconstituting a democratic audience so that the audience can reinvent itself in response to temporality and contingency, a philosophic rhetoric must reinvent this form. When epic is used by philosophy, it must be transformed into both a mimetic act and a critique of that act. This leads Plato to present his account of philosophic persuasion in a mimetic work that simultaneously offers a warning about the dangers of mimesis. The *Republic* is a work that both provides a demonstration of a complex act of persuasion and, at the same time, offers a critique of that demonstration. The dialogue is not so much an effort to provide a conclusive definition of justice as it is an effort to bring its audiences inside the practice of persuasion, which, in this case, involves thinking and speaking about justice in ways other than those that were currently available in the culture.

The nature of philosophical persuasion involves a reimagining of human possibility and a reminder that this reimagining produces a rhetorical construct and not an instance of knowledge. This is not a deconstructive moment in which philosophy encounters the inherent instability of its own discourse but part of a complex rhetorical process through which it redirects

desire and prevents a premature and false closure. Philosophical rhetoric must not only encourage a desire for wisdom—a desire constituted through the audience's participation in the mimetic act—but also resist the temptation to collapse figure into truth. Philosophical rhetoric must be both philosophical and rhetorical.

Although banned from the Kallipolis, mimesis is essential for all political orders subject to temporality and contingency. Even the Kallipolis, designed to be the city least impacted by time and change, has to resort to a literary feint, in the form of noble lies, to insure the stability and continuity of the identities that it has constituted for its citizens. Mimesis possesses a power that enables ideas and values to be psychologically incorporated by an audience. Even as Socrates criticizes mimetic poetry, he acknowledges its power:

The best of us, I imagine, when we hear Homer or one of the tragic poets imitating some hero in a state of grief, as he drags out a long speech of lamentation, or even breaks into song, or starts beating his breast . . . well, you know how it is. We enjoy it, and surrender ourselves to it. We follow and share the hero's sufferings, treat them as real, and praise as an excellent poet the person who most affects us in this way. (605d)

Audiences respond naturally and spontaneously to the affectivity of mimetic images. As Socrates argued earlier, this affective response shapes how one perceives the world. In its affectivity, the mimetic has a force similar to and possibly equal to or greater than a person's experience of the real world. In both mimetic and practical experience, the emotional force of experience creates an authority. So to the extent that a philosophically mimetic work can be shaped by the philosopher's understanding of culture as a historical artifact, a philosophical poetry has the potential to change the understanding of everyday experience. This authority in mimetic experience is reinforced by the inherent pleasure that people feel when they occupy the role of spectator. Spectatorship possesses a natural attractiveness for humans.<sup>1</sup> The pull of spectatorship is evident both in the frenzied behavior of the theater lovers and in the philosophers' enthralled gaze at the sun in the myth of the cave.

At the heart of mimesis is an act of constitution or identification.<sup>2</sup> Because humans respond to mimesis and are shaped by their participation in mimesis, any intellectual practice seeking to be effective must use mimesis. Socrates's criticism of the current poetic and educational practices is equally a testament to their effectiveness. Because past mimetic acts have

been successful, they need to be criticized and redirected. If political identity is a consequence of participation in a culturally valued narrative, Socrates must point this out and then replace the current narrative with a new one that alters the citizens' desire. For this narrative to create a new authority, it must offer a tale more compelling than the traditional narratives. Since it will, in all likelihood, be less emotionally moving than a traditional mimetic work, a philosophical literary work, if it is to be persuasive, must offer a form of heroism that embodies the virtues necessary to confront the world as it is and not retreat to either the world as one would like it to be or a world that no longer exists. In a philosophical epic, the paradigmatic cultural activity shifts from war to persuasion. Philosophy serves democracy not by usurping rule but by bringing its audience inside persuasion, the one activity essential for a democracy to function as a government that is based on the citizens' consent.

The *Republic* expands what can be considered as political discourse. As a counterintuitive and revolutionary discourse, philosophical rhetoric invites a rethinking of what is taken to be true. It acknowledges that people form their understanding of the world by generalizing about appearance, and it recognizes that this understanding allows the ordinary citizen, more or less, to negotiate the world. It is the authority of experience that philosophical rhetoric questions. It sees this authority as a form of enslavement, and it seeks approaches that enable an inquirer to move beyond appearance and acquire a perspective not determined by commonplaces that are held unreflectively. For philosophy, the natural is a rhetorical construction, but rhetoric as practiced normally seems to be unaware of this. Philosophical rhetoric takes seriously the insight that what is given in the everyday world is not a reflection of a natural order but rather a human construction. Because philosophy questions the authority of what is perceived as normal and natural, a philosophical rhetoric is an inherently disruptive or arresting discourse.<sup>3</sup> If this rhetoric succeeds, the audience is changed fundamentally and is moved by a set of desires and beliefs shaped by a new understanding of foundational values.

In its construction of a utopian political order, Socrates's rhetoric discloses that all political order is a product of human imagination. For Plato, much of what appears natural is a consequence of past rhetorical acts. Hidden in the mundane, this history of past rhetorical action is powerful because it obscures both its origin and current force. As such, it is an instance of rhetorical self-effacing. In calling attention to the rhetorical construction of what appears to be natural, philosophical rhetoric presents the world to its audience as a choice and not as an established fact to which human beings

must accommodate themselves. Because it recognizes the role of choice, Socrates's philosophical rhetoric is not an attempt to flee from the political life but an effort to make a meaningful political life possible. Again, one should not assume that the only meaningful political life is one that seeks power through rule. Socrates understands that the activities of questioning an accepted understanding and of imaginatively conceiving of alternatives are themselves political activities. Thus, private conversations among friends and philosophically informed poetic works that assist such conversations are essential to the shaping and maintaining of citizenship. This understanding of the importance of such conversations and of a philosophical poetry that can contribute to these conversations is not an abandonment of political responsibility but a recognition that the interrogation of an inherited cultural understanding is a fundamental political responsibility.

The narrative arc of the *Republic* argues that such interrogations are crucial if democracy is not to degenerate into tyranny. Even as Socrates develops his various arguments and pursues his digressions, there is a larger framing narrative for the dialogue. His discussion of justice starts with a near Edenic city, one in which a concern for justice does not develop because there is a natural order and harmony shaped and limited by human needs and their satisfaction. As so conceived, it is a minimal city, and it is one in which desire, if not absent, is certainly not a driving force. Once desire and spirit are admitted to this city, needs multiply and the city quickly becomes a more complex political organization. Only as complexity develops does justice enter political life as an issue. So the general public is partly right: people are not naturally drawn to justice. But their partial insight misunderstands the situation. Justice is not a natural concern, for it only becomes an issue when a city develops a more complex political constitution in response to the multiplication of human needs.

For a more complex city to thrive, justice is essential. Socrates's construction of the imagined city discloses both the necessity of justice and the difficulties involved in sustaining justice. Maintaining the just state, even in a theoretical discussion, leads Socrates and his interlocutors to develop an increasingly complex political structure, one continually threatening to dissolve into disorder. The imagined city begins to unravel almost as soon as its construction is complete. The Kallipolis, like any political structure, is fated to succumb to temporality and contingency. That is the lesson of Books 8–9 in which Socrates acknowledges that justice as a political value is only realized partially and in increasingly less satisfactory ways as cities and the individuals within them who are unable to appropriately discipline desire deteriorate.



At the center of this narrative of political and individual deterioration is a tension between the public and the private, with the Kallipolis and the tyrannical state representing the two extremes. In the Kallipolis, the private is minimized in favor of the public, and in the tyrannical state the public is subordinated to the private. Justice is a problem precisely because the relation between the private and public is unstable, and the rule seems to be that this tension plays out in a movement from order to disorder. The process reaches its culmination in tyranny, which is a situation in which the political ceases to be.

Tyranny in the *Republic* is a post-political state. This is an important insight that the narrative discovers. In the popular understanding, the unconstrained pursuit of desire, which is the masked form of tyranny, is a fantasy of complete and unmediated human satisfaction. In this unreflective but shared popular narrative, freedom appears to be a pre-political condition that was lost as political order imposed restraints on the natural expression of desire. In the popular imagination tyranny does not appear as tyranny as much as it appears to be a freedom that can blossom naturally once the political constraints that frustrate it are removed. The dialogue argues that this is a serious misapprehension of what freedom is and what tyranny is. At the heart of this misapprehension is an obliviousness to the way in which past and present rhetorical acts have shaped the community's understanding of freedom. These discourses have defined freedom in such a way that it is considered as a natural desire that is frustrated by any political organization short of anarchy. Until this fantasy of tyranny as absolute freedom is unmasked, the citizens will continue to misunderstand desire and be moved by this fantasy to conceive of political life primarily as an order imposed on them from outside. The dialogue wants its readers to see tyranny figured neither as absolute freedom nor as a natural paradise that has been lost but rather as a diseased condition resulting from the collapse of political life. The rise of tyranny represents the absolute subsumption of the political under the private, as rule becomes the prerogative of a single individual who is himself moved exclusively by desire and fear. So Socrates presents a mini-narrative designed to show that the tyrant is, in fact, not a free actor pursuing whatever he or she desires, but a driven creature responding always to actual and/or perceived threats.

The dialogue's narrative of the collapse of democracy is what allows the fantasy of tyranny to surface in its true form. In Book 9, this fantasy is revealed as a nightmare in which desires, grown monstrous, dominate and subdue humanity. The rise of tyranny is not a return to a state of nature (in the *Republic*, in the natural state, imagined as the city of pigs, there are

natural and spontaneous limits to desire and also a natural inclination to live in a collaborative community); rather, tyranny is the consequence of a failed state. Tyranny is what arises when political discourse fails; the tyrant does not exist in nature but only comes into being when a democracy collapses. Consequently, a tyrant's desire is not an expression of a natural affection but an instance of a set of unnatural and decadent impulses.<sup>4</sup>

Seen against this narrative, the *Republic* is an act of political intervention seeking to arrest the tendencies inherent in democracy to give way to a false view of freedom that claims the authority of nature. This understanding of a freedom that knows no limits is what makes justice suspect and what allows tyranny to represent itself as an act of liberation in which a collection of repressive and diminishing rules are discarded in favor of a free expression of desire. The rhetoric of tyranny offers the nightmare of an anxious and chaotic disorder in the masked form of the dream of freedom. As Socrates argues, such a conception of freedom is self-contradictory and transforms human life into a form of slavery. An important part of Socrates's effort at developing a genuinely persuasive defense of justice is him alerting his democratic audience to dangers that inhere within a prevalent fantasy within the democratic imagination and providing a resource with which to address those dangers, even if the dangers can never be completely vanquished. If democracy is the political order in which tyranny must be directly confronted, then the *Republic* offers the possibility of a democracy influenced by a philosophical rhetoric that sees freedom in a new way.

As the dialogue makes clear, the seductiveness of tyranny and hence its rhetorical efficacy do not arise from its pursuit by manipulative and ambitious professional rhetors like Thrasyarchus but from narratives such as the myth of the ring of Gyges and from other tales that seem to confirm the natural appeal of possessing unrestrained power. Such narratives have captured and shaped the democratic audience's understanding of freedom and their understanding of themselves as naturally desiring such freedom. These stories have informed the audience's desires, so rather than these desires being a natural expression of the audience's aspiration, they are, in fact, culturally determined dispositions that are misinterpreted as being natural. The rhetorical operation of traditional mimetic poetry is hidden, as the audience's beliefs, desires, and perceptions are shaped mimetically, and a particular understanding of freedom as action without any restraint is continually confirmed by the circulating cultural narratives.

The power of a myth such as the ring of Gyges resides, in part, in its democratic appeal. Where an advocate, like Thrasymachus, who defines justice as what is beneficial for the powerful, comes across as having an ir-

ritatingly bloated assessment of his own intelligence and superiority, the story of the ring of Gyges acquires its authority because its protagonist is an everyman. Gyges is a normal person who lucked into a situation that allows his true desire to assert itself. His is a story of triumph, and if it involves overthrowing a ruler, the myth downplays significantly any of the chaos or violence that would accompany tyranny. The undesirable aspects of tyranny are given minimal attention, and unrestrained power is represented as an unalloyed good. It is not hard to understand why this tale is attractive and why it presents a persuasive portrait of the desirability of injustice. Injustice is not seen principally as an act of injury to others as much as it is represented as the unimpeded flow of freedom. The dream of injustice is the dream of a world that spontaneously conforms to human desire, a world in which there is no gap between desire and the satisfaction of desire. If justice in the Kallipolis appears to be the consequence of an arduous, deliberate, and continual effort, injustice in the tale of the ring of Gyges seems to require little or no effort.

In presenting the myth of Gyges, Glaucon shows why the desire for injustice (and the implicit valuing of tyranny) has not been touched or diminished by any of the arguments on behalf of justice. The myth persuades because it offers a picture of a world fully and immediately responsive to human desire. Injustice is Edenic, and tyranny appears to be the epitome of freedom. The myth imagines action by someone who possesses omnipotence as a simple and uncomplicated affair. Omnipotence obliterates the frustration of desire that is part of any normal life. In the myth, human life mirrors divine existence; it is a vision that would seem to be inherently desirable. Repressed in the myth's masked fantasy of tyranny is the understanding that absence of constraint alters the nature of desire. The myth of the ring of Gyges still imagines desires that are part of the fabric of normal life, but Socrates's account of the tyrannical state argues that tyranny unleashes a set of desires recognizing no commonly held norms of acceptable behavior. These desires are not simply transgressive; they are monstrous, acquiring control over the tyrannical individual and directing his behavior. Having absolute power changes someone—that is not simply a sad ethical truth but a structural consequence of the way in which unconstrained desire operates in the individual.

The power of the fantasy of tyranny as the epitome of individual freedom can be measured by the effort required to challenge it. Socrates must produce a narrative that also begins from an Edenic state but with a crucial difference. The characters in Socrates's narrative are conceived as subject to history and not as autonomous individuals. While valuing the peace and

richness of a private existence in which needs are met and desires fulfilled, Socrates's counternarrative does not begin from an assumption of an autonomous private person. Instead, Socrates's rustic city starts from an assumption that people are diverse but interrelated, and this diversity and interrelation allows for the fulfillment of need and satisfaction of desire. So Socrates starts with an important counter fact: our connection to others is not something to be regretted and overcome; rather, it is essential if humans, who are necessarily dependent on one another, are to thrive. That reality is not part of the myth of Gyges, and Socrates's imagined city is intended to challenge the myth of Gyges by incorporating a reality the myth ignores. Further, Socrates's narrative argues that desire as it actually operates in human life is not a natural condition but a product of political order. Desire has a cultural history. This is evident in Socrates's imagined Edenic proto-city, which evolves into a complexity as it attempts to represent more accurately the world in which people live and in which a developing desire leads to a complicated and entangled political order, even if that political order is still represented in ideal form. Through his narrative, Socrates argues that any satisfactory account of justice or injustice must be capable of addressing the complexity of a desire shaped by a cultural rhetoric.

The Kallipolis, in its deliberate and extended artificiality, is a countermyth to the ring of Gyges. In the evolving complication that arises in designing the Kallipolis, nature is reconceived from being understood as a spontaneous set of desires and needs to being viewed as an imagined state that cannot be recovered precisely because human nature is not natural but rather political or cultural. In its construction of the Kallipolis, the dialogue asserts the rhetoricity of human existence. Whatever else we are, we are not simply natural creatures; we are shaped by our past practices and understandings. Socrates's imagined city argues that nature is not a state capable of empirical description but a product of a rhetorical construction. If nature is a standard by which to judge the value of a political order, that is not because it exists outside of and prior to politics but because it has been invented as an ideal rhetorical construct against which one can judge the adequacy of any actual political order. The danger of normal rhetorical practice is that it unwittingly disguises the fact that nature is a rhetorical construct.

A major contribution of a philosophical rhetoric is to unmask the rhetoricity of nature. The dialogue's portrait of tyranny in Book 9 argues that there is no possibility of jettisoning the political and returning to a pre-political natural state; Socrates's narrative reveals tyranny exists only as possibility arising from the destruction of the political that ushers in a post-political

chaos. Desire as an idealized state of limitless satisfaction, then, is itself an unnatural understanding of desire. The current understanding of desire is the consequence of an unacknowledged rhetorical construct that seeks, in fantasy, to deny the constraints of any political order. The confusion of this fantasy as an accurate representation of a natural and pre-political desire, in turn, has the deleterious consequence of persuading people that the fantasy embodies their natural desire in an ideal form. Having been persuaded that this is what desire is, they begin to desire in a certain way.

Socrates's counternarrative begins from the assumption of the inherent sociality of human beings—humans are not natural creatures that become members of a polis but are social beings whose individual and political identities are functions of their role in a community. This is what makes constitution a philosophical concern. If Socrates can claim that justice is everyone performing the one role appropriate to him or her, this can also be read as justice is possible when each individual fully embraces their identity as a political being. The political community is not derived from the individuals but rather is the condition that permits the individuals to have an identity.<sup>5</sup> Socrates replaces a fantasy of omnipotence with a narrative of idealized political cooperation. A constructive fantasy replaces a destructive one. In place of a magical and improbable device such as a ring of invisibility as the source of the satisfaction of desire, Socrates's imagined natural city offers an image of an organized set of necessary operations in which the collective efforts of the community lead to the satisfaction of the needs and desires of the individual.

The rub, of course, is that this natural city requires that these needs and desires be limited and relatively simple—that is the source of the city's health. This limitation leads to an important and representative narrative strategy: the developing imagined city needs to be revised if it is to be adequate to humans as we know them. Part of the persuasiveness of the imagined city of Socrates depends upon it being revised continually in response to the complexity of human reality. This makes revision an essential feature of Socrates's theoretical exploration of the requirements for an ideal city in which justice exists. There is a way in which the dialogue's imaginative construction of the city displays political thinking in action, as an increasingly involved political structure emerges to face the consequences of past political decisions.

It is not only in its simplicity that the world imagined in the story of Gyges proves to be inadequate. The value of a fantasy in which desire is simple is that it imagines a world that is beyond time. The world of Gyges is a world of an eternal present in which desire is continually satisfied. In

contrast, the world of the Kallipolis is one that must contend with complexity and contingency, and that makes it a city that must address temporality. Although Socrates continually imagines ways to reduce complication and exile change, the city and its education become increasingly elaborate, as human ingenuity is called on repeatedly to anticipate and forestall innovation. This is a continual reminder that political order is human order, and hence subject to time. Finally, in Book 8, Socrates acknowledges that even the Kallipolis cannot escape time, and that contingency will undo even the most carefully and rigorously maintained order. Like all other cities, the Kallipolis will be subject to change. This change does not follow from the will or ambition of a powerful figure; its origin is more mundane—it is simply a failure of calculation. After this initial failure, subsequent change is located in the dissatisfactions and the consequent stories that people tell. These stories, in turn, redefine desire and identify new objects that seem the natural goal of this redefined desire. The tyrant does not so much shape the city as he arises out of the chaos of a democracy in shambles because it has mistaken its fantasy of desire for the real operation of desire. The rhetoric of the tyrannical city is not a consequence of any group of crafty rhetors seizing control of the political discourse but the result of ordinary conversations reinterpreting current values. As the political order becomes more chaotic, there is an increasing movement to understand value as a function of desire, and desire, in turn, is understood as that which moves people once the artificiality of constraint has been lifted.

The fantasy of tyranny is important because it is an inherent and continuing, if repressed, presence in any political organization, but it acquires an especially dangerous power in a democracy because freedom is a foundational and organizing value for a democracy. Plato's larger narrative sees the Kallipolis not as a political end but as an imaginative moment necessary to begin the rethinking of the status quo. The concern of the *Republic* is not the idealized city but the act of designing it and revising it. In the case of Socrates, this leads to a reconceptualization of freedom from being the capacity to pursue desire unimpeded by any constraints to the ability to reimagine political order so that political existence is understood as a consequence of choice, even if the audience is unaware how these choices have been made in the past or even if these choices were not made explicitly by anyone. The fact that the present may have been shaped by unintended and unreflective choices does not mean that the future must also be determined that way. Once a reconceptualization of freedom is possible, justice need no longer be understood merely as a set of negative restraints on freedom necessitated by the limited ability and courage of the average person. It can

be reimagined as a positive and purposive goal essential to a political order that can best satisfy human desire. A genuinely persuasive defense of justice does not involve convincing the audience of the superiority of the Kallipolis, but it does involve demonstrating to them the power of discourse to imagine change. The complicated act of philosophical imagination, both as it explores an alternative political order and as it critiques the very order that it invents, is what is mimetically represented in the *Republic*. The defense of justice is tied to the mimetic representation of the effort of philosophy to develop an understanding of justice adequate to a complex human nature. This effort is a search for an understanding that is persuasive, and if the mimetic representation does not make its audience into philosophers, it does offer them a heroic story in which the human race can see both its current enslavement and the possibility of a life organized otherwise.

Only if the current understanding of desire as a natural longing for unconstrained freedom is supplanted by a new understanding can justice be defended persuasively. This new understanding has to arise in response to a new narrative. This narrative must enable an audience to see itself differently and to understand and appreciate what it means to be a rhetorical creature. If philosophy can discover and interrogate the fantasies that shape the desires of the citizens of democracy, rhetoric can make this criticism and potential reconstitution available to these citizens through a combination of figures encapsulating the citizen's imaginative enslavement and of arguments whose initial preposterousness leads an audience to question them.<sup>6</sup> This combination of arresting images that provoke thought and counter-intuitive arguments that occasion questions seeks to make the audience intellectually active and to enable them to begin to reflect upon what they had previously taken for granted. The natural is now a topic for rhetorical investigation. The length of the dialogue suggests such persuasion cannot happen quickly or in response to a single speech. Rather, persuasion happens over time and begins when an audience starts to realize the ways in which they have been shaped by past acts of rhetoric, many, if not most, of which they have been unaware. This is the beginning of the audience seeing itself as rhetorical. That is a major shift. Persuasion is no longer restricted to being a choice between various surface options but instead can be extended and deepened to being understood as the opportunity and responsibility to shape one's own identity. Persuasion can now be understood as a practice of individual and political constitution (*politeia*).

In its commitment to taking account of the world as it is, the mimetic narrative of the *Republic* contrasts sharply with the myth of the ring of Gyges. In the myth of the ring of Gyges, the ability to pursue injustice and

not suffer the consequences of such a pursuit depends upon someone fortuitously acquiring a magical power. However explanatory the myth may be, its surface narrative points to the tale being fantastic. As an account, it provides no guidance on how one could acquire such a power, and indeed, the narrative seems to argue just the opposite and to say that the desire for injustice can only be fulfilled in a fantastic narrative and not in a real world. As much as the myth is the story of desired fulfilled, it is equally a reminder that such desire is always fated to be frustrated in the world in which its audience actually lives. In contrast, in the mimetic narrative offered by the *Republic*, persuasion, as the defining activity of freedom, is available to an audience. While Socrates takes the lead in designing the Kallipolis, the model of the city is developed, expanded, revised, and refined in response to concerns raised by the interlocutors. Not understanding is shown to be productive. Questions are asked; clarifications are sought. In an act of genuine persuasion, the audience is active and not passive. In its capacity to raise questions, the audience challenges the speaker. If Socrates seeks to persuade his audience, he is equally persuaded by his interlocutors of the necessity of exploring some of the complexity and difficulty he initially sought to avoid. Persuasion is represented as being collaborative: one seeks to persuade and so must be open to the possibility of being persuaded.

Philosophical persuasion is not an action done by someone to someone. The need for collaboration distinguishes philosophical persuasion from manipulation, in which the discursive action is the imposition of an understanding by one party on another. Equally, philosophical persuasion cannot be reduced to a technical communicative practice because such practices are empirically based and a philosophical persuasion calls into question the authority of an uncriticized empiricism. In the *Republic*, persuasion is represented as a process that happens only when the audience assumes a responsibility for a position by making it its own. This, of course, means that one of the responsibilities of a rhetor is to encourage the audience to assume such a responsibility or, at the very least, to be receptive when the audience exercises that responsibility. The questions, the requests for clarifications, and the challenges to the developing model of the Kallipolis are integral to the process of persuasion. Only if the interlocutors and the audience actively engage with Socrates can genuine persuasion occur. It is helpful to remember Adeimantus's earlier criticism that too often Socrates's audiences are not persuaded but simply mesmerized or feel themselves tricked by a more skilled speaker. Persuasion only happens when it has an earned victory over skepticism.

When persuasion as the paradigmatic political and personal activity is



internalized, the nature of desire is transformed. The transformation is, in part, intellectual, but, more importantly, it occurs because of a change in the structure of belief and in the object of desire. In the absence of this change in the structure of belief and object of desire, any intellectual shift would be temporary and would finally have no lasting impact. Genuine persuasion reshapes audiences ethically and passionately. If there is a certain headiness in designing a utopia, and if there is equally a certain sense of engagement in criticizing the shortcomings of that utopia, the overall rhetorical effort can lead an energized audience to think in terms of political ideals and to use those ideals as standards against which to measure both the conduct of everyday life and the theoretical reimagining of that life.

This change of belief depends upon the dialogue's narrative becoming more attractive than the narrative that sees injustice as naturally desirable. The attractiveness of the dialogue's narrative arises from two things. First, its story depends not on magic but on an evolving attempt to be adequate to the reality of the world. In its effort to be adequate to reality, the narrative earns its authority. Second, the narrative discloses that the ability to conceive of alternatives to the current reality is a source of human agency. In this, persuasion offers a new, viable model of heroic action. The dialogue does not represent the activity of the philosophical imagination or of the rhetorical effort to communicate that imagination as an easy or unproblematic affair, but it shows that a philosophical rhetoric offering a vision of human life shaped by persuasion can lead to meaningful choice.

In such an understanding of choice, justice has an integral role to play. If justice is a principle that each should do the role for which he or she is most fitted and should perform only that role, then justice involves trying to understand one's unique identity and to understand how that identity relates both to other people and to the larger political whole. As such, justice is best viewed not as a rigid principle of social order leading to a frozen class structure of unreflective peons mindlessly staying in place and adhering to a definition of who they are that is imposed on them by some class of supposedly wise rulers. That is simply another form of slavery. Justice should be seen as a complex quest in a historical world, defined by temporality and contingency, to constitute an identity that allows one to belong appropriately to that world. Part of Socrates's challenge was to represent that quest mimetically as a heroic task.

The dialogue emphasizes continually the difficulties faced by anyone trying to reconceive the world so that it can be ordered justly. It also suggests the virtues necessary to meet these difficulties. Socrates and his interlocutors are rigorous, flexible, respectful, imaginative, and committed

to making sure their theoretical models do the best possible in terms of approximating the complexity encountered in the historical world. If not everyone can do philosophy, the dialogue shows, through the participation of various interlocutors, how one might question a philosopher and how a philosopher might reply. Also, it invites its audience to engage in acts of political imagination and to see the act of self and political constitution as a heroic act. Because the dialogue does not assume that any single narrative can possibly provide a mimetic representation fully adequate to the truth of political life, part of its persuasiveness is a function of its self-interrogation. In its self-subversion, the dialogue enacts the critical perspective necessary if the quest for justice is to be ongoing and if rhetoric is not to collapse into a false and static wisdom. The genuinely persuasive defense of justice turns out to be one in which the audience is brought inside the ongoing rhetorical effort to be adequate to a historical world inescapably defined by change.

To understand the world as defined inescapably by change is to see the world as a place of anxiety. The fantasy of tyranny may well be a response to the anxiety that the human world is one no one controls. Both the appeal and the repulsiveness of the Kallipolis also speak to this anxiety. Socrates's willingness to follow the argument where it leads and to be open to digressions and revisions suggests how one might live responsibly in a world that is beyond any one individual's control. In such a world, persuasion must be a foundational action. As an ongoing effort at reconstitution, philosophic persuasion becomes a resource for those seeking to be adequate to the contingency and temporality of the world. Persuasion is tyranny's opposite. Tyranny begins with an embattled self that seeks control of its world through the imposition of its will. Since such imposition can never be complete or final, tyranny is trapped in a continual effort to repulse the influence of others. In this effort to wall itself off from the potential influence of others, tyranny is an anti-rhetorical stance. In a tyrannical world, there can only be one person. In contrast, persuasion requires a willingness to cede control. Order is not to be imposed on the world through the domination of others. Instead, order emerges as individuals reconstitute themselves by investigating the narratives they inherit and the modes of reasoning that seem normal. In this process, the world is transformed from a place outside the determination of human purpose and desire and to which those purposes and desires must conform and becomes, instead, a rhetorical construct in which human purposes and desires shape and are shaped by the process of individuals seeking to find out who they are or can be in the worlds they have inherited.

If Platonic philosophy contributes to a democratic form of government,

it is because it conceives of persuasion in terms of a meaningful redefinition of choice. Platonic philosophy's potential contribution or its looming threat does not reside in an attempt to impose an ideal and impractical and inhuman order onto a historically complicated political reality. The Kallipolis is not the principal mimetic object of the *Republic*. The object of imitation is the act of philosophical persuasion in its full complexity and its qualified satisfactoriness. The *Republic* understands the world is historical, and it makes the case for the necessity of a philosophical rhetoric in such a world. Rhetoric is the process through which individuals engage in the ongoing task of aligning selves and worlds, of reimagining these worlds so they can be appropriate objects of human desires and places in which these desires have a reasonable chance at satisfaction. For Plato, genuine persuasion is the fundamental human activity through which the human is realized in the historical world. Persuasion is the guide in a world in which the certainty of knowledge is not possible but in which action is still necessary. A philosophical rhetoric becomes the meaningful negotiation of the past in a present that both brings that past forward and finds that it no longer fits perfectly. Neither seeking nor offering finality, a philosophical rhetoric holds out the possibility of a productive stability that can modify and transform itself in an effort to do justice to the world in which people must live. In its centrality in a democracy, persuasion becomes the essential political activity, and, as such, is the appropriate mimetic object of a new transformed epic seeking to inculcate the values and practices that define democracy.

In its narrative that represents persuasion as the definitive activity for a democracy, the *Republic* does more than provide a resource for democracy.<sup>7</sup> The effort at discovering a genuine defense of justice leads to a reconsideration of persuasion and to a reconceptualization of democracy. Democracy is no longer understood as a political order shaped in history and subject to a law of political determination leading inevitably to tyranny; instead, it is seen as a political order that can be reimagined by philosophy as an occasion for freedom and self-determination. In its unmasking of the tyrannical fantasy hidden in historical democracies, philosophy makes possible an understanding of democracy not controlled by that destructive and destabilizing fantasy. As an act of revolutionary political intervention, the *Republic* seeks a new constitution for democracy. In its challenge to democracy's unreflective self-understanding, the *Republic* attempts to persuade a democratic citizenry of a way of conceiving themselves that allows them to escape a fantasy threatening their destruction. In freeing citizens from the grip of a destructive fantasy, a philosophical persuasion offers the possibility of a viable democracy. In this philosophically reconstituted de-

mocracy, the citizens' desires are shaped by persuasion. Desire is no longer understood as a brute force compelling human behavior but as a psychological drive shaped by persuasion and mediated through a heroic image of the self-determination of identity. In its ideal form, this democracy and the activity of persuasion become the standards by which to judge any existing democracy and the ideal to which all democracies should aspire. The central and valued political activity is not ruling but engaging in a collaborative conversation. The ambition of power has been replaced by a humility that seeks not to control the world but to achieve the modest goal of living a just life. That is Odysseus's choice at the dialogue's end, and that is the paradigmatic choice defining all who participate in a philosophically reconceived democracy that values human freedom and desires justice.

In its mimetic representation of persuasion as undertaken by a philosophical rhetoric, the *Republic* not only rescues philosophy from the danger of becoming merely an esoteric discourse but also makes an important contribution to rhetorical theory. It argues that rhetoric is an essential aspect of philosophy, and only through philosophy's embrace of rhetoric can it have any impact on the world. As a crucial component of philosophy, rhetoric can be understood not in an instrumental role of assisting individuals as they make decisions but as having a more foundational role in the ongoing political and individual task of reconstitution. In its need to meet its obligation to be politically relevant, philosophy discovers a new possibility for a rhetoric based in a non-normal discourse. This rhetoric pursues a counterintuitive direction that will understandably be resisted. That is a fundamental challenge at the heart of philosophical rhetoric. The nature of philosophical rhetoric is to disrupt and dispute normal discursive practice as part of a larger enterprise of the continual and necessary reconstitution of foundational values. If the *Republic* begins with Socrates's refutation of an unprincipled rhetoric, that refutation is followed by Socrates coming to appreciate a deeper truth: philosophy as a meaningful political discourse is possible only if it can find an appropriate rhetoric.

To be genuinely persuasive in its defense of justice, philosophy must become rhetorical because human identity is not simply a function of rationality but rather it is also constituted through a complex set of beliefs and desires. Human nature is rhetorical. The *Republic* shows what it means for human beings to be rhetorical and what it means for human identity to be constituted and reconstituted in rhetorical acts. At the heart of this ongoing task of human reconstitution is the activity of persuasion. Persuasion is the collaborative effort to align a structure of beliefs and a historical world, not so that belief merely accommodates a particular historical order

but so that it opens up that order to be rethought and better serve human purpose. That is the epic drama of a philosophically reinvented democracy. Glaucon's challenge to provide a genuinely persuasive defense of justice is the enduring challenge for all democratically organized states.

The rhetorical crisis that the *Republic* confronts is an ongoing dynamic of political life. The nature of political discourse is to be in peril. Political orders arise out of and in response to certain historical challenges, and part of the challenge of such political orders, if they are to remain vital and legitimate, is to understand that further change and challenge are inevitable. For as things change, political orders and historical worlds can become unaligned. The narratives and the cultural practices shaped by those narratives can cease to serve the values that they are intended to support. The culture's normal rhetoric begins to lose authority and it functions as a discourse that sustains only a surface allegiance. When this happens, the political threatens to collapse into the private. The role of a philosophical rhetoric is to investigate and, when necessary, reimagine narratives and practices so that the values they promote have a genuine force in citizens' lives. Justice is one such value that needs to be continually defended so that it is internalized as a principle uniting the citizenry in a common and shared constitution that shapes their desires into politically healthy aspirations. Justice as a foundational political value exists in a state of crisis. But this crisis is not to be regretted; rather, it should be embraced as a generative occasion for the preservation of justice as a meaningful political value.

In the theoretical imagining and criticizing of ideal political orders designed to serve human purposes, those engaging in philosophical rhetoric, as either performer or audience, collaboratively sustain the freedom that enables a political order to manage a historical world in which temporality and contingency threaten to undo any human order. In its mimetic presentation of a persuasion enacted by a philosophical rhetoric, the *Republic* contests the ambitions of those who seek power and domination of others and offers in the place of those ambitions a humble but disciplined life of intellectual integrity that exercises its freedom to engage in the ongoing task of finding a discourse that can genuinely defend justice. In this defense of justice, the *Republic* reinvents rhetoric and revitalizes democracy.

## NOTES

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### CHAPTER 1

1. Carol Poster makes a compelling case for Plato as a rhetor, "Framing *Theaetetus*: Plato and Rhetorical (Mis)representation." See also Michelle Gellrich, "Socratic Magic: Enchantment, Irony, and Persuasion in Plato's Dialogues"; Marina McCoy, *Plato on the Rhetoric of Philosophers and Sophists*; and Harvey Yunis, *Taming Democracy: Models of Political Rhetoric in Classical Athens* and "The Protreptic Rhetoric of the *Republic*." Hayden Ausland argues, in particular, that "the fundamental principle of [the *Republic*'s] organization is rhetorical in character" ("Socrates' Argumentative Burden in the *Republic*," 123). For a representative account of Plato as an implacable opponent to rhetoric, see Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric*.

2. Josiah Ober, "How To Criticize a Democracy in Late Fifth- and Fourth-Century Athens," in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy*, edited by J. Peter Euben, John R. Wallach, and Josiah Ober; and *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens*. See also S. Sarah Monson, "Frank Speech, Democracy, and Philosophy: Plato's Debt to a Strategy of Civic Discourse"; and J. Peter Euben, "Democracy and Political Theory: A Reading of Plato's *Gorgias*." Both essays are in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy*.

3. In *The Platonic Political Art: A Study of Critical Reason and Democracy*, John R. Wallach has made a strong argument that Plato should not be read as an antidemocratic thinker and that his work is best read as an effort to solve what Wallach labels the "Socratic Problem." This problem arises from Socrates's failure to integrate or synthesize his ethical values with the current political practices of democratic Athens, thus creating a gap between words and deeds. Wallach argues that Plato, and especially in the *Republic*, invents political theory as a practice that reconciles the tension that Socrates failed to negotiate. Arlene Saxonhouse demonstrates how democracy and democratic institutions informed Socrates's understanding of philosophy; see *Athenian Democracy: Modern Mythmakers and Ancient Theorists*, chap. 4. In *Plato's Democratic Entanglements*, S. Sara Monson provides a nuanced and convincing argument for Plato's appreciation of some of democracy's achievements and sees his work as an effort to resolve issues that were important to democracy.

4. For additional accounts that see Plato's interest in addressing a nonphilosophic audience, see Allen, *Why Plato Wrote*, 76; and Rosen, *Plato's Republic*, 1.

5. For Plato's interest in making philosophy a resource for the public, see Allen, 14–15. Euben argues that “by showing us how and why characters who are not professional philosophers enter into an argument, by showing what sort of worldly problems bring people to philosophize in the first place and what contributions philosophy can make to their predicaments, dialogue, like drama, shows us why and when we ourselves care about political and moral reflection” (*The Tragedy of Political Theory*, 237).

6. As Yunis notes, “Before Plato, philosophers treated arcane subjects in technical treatises that had no appeal outside a small circle of experts. These writings, ‘on nature,’ ‘on truth,’ ‘on being,’ and so on, mostly in prose, some in verse, were demonstrative, not protreptic. Plato, on the other hand, broke away from the experts and sought to treat ethical problems of universal relevance and to make philosophy accessible to the public” (“The Protreptic Rhetoric of the *Republic*,” 12).

7. All translated passages are from *The Republic*, trans. Tom Griffith, edited by G. R. F. Ferrari, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

8. As I argue in chapter 11, Glaucon's tale of Gyges makes clear the universality of this desire.

9. Morrison notes “Socrates in the *Republic* commits himself to the idea that human nature is extremely plastic in some ways: we, or anyway an entire social class of us, could accept community of spouses and children” (235). Morrison goes on to explain that this plasticity is not without limits—we cannot all become philosophers. But what he has recognized is that Plato assumes that rhetoric may be able to assist us in reconstituting ourselves. And Ludwig argues that, for Socrates, “an open, flexible eros is educable” (“Eros in the *Republic*,” 218). So rhetoric can shape or reshape desire.

10. Yunis recognizes that the successful argument cannot merely produce agreement but must affect action: “The point of the entire endeavor is not merely to know the truth about justice but to know it and to live it. That is a problem of the will and is properly attacked by rhetoric” (“The Protreptic Rhetoric of the *Republic*,” 22). Where I differ a bit from Yunis is that I think of this less as a problem of will and more as a problem of desire. Socrates's task is not to make his audience aware of an ethical obligation as much as it is to persuade them of the worth of justice (its beauty) so that they desire it and pursue it not to fulfill an obligation but because they are drawn to it.

11. Yunis points to Plato's distinguishing normal rhetorical practice from philosophic rhetoric: “And though Plato's written protreptic is often rhetorical—in the sense that it uses form for effect in an artistic manner—it is not rhetorical in the sophistic sense condemned by Plato in the *Gorgias* and elsewhere, namely, that, like flattery, it caters to irrational desires” (“The Protreptic Rhetoric of the *Republic*,” 16).

12. Euben, *The Tragedy of Political Theory*, 246.

13. Monoson is very helpful on this point. See, in particular, her discussion of *parresia* (frank speech) (*Plato's Democratic Entanglements*, 51–63). See also Arlene W. Saxonhouse, *Athenian Democracy: Modern Mythmakers and Ancient Theorists*. Saxonhouse asks, “Must one live in a democracy to dream of a Callipolis?” (105). Certainly the

experience of living in a democracy made some sort of substantial contribution to the imagining of an alternative ideal form of political life.

14. For a discussion that takes seriously Socrates's claim that democracy may be the form of political life that best supports philosophy as Plato understood it, see Monoson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements*, 166–69.

15. For the need for Platonic philosophy to be both political and practical, see Nightingale, *Genres in Dialogue*, 70–71.

16. One way to read Book 8 is as a repeated demonstration of this as a fact of political life.

17. Nightingale, 60. Most scholars do not follow Nightingale in this claim. For a good example of an alternative position that argues that there was such a quarrel prior to Plato, see Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 42. Nussbaum, however, does offer support for such a claim: "Before Plato's time there was no distinction between 'philosophical' and 'literary' discussion of human practical problems" (*The Fragility of Goodness*, 123).

18. To read the dialogue as a work of rhetoric is to take it seriously as a work of literature, which, in turn, is to take it seriously as a work of philosophy. In the last couple of decades, the literary aspect of Plato's philosophy has received significant attention. Ruby Blondell's book-length study, *The Play of Character in Plato's Dialogues* and collections by Areti (*Interpreting Plato: The Dialogues as Drama*) and Press (*Plato's Dialogues: New Studies and Interpretations*) are good examples of this scholarly approach.

19. For a discussion of the *Republic's* as Plato's effort at reeducating the *thumos* and redirecting its object of desire, see Gabriel Richardson Lear, "Plato on Learning to Love Beauty."

20. See also Halliwell, "The Subjection of Muthos to Logos," 108.

21. Kurke is certainly right that the dialogues do, in an important sense, offer us Socrates as a model to be imitated, but as she notes, we are not to imitate the character, who is inimitable, but the activity of his endless quest for truth ("Plato, Aesop, and the Beginnings of Mimetic Prose," 37–38).

22. Yunis argues that Plato himself did not simply model Socratic activity but rather sought an alternative effective rhetorical form in which to pursue his philosophical challenge to his fellow citizens ("The Protreptic Rhetoric of the *Republic*," 16).

23. Monoson argues this point convincingly: "Plato's dialogues contain explicit, albeit qualified, expressions of acceptance of the wide dispersal of political power characteristic of democracy, enlist certain celebrated Athenian democratic principles in the design of his critique of democratic politics, and depict the practice of philosophy as indebted to Athenian democratic culture" (*Plato's Democratic Entanglements*, 4).

24. For a reading that sees the *Republic* as Plato's moving from a concern with practice of politics and embracing theory as an alternative, see Ophir, *Plato's Invisible Cities: Discourse and Power in the Republic*.

25. O'Connor does a good job of capturing the complexity of Plato's stance (86).

## CHAPTER 2

1. As interpreters have noted, the internal audience in the dialogue has serious implications for the discussion of justice soon to take place. Any contemporary reader of the



dialogue would know that two of the characters, Polemarchus and Niceratus, will subsequently be murdered in the aristocratic coup in 411 BCE led by Plato's maternal uncle, Critias. Their murder had little or nothing to do with their politics; rather, the members of the coup coveted the wealth of these two young men. In the *Republic*, Polemarchus is portrayed as a decent young man with a genuine interest in justice. Niceratus was considered as someone "just and humane" and whose murder was considered as emblematic of the excesses that occurred during the short rule of the Thirty (Nails, *The People of Plato*, 212). Any discussion of justice connected to these two young men would argue that justice cannot be a theoretical concern and that acts of injustice have dire consequences for specific people (Euben, *The Tragedy of Political Theory*, 273). The death of Socrates only reinforces that understanding.

Also present are Lysias, Euthydemus, Thrasymachus, Charmantides, and Cleitophon. Leaving Charmantides and Euthydemus aside, the other three have clear connections to rhetoric. Lysias, who is silent throughout the dialogue, and Thrasymachus were prominent rhetors. Cleitophon is especially interesting because in the dialogue named for him he raises explicit questions about the effectiveness of Socratic persuasion, claiming that Socrates's arguments work only for those who already believe them (Rutherford, *The Art of Plato*, 98–101). Further, according to Cleitophon, those whom Socrates does persuade often turn out to have only a superficial understanding that is easily confounded.

His inclusion among the rhetors suggests, at least obliquely, that the efficacy of Socratic persuasion might be an issue for the dialogue. More importantly, the composition of the dialogue's internal audience, characters who will suffer injustice or characters who are identified as rhetors, links rhetoric to injustice and establishes the background with which Socrates must contend.

2. Roochnik, *Beautiful City*, 53–55.

3. Klosko makes this point by arguing that the elenchus is entangled in two paradoxes from which it cannot escape. The first is the paradox of reason: "In order that the elenchus may work, its interlocutor must exhibit a prior commitment to intellectual inquiry. But according to this sequence, he only receives that commitment from the successful elenchus. As we have noted above, rational arguments cannot be used to create the commitment to reason; without a prior commitment to reason persuasion cannot succeed" ("Rational Persuasion in Plato's Political Theory," 29). The second is the paradox of receptivity: "One cannot simply take individual (at stage 1) and attempt to convince them of the truth of new principles. Because they are satisfied with the principles they have, they will not be receptive to new principles" (30).

4. See Nightingale for a discussion of the need to address the force of words as they have been internalized by us and now function as strands of internal discourse (169–71).

5. This issue becomes particularly important in Book 7 when Socrates argues that those who have been educated to be philosophers must be compelled to return to the city and rule. Can such compulsion be just? To answer that question, we will need to explore what can compel a philosopher.

6. At four different points in their conversation, Thrasymachus accuses Socrates of trickery.

7. Many readers of the dialogue feel that the refutation fails and the evidence of this is that it is not persuasive. See, for example, Annas: "Socrates' opponents lose the argu-

ment, but they are not convinced, and they say so; the only result of their being worsted in argument is that they become dismissive of argument, regarding it as a silly waste of time and a diversion from real issues" (*An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, 56). See also Barney, "Socrates' Refutation of Thrasymachus," 44.

8. For a classic essay that finds Socrates's refutation of Thrasymachus as seriously flawed, see David Sachs, "A Fallacy in Plato's *Republic*."

9. See Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings*. Book 1 is "a brilliant critique of Socrates, every aspect of which is designed to reveal a flaw in his theories" (23). Charles Kahn reads Book 1 less as a criticism of the Socratic elenchus and more as an effective presentation of the philosophy of the earlier dialogues that Plato uses as context in which to develop his new positions. Thus, for Kahn, Book 1 is intended to introduce proleptically the major themes of the dialogue (135–36).

### CHAPTER 3

1. Rowe argues that from Socrates's perspective his argument did succeed: "So, I conclude, he [Socrates] has good reason, from his own perspective (which, again, he thinks true), to be happy with this particular argument" (187). Whether or not Rowe is right about Socrates's feeling that, given the terms in which he framed the problem, he has argued successfully for his position, the problem remains that he has not persuaded anyone else of that rightness. If anything, the dissonance between what he believes he has proved and what others see as a failure to address substantially Thrasymachus's argument makes it even more imperative that Socrates discover a way of speaking persuasively that is more effective.

2. The Greek reads: "*O, Sokrates, poteron hemas boulei dokein pepeikenai* (to have persuaded) *e hos alethos peisai* (to persuade)."

3. Later, in Book 10, Socrates will make a similar charge against the poets, accusing them of using the rhetorical resources of language to bewitch their audience (601b).

4. For a discussion of the role of shame in Socratic refutation, see McKim, "Shame and Truth in Plato's *Gorgias*," 36–37.

5. Also, he is erotic (Rosen, 8), so it is a character committed to eros who is finally able to present the issue of justice in a way that permits a philosophical conversation. As O'Connor notes, "Eros is what makes Glaucon the right man for philosophy (see, esp., 474c–d), and at the same time it is what threatens to unman him" (67).

### CHAPTER 4

1. Socrates's later discussion of gender roles provides a helpful illustration of how it is easy to mistake and assume that a particular cultural interpretation accurately represents what is natural. Having shown the reasonableness of including women as potential guardians and of having the two sexes exercise together naked, Socrates concludes: "There was a natural justification for the law we passed [that qualified women could serve as guardians]. It is society today, apparently, which is out of step and unnatural" (456c).

2. Socrates will explicitly address this issue later in his figure of the divided line in which initial contact with the world is not an unmediated reception of sense data but

a figured presentation of the world. We first encounter the world as images—that is, as culturally shaped understandings—of the world (509e–511e, esp. 510b).

3. This is the position that underlies Eric Havelock's argument in *Preface to Plato* that the dialogue is best read not primarily as a work of political theory but as a radical effort at pedagogical reform.

4. Blössner speaks to this point and argues that the binary of larger and smaller letters obscures the real division which is between the visible (city) and the invisible (soul) ("The City-Soul Analogy," 246).

5. Socrates addresses this point about our seeing the soul in a corrupt form in his later account of Glaucus, a creature whose shape has been so altered by past accidents that it is not possible (or nearly impossible) to ascertain his original nature. Our image of the soul and consequent understanding of its nature is deeply distorted (611d).

6. Blössner makes a similar point: "For if after reading the big letters, a person could be sure that the small ones comprise the same text, he could spare himself the trouble of reading them" (347).

7. Roochnik makes an important point about the intended inadequacy of this model: "On its own, the book 4 psychology *is* inadequate, and as I explain at length below, *it is meant to be inadequate*. It represents a stage, a moment, of the dialogue and not, as some commentators too often refer to it, a 'doctrine'" (italics in the original, 19).

8. For a contrast that sees this discussion as an instance of dialectic, see Roochnik, 11–19. For an account that sees the dialogue as a whole as an instance of dialectic, see Rowe, *Plato and the Art of Philosophical Writing*: "My own view is that Platonic/Socratic dialectic is a matter rather of serious philosophical conversation, so that the exchange between Socrates and his interlocutors in the text of the *Republic* will itself count as a perfectly acceptable example of this kind of thing dialectic may be" (167).

9. Blössner provides a convincing argument that the analogy functions rhetorically, see esp. 358–60 and 381–84.

10. See Rosen on the difficulty and maybe the impossibility of a philosopher persuading the many (247–48). This raises the question of just what the dialogue is seeking to persuade its audience. If it is that the Kallipolis should be instituted, then it would seem to be an impossible task. If, however, it is seeking to persuade the audience of the role of critical reflection on the way in which individuals and cities have been constituted as a necessary preliminary understanding to reconsidering what justice is, then this effort at persuasion may be more possible.

11. Paul W. Ludwig notes that there appears to be no role for *thumos* in the natural city and that what distinguishes the revised city from the earlier city is not merely the expansion of opportunity to satisfy desire, but that desire now also acquires cultural meaning and the ability to have and satisfy a myriad of desires marks one as a prominent citizen (226). A desire that had been natural has been transformed into one that is equally, and, probably more so, cultural.

12. For a discussion of Glaucon as an erotic character, see Rosen, 8–9. Ludwig offers an interesting comment about Glaucon and the relation between desire and tyranny: "If to Glaucon's ambition we add his eroticism, Glaucon would seem to be in more danger than most of wanting to become a tyrant" (225). My first response to this observation was to say, "No, Glaucon is concerned with justice and is not drawn to tyranny," but if one

assumes that an unreflective valuing of freedom is a common possession of all honorable characters in a democracy, and if this unreflective valuing of freedom embodies a wish for the absolute freedom that tyranny epitomizes, then it is right to say that Glaucon and many admirable citizens in a democracy are in danger of falling under the thrall of the dream of tyranny. That danger suggests one important reason why Socrates needs to talk with Glaucon and with the other citizens in a democracy. He needs to counter desires that they have and whose consequences they do not understand.

13. For a good discussion the consequences of the introduction of *thumos* for the city, see Ludwig, 226–30.

14. This is precisely Callicles's complaint in the *Gorgias* when he bemoans the fact that civilization seeks to domesticate large and powerful natures, thus creating a kind of moral sickness (483b–484b).

15. The education of the guardians is a political question and not a philosophical one. At this point of the discussion, it appears that justice is capable, at least theoretically, of being handled by a correct arrangement of the city's control over education. In effect, justice can be handled as a technical issue. It will only be in Book 5 (473d) that justice will be approached as a philosophical problem when Socrates finally acknowledges that the Kallipolis is possible only if philosophers rule. So a correct and chastened poetic education cannot, in itself, solve the problem of justice. To believe that it can is to mistake a philosophical problem for a political one.

16. On Plato's view of the malleability or plasticity of the soul, see Morrison, "The Utopian Character of Plato's Ideal City," 235; and Rosen 246.

17. Since the readers of the dialogue do not undergo the proposed education, they do not acquire a certain and absolute loyalty to a city, even to an imagined city. Their education occurs as they witness the way in which a culture, through its educational practices, shapes a citizen's understanding. Presumably, someone who learns this may be more open to reflecting on the ways in which he or she has been shaped by a particular culture and thus in a better position to either accept responsibility for or rethink their civic and personal identity. This growth could make them more available for persuasion by a philosophical rhetoric that sought to get its audiences to think critically about the foundational values that structure their understanding of the world and that shape the desires that move them.

18. The scholarly literature on Plato and mimesis is vast. Here is a partial list of recent work that I have found valuable: Danielle S. Allen, *Why Plato Wrote*; Hayden W. Ausland, "On Reading Plato Mimetically"; Myles F. Burnyeat, "Culture and Society in Plato's *Republic*"; G. R. F. Ferrari, "Plato and Poetry"; Stephen Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems*; Jonathan Lear, "Inside and Outside the *Republic*"; Ramona A. Naddaff, *Exiling the Poets: The Production of Censorship in Plato's Republic*; and Alexander Nehamas, *Virtues of Authenticity: Essays on Plato and Socrates*, esp. chaps. 12 and 13.

19. At this point in the dialogue, Socrates underestimates the problem of mimesis and assumes that it can be handled technically by prescribing the content and the form for approved of cultural transmission. In Book 10 he will return to the problem of mimesis and deal with mimesis as a fundamental aspect of any rhetoric that seeks to be adequate to the task of constituting individuals and cities.

20. See Gabriel Richardson Lear, "Plato on Learning to Love Beauty."

21. For a discussion of Plato's developmental psychological model, see Jonathan Lear's "Inside and Outside the *Republic*."

22. My understanding of Plato intentionally designing an education and city that would prove to inadequate is indebted to David Roochnik's argument in *Beautiful City: The Dialectical Character of Plato's Republic*. Roochnik makes a convincing case for Plato's strategy of offering and then complicating his account of the soul.

## CHAPTER 5

1. Nightingale argues that Plato used "intertextuality as a vehicle for criticizing traditional genres of discourse, and, what is more important, for introducing and defining a radically different discursive practice, which he calls 'philosophy'" (5). Kurke points out that "Plato's choice of mimetic prose was radical within his own tradition and according to some scholars (including Mikhail Bakhtin) served as an important precursor of the modern novel" (7).

2. Roochnik, who points out the dialectical nature of Platonic thought, argues: "The *Republic*, conceived as a dialectical work, is a series of swellings. An early stage of the conversation is interrupted and then revised in an increasingly rich and more adequate manner. In a dialectical development an earlier stage is not, however, totally discarded as being simply wrong. Instead, even if it is partial or one-sided, it is nonetheless—though modified and thereby negated by the more complete accounts that follow it—preserved in its partiality as a stage or moment of the entire development" (5). I agree with Roochnik about revision as being essential to the movement in the dialogue, but where he attributes it to Plato engaging in a dialectical investigation, I see it as a feature of Plato's rhetoric that is not so much the working through of an intellectual problem as it is the addressing of a concern the audience has.

3. Monoson makes the important point that Socrates is no more friendly to the currently powerful elite than he is to the democratic masses: "Even though in democracy the many are undisciplined and without standards (it is exceedingly difficult for them to sort through the myriad opportunities before them and therefore making them unable consistently to pursue virtue), the situation in oligarchy is worse. In oligarchy, a few systematically and with great conceit pursue wealth. In oligarchy, powerful elites enshrine the wrong standard and reduce the remaining mass of people to beggars" (*Plato's Democratic Entanglements*, 116–17). If Socrates imagines a new aristocracy, it is one constituted by virtuous citizens ruling. His aristocracy bears little, if any, resemblance to the current aristocracy of Athens.

4. Roochnik, who reads the dialogue as a dialectical inquiry, is very helpful in demonstrating the ways in which positions are offered and then revised. His account of the a political reform, based on the arithmetical approach and its consequent need for dialectical negation (40), shows Plato's awareness of the attractiveness of a theoretical solution and his equal awareness of the way in which the very tidiness of the solution points to its inadequacy. For Roochnik, this initial theoretical tidiness fails because it leaves out eros. He is certainly right about that, but there is also a structural feature of the dialogue where it continually complicates the positions that it articulates.

5. Strauss argues that “the abolition of privacy is a blow struck at *eros*” (*The City and Man*, 111). But I would argue that this states the case backward. Plato’s primary concern is the elimination of the private, and Socrates’s attempts to control the expression of *eros* in the city are derived from his more important concern to create a class of guardians that is motivated exclusively by public interest. For example, later on Socrates has no objection to the rulers who have served their term having a fairly liberal sexual life because it has no political consequence. So *eros*, although a serious complicating factor for the city, is not Socrates’s primary target.

6. In denying that the Kallipolis is “the model of a just city,” Rosen argues “that the rule of philosophy is just, but the attempt to exercise it leads to injustice” (138).

7. Rochnik has written perceptively on the consequences of Socrates’s failure to take adequate account of the force of *eros* in human life: “Books 5–7, then constitute Socrates’ return to a ‘whole section’ (*eidos holon*: 449c2) of the *Republic*. They are a revision of books 2–4, generated by the interruption of *Eros*” (57).

8. Ferrari makes this point convincingly. See esp. his analysis of Bernard Williams’s argument, *City and Soul in Plato’s Republic*, 42–50.

9. It will turn out that the city’s inability to have absolute control over *eros* or over the consequences of *eros* will play a leading role in its ultimate dissolution (546d).

## CHAPTER 6

1. Nightingale explicitly identifies Socrates’s extended definition of philosophy as a “rhetorical *tour de force* which ranges far beyond the intellectual activities that characterize philosophy” (18).

2. Weiss focuses on the consequences of Glaucon as immediate audience for the particular account of philosophy in the Kallipolis that Socrates offers (*Philosophers in the Republic*, 3). I think that it is partly right, but the more important audience—the audience who resists the claim that philosophers should rule—is the general population of the city of Athens. It is helpful to keep this in mind. Weiss’s discussion of Plato’s defense of the various forms that philosophy can take is incredibly helpful and does a very good job of locating some key tensions in the dialogue. She does a particularly good job of bringing out the serious and often unattractive limitations of the philosopher-kings, but it is important to remember that Socrates’s task is not simply to provide an account of philosophy and ultimately justice that is persuasive to Glaucon but one that Glaucon and Adeimantus can use to rebut effectively the common perception that injustice is superior to justice. Any account of philosophy must be read as functioning with respect to the people of Athens, that is, to a city that is democratic.

3. Weiss does an excellent job of explaining the troubling nature of Socrates’s account in Book 7 of the philosophers who would be groomed by the founders to rule the Kallipolis. See esp. 114–18.

4. As Weiss points out, only one of the accounts of philosophy is grounded in nature (11–48). A second account of philosophy as envisioned in the Kallipolis would be a practice that was intentionally cultivated by the city to produce a particular type of ruler. It would be a nonnatural occurrence of philosophy.

5. Plato sees this mirroring as an important problem. He will later accuse the poets

also of offering their audience a mirror (596d–e). When rhetors or poets offer work that mirrors the world, they increase their audience's sense that the audience can see what is really there. It is a mode of self-confirmation, backed by the further authority of empirical inspection. This is a way of naturalizing corruption by uncritically taking an image of the world as an unmediated representation of the world. It is basically an arhetorical posture.

6. Weiss labels these philosophers as “philosophers by nature” (11–44), and she makes clear how fundamentally they differ from the “philosophers by design” who will be the focus of Book 7.

7. This is an important claim and one that suggests that Socrates's attack on mimesis in Book 10 needs to be read not simply as an argument against all forms of mimesis but rather as an elaborate consideration of the potential and problems that inhere in mimesis.

## CHAPTER 7

1. For a discussion of Glaucon as a character who is a potential guardian, see Rosen, 12.

2. Weiss argues that Socrates's account of the philosopher-king, especially with its emphasis on the warrior character of such a ruler, is shaped in part by the need to speak to values that are central to Glaucon (50).

## CHAPTER 8

1. Weiss argues that the peculiar nature of these philosophers is what requires compulsion (74–75). Unlike earlier philosophers who were naturally drawn to philosophy, the philosophers raised and educated in the Kallipolis are marked by compulsion at many stages of their growth and at moments of key decisions (105).

2. For a similar argument, see *ibid.*, 99–102.

3. Weiss argues that these philosophers are, in fact, not just. *Ibid.*, 114.

4. For a more positive account of the consequences of the designed philosophic education, see Ferrari, *City and Soul*, 89–90. Ferrari points out the interesting contrast between an Isocratean philosophical education and a Platonic philosophical education. As Isocrates conceives philosophical education, its goal is to shape ethically potential rulers since the noblest thing for a human to do is rule well. Plato, on the other hand, conceives of the practice of philosophy as more noble than political rule. This doesn't mean that Plato denies the philosopher may have political responsibilities but only that these responsibilities do not mark the epitome of human excellence.

## CHAPTER 9

1. Roochnik argues that “the major purpose of books 8 and 9 is to provide a psychology richer than the one articulated in book 4. It requires a narrative, for the phenomena of human experience are essentially temporal and never occur ‘at the same time’” (106). Plato's various vignettes tell the stories of how various souls come to be. The soul is a

product of nature, culture, and history, and this produces both particular identities or constitutions and also a diversity of ethical types.

2. Ferrari makes an important point about Plato's discussion of these various regimes: "Those constitutions are not analyzed as political systems; the focus is not on their institutions and structures, their balance of power, their laws, or on any of the terms of political analysis that we would find in a work such as Aristotle's *Politics*" (*City and Soul*, 76). He goes on to say: "To be sure, they [the various regimes] are moral or behavioral categories rather than technical political categories they might first seem, but as such they are true to the reality of Greek politics" (*City and Soul*, 77). They are a broad spectrum of character types or ethical ways of organizing a life that were present and available (at least to some) in Athens. It is helpful to read these as idealized portraits of actual options that would have existed in less pure and more mixed forms. The idealization works to help sort out the issues involved.

3. Annas finds Socrates's categorization of the types of political regimes unsatisfying and irritating, and she points out that Socrates's classifications do not easily fit existing regimes but rather are determined a priori (294–95). She is certainly right that Socrates is not attempting any kind of actual history of Greek city-states, but his descriptions of various regimes and character are intended to reflect types that do exist. If these types have been extracted and abstracted from a more complex political and cultural terrain, that is because such idealization of types is analytically productive. It allows Socrates to locate tensions that are in operation as ambition, wealth, and freedom clash and shape particular regimes and characters. As Ferrari notes, "Even if none of the portraits of civic life reflects the life of a historical community with complete accuracy but each is a caricature of a tendency found in actual communities, sometimes simultaneously, as with oligarchic and democratic factions in Athens, this is not to deny these caricatures a genuinely political application" (*City and Soul*, 77).

4. For Roochnik, the soul is a dynamic and developing organism, and its nature requires that it can be understood only through narrative. The ethical-political types become representative accounts of how a soul comes to be: "These little stories have miniature plots unfolding through time. For Socrates, it seems, a *logos* of a soul type is a *logos* of a soul's coming-to-be, its history or story" (100).

5. For helpful examples of how these changes are a product of generational conflict within the family, see Jonathan Lear, 235–36.

6. For a similar understanding of the force of culture on the constitution of the individual, see Roochnik: "Since there is no impermeable line between the inside and the outside of the soul—that is, since the soul is the ever changing locus of interactions between inside and outside—a precise and formally structured theory would be an inadequate vehicle for psychology" (102). What that structure would miss is the inherent rhetoricity of human identity.

7. Again, it is important to emphasize that Socrates is not offered for purposes of literal imitation. To do so is to read his character arhetorically, and to assume that justice or the practice of philosophy can be achieved by simply and slavishly following a model. To read Socrates rhetorically is to begin a process of constituting oneself so that one can engage in persuasion, as a speaker and as an audience. It is to constitute a new political identity for oneself.



## CHAPTER 10

1. As Burnyeat points out, the “Greek word *paideia* means both education and culture, because culture is what educates and forms the soul” (240). In Book 10, Plato’s primary concern is how the city perpetuates its culture through poetic performances that are understood as political exercises. As such, they are instances of poetry functioning rhetorically.

2. Ferrari emphasizes how unremittingly negative Plato is in his assessment of poetry (“Plato and Poetry,” 92).

3. Burnyeat makes a similar point: “By returning to discuss musical poetry in light of the psychological, epistemological, and metaphysical theories introduced since book III, it shows that those theories have a practical significance even if the ideal city is not founded in our lifetime. They provide the antidote (595b: *pharmakon*) or countercharm (608a: *epode*) to *mimesis*” (288). This argues that Plato imagines the *Republic*’s contribution to political life cannot be restricted to developing a theoretical construction; rather, he assumes that the theoretical discussions will have consequences for politics in the currently existing city. In particular, these discussions will allow us to counter currently circulating discourse by understanding how it operates rhetorically.

4. For an illuminating discussion of Plato’s use of couches as an example of *mimesis*, see Burnyeat, 245–49; also see 233.

5. Nehamas emphasizes Plato’s efforts to create a new form of discourse: “‘Philosophy’ has now become a common word, even though the exact sense of it is still in dispute. This was not true in Plato’s time. The *Republic* was a radically innovative effort to establish the term’s legitimacy: it argues that the word corresponds to a genuine practice, which Plato introduces here for the first time” (*Virtues of Authenticity*, 325).

## CHAPTER 11

1. For a discussion on the importance of theatricality to democracy and to Plato, see Monoson, *Plato’s Democratic Entanglements*, esp. chaps. 4 and 8.

2. Halliwell: “The concept of *mimesis* used in this section of the work, as applied to both the poet (393c) and the recipient or reciter (396a–b, 396d), entails ‘self-likening’ or assimilation of the figures of poetry. In experiencing poetry in dramatic works, the mind orients itself to, and positions itself ‘inside,’ the viewpoint of the speaker. This model of close psychological identification allows a deepening of the earlier concern with poetry’s effects on the mind” (*The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 52).

3. Nehamas: “The *Republic* praises the most abstract, rigorous, and theoretical modes of thought at the expense of the practical, the rhetorical, and the literary. Nevertheless, it is itself a literary work of the first order, and it is as a literary work that it succeeds in establishing the priority of abstract reason. It works by indirection. As we dispute, for example, Plato’s idea that philosophers should govern our city, we grant him his view that reason should rule our life. The *Republic* argues for, but also seduces us into rationality” (318). I would extend Nehamas’s insight: not only does the apparently banned literary return, so do the practical and the rhetorical. And this combination of

literary, rhetorical, and practical has consequences for how one accesses and participates in reason. For that participation is not abstract.

4. Rosen: “I suggest that the *Republic* is Plato’s account of his struggle against decadence” (4). As Rosen goes on to argue, neither Plato nor Socrates could exist in the Kallipolis “without sacrificing an essential element of their nature” (4). So it is not a question of the inhabiting the Kallipolis, but of asking how the activity of imagining the Kallipolis better equips one to live in the world as it is.

5. Socrates makes this point in the *Crito*, when he imagines the city’s laws addressing him as if they were his parents.

6. As Allen makes clear, Plato’s use of images, even his use of mathematical diagrams, functions rhetorically to convey abstract ideas: “Images such as this—models and diagrams—are techniques for conveying, not finding, abstract concepts” (52).

7. Socrates characterizes the democratic city as “full of freedom and freedom of speech” (557b), and he goes on to argue that rhetoric is the source of power in a democracy: “All anyone has to do to win favour is to say he is a friend of the people” (558b). This combination of free speech and political authority being popularly based is, in effect, a characterization of Athens as a city constituted by persuasion. The problem, of course, is that it is often an unprincipled and unreflective persuasion that presents friendship as an act of confirming the audience’s self-image. This is the type of persuasion that the *Republic* seeks to challenge.



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