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3-2001

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John Patrick Coby

*Smith College*, [pcoby@smith.edu](mailto:pcoby@smith.edu)

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### Recommended Citation

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**WHY ARE THERE WARRIORS IN PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*?**

John Patrick Coby  
Professor of Government  
Smith College  
Northampton, MA

pcoby@smith.edu

Published in *History of Political Thought* (Autumn 2001): 377-99.

## **Why Are There Warriors in Plato's *Republic*?**

### **Abstract**

The warriors are a troublesome addition to the city founded by Socrates. Continuous supervision and a heavy-handed pedagogy are required just to keep them from oppressing the producing class. They also never accomplish the mission they initially are given—the violent taking of adjacent lands. So why are they summoned and set up in power? For that matter, why is spiritedness cultivated instead of discouraged or suppressed? There is a case to be made against warriors in the city and spiritedness in the soul. After making that case, the paper turns to constructing a defense of each, noting their respective contributions to civic defense and self-preservation, political justice and moral development, and the rule of philosophers and the life of the mind.

## Why Are There Warriors in Plato's *Republic*?

Notice the way warriors first come to Socrates' city of "utmost necessity" (*anagkaiotatē polis*). They are not among that community's original inhabitants, which when fully populated consists of workers distributed across ten occupations. The "true" and "healthy" city, as Socrates calls it, is limited by life's basic necessities. But basic necessities are not wish-list luxuries, the desire for which causes Glaucon to abandon this city for one capable of supplying more appetizing relishes and more comfortable couches. A horde of new people, practicing less essential trades, is thus invited to fill out the city, changing its character from true and healthy to luxurious and feverish. But while there is change, there also is continuity, for an important feature of the first city survives the transition to its successor—namely, the principle of "one person one art" (*heis mian*), Socrates' catchphrase for the professionalism of job specialization and divided labor.

Farmers till the soil using plows crafted by artisans, pulled by oxen tended by herdsmen; their produce is sold in markets managed by tradesmen or is sent abroad in ships sailed by seamen; poets, rhapsodes, actors, and dancers provide for their entertainment, as do other professionals for their comforts, beauty aids, and the education of their children.

We must attend further to Socrates' archaeological speculations if the anomaly of warriors in the city is fully to be appreciated. Somehow the first city has its own land, uncontested by others and adequate to its needs. But with the influx of new people, more space is required, and the city is hemmed in by neighbors unwilling to move. Thus, the city must conquer in order to expand; and in order to conquer, it must provide itself with

soldiers proficient at war. Glaucon recommends a citizen-militia; but Socrates observes that victory in combat is a matter for art (374b). A skillful soldier is a person who has trained for war, not someone who first picks up his weapon on the day of battle. Fighting is a craft, which like other crafts requires practice and dedication to be mastered. Natural ability is another requirement of craft, in the case of fighting a powerful physique and a spirit-like temperament (*thumoeidēs*). But who among the city's residents possess these native qualities of body and soul? Which of the artisans are best suited for service in the military? Socrates does not say; but since he describes the spirited as having "sharp senses, speed to catch what they perceive, and, finally, strength if they have to fight it out with what they have caught" (375a),<sup>1</sup> a reasonable surmise is that the spirited belong to the hunters who accompany the artists, craftsmen, teachers, beauticians, cooks, and swineherds in the first wave of immigration (373b-c). The strong and spirited hunters, it seems fair to say (if only for now), are retained by the artisans of the healthy city to do their fighting for them. The hunters then are rather like a "Magnificent Seven" brought in to protect and serve a population of placid peasants.

It occurs to Socrates that large, aggressive men, in possession of the weapons of war and trained in their use, might not be as compliant as the artisans expect them to be (375b); that their hostility toward enemies might turn into hostility toward friends unless their natures somehow contain the opposite quality of gentleness. Initially discouraged by the oxymoronic psychology required of the warrior, Socrates takes comfort in the thought that noble dogs are capable of being ferocious with strangers and docile with

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<sup>1</sup> Translations of the Greek are from *The Republic of Plato*, Allan Bloom, trans., 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1991). Line numbers are those in *Platonis Opera*, vol. IV (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978) and are given only when necessary.

familiars. Noting that ignorance/knowledge is what seemingly determines the canine's disposition, and that the well-trained dog, therefore, is part "philosopher" (375e10), he concludes that education is the key to transforming spirited hunters into reliable warrior-guardians.<sup>2</sup> Glaucon and company agree, and so the conversation turns to the "liberal" education (405a9) in music and gymnastics meant to fine tune the thumotic soul.

Only one point about this education requires mention here. The content of the music education (as it concerns gods, heroes, and ordinary men) and its harmonic mode communicate the lesson of moral simplicity: Gods are simple, perfect, and unchanging beings, ever truthful and the cause of only good; heroes are uncomplicated paragons of courage and moderation; ordinary men are beneficiaries of the justice they do no less than of the justice they receive (376c-392d). Also, melodies and rhythms imitate the edifying virtues of war and peace rather than the debilitating vices of symposia (398e-399c). The gymnastic education is similarly structured to promote simplicity, favoring a basic regimen of diet and exercise and primitive medicines to mend the body (403c-410a). Simplicity is the message because moderation is the purpose.<sup>3</sup> By appreciating the simple (one might say classical) beauty of harmony, proportion, symmetry, and

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<sup>2</sup> The class of silver-soul warriors is divided into guardians and auxiliaries at 412a-414b. When the golden-soul philosopher appears as the true guardian of the city at 473c-d (and again at 503b), the warrior-guardians return, in effect, to their previous, undifferentiated position as spirited soldiers. I therefore take little notice of the original discrimination (warriors are warriors whether guardian or auxiliary), and if I refer to warriors as rulers, it is because of their high profile as public servants (about which see below), not because I suppose them to be the city's supreme authority.

<sup>3</sup> Allan Bloom, "Interpretive Essay," in *The Republic of Plato*, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1991), p. 364.

completeness, the warriors come to admire the measured mien of the virtuous man and to defer to his superior judgment (402d). The warriors-to-be are high-spirited by nature; their education renders them disciplined and obedient.

It does, so long as those most responsible for its transmission, the poets, subordinate their creativity to the social good of domesticating the warriors. The poets are censored (398a-b). But then so are the workers on whom a regulatory regime is also imposed (401b-c). The workers are supervised because the good disposition of the warriors depends on their encountering graceful objects everywhere they go. That the warriors might become gentlemen, carpenters are forced to comply with “building codes” and “zoning ordinances,” so to speak. Psychic equipoise is the object of these restrictions, not safety, economy, or comfort; not the material and creative needs of the carpenters. In fact, they and their fellow workers are forbidden to acquire wealth or to innovate with respect to their crafts. The worry is that a “free-market” economy will enrich some and impoverish others and that both wealth and poverty will prove inimical to the precise practice of art—wealth because it eliminates the necessity, and poverty because it lacks the resources (421d-e); also, preciseness is undefinable where innovation is forever changing the standards of excellence. The workers then, while spared the communistic institutions employed to keep the warriors in tow, function inside a “socialistic” economy that is austere, equal, and unprogressive. And because they have no wealth—either individually or collectively—their community is unable to utilize wealth in the prosecution of its wars. It therefore must rely on the training and conditioning of an army one thousand strong (423a). Socrates claims that this smallish force is nevertheless potent enough to take on the armies of larger but (necessarily) divided states, provided that the city which the one thousand defend remains united and

whole. Expansion consistent with unity is permissible, but nothing beyond that—nothing like what was anticipated when the warriors first were recruited by the workers. It was the workers who began the city and who were its most essential (its only) component. But with the addition of the warriors, the workers' status noticeably declines. Indeed, there is now a national myth, called the Noble Lie, which states that the workers are an inferior breed owing to the base metals they have in their souls (414c-415c).

How very strange, how totally senseless this legislation seems to be! The healthy city is abandoned to have better food and better furnishings; but in place of such amenities there is austerity, as in the rejection of “a Syracusan table and Sicilian refinement at cooking” (404d). And why this austerity? Because the taming of the warriors’ spiritedness requires a liberal education in music and gymnastics, the hallmark of which is simplicity and the moderation of desire. And why are there warriors whose moral education supplants the gratification of workers’ wants as the first business of the city? Because the principle of divided labor, or one person one art, mandates a professional army in place of citizen-soldiers. And why have an army of professionals? Because the city, wanting to improve its standard of living by increasing the number and variety of its artisans, must make room for a growing population by making war upon its nearby neighbors; and because victory in war takes precedence over the goods and services supplied by other crafts. But then one of the city’s laws effectively prohibits growth, since a large city is judged vulnerable to division by faction. So expansion is disallowed. But if the city is to remain small, and austere in the bargain, why create a warrior class in the first place? These warriors never do perform the function assigned to them, the conquest of adjacent lands, so why bother having them?

Think of the artisans of the healthy city as a chocolate gourmand, one who



imagines the day when, set loose in a candy store, he gorges himself on cordials, creams, and caramels. Determined to act out his fantasy, this sweet-tooth epicure plans a break-in of the corner confectionery. He soon though realizes that he isn't big enough to knock down the door and that he will have to secure the services of some supercharged muscleman who is. That done, the epicure is about to give his minion the go-ahead when the thought occurs that nothing prevents the muscleman, once inside, from claiming all the candy for himself. So, the burglary is delayed until the muscleman—let's call him "Arnold"—can be taught proper eating habits. Arnold is put on a diet and lectured to about the health risks of fat and cholesterol. A portentous tale is told that if ever Arnold feasts on chocolates, he straightway will die. He is allowed no money with which to purchase sweets, should a vendor pass by, and his actions are constantly monitored. But not only is Arnold so instructed and restrained; for it often happens that when one person diets others around are obliged to join in lest their consumption of high calorie delectables pose a temptation too enticing to resist. It also often happens that when diets end, bingeing begins; and the excess pounds which were slowly shed are quickly put back on, the good habits painfully established jettisoned in a flash. So, the diet is unending as well as required of all. The point was to break into the candy store and gobble up chocolates. Instead, the epicure and muscleman remain outside the shop, eating only tofu and never tasting truffles!

From the perspective of original intent, the warrior class is utterly superfluous. In light of near and distant consequences, it also is undesirable. With the arrival of warriors (under the guise of hunters, it has been presumed), the healthy city comes to an end. What additionally comes to an end is human equality and a justice so ubiquitous that it hardly needs looking for. The agora is the center of this community, the place where

separate artisans exchange their wares. The equality of needs and of the tasks to supply them is the source of the equality of citizens. They are equal because they are mutually dependent. And they are just (as the dialogue defines justice) because they “mind their own business” (*ta hautou prattein* [433a8]) simply by sticking to their crafts. Their justice derives from their art—one person one art—and is no more taxing than the professional courtesy which one artisan gladly extends to another. Neither a trained army nor powerful magistrates are required to keep workers in their places and the economy performing. The proficiency with which goods are produced and the ease of their exchange in a self-regulating market bring peace, prosperity, and leisure to all. But for the emphasis on job specialization (no small difference, to be sure), Socrates’ healthy city would presage Marx’s communist utopia, an arcadian idyll in which workers find fulfillment in nonindustrial labor (hunting, fishing, shepherding, criticizing) and in which society is equal and classless because the state has withered away.<sup>4</sup> But with the introduction of warriors, the practice of minding one’s own business in an egalitarian community of exchange becomes the basis for inequality and for class differentiation. An army of professionals minds its own business by commanding and coercing. The warrior’s craft is not just one more occupation added to the panoply of arts since its monopoly of power and the primacy of its function render it supreme. The warriors are a ruling class, and the workers are the ruled, even though the workers were the first on the scene and summoned the warriors to serve their needs.

The reference to Marx is admittedly a reach: divided labor, according to Marx, causes much of the alienation for which material abundance produced by science and

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<sup>4</sup> *The German Ideology*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), p. 160.

technology provides much of the cure.<sup>5</sup> The reason for referencing Marx is to call to mind his commitment to equality and to suggest that neither he, nor the political left in general, can accept with equanimity the coming of the professional warrior and the passing away of the healthy city. Marx denounces the transformation (or his version of it), declaring that all subsequent history “is the history of class struggles.”<sup>6</sup> Much the same opinion is held by the sophist Thrasymachus (though his motives are different), that justice is but a word used to advance the interests of the strong, the rulers, at the expense of the interests of the weak, the ruled. Justice is the “advantage of the stronger” (338c2). It follows then that when the army arrives, so too do the rulers, and with the rulers the possibility—the inevitability say Marx and Thrasymachus—of class oppression.

Socrates apparently agrees that the warriors present a problem, because most of the laws and institutions of his “purged” city (399e8) are aimed at controlling the warriors and guarding against their injustice. The education in music and gymnastics, the censorship of poets and craftsmen, the separating of guardians from auxiliaries, the Noble Lie (or some of its tenets), the restrictions on wealth, the animus toward change, the size of the territory, the communization of property and family, the equality of women, and the government of philosopher-kings—these are all expedients designed to prevent the division into classes from leading to injustice and the abuse of power. They are designed, in other words, to prove the Marx-Thrasymachus thesis false. Socrates, in effect, is frantically pumping and bailing just to keep his “ship of state” afloat; but the hole in the side was put there by Socrates himself when he divided his community into

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<sup>5</sup> There also is no philosophy of history in Plato as there is in Marx.

<sup>6</sup> *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 473.

classes of rulers and ruled. Moreover, when Socrates describes politics as it is actually practiced, using the “ship of state” analogy (488a-489a), it is perfectly clear who the real culprits are: they are the sailors whose selfish ambitions disturb the vessel’s peace. The sailors compete for the prize of piloting, and they roil the ship with their incessant struggles for power. Even those who ascend to the helm with the owner’s (the people’s) permission find their title to rule insecure and contested, as envious others rebel against their authority, seize command for themselves, and enslave the shipowner with drinks and drugs. Democratic legitimacy based on the consent of the governed is no protection against timocratic usurpation. Politics is factious and regimes short-lived because spirited sailors, substitutes for the warriors, want power, preeminence, and recognition of their worth. Their pride permits incompetents to rule while preventing true pilots, stargazers, from navigating the ship. The stargazer is useless onboard ship because the ambition of the sailors stands in the way of his ever being used. And the same ambition among warriors stands in the way of the philosopher’s ever becoming king. The goal of saving politics from tyranny and faction seems hopelessly naive because the people on whom its achievement depends are the ones who benefit the most from current arrangements.

It is noteworthy that another political philosopher, every bit as interested in securing authority and maintaining the peace, makes no such move toward creation of a warrior class; and that spiritedness, called pride, vain-glory, or natural right, he actively discourages. It might even be said that this philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, envisions a state wherein the sovereign rules directly over an artisan class enlightened as to the requirements of natural law. Of course, the sovereign’s rule is backed up by the threat of force, but the loyalty of those applying the force is not a subject of Hobbes’ analysis. In

a sense Hobbes has greater confidence than does Plato/Socrates in the reasoning power of ordinary citizens; at the same time, Hobbes has greater fear than does Plato/Socrates of the recusancy of spiritedness, for Hobbes designates his Leviathan “King of the Proud.”<sup>7</sup>

This brief comparison of Plato/Socrates with Marx and Hobbes, combined with the recollection that the warriors do not accomplish their intended purpose and that the pedagogical effort to change their natures from prowling wolves to obedient sheepdogs under the command of shepherds is a high-risk venture, all raise fundamentally the question of why the warriors are a class within the community.<sup>8</sup> And if the warriors are a

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<sup>7</sup> *Leviathan*, XXVIII.27, XXXI.41 (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994).

<sup>8</sup> This question never quite arises for Mary P. Nichols, who accounts for the change of purpose (from expanding the city to taming the warriors) in terms of the spirited character of Glaucon. More a warrior than an artisan, Glaucon wants luxuries, Nichols argues, not for the comforts they provide but for the independence they imply; Glaucon, therefore, is indifferent to the fact that the warriors fail to achieve their acquisitive mission (*Socrates and the Political Community: An Ancient Debate* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987], pp. 68, 81; see also Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* [Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964], p. 95, and Leon Craig, *The War Lover: A Study of Plato's Republic* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994], p. 117). It is my opinion, however, that Glaucon's indifference ought not be used to sanction indifference in the reader, not when the structure of the discourse so clearly provokes the asking of this question. (See Diskin Clay, “Reading the *Republic*, in *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings*, Charles L. Griswold, ed. [New York: Routledge, 1988], pp. 21-23.) Nichols also, by insisting on the continuity of cities, skirts the question of the viability and desirability of the city of pigs (pp. 69, 80). I, on the other hand, am impressed by the discontinuity of cities, by the heterogeneity of workers divided by trades and the homogeneity of warriors united by patriotism (see below).

Christopher Bruell is similarly interested in the character of Socrates' interlocutors. Bruell uses pedagogical strategy to explain why Socratic means fail to accomplish the ends they (provisionally) are said to serve (“On Plato's Political Philosophy,” *Review of Politics* 56 [1994]: 266-71, 274). While I do not disagree, I place the focus of this paper on the ends (either abeyant or emerging) rather than on the pedagogy.

dubious addition to the city, then spiritedness is an equivocal, controvertible part of the soul. Why have *thumos*? Is it optional? Could we get along without it? There are those who believe that aggressiveness is unnatural, a learned trait that can be unlearned or never acquired; who consequently believe that coercion is unnecessary and that armies and police can be superannuated and banned—or relegated to the margins of society, their influence and funding reduced to a minimum. As mentioned before, the political left has reason to be satisfied with the healthy city and to deplore its demise at the hands of the warriors; reason, therefore, to seize upon evidence that the warriors are nonessential to the success of the city and excludable from its membership.

### Self-Defense

Because the city of “utmost necessity” consists of “four or five” artisans (369d11), none of whom is a soldier,<sup>9</sup> and because with its enlargement to ten occupations the city still contains no army, it has been supposed all along that the warriors are new recruits joining the city at the time it changes from healthy to feverish. The warriors would be the equivalent of those manly clans of the *Laws* which unite with orderly clans when the city there is at a comparable point of maturation (681b). The difficulty is that Socrates identifies spiritedness as an original attribute of the soul, present in children from birth (441a) and present also in animals (375a). Every soul is

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<sup>9</sup> Seth Benardete speculates that the warrior is the fifth man mentioned at 369d11 (*Socrates' Second Sailing* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989], p. 54). Carl Pag e suggests that the unnamed fifth is the doctor, who is a surrogate for or precursor of the ruler (“The Unnamed Fifth: *Republic* 369d,” *Interpretation* 21 (1993): 10-12). But the toolmaker, I think, is a better candidate since his special services are mentioned at 370c-d. Called a carpenter, smith, or craftsman, he is named at 370d6 as one of the “partners in our little city.” See Aristotle, *Politics*, 4.4.12.

made “fearless and invincible” by the presence of spiritedness (375b2). Perhaps then the initial supposition is false or wants amending. The fact that there are no warriors in the healthy city need not prove that there is no spiritedness somewhere about; and the fact that hunters are in the company of immigrants need not prove that they alone are slotted for service as the community’s guardians. Hunters may have bodies bigger, stronger, and hardier than the bodies of some others, but inequality of physique is already present in the healthy city insofar as tradesmen are marked for their calling by the weakness of their constitutions (371c). Hunters may also have temperaments more aggressive than some, but aggression must combine with gentleness, a product of intelligence and education, to be useful to society. In the healthy city, inequality of intellect is also present insofar as wage-earners are assigned their subservient role because their minds are too weak to allow them full partnership in the community (371e). In a word, there is diversity of type even among appetitive producers. Appetitive producers, therefore, are sufficient to account for the warrior type and likely make up the applicant pool from which the warriors are drawn. If the warriors are not visible in the healthy city, the reason may be that spiritedness requires a certain minimum of material well-being before distinguishing itself as a separate part of the soul.<sup>10</sup> In this it would be similar to Rousseau's *amour propre*, self-love, which also lies latent in the soul until a point of development is reached allowing human beings to value themselves in relation to others.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Those whose lives are structured by daily necessity can ill-afford prideful displays of independence. See Paul Cantor, *Shakespeare’s Rome: Republic and Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), pp. 66-68.

<sup>11</sup> *Second Discourse*, in *The First and Second Discourses*, Roger D. and Judith R. Masters, trans.

How then does this development come about?<sup>12</sup> Some artisans will have their appetites whetted by the material benefits of job specialization, and these appetites in turn will call forth spiritedness to use it for gain. When first observed, spiritedness is but an alternate means of acquiring, quicker than laboring over a task or walking behind a

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(New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), pp. 148-49, 221-22.

<sup>12</sup> Initially, it seems, this development comes about quite extraneously. For what Socrates describes is a static society handing on its way of life, unchanged, across the generations: “So they will have sweet intercourse with one another, and not produce children beyond their means, keeping an eye against poverty and war” (372b). It takes Glaucon's objection to the primitiveness of the healthy city, denominated by him the “city of sows”—more commonly known as the “city of pigs”—to jump-start its engine and push it along the path of progress. But Glaucon is a sophisticated, fifth-century Athenian. Are his appetites and expectations representative of the wants and needs of the healthy city's artisans? Actually, they are—since the desire for easy living is woven into the very fabric of the healthy city. Its principle of job specialization takes account of individual aptitudes and facilitates the production of quality goods, in abundant quantities, with time to spare in which to enjoy them: “So, on this basis each thing becomes more plentiful, finer, and easier, when one man, exempt from other tasks, does one thing according to nature and at the crucial moment” (370c). Personal development (Rousseau's “perfectibility” [*Second Discourse*, pp. 114-15]) and improvements in manufacturing techniques are objectives unsettling of established patterns of life. By embracing these objectives, the healthy city destabilizes itself. The healthy city, then, is no more sustainable than is Rousseau's nascent society once divided labor has been introduced (*Second Discourse*, pp. 151-53). An indication that change is in the offing can be detected even in the passage ostensibly describing the permanence of the first city, namely, its need to take precautions against excess population, poverty, and war. These are tasks which, as the dialogue soon discloses, are the responsibility of the ruling class. They cannot be performed by any of the healthy city's equal craftsmen, specialists in single, apolitical arts. Other artisans must therefore be on the way. Accordingly, Glaucon's demand for fine furniture and appetizing desserts is not the imposition of an outsider; for the city of pigs, by its social organization and method of production, is inherently progressive, generating new and more exotic desires (Benardete calls the healthy city a “high-tech Eden” [*Second Sailing*, p. 50]). And Socrates would seem to concur since he downplays the intrusiveness of Glaucon's demand by ascribing it to “some” (*tisin*) of the residents themselves: “For these things, as it seems, won't satisfy some . . .” (373a1).



plow. It is capable of growth, especially when nurtured by education, and includes among its branches anger, ambition, pride, honor, shame, self-assertion, and simple aggressiveness;<sup>13</sup> but its roots are in acquisitive desire. Throughout the dialogue there are indications that spiritedness, while original, is not originally unique, an intermediate part of the soul between reason and appetite.<sup>14</sup> Unless trained and

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<sup>13</sup> For discussions of the nature and integrity of spiritedness, see Bloom, “Interpretive Essay,” pp.348-49, 355-56, 375-77, 388; Thomas Pangle, “The Political Psychology of Religion in Plato’s *Laws*,” *American Political Science Review* 70 (1976): 1063-64; Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 126-28; C. D. C. Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings: The Argument of Plato's Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 136-38; Catherine H. Zuckert, “On the Role of Spiritedness in Politics,” in *Understanding the Political Spirit: Philosophical Investigations from Socrates to Nietzsche*, Catherine H. Zuckert, ed., [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988], pp. 1-7; Gerald Proietti, “The Spirited Soul and the Genesis of Tyranny in Plato's *Republic*,” in *Politkos II: Educating the Ambitious*, Leslie G. Rubin, ed., (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1992), pp.59-85; Craig, *War Lover*, pp. 64-67, 104-09.

<sup>14</sup> For instance, the discussion of poetry in Book X implies that the soul consists of two parts—one prudent, deliberative, and calculating and instructed by law and argument, the other irritable, idle, and irrational and excited by imitation (602c-604e). Spiritedness is here listed with sex, desire, and pleasure and pain as that single part of the soul to which imitative poetry makes its appeal (606d). Socrates further admits that he does not know whether the soul is “many-formed or single-formed,” whether it has parts at all (612a). This ambiguity as to parts affects as well the city’s division into classes. It is said in Book V that some warriors are found unsuited for procreation (460b-c). Are they true warriors or are they more like the artisans and farmers of the laboring class? In Book VIII it is stated that duty-bound timocrats, when they decline, become money-loving oligarchs (spiritedness easily becomes greed) (548a-b); similarly, that spendthrift drones turn into lean and tanned fighters (over-indulgent consumers are capable of determined resistance) (556d). And in Book IX it is observed that the tyrant is both a mercenary bodyguard (575b) and an eroticist (573a-b) too sickly to fight (579c-d).

differentiated by alliance with reason, spiritedness falls into the nonrational part of the soul. It belongs to desire, just as strong and spirited men—whether hunters, farmers, or carpenters—belong to the artisan class. Hence it is a mistake to suppose that a decision is taken to hire the warriors, or to think of them as new arrivals and outsiders, a “Magnificent Seven” come to save the peasants.<sup>15</sup> They are of the peasants themselves and can no more be retained than they can be dismissed.

If spiritedness is there from the beginning, just waiting for the opportunity to separate from desire—and warriors, too, just waiting for the moment when the city will muster an army—then it is dangerous to sit idly by trusting in assurances that the future will replicate the past and that nothing new and untoward can ever occur. Like it or not, the warriors (as warriors) are coming.<sup>16</sup> Either one prepares for their arrival with an education designed to manage their aggressiveness and secure their loyalty, or by inaction one allows them to spring forth unbidden and to bound about unsupervised. The goal is to escape class oppression, and the mechanism,

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<sup>15</sup> It may be a mistake to think of the warriors as an option and an add-on, but it is a mistake which Socrates disposes his listeners (and Plato his readers) to make (e.g., 373d, where choosing the luxuries of the feverish city means adding a professional army to acquire adjacent lands). And why do that? A possible answer is to close off advertence to the “Machiavellian” founding, so to speak, the imposition of modes and orders on a subject population by a warrior-prince. Socrates presents warriors as ministers; he thereby discourages consideration of them as conquerors. He gives his audience a left-wing fantasy (the city of pigs) which he will augment and reform, in place of a right-wing aspiration (empire) which his interlocutors (Thrasymachus, Glaucon, Adeimantus) actually do want.

<sup>16</sup> This is Bloom’s position; and Bloom likes it that warriors are coming since he regards spiritedness as an essential component of humanity (“war is requisite to the emergence of humanity”) (“Interpretive Essay,” pp. 345-48). See also Craig, *War Lover*, p. 157; Jacob Howland, *The Republic: The Odyssey of Philosophy* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), pp. 88-92.

paradoxically, is to create firmly demarcated classes.<sup>17</sup> The opposite approach, that of instituting a classless and stateless society, is but an invitation to the strong to assert control and to rule the community in their own interests.<sup>18</sup> A second and related goal of cultivating spiritedness (though one little noticed) is to escape domination by foreign powers. We are encouraged to think of the feverish city as an aggressor state (expanding to accommodate its immigrants, welcoming immigrants to satisfy its unnecessary desires);<sup>19</sup> but in point of fact, the city's soldiers first go into battle defending the wealth of the city against looting by invaders (*diamacheitai tois epiousin* [374a2]). Socrates remarks that acquisition beyond the necessary is a two-way street, traveled by the city when attacking its neighbors or by its neighbors when attacking the city (373d). Evidently, the world is too perilous a place to remain forever unarmed, for if one's own appetites do not cause aggression, someone else's appetites will. Although the artisans of the feverish city do choose to have an army, in reality they have no choice, or the choice is forced upon them.

The first explanation for including the warrior class is then the obvious one—self-preservation. Strength is needed to defend against strength. If not peace through strength, then safety through strength is the lesson of the city's transition from healthy to feverish. And the lesson of the transition from feverish to purged is that strength must be tamed if it is not to oppress the weak it is entrusted to guard.

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<sup>17</sup> Craig, *War Lover*, pp. 157-58.

<sup>18</sup> Radical democracy is a tyranny in which demagogues rule in the name of the people (562aff.).

<sup>19</sup> See Aristotle, *Politics*, 4.4.13.

## Justice

The second explanation is not so obvious: it is that justice depends on spiritedness. From one perspective, justice is a facet of self-defense, especially when the threat to preservation comes from within one's own political community. Freedom from oppression is security, and it also is justice. But justice in the *Republic* means considerably more than the prevention of harm, and physical safety is the least of its objectives.

We should begin with the definition, which is perplexing: Justice is “the minding of one's own business and not being a busybody” (433a). So defined, justice is nonrelational and private—almost selfish, it seems. In some cases, the focus on personal business has just this isolating effect: the jack-of-all-trades, who does everything pertaining to survival for himself, is cut off from contact with others and is stingy with his time and his labor (369e-370a); the philosopher who exits the cave and contemplates the ideas is similarly disengaged and ungenerous, since he is lost in his thoughts and has to be forced back into the city (519d). Justice for these extreme types is a function of self-sufficiency: they don't meddle because they don't need and they don't care.<sup>20</sup> This

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<sup>20</sup> Gregory Vlastos treats “minding one's own business” very differently (“The Theory of Social Justice in the *Polis* in Plato's *Republic*,” in *Interpretations of Plato*, H. North, ed. [Leiden, the Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1977]). He takes the reciprocity implicit in artisan interdependence and exchange of services to be tantamount to a social duty: “The duty of justice it defines is fulfilled in doing one's best to contribute to the happiness and excellence of everyone in the *polis*, and to that alone” (p. 18). But this understanding requires him either to ignore or dismiss uses of the phrase to describe activities that are plainly private and selfish (e.g., 370a, 496d, 620c). As Vlastos sees it, the just man is one who gives his special talent to the city (p. 6, n. 24). The philosopher's special talent is ruling, and the just philosopher is a philosopher-king. But when the philosopher is first introduced in the form of the good and decent man

condition changes somewhat in the case of artisans in the precise sense, who practice only one art and leave other specialists to the practice of theirs. They are just, as noted above, because they would not presume to interfere with work they know nothing about. Precise artisans are differentiated and interdependent beings in need of others to supply the goods they do not supply for themselves. Need, exchange, and trust to a degree bind them together in a marketplace community. Also, they associate with the warriors, in the sense that workers and warriors agree about who should rule (the virtue of moderation [432a]). But apart from contributing to this collective consent, workers individually are preoccupied with private affairs and have no special love or responsibility for the community. Professionalism keeps them just, but so too does disinterest and self-regard.<sup>21</sup> The warriors, though, are different; the business they mind is the business of the community, or at least the business of their class; and they mind this business not by practicing separate crafts but by forming themselves into a perfect whole. They live in a “community of pleasure and pain” where citizens say “‘my own’ and ‘not my own’

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(347b-d), he does everything in his power to avoid ruling. And, of course, the philosopher in Book VII must be compelled to descend into the cave (519c-520a). If there is justice in this compulsion, it is not the justice of minding one’s own business, which for the philosopher is not governance but philosophy. Annas also stresses the obligatory side of minding one’s own business, or of job specialization (*Plato’s Republic*, pp.74-76; cf. p. 78).

<sup>21</sup> The workers, it seems, come by their moderation in a variety of ways: (1) as just stated, by the professionalism of precise art and by the apoliticism that results from minding one’s own business; (2) by partial exposure to the liberal education in music and gymnastics (e.g., poetry taught to them as children) and by full exposure to the dogmas of the Noble Lie; (3) by their own utilitarian rationality which instructs them as to the risk and futility of pressing for more land, wealth, and freedom—namely, that they might undo the warriors’ devotion to the community; and (4) by the police power of the warriors which threatens punishment of any worker tempted to withhold or retract his agreement.

about the same thing” (462b-c). Communal solidarity replaces divided labor as the basis of the warriors’ justice.<sup>22</sup> The definition of justice remains formally the same, “minding one’s own business,” for taken as a class and in relation to other classes the warriors mind their own business by respecting the guardians’ right to rule and by allowing the workers the free—albeit regulated (421d-e)—use of their property. But only the warriors’ justice is recognizable as justice, since it is emphatically unselfish and relational.<sup>23</sup> The warriors actually care for the whole of which they are a part, unlike some others whose partiality occasions privacy and indifference. Artisans and philosophers are inadvertently just (443c, 486b), warriors deliberately so. They are just because, though powerful, they take no more than their share, and because, as members, they subordinate their interests to the good of the group.

Justice is distributional of roles and responsibilities, an ordering of parts into a functional or contractual whole. It also is restorative and correctional, returning the parts to their assigned positions when the order has been disturbed. The warriors lack the wisdom to determine the initial assignments, but the defense of the order is work they easily can do. The warriors can defend because they are spirited, and, in particular, because they are quick to feel anger. Anger is the emotional seat of justice.<sup>24</sup> It is aroused not merely by pain, but by pain that ought not be suffered—by undeserved

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<sup>22</sup> The warriors’ unity owes little to diversity, interdependence, or job specialization; no articulated hierarchy of military rank or careful balancing of magisterial offices keeps them true to their trust. Beyond the division into guardians and auxiliaries, only the reverence of the young for the old assists them in being just (465a-b).

<sup>23</sup> Socrates refers to this recognizable justice as “justice in light of the vulgar standards” (442e).

<sup>24</sup> Strauss, *City and Man*, pp. 11 1-12; Bloom, “Interpretive Essay,” pp. 355-56; Craig, *War Lover*, p. 98.

hardship, deprivation, and woe. Right and wrong structure anger's reactions, as do intentionality and responsibility. The rocks and rivers that stand between Achilles and his vengeance *mean* to impede his way and so *deserve* the wrath he visits upon them. Likewise, the traffic lights that turn yellow then red just as you approach *deliberately* cause you delay. By running them you *get even*, repaying malice with defiance. Anger need not be sane, but it need believe itself in the right. Let that conviction falter, and anger loses its energy. We humans are moral agents, interested in right, because anger awakens when we see wrong.<sup>25</sup> Right means order, and order is natural when form follows function, conventional when the parts merely agree. Male and female comprise a natural order for the purpose of procreation. Also, intelligence and strength are properly aligned when intelligence proposes and strength disposes. Disrupt the order, move a part out of its functional or contractual place, and wrong is done. When wrong is committed, indignation is aroused. Moral indignation is anger seeking to ascribe responsibility and to hold culpable parties to account. Anger punishes, but as a way of affirming order. Of course, anger is only an emotion; it feels the wrong, it does not comprehend it. Often it is misguided and excessive, and almost always it is self-interested. It cannot on its own accomplish justice, the making and the restoring of order, but anger—or spiritedness—is what commits us to justice.

It is not too much to say that without spiritedness there would be little or no caring for justice. Reason does not much care, for reason tries to escape its position within the group, or it brings back new members (new ideas) which confound the

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<sup>25</sup> Pity is another response to suffering and an alternate source of concern for others, if not exactly of concern for justice.

orderly arrangement of the parts.<sup>26</sup> Reason is not essentially tidy. Nor is it essentially political. Reason inquires and investigates of its own accord; it rules because it must. Reason is privatively just, doing its duty by the whole because of unpleasant consequences should it do less (347b-d). Reason might use order, but it does not love order for its own sake. As for appetite, it surely is not order's friend, being instead the prime target of order's discipline. Appetite is disorderly by nature. It is insatiable and limitless, formless like a hydra. Respecting no boundaries and acknowledging no standards, it is the driving force behind those wage-earners who strive to "get the better of" (*pleonektein*) and who settle for justice only because they fear injustice. Their hero is the tyrant who does not fear and is not just. That leaves spiritedness among the parts of the soul to befriend justice. Spiritedness loves order, loves it as a thing of beauty and protects it from corruption and change. Happily do the warriors stand against innovation, since innovation upsets the harmony of the composition, the simple beauty of which their spiritedness admires.<sup>27</sup> Spiritedness, therefore, is a distinct faculty of the soul, except that when biased and untutored its aggrandizing temper is inseparable from selfish appetite (e.g., the raucous behavior of the sailors onboard ship). As stated, spiritedness begins in appetite, then takes on a character of its own.

It may seem strange to find the assertiveness of the spirited warrior associated with the orderliness of the precise artisan and/or household manager (443d3-4). The warrior is rough, impulsive, neglectful of details; the householder lives by the maxim,

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<sup>26</sup> Craig (*War Lover*, p. 106) tries to connect reason to justice by way of the love of truth. But justice is not truth-seeking as such; it rather is action taken in consequence of learning the truth. Prosecutors sacrifice justice when, in an effort to discover the truth, they grant immunity to material witnesses or plea-bargain with lesser criminals.

<sup>27</sup> Craig, *War Lover*, pp. 69, 102, 106.



“A place for everything, and everything in its place.” And yet it is the case that no living quarters are as spotless as a boot-camp barracks, no bed as tightly made as a soldier’s bunk. The military inculcates a fetish for neatness. Soldiers are not originally this punctilious (compare a soldier’s footlocker with his closet back home) but develop a disciplined, spit-and-polish demeanor by regular submission to a chain of command. Similarly in the *Republic*, the warrior moves from wholesale destroyer to conservator of “just right” order because his spiritedness comes under the guidance of reason, himself under the supervision of philosopher-kings. Not just spiritedness, however, but appetite too can take direction from reason when caution and calculation are needed to accomplish appetitive aims, especially when experience has shown that unchaperoned appetite runs into trouble and fails in its pursuits. But in cases like these, it is appetite that determines the end to be achieved, and reason is engaged merely to devise workable strategies of acquisition. Such is the role of sophistic reason, to satisfy the *pleonexia* of appetite. On the other hand, the submission of spiritedness to rational control is more substantive and complete. Spiritedness is open to reason’s counsel respecting the end. Honorable conduct is the end, and reason helps to assure spiritedness that its inclinations are right and deserving of praise. Thrasymachus falls under Socrates’ spell when he, Thrasymachus, demands that his own brand of strength, his art of rhetoric, be recognized as meritorious. It is not enough that Thrasymachus wins the day; he wants it also said that he merits the victory. Thrasymachus is spirited,<sup>28</sup> and being spirited he is susceptible to Socrates’ queries about the meaning of true strength and just desert (349d-350d). The honor-loving (or victory-loving) part of the soul seeks validation from reason and so is

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<sup>28</sup> Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings*, p. 41.

governable by reason.<sup>29</sup>

This is not to suggest that spiritedness is addressed discursively or that the arguments spoken to it bear much looking into. Reason's speech to spirit is inspirational, analogical, and duplicitous. Spirit is inspired by beauty and by the promise of praise for those who choose the noble in lieu of the useful. Spirit is told stories and given images to delight in and learn by. Spirit is manipulated with lies. It is a lie, for instance, that spiritedness is wholly distinct from desire and the natural ally of reason.<sup>30</sup> The alliance between spiritedness and reason is an educational artifact, as is the dedication (though not the orientation) of spiritedness to right order. For absent taming and channeling by reason, the aggressive impulses of *thumos* exhaust themselves in fits of pique and resentment (the spiritedness of a young child is but appetite fortified by stubbornness). On the other hand, when subject to reason's direction, spiritedness becomes a third part of the soul distinguished by its love of justice. Glaucon and Adeimantus want Socrates to prove the goodness of justice. For the warrior—and perhaps only for the warrior—the right order of justice is wholly good, whereas for the other classes of the city, right order

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<sup>29</sup> Craig distinguishes between the honor-loving timocrat and the victory-loving timocrat (*War Lover*, pp. 58-80, 1 04-05). Spiritedness is under reason's control when the desire for victories, justly earned, replaces the desire for honors, bestowed by the many.

<sup>30</sup> The kinship between spiritedness and appetite has been considered above. When Socrates tries proving the contrary, that spiritedness is a distinct part of the soul separate from desire (Leontius and the corpses [439d-440a]) and separate from reason (the Homer quotation [441b]), what he mainly suggests is that the alliance between spiritedness and reason is tenuous and unreliable because dependent on education. Socrates describes the alliance as natural, "if it's not corrupted by bad rearing" (441a3); it is the argument of Book V, however, that the alliance requires, not just the elimination of bad rearing, but good rearing of the most extraordinary kind. See Bloom, "Interpretive Essay," pp. 375-76.

is but a partial good. It is a partial good for the artisans, who, “mutilated” by their crafts (495d8), aspire to be philosophers (495d6) (though they end up as sophists [496a8]); it also is a partial good for the philosophers, who, assigned to guard duty in the cave, long for liberation under the light of the sun. Likewise, conventionalists see justice as a compromised good between gratification and denial, between the best life of practicing tyranny and the worst life of suffering tyranny (375b-d). This they do, in part, because order is determined by the consent of the associates and not by the fitness of the association. In any event, contractual justice can never show that justice is good in the soul and good for its own sake. The warriors believe that it is, believe that their morality, which is also conventional (in the sense of depending on reason’s deceits), is entirely natural. Accordingly, they can be trusted to do justice, unlike enlightened conventionalists who must be prevented from doing injustice.

The expectation is that because warriors are lovers of justice, society is more just, more orderly, more harmonious and law-abiding if warriors are in positions of public responsibility. Politicized warriors submit to the government of philosopher-kings and use their power and influence to ensure the submission of artisans and farmers. By this reasoning, one has warriors as auxiliaries to avoid having workers for rulers, or to avoid the anarchy that ensues when workers refuse to stay in their places. Domestic tranquility would once again be the rationale, only that this time the threat to concord would come from below—from popular insurrections rather than from usurpations or coups d’etat (442a-b).

But domestic tranquility is not the primary purpose of this commitment to justice and respect for right order. The primary (political) purpose is citizenship. Warrior-citizens are public persons who live for the commonweal. They are not rulers,

and so their citizenship is attenuated. But they are executives of the ministerial type; they participate, though at a subordinate level of responsibility. Because republican politics, or the competition among equals for position and power, is judged the cause of faction and proscribed, the Latin title—*Republic*—may seem seriously to misconstrue the book's meaning. But if a citizen is first a servant of the public and second a participant in rule, then the Latin title is apt enough. In any event, the warrior-citizen is the consummate patriot—dutiful, obedient, and self-sacrificing; and a trained spiritedness is what causes his love of the city and his passion for justice.

The negative, political reason for the right ordering of justice, namely the danger of a workers' revolt, has its counterpart on the psychological level. The city is an image of the psyche, and as concerns the psyche, the danger, quite literally, is essential, with disorder resulting in dehumanization. For the appetites, as Socrates represents them, constitute a dark, unruly, and monstrous part of the soul. Man is a composite being, and reason is his only human part. His other parts are bestial, the psychic equivalents of lions and hydras. If they rule the soul, the humanity of the person is forfeit or undeveloped. Humanity is not a given, a matter of receiving at birth a species nature. Humanity, rather, is a work in progress, a nature to be achieved. When fully achieved (so remote is the prospect), humanity goes by the name of divinity (588b-589b). Spiritedness assists in this humanization/divinization process by allying with reason in its battle with appetite. By controlling the beast within, spiritedness enables the human within to grow and to flourish. Spiritedness, itself an animal part, safeguards humanity by preventing the ascendancy of inhuman appetite.

## Philosophy

Does spiritedness do something more? Does it, and the warrior class, make a positive contribution to the education of philosophical intelligence and to the establishment of philosophical rule? It should not be expected that the warriors are anything but a hindrance to the project of empowering philosophers.<sup>31</sup> Warriors are not philosophers themselves, even though philosophers they are called when compared to noble dogs. But warriors as dogs are hostile to new learning, whereas philosophers are curious and quick to catch on (486c). Philosophers are hungry for knowledge and pleased by the pursuit; warriors are stern, confined, and happy in their unhappiness. Philosophers are connoisseurs of learning, loving wisdom in all its forms (475b-c).<sup>32</sup> Loose and indiscriminate,<sup>33</sup> philosophers do not respect the justice that assigns people a place and keeps them ignorant of the business of others. By contrast, warriors love hierarchy and guard order; they are finicky about learning and stick to the tried-and-true. Warriors are not selected for their intellectual potential; rather, what qualifies them as auxiliaries is their inflexibility and resistance to change. When an opinion takes hold, it stays with them always, and not robbery (persuasion or forgetfulness), wizardry (pleasure or fear), or force (grief or pain) can dislodge it (413b-c). But philosophers are dialecticians who ascend easily from one opinion to the next. Indeed, opinion they

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<sup>31</sup> Bloom remarks that spiritedness “stands in the way of the development of the soul’s theoretical capacities” (“Interpretive Essay,” p. 377).

<sup>32</sup> Nichols is troubled by this description of philosophical eros, thinking it to be an account of eros palatable to spiritedness and consonant with the communistic institutions of the city (*Socrates and the Political Community*, pp. 110-11). I read the passage somewhat differently. I take Socrates simply to mean that a true lover—say of architecture—appreciates, not bad architecture, but multiple styles of architecture.

<sup>33</sup> Craig calls philosophers “wino[s]” (*War Lover*, p. 53; see also pp. 91, 252).

disdain, for it is truth that they seek (479e-480a); warriors, though, are opinion-bound—they believe in lies.

There is no reason, then, to think that the warrior bears any relationship to the philosopher. The warriors are introduced as the city's ruling class because Socrates, in Books II through IV, is being closemouthed about the radical nature of his founding. But once the word is out that philosophers are in charge, the warriors retire to the wings, and a new education meant to produce a new kind of ruler is brought center stage. The *Republic*, in effect, starts all over again (502e). Evidence of a fresh start is the proposal that the community be organized as a research institution for the speedy discovery of solid geometry (528a-c). The intellectual excitement and anticipation of progress implicit in this proposal contrast pronouncedly with the nervous timidity behind the law prohibiting innovation to the warriors' curriculum (424e). Hardly could the moods be less alike. So, it is remarkable—truly astonishing—that Socrates would connect the two educations, that for warriors based on music and gymnastics and that for philosophers based on mathematics and dialectics. The philosophers are to be “champions in war,” Socrates insists (521d; also, 416e, 422b, 467c, 525b, 543c). But why? Why have philosophers who also are battle-hardened veterans?

A practical explanation exists for connecting the educations and for requiring that philosophers put in time as warriors. It is that the warrior's resume aids the philosopher in the discharge of his kingly responsibilities. Warriors are formed into obedient auxiliaries by an education that shapes their aesthetic sensibilities. Warriors obey because they love beauty and because the philosopher's soul, to the musically educated, is the fairest sight to behold (402d, 540c). But perhaps warriors and philosophers harbor contrary opinions about what is beautiful; or perhaps the warriors' admiration

for virtue needs supplementing by beauty of a more visible kind. Utility (the good) is the philosopher's standard of beauty (452e), and so to the philosopher eugenics is beautiful because it is useful. But the warriors must be told a throng of lies by a "courageous doctor" if eugenic matchmaking and other such practices (abortion, infanticide, incest) are ever to be tolerated (459c). Thus, as a concession to the warriors' rather different sense of the beautiful, or to the warriors' rather limited capacity for seeing invisible forms, Socrates specifies that philosopher-kings, whenever possible, are to be chosen from among "the best looking" men (*tous eueidestatous* [535a11]). Powerless himself, the philosopher issues commands to those strong of body, spirited of temperament, trained to fight, and armed to the teeth. If they are to obey, their leader must be someone like themselves, only better—a hero, with the looks of a model! Prior to the revelation that philosophers are kings, the guardians of the city were thought to be senior or retired warriors (412c). There was a reason for this: young warriors are disposed to obey old warriors, just as football players are willing to take instruction from a coach who was formerly a player himself. It is helpful to compare the warriors of the *Republic* with football players on a school team. These players are told that if they expect to win, they must submit to discipline (no late-night carousing) and function as a unit (no prima-donnas) (i.e., the education in music and gymnastics and the familial and property institutions of communism). It is their coach who exhorts them, a man whom they trust and admire because, as it happens, he was the star quarterback on that championship team of a generation past (i.e., the warrior-guardian who passed all the tests, whose love for his city is unsurpassed, and who, it now is stated, is *ho eueidestatos*). The players gladly put up with the hardships and sacrifices of school

athletics because their coach has assured them that football glory and sportsmanship are worthy goals (i.e., the precepts of the Noble Lie). But just as the post-season tournament is about to begin, they are stunned to learn that their real coach is not the man who has been walking the sidelines the entire season long; rather, it is the lowly equipment manager whose geometry homework they all have been copying. With the disclosure in Book VI that philosophers, not warriors, are to be kings, the *Republic* becomes in effect *The Revenge of the Nerds!* The shock alone is sufficient to explain why Socrates' interlocutors regard philosophical kingship as the most ridiculous of the three "waves." Their resistance gives fair warning that ruling by philosophers—likewise coaching by nerds—will provoke an uprising among the warriors/jocks. And so it is decided that the philosopher-king should begin as a warrior and be a lover of gymnastics and hunting along with listening and inquiry (536d)—or that the equipment manager should stop dispensing towels and do weightlifting in the gym, this as a prelude to trying out for the team and actually playing the sport he plans to coach. For if coaching is the job, then the scholar-athlete is the person best suited to do the job. The philosopher-king—to switch metaphors now—is a Rhodes scholar!

In addition to better management of "wide-body" warriors, the philosopher can learn from their spirited temper. The philosophical nature, says Socrates, is good at learning and remembering; it is shrewd and quick, energetic and magnificent. But like the noble dog which combines in a single nature the opposite qualities of ferocity and gentleness, the philosopher-guardian is an oxymoronic combination of intellectual agility and moral steadiness. The rulers-to-be are whiz-kids, and they are warriors—men (and women) taught to love the city, to withstand pain, to resist temptation, and to guard convictions (503a). They are the former because they need to be successful at their



studies; they are the latter because the “greatest study” of all, the idea of the Good (505a), will not be mastered easily or anytime soon (517b8-c1). As if to underscore the difficulty of the task, Socrates takes to calling philosophy “gymnastics” and stresses the courage that is involved (503e; also 498b, 526b, 539d).<sup>34</sup> Gymnastics and courage are the trademarks of the second education, music and moderation of the first (the philosophical nature is toughened, because the work ahead is discouraging; the spirited nature is softened, because the warrior is violent and is entrusted with power [410c-412a]). The vision of the Good comes only at the age of 50. Before that, the goodness of justice is taken mostly on faith, a faith which needs anchoring in strong moral character. Socrates is careful to keep dialectical questioning away from the young, who like puppies enjoy “pulling and tearing” at arguments, but who in consequence lose faith in the lessons they formerly were taught (539b-c). Such an awakening Socrates compares to the changeling child’s discovery of his adoption. Learning that his wealthy and esteemed parents (conventional opinions) are adoptive and failing thereafter to discover who his natural parents are (philosophy), the changeling falls prey to the blandishments of flatterers (sophistry). He is in the position of the cave prisoner who is forcibly stood upright, turned around, and made to look on the artifacts casting the shadows he mistook for reality (51 5c-d). These artifacts and their shadows are his “childhood convictions about what’s just and fair” (538c). Argument refutes them “many times and in many ways” until the conclusion is drawn that “what the law says is no more fair than ugly” (538d). Argument is iconoclastic and liberating; if it is encountered too soon, the prisoner/changeling, untethered and directionless, “becomes an outlaw from having been a law-abiding man” (539a). Thus, dialectics is held in reserve, waiting for students to

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<sup>34</sup> Craig, *War Lover*, pp. 72-73, 79, 271-72.

turn 30. But age alone will not keep students on the straight and narrow path leading from shadows to sunlight. The other precaution is “that those with whom one shares arguments are to have orderly and stable natures” (539d). A disciplined spiritedness provides then the moral wherewithal to resist sophistic relativism until philosophy arrives bringing rational confirmation of the goodness of justice.<sup>35</sup>

Spiritedness also supplies grounding in the here-and-now. The philosopher is much given to idle dreaming about what’s best, what ought to be, what might have been. “Such men,” observes Socrates,

before finding out in what way something they desire can exist, put that question aside so they won’t grow weary deliberating about what’s possible and not. They set down as given the existence of what they want and at once go on to arrange the rest and enjoy giving a full account of the sort of things they’ll do when it has come into being, making yet idler a soul that is already idle (458a).

Socrates is prone to this soft utopianism and confesses himself guilty of intellectual idleness for choosing to slide by the question of whether his city in speech is feasible (458b). He later justifies his choice by asking rhetorically whether “what we say is any less good on account of our not being able to prove that it is possible” and by claiming that “it is the nature of acting to attain to less truth than speaking” (472e). Later still he tries settling the matter by permitting his founding such enabling conditions as “endless time” and places “outside our range of vision” in which to occur. His founding is not dismissible as a prayer, he asserts, because anything is possible given near-infinite time

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<sup>35</sup> Rational confirmation shows justice to be (in Glaucon’s taxonomy) a second-order good akin to health (357b-d; cp. 353e, 444d13-e2, 591b). Spiritedness sees justice as a first-order good chosen for its own sake. Sophistic, or conventionalist reasoning sees justice as a third-order good.

and space (499c-d).<sup>36</sup> He finally admits that the city is but a heavenly pattern “laid up for the man who wants to see and found a city within himself” (592b). But then as a philosopher Socrates has not much invested in the earthy practicality of his city, since as a philosopher he views with contempt the things of this world (500b-c). The philosopher is magnificent by virtue of his contemplating “all time and all being.” Compared to the eternal with which he communes, human life seems to him nothing great nor does death seem anything terrible (486a-b). If made king, the magnificent philosopher would pass a law censoring tragic poetry because human concerns are not worth the worry and the tears (604c). But would such a philosopher then care about the city he was commissioned to rule? Would he be vigilant in superintending its affairs? With his head in the clouds, would the mess on the ground ever pass through his thoughts? Presumably not.<sup>37</sup> The philosopher, whose qualification for king is that he has other things to do (521a), could very well make a ruin of the city’s business. There also is the problem that this stargazing recluse does not want to come down from his planetarium perch and so must

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<sup>36</sup> Socrates suggests that the only prerequisite for the realization of the perfect city is the presence of “some necessity” compelling the philosopher to take charge (499b5, 499c7, 500d4), and he supposes that this necessity must surely have occurred sometime in the infinite past or somewhere in distant, barbarian lands (499c-d). But if the necessity spoken of is egregious political misrule, it should be noted that Socrates has advised the philosopher, under these conditions, to take cover and to avoid politics altogether (496c-e). And the suggestion of indefinite opportunities for the concurrence of chance events ignores the fact that philosophy is a recent invention of civilized living and is thus quite out of place among barbarian tribes (*Statesman*, 272c-d).

<sup>37</sup> Nichols, *Socrates and the Political Community*, p. 113. Darrell Dobbs names this otherworldliness of the philosophical nature “hyperian partisanship” (“Choosing Justice: Socrates’ Model City and the Practice of Dialectics,” *American Political Science Review* 88 (1994): 271.

be forced to take up his duties as captain. The solution is the same though to this and the previous problem (the skepticism of the philosopher-in-training,) namely, a spirited constancy and moral balance which keeps the feet of the philosopher firmly on the ground. The philosopher who is spirited will love his city,<sup>38</sup> no matter its terrestrial tarnish, and will require much less cajoling to ensure his return to office. And it is the case that Socrates' philosopher will be spirited, for his fifteen years (ages 35 to 50) spent as apprentice guardian continue the testing of his moral virtue and place him, it would appear, in the company of and in competition with warrior-guardians selected for their spiritedness.<sup>39</sup>

Spiritedness is an auxiliary to reason, assisting with reason's governance of the soul and causing reason's solicitude for the everyday. But spiritedness—and more generally the nonrational part of the soul—helps in another, and opposite way—with reason's pursuit of the truth. Philosophy, as Socrates defines it, is a turning around (*periagōgē*) of the soul from becoming to being, from sense experience to noetic intellection. The noetic intellect is the instrument for contemplating being, just as the eye is the instrument for seeing the light. And as the eye turns toward the light with the aid of the whole body, so the whole soul aids the intellect in its apprehension of ideas (518c).

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<sup>38</sup> Socrates, who confesses to being a soft utopian, also confesses to being spirited. But he is spirited on behalf of philosophy (536c). It is Mary Nichols's thesis that the Socratic philosopher (minimally spirited) is distinct from the philosopher-king ("The *Republic's* Two Alternatives: Philosopher-Kings and Socrates," *Political Theory* 12 (May 1984): 252-74. Bloom thinks Socrates nearly incapable of spirited anger or of political justice ("Interpretive Essay," pp. 372, 396).

<sup>39</sup> Socrates recalls the first guardians promoted late in life (536c) and mentions that the new guardians, promoted while young (at age 35), perform military and political functions "so that they won't be behind the others in experience" (*hina mēd' empeiria husterōsi tōn allōn* [539e4-5]).

Appetite and spiritedness, then, are participants in the conversion experience known as philosophy. Socrates does not say how exactly, though the policing role of spiritedness has already been delineated: it prevents appetite from imprisoning the soul in the “cave” of sensuality and from capturing reason and using it for its own vile purposes. Spiritedness is home base to moral virtue, which is not a power in the soul like prudence but is a later attainment “produced by habits and exercises” (518e). While conventional, moral virtue complements nature by helping prudence to turn around. Spiritedness also supplies the courage needed to relinquish traditional beliefs and to confront the unknown. It even is capable of transcendence of a kind, of sacrifice, denial, and dying to the self. It assists with philosophy’s “practice in dying.”<sup>40</sup> By the same token, appetite is capable of transcendence, since appetite is a property of the soul as well as of the body. The true philosopher, Socrates contends, is “concerned with the pleasure of the soul itself with respect to itself and . . . forsake[s] those pleasures that come through the body” (485d). Philosophy is mainly presented as a compelled activity, an ascent to the Good resisted at every stage. But this depiction is surely inaccurate, or is an exaggeration suited to the moral and political purposes of the dialogue (justice as right order in the soul and the city).<sup>41</sup> *Philosophy*, after all, is *love* of wisdom, a desire for

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<sup>40</sup> *Phaedo*, 64a, 81a.

<sup>41</sup> What I take as an exaggeration supporting the goal of justice, Nichols takes as proof that the philosopher-king is a tyrant deformed by spiritedness (*Socrates and the Political Community*, pp. 100-01, 122-23). On Nichols’s reading, spiritedness rules reason and imposes on reason an alien desire for order (for unity, simplicity, abstraction—Nichols’s characterizations). I, however, incline to the more conventional view that reason rules spiritedness, cultivating its potential for orderliness so as to make of it a defender of justice; and that order, while not reason’s desideratum, is a disposition useful to reason’s work. Wanting to raise a caution against absolutes, Nichols creates the impression that justice (right order), defended by

missing knowledge, not satisfaction with knowledge possessed. The philosophical nature, Socrates at last admits, is erotic and self-motivated insofar as it is unable to countenance the “unwilling lie” of ignorance (535e). Not compulsion from without, but inner agitation and felt need are what propel the soul’s ascent. Philosophy is a quest originating in appetite or desire. Appetite—and spiritedness, too—are auxiliaries helping the rational soul accomplish its turning around.

An auxiliary’s work is instrumental and preparatory. At some point the auxiliary steps aside so that the primary actor can perform alone. Thus it is with the nonrational part of the soul, that it accompanies reason only so far on its journey toward the Good. Not all the soul, but only “what is best in the soul” is led “up to the contemplation of what is best in the things that *are*” (532c). When arguing for the soul’s immortality, Socrates concedes that no multi-formed, composite being is likely to live forever. Only that finest of psychic parts, the noetic intellect, might survive the body’s decay, not spiritedness or appetite. These lesser parts are what give personality to the individual; but the individual person ceases at death, while that which is “akin to the divine and immortal and what *is* always” perhaps goes on. In fact, Socrates is unsure whether spiritedness and appetite even belong to the soul’s true nature or whether they are accretions and distortions caused by the soul’s encasement in the body. The soul in its original (disembodied) form was presumably quite different from the soul as it is now experienced. Its original form, Socrates conjectures, was like that of the sea-god Glaucus—divine, simple, and pure, unsullied by association with the body and its desires. But after eons of ocean battering and of shells and seaweed collecting on its sides, the godly shape is lost to view and what remains is more bestial than divine. Only

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spiritedness, is a psychic monstrosity, not the condition of the soul’s humanity (see 353d-e).

the soul's love of wisdom provides an inkling of that original form and of what the soul might become in an afterlife when, free of the body's encumbrances and distractions, it "give[s] itself entirely to this longing and [is] brought by this impulse out of the deep ocean in which it now is" (611b-e).

Spiritedness is important to the operation of reason, but always as an auxiliary, never as a full partner. Spiritedness is not with reason in the end when reason performs its most important task. Nor is spiritedness visibly with appetite in the beginning when satisfying basic necessities is the compass of the soul's ambition. Spiritedness, therefore, is uniquely exposed to vilification and debunking. It causes trouble, and it seems unnatural and unneeded. Admittedly, spiritedness is conventional, in the sense that its promotion to auxiliary status depends on education or on art. But the artificiality of art does not equate with unnaturalness—not when art helps nature to realize its potential. Spiritedness, then, while equivocally natural, is natural enough. It also is needed: needed for protecting the body, for maintaining right order, and for assisting reason with both its political and philosophical work.