The Essential Polis:
Bridging the Tragic Divide

by

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Abstract

This dissertation is a conceptual study of central ethical issues in human association identified and addressed within the context of the Hellenic polis ideal of Athens in the 5th and 4th centuries B. C. The study derives its coherence from the recognition that there is present for Athenians throughout this period a sustaining underlying conception of the polis as an essential unity. This idea is formally defined by Aristotle as a 'whole of parts', an 'ethical substance' in which citizens come together in association within an ordering polity. In the dynamic interplay between the 'parts', however, disruption and instability readily arise so that in practice the concord that distinguishes the just polis is disturbed. Hence the exposition of the nature of political association becomes not that of the ideal but of the perturbations destructive of that ideal.

During the 5th century intellectual enlightenment, belief in the justice of Zeus as the causal principle conferring a unity on the polis wanes in influence. Reason and feeling, no longer ordered in justice and friendship to the common good of the polis as a whole, stand increasingly opposed. The aetiology of this pathological process is found revealingly explored in tragic drama, offering an insight into how the 'whole' which is the polis ideal loses its structural integrity to become in effect no more than a 'heap' of competing 'parts'.

Drawing on the understanding that tragic drama provides into the human condition, Plato and Aristotle articulate and reconstitute for thought the defining parameters of the polis ideal as a 'whole of parts'. It is through habituation and education to virtue of the individual as ethical agent, they agree, that the resolution of ethical dilemma is effected at the level of the political. However, like Sophocles, and in contrast to Plato, Aristotle acknowledges that man must perforce seek his inner and outer good within a world which distorts and holds hidden from him the true end to which he is by nature ordered. Prevention of conflict in the political community, the assurance of its integrity, Aristotle concludes, is 'up to us'.

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I

Introduction

πάντων γὰρ ὅσα πλείω μέρη ἔχει καὶ μὴ ἔστιν οἷον σωρὸς τὸ πᾶν ἀλλ' ἔστι τι τὸ ὅλον παρὰ τὰ μόρια, ἔστι τι αἴτιον.

Arist. *Metaph.* 1045a8-10

Pre-eminent among the city-states of Greece, the democratic polis of Athens was, in the 5th and 4th centuries B. C., the acknowledged centre of Hellenic culture.[1] Through the works of its poets and philosophers, its political leaders and historians, it brings to life before us the ethical milieu of the classical political association *par excellence*.[2] The inherently dynamic nature of polis life, which can be seen to issue from the freedoms the citizens enjoyed, has been given cogent expression by Ehrenberg. "The citizens were assembled like one large family round the hearth of the Polis, a life in common which received its inner tension from the natural self-assertion of the individual and its urge towards competition (ἀγών), but was seriously threatened only by the degeneration of that competitive spirit, by internal strife (στάσις)."[3] Although it is in the 4th century philosophical writings of Plato and Aristotle that the sphere of praxis may be said to achieve its most self-consciously rational articulation, the ethical life of the polis emerges with a special richness and vividness of form in the works of the 5th century Athenian dramatists.[4] Tragic drama, in particular, through its incisive explorations of the nature of

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[1] On Athens as a cultural centre during this period, see, for example, Ostwald (1992), Rhodes (2003:119).

[2] To these literary sources, important for understanding the political ideology, could be added also many thousand inscriptions, most fragmentary, that date to this period in Athens and attest to the nature of the day-to-day activity of the democracy. "Publication was a prerequisite for a democracy, so the Athenians had to display everything they could in public" (Hansen 1991:11).

[3] Ehrenberg (1960:90). The centrality of the ἀγών to Greek life and its significance in the classical polis, as evidenced in assembly debates, the law courts and the representation of conflict in drama, is undeniable.

[4] On post-Kantian distinctions between the use of the words 'moral' and 'ethical' in practical philosophy see Williams (1985) and the response of Taylor (1995). See also Blundell (1989:3). In practice, 'moral' and 'morality' continue to be widely employed in deliberation upon ethical concerns in relation to human action in general, extending well beyond any limited Kantian perspective. Where possible, I shall prefer 'ethical' in referring to universal theory, in particular in relation to Plato and Aristotle, and for actions seen in their

the human condition, the questions it raises on issues such as the nature of justice, of human freedom, and the relation between the common good and the good of family and individual, offers a meaningful context in terms of which the subsequent philosophical models for a just πολιτεία can be understood to take shape.[5]

Although there have been a number of recent studies individually devoted to examination of the ethico-political thought expressed either in 5th century tragic drama or in 4th century practical philosophy, relatively little attention has been directed to drawing intellectual connections between the way poet and philosopher portray the sphere of ethical action about which they write.[6] Where tragedy and philosophy do find themselves the common object of a single inquiry, the nature and interrelationships of the ethical thought expressed in these ancient authors is commonly viewed through the filtering lens of contemporary preconceptions and preoccupations, and hence readily subject to distortion.[7] Thus, for example, Nussbaum's influential and widely cited work, *The Fragility of Goodness*, which sets out to examine 'moral luck' "through a sequence of interrelated reflections" on ethical problems posed by the tragedians, Plato, and Aristotle, is not so much an investigation of these ideas sited within their Hellenic context as, in White's words, "an essentially analytical philosophical discussion" which follows a contemporary anti-Kantian agenda.[8] Gill, in his weighty study of *Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy, and Philosophy*, explores "ethical and psychological questions in Greek poetry and philosophy," focusing on establishing interconnections in thinking between

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universal nature. Otherwise, I follow customary usage in retaining the word 'moral', in accordance with other commentators whose works are cited.

[5] "Only in a free state," writes Ehrenberg (1960:93), "could the freedom of the citizens rise to unlimited devotion to the state and, at the same time, lead to the political initiative of the individual." Athens, as its citizens are characterized by Herodotus 5.78 and by the speech of the Corinthians (Thuc. 1.70.1-9) appears to epitomize this ideal.

[6] Scholars, such as Williams (1985, 1993) and MacIntyre (1984), in common pursuit of the anti-Kantian enterprise have been influential in arguing quite the opposite in fact, claiming that Greek tragedy and philosophy offer conflicting and ultimately incommensurable ethical accounts. The issues they raise will be more fully addressed in Chapter 10 in relation to Sophocles and Aristotle.

[7] North's 1966 extensive and valuable study of the concept of σωφροσύνη as it emerges in its historical context is an important exception. See also Cairns' (1993) examination of the psychology and ethics of αἰδώς in Greek literature and philosophy.

[8] Nussbaum (1986:8). White (1988:137). White points out, for example (137-8), that although Nussbaum's work focuses on τύχη it offers no general consideration of the concept as it appears in Greek literature or philosophy relying instead on the contemporary account of Bernard Williams on 'moral luck'.

models of the self implicitly or explicitly expressed in these works.[9] Although he is sensitive to the need to "allow the voice of the text to be heard as clearly as possible," it remains the case that the intellectual framework for Gill's account constitutes "the re-examination of Greek thinking in the light of current philosophical thought."[10] As a result, the 'objective- participant' model Gill finds to be constitutive of Greek ethical and psychological conceptions of the self becomes in effect an undifferentiated formal abstraction which obscures important distinctions between tragic drama and philosophy as a vehicle for thought.[11] In Euben's *The Tragedy of Political Theory*, the current concerns of moral philosophy are replaced by those of a contemporary political theorist. Taking as his themes issues of justice, identity, and membership, Euben juxtaposes and compares tragic drama and the political thought of Thucydides and Plato. In his attempt to establish the "usefulness" of these ancient texts "for 'grounding' contemporary theory," however, Euben is driven, paradoxically, to subsume tragic drama and Platonic philosophy alike under a single all-encompassing umbrella of unremitting tragic ambiguity.[12]

The present inquiry, the basic assumptions and scope of which will be delineated in the course of this introductory chapter, seeks to examine more closely the intellectual connections between 5th century tragic drama and 4th century practical philosophy by investigating the interrelationship of poetic and philosophical thinking from within the context of the encompassing conceptual framework of the Hellenic polis ideal and the pressures brought historically to bear upon it. The study, which is to my knowledge the first to explore the topic in this way, derives its coherence from the awareness that there is present throughout the period of investigation a sustaining underlying conception of the polis as an essential unity with its own inherent telos, an ideal which in metaphysical terms will come to be seen as a composite whole comprehensive of the difference

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[9] Gill (1996:2)

[10] Gill (1996:18, 5). Gill sites himself solidly within the anti-Kantian stance adopted by Nussbaum (1986), Williams (1993), and MacIntyre (1984). The consistently observed 'objective-participant' model of Greek psychological and ethical thought in epic, tragedy, and philosophy, as opposed to a 'subjective-individualist' one, he hopes will provide "a psychologically and ethically promising avenue *for us*" (17).

[11] Cairns (1998:225) notes the problem of this "tendency towards over-schematization" in Gill's account.

[12] Euben (1990:45). In adopting this approach, he follows, he says, those who like Vernant and Segal argue "that tragedy simultaneously validates established cultural boundaries and 'problematizes' if not dissolves them" (35). This position, which is prevalent in current scholarship, will be examined in more detail in 1.4.

expressed in its parts.[13] Although this understanding of the polis is only given a philosophical form in the 4th century, the conception of a unifying polis ideal is clearly embodied in the public ethos of 5th century Athens, expressed in the great civic festivals, in funeral orations and in traditional myth.[14] What tragic drama reveals, it will be argued, is how, during the course of the 5th century enlightenment, this ideal of the polis as a 'whole' is found disrupted as the 'parts' lose their inner connectivity and order to become by the end of the century no more than what Aristotle would call a 'heap'. Thus, Euben remarks aptly that "dismemberment of a body or body politic involves a violent rending of whole into parts." The *Bacchae*, he notes, "inverts the closing scene" of the *Oresteia*.[15] Whether unconsciously or consciously realized, tragic drama, through the portentous nature of the questions it raises, acts as a powerful stimulus in heightening awareness of the fundamental underlying principles at work within the political association, invoking in its audience the need to further determine what it is in its essence to have a political community as an organized entity drawing humans together in a stable and ordered relationship.[16] As Nussbaum expresses it: "The impulse to create a solution to the problem of conflict is not foreign to tragedy. ...It is present within tragedy. ...Like any works that truly explore the human 'appearances', these tragedies show us, alongside the 'tragic view', the origin of the denial of that view."[17]

Aristotle, looking back on the whole of the Hellenic age in articulating his own position

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[13] Doull (1982:125) points to Aristotle's "precise conceptual formulation" of Hellenic thought which allows an objective measure to be brought to bear on the period while at the same time evading contemporary assumptions.

[14] Goldhill (1990). See too Pickard-Cambridge (1968). For a consideration of the idealized Athenian image of Athens as a model for the rest of Greece see Mills (1997), in particular chapter 2, and the works cited there. Mills evaluation of evidence from a range of sources, offers a valuable corrective to the influential work of Loraux (1986a). "When evidence from the various sources is combined," Mills concludes, "a surprisingly unified picture of ideal Athens emerges" (52).

[15] Euben (1990:44). Although he does not include a consideration of tragic drama in his study, Kalimtzis' (2000) investigation into the concept of στάσις provides an informative and complementary perspective on issues relevant to the present work. Cf. also Juffras (1988) who "traces the ideology of stasis in archaic and fifth-century literature" (6) as a prelude to her investigation of στάσις in Sophoclean tragedy.

[16] The absence of a fully articulated expression of an explicitly named concept, it should be stressed, is not to be taken as evidence that this concept is not implicitly present to the understanding as a unifying principle. See on this Williams (1993), especially Chapter 2 in which he presents a thorough and convincing description of agency in Homer, one which responds decisively to the influential account of Bruno Snell.

[17] Nussbaum (1986:50).

on ethico-political matters, is to be understood in this, as elsewhere in his investigations, to be informed by a considered reflection upon what has emerged in the thought and experience of his predecessors and on the difficulties that he understands it to present to a true account.[18] The tragic ethical dilemmas which threaten the integrity of the ideal form, in Aristotle's language, a knot in the soul. It is not possible, he says, to resolve such a problem for thought (ἀπορία) while remaining in ignorance of its essential nature.[19] Viewed in this light, the thought contained within the works of these ancient authors transcends the external appearance of particular historical forms of community to address questions that are enduring and fundamentally unchanging, intrinsic to what it is to be a human and associating politically with others of one's kind. The argument which follows, guided by Aristotle's 'precise conceptual formulation' of the essence of political κοινωνία as a composite 'whole of parts', will ask how reason and feeling, as the constitutive elements of human association, are to be related to one another as justice and friendship in political concord, and how disturbances in this relationship impact in turn upon the ways in which the polis is construed to be a whole.[20] Just what speaking of the polis as a composite 'whole of parts' entails will shortly be made clear.[21]

Since the metaphysical backbone, so to speak, of this inquiry is to be a consideration of the essential nature of the polis as a composite whole, defined by Aristotle as a κοινωνία πολιτῶν πολιτειάς, before turning to the investigation itself, it is necessary to sketch out more fully the theory of composition by which the relation between parts and whole is to be understood. What I take to be incontestable is that the polis belongs in some sense to the class of things which are held to be composite entities. On any understanding it has a concrete spatio-temporal existence as a body of human individuals held in relation to one

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[18] *Metaph.* 993a30-b4; *EN* 1145b1-7. Although he does not provide a systematic account of his understanding of the ethical thought of his non-philosophic predecessors, literary references abound in Aristotle's ethical/political works, and his familiarity with the ideas of the poets and his debt to them is everywhere evident. See Roberts (2000:344), Nussbaum (1986:8).

[19] Arist. *Metaph.* 995a27-b4..

[20] At a time when there is a considerable reawakening of interest in Aristotelian Ethics, reconstituted now in modern dress as 'virtue ethics', it seems appropriate to look at how Aristotle's ethical thought is to be seen within the historical context of the period in which he himself writes.

[21] While in its metaphysical sense polis is being understood to be the substantial whole which contains as its constitutive parts, the formal element of the πολιτεία and the material element of the κοινωνία of the citizens, in practice, as the order breaks down, the rational ruling element is usually equated with the polis as a whole and seen to be in opposition to the citizen voicing the concerns of the individual or the family.

another by a common rule.[22] However, the way in which the parts and the whole can be said to be related to one another in a composite body is subject to confusion and contention. At the heart of this debate is the enduring problem of the one and the many. Thus it is queried whether the whole is to be seen as simply the sum of the parts or whether, on the other hand, it is more than the sum of its parts. Harte rightly points out that if we argue that the whole is identifiable with the sum of the parts we are in fact simply avoiding the problem of the relation of the many to the one "by coining another singular term with which to identify the whole." On the other hand, if the whole is argued to be more than the sum of the parts, this "on any ordinary understanding of the phrase 'more than', is to say that a whole has something extra in addition to its parts (or indeed the sum of its parts)." The question then becomes how this 'extra something' is to be understood. If it is conceived as another 'elemental part' then the problem of infinite regress rears its ugly head so that we are driven back on the conclusion that the whole must be identified with the sum of its parts. It is Aristotle, Harte notes, who first explicitly sets out the nature of this problem.[23]

The composite whole which has a unity (τὸ ἔκ τινος σύνθετον οὕτως ὥστε ἓν εἶναι τὸ πᾶν) and is not just a heap (σωρός) may be likened, Aristotle suggests, to a syllable *ba* which, although not identical with the separate elements *a* and *b* that compose it, nevertheless when separated from these elements ceases to exist; whereas the elements themselves can persist in isolation from it. The syllable must therefore be conceived, he concludes, as constituted not only of its elements but of something in addition (ἕτερόν τι).[24] This other something, however, Aristotle is careful to point out, noting the

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[22] For an overview of the ontology of composite objects as it is understood in classical Greek and in modern thought and the connections that can be drawn between them see Harte (2002) Chapter 1. She concludes that although "[c]omposite objects-wholes of parts-are ubiquitous ...the part-whole relation is not well understood" (8).

[23] Harte (2002:11).

[24] See too Arist. *Metaph.* 1043b4-14. Compare Plato's use of the example of the syllable to make the distinction between the whole and the parts (*Tht.* 203e2-204a10) which leads him to conclude that the whole is a single form arising from the parts but different from all of the parts (*Tht.* 204a8-10). In contrast to Plato, Aristotle will not see the relationship between parts and whole as that of the lower contained within what is higher and more universal; the species within a genus. For Aristotle, form and matter are intrinsic moments in a single activity which is substance (οὐσία). As will be seen in the later chapters of this thesis, this distinction is of crucial significance to their very different understanding of the structure of political κοινωνία.

difficulties with infinite regress already mentioned above, while it is something, cannot be an additional element. It is, he argues, the cause (αἴτιον) that makes the syllable a syllable, and all other such things what they are. This is the substance (οὐσία) of each thing for this is the αἴτιον πρῶτον τοῦ εἶναι, the primary cause of its being (*Metaph.* 1041b11-28). The answer to the question of *why* the matter is some definite thing (διὰ τί <τί> ἐστιν), why this is a house and that a man, is that that which is the essence of that thing is present (*Metaph.* 1041b4-7).

In order to come to an understanding of the essential nature of any composite body that is acknowledged to be a whole composed of parts and not simply a heap, Aristotle has determined, we must ask the cause of its being one (τί αἴτιον τοῦ ἓν εἶναι, *Metaph.* 1045a8). Thus, when we seek to grasp the nature of the polis, as constituting just such a 'whole', we are in his terms, seeking to define for thought the idea of the polis, what a polis is (τί ...ἐστιν ἡ πόλις, *Pol.* 1274b33-4), which is to determine how the polis is to be conceived in terms of a 'whole' of 'parts' which is an essential unity.[25] Aristotle defines the essence of the polis in this way as a coming together of citizens in a polity (ἔστι δὲ κοινωνία πολιτῶν πολιτείας, *Pol.* 1276b1-2). Ordered naturally towards its innate telos, the polis is the locus of τὸ εὖ ζῆν, of human flourishing in the life of praxis. The polis can thus be understood analogously as an 'ethical substance' whose genus is the κοινωνία of citizens, and to which each of the various possible πολιτεῖαι provides a specific differentia.[26] The defining element of this political κοινωνία is the constitution that binds the citizens together as one, polity as an ordered arrangement of the inhabitants of the polis (ἡ δὲ πολιτεία τῶν τὴν πόλιν οἰκούντων ἐστι τάξις τις, *Pol.*1274b38). Newman notes the significance of Aristotle's claim. "The view that the πόλις is a κοινωνία had an important bearing on Greek political speculation; Plato already asserts it by implication (*R.* 371b; 462c; 369c), but Aristotle seems to have been the first to fix the

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[25] That the polis is one of those things he describes as a composite whole made up of parts Aristotle makes clear at *Pol.* 1274b39-40. Note also *Metaph.* 1023b32-5 where Aristotle maintains that what is most fully to be considered to be by nature a substantial whole of parts is the composite in which the constituent parts are in potency and have no separate existence. It is in a sense analogous to this that man, *qua* citizen, is considered to be inseparable in actuality from the polis.

[26] The similarity of the roles of the political constitution to the activity of formal, final, and efficient cause in Aristotle's metaphysical doctrine of substance is noted by Miller (1995:151).

conception of κοινωνία and to define its meaning."[27] Here it will be argued that the same understanding is implicitly present also in 5th century tragedy.

Man himself, the ultimate element from which the polis is composed, is a πολιτικὸν ζῷον, Aristotle declares, fitted by his own nature for life in the political κοινωνία (*Pol.*1253a3). However, since the whole is to be recognized as necessarily prior to the part, the polis is prior to both the family and to each individual (*Pol.* 1253a19).[28] As a result one should in no way think that any of the citizens belongs just to himself, rather all of them belong to the polis, for each is a part of the polis (*Pol.* 1337a27-9). The unity that characterizes the polis as a κοινωνία of citizens and draws the parts into relation as the whole is resident in the justice which is the expression of its πολιτεία (*Pol.* 1276b1-2). Every polity as a κοινωνία is thereby a form of justice, Aristotle argues (*EE* 1241b14-16). Justice is therefore the organizing principle of the political association (ἡ γὰρ δίκη πολιτικῆς κοινωνίας τάξις ἐστίν, *Pol.* 1253a37-8), the means by which the life of the members of the political κοινωνία is ordered to the attainment of a common end as the highest good of human flourishing.[29]

The foregoing outline, to be developed more fully in the final chapter on Aristotle, while providing a formal structure for this work delineated manifestly in terms of Aristotelian metaphysics, nevertheless imposes nothing upon the ethico-political thought of the classical polis of his predecessors that is not already implicitly or explicitly present to it. The fundamental parameters that Aristotle has recognized to be integral to establishing the polis as a unified whole of parts are found to be acknowledged throughout the period to be investigated here. His understanding that the polis has a nature, which is to say that there is a polis ideal, that man is naturally a πολιτικὸν ζῷον, that the polis is prior to family and to individual, and that the unity of the polis resides in the justice of its πολιτεία, so that the good life is the end to be sought in the political κοινωνία, are all in

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[27] Newman (v. 2 1887:97).

[28] Aristotle distinguishes the various ways in which things are said to be prior and posterior in *Metaph.* Δ.11 and *Cat.* 12. The individual and the family are temporally prior to the polis. The polis, however, is prior in completeness to both, as the end in which man attains to self-sufficiency (*Pol.* 1253a25-27). That for the sake of which, the final cause (τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα) or the end (τὸ τέλος) is what is best and is self-sufficient (αὐτάρκεια) (*Pol.* 1252b34-1253a1).

[29] Cf. Arist. *EN* 1097a34-b6; 1099b25-32.

evidence as established tenets of Athenian political life of the period. Goldhill comments to the point that "Aristotle's expressions that the city is logically prior to individuals and family, or that man as an animal is essentially *polis*-based, are enshrined in tragedy as well as in the prose writing of the fifth and fourth centuries."[30] Yet, in actual practice, polis life is found to fall far short of measuring up to the ideals it sets for itself, those Aristotle will formalize as a coherent account in his ethical and political treatises. What we have considered so far is the side of reason alone, the rational formal ideal which is conceived as the human telos. Man's nature, however, it must be recognized is both rational and animal, necessarily and often tragically subject to division in the life of praxis.[31]

On the one hand, what is most especially the polis is identified with its πολιτεία as that rational ruling part which defines the common good. On the other hand, however, urgently pressing their own claims, demanding to be given a place within the structure of the rationally ordered whole, are all those natural distinctions, which mark the side of feeling and the private good of the individual citizen and his family. In the resultant dynamic interplay between the parts of the political association, disruption and instability readily arise with shifting balances of power. As a result the ordered equilibrium, the ὁμόνοια that is the mark of the just polis, is in practice disturbed and the sides of reason and feeling, no longer ordered together in justice and friendship in relation to a common end as their good, come increasingly into opposition with one another. Each 'part' seeks to assert its own ascendancy, its own privileged relation to the good that in the flux of the sensible world appears as a 'whole' divided. It is the aetiology of this pathological process, it will be argued, that 5th century tragedy illuminates. As the causal principle that confers a structure on the 'whole', the justice of Zeus, is increasingly lost to sight, the polis will be seen to cease to exist as a composite whole, so that what are left are simply the parts, themselves now best categorized as atomistic wholes. The exposition of the nature of the political association becomes as a result not so much that of the ideal as that

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[30] Goldhill, (1990:114). See also Finley (1983:125). Deprived of friends and polis, Philoctetes laments that he is a corpse among the living (ἄφιλον, ἔρημον, ἄπολιν, ἐν ζῶσιν νεκρόν, S. *Ph.* 1018). The chorus of city elders in *Antigone* dismiss as ἄπολις the one who sets himself in opposition to the laws and the justice of the gods in accord with which the polis and its citizens ride high (S. *Ant.* 368-71).

[31] I use the masculine noun and pronoun throughout advisedly, both in place of a missing gender neutral element in the English language and in keeping with the undoubted realities of the age.

of the disturbances, the perturbations, that are destructive of that ideal and the measures that can be taken to counteract them and preserve the stability of the polis.

In Chapter 2, I will establish the intellectual import of tragic poetry for the political life of 5th century Athens as a basis for the subsequent investigation. A critical exploration of the major philosophical interpretations of the political significance of tragedy, identified as those espoused respectively by Plato, Aristotle, and current scholars who identify with 5th century sophistic rhetoric, reveals that the origin of the differences between these schools of thought is to be sought in their conceptions of the relation of natural necessity to reason in the tragic texts. While ultimately incompatible with one another, each of these three very different positions will in the chapters that follow find a place in the interpretation of the political import of tragic drama.

Chapters 3 to 5 together look at the relation of tragic drama to the 5th century polis ideal as it is seen to be sustained by a traditional piety, the justice of Zeus. The tragic texts that have been selected for examination in this study are all firmly established in the literature as of central importance to a study of the nature of the political κοινωνία.[32] Each author has their own special insights to offer and I have sought to present their work in a way that allows this to emerge in a coherent manner from within the structure of the dramatic argument itself. Blundell, in her influential study of Sophoclean ethical thought, has argued cogently the need to understand the tragic ethical dilemma from within the context of the parameters that shape and form it.[33] She points to the limitations of Adkins' approach, which examines "individual scenes or brief passages without considering the overall dramatic context or the place of moral debate in each play as a whole."[34] Each chapter, as it is presented here, has therefore in one sense its own completeness. This being said, however, I will argue that taken together and studied in relation to one another and to the conceptual ideal, these dramas can be seen to offer an important insight on the historical decline of the polis, one which offers a rich resource to Plato and Aristotle as they undertake their own investigations on the essential nature of

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[32] For example, Goldhill (2000:74) calls *Oresteia* and *Antigone* "two exemplary works to see in more detail where and how political argument, political thought, and political theory can be located." Euben (1990:3) describes his choice of texts, which includes *Oresteia* and *Bacchae*, as "somewhat conventional."

[33] Blundell (1989). Ethical issues surrounding the talio are investigated in five Sophoclean plays in turn.

[34] Blundell (1989:5). Cf. Adkins (1960).

the political association. With this in mind, a major focus of interest will lie in examining how the challenge of the intellectual enlightenment which burgeoned in Athens in the last half of the 5th century can be observed to destabilize the assumed agreement between a universal natural necessity and an objective form of human freedom.

In Chapter 3, with the establishment in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* of a charter for the foundation of the just polis, the political κοινωνία is examined from the perspective of the unified composite whole through which Aeschylus envisages the citizenry can be drawn within a κοινοφιλὴς διάνοια. Sophocles, in the *Antigone*, will be seen in Chapter 4 to oppose to this ideal a conception of the difficulties that arise from the divided nature of the human good in praxis. The parts that constitute the whole are here found set apart from one another so that justice asserts itself in the form of conflicting obligations of family and polis, witnessed in the opposition of universal unwritten laws of nature and the rational assertion of human reason in positive law. The concluding chapter of this section will chart a further dissolution of the 'whole' as the polyphony of the later stages of the intellectual enlightenment wreaks its havoc on the political κοινωνία. Now law (νόμος) and nature (φύσις) have taken on a different meaning again, and necessity and freedom are found to coincide, not in the universal order of Zeus and the objective political order, as in Aeschylus, but in individual human interest and in the collective will of the masses, the δῆμος seen as a 'tyranny of the majority'. An examination of Euripides' *Bacchae* will be augmented with insights and perspectives offered by Thucydides, and the sophists. As a result, the 'whole', which properly constitutes the polis, will come to be seen to have lost its causal structural integrity becoming nothing more than a 'heap', a mere aggregate of atomistic parts, attracted like iron filings to the most powerful magnet.

In Chapters 6 to 10 the focus changes to the 4th century philosophers and issues surrounding the just πολιτεία will be considered as they are understood in turn by Plato and by Aristotle. Chapters 6 to 8 will examine the developing argument of the first five books of Plato's *Republic* where, in response to a critical exploration in Book 1 of the diverse images of justice to which he sees the citizens of the radical democracy subscribe, Plato develops his own account of the rational political and social order deemed necessary to bring into being the just city as a unified and unitary whole informed by a knowledge of the Good. At the heart of the problem for Plato, and brought most forcefully to bear on the debate, will be seen to be the disparity that exists between the

ethical ideal realized in theory and the political life of praxis, a division symbolized in the collision between the philosopher Socrates and the rhetor Thrasymachus, representing the embodiment of political power.

In Chapter 9, Aristotle's analysis and criticism of the organization of the ideal political community as it is presented in Plato's *Republic* will be the subject of reflection. In particular, I will examine his assertion that human individuality and diversity cannot be directly subsumed to unity, as Plato supposes, but must be admitted its place in the polis as a distinct moment in the composite whole which is the concrete universal. In the concluding chapter, Aristotle's separation of the theoretical from the life of praxis and his thorough and perceptive examination of justice and friendship will be found to be central to his own account of the nature of political κοινωνία. Recognizing the essential imperfection that marks the human condition as 'rational animality', Aristotle will be seen to restore the tragic ἀγών to centre stage. Like Sophocles, Aristotle acknowledges that man must seek his good within a world, both inner and outer, which distorts and holds hidden from him the end to which he is by nature ordered. With this in mind, it is on the fundamental significance of a prior habituation and education to virtue in shaping the lives of all the citizens that Aristotle will lay stress as the means by which this division is to be overcome. In the end, he argues, it is within the soul of the individual, in the choices he makes, that the resolution of ethical dilemma must be effected. Prevention of conflict in the political community, the assurance of its integrity, is up to us: ἐφ' ἡμῖν.

2

Polity & Poetry

Philosophical Perspectives on the Polis in Tragedy

προσείπωμεν δὲ αὐτῇ, μὴ καί τινα σκληρότητα ἡμῶν καὶ ἀγροικίαν καταγνῷ, ὅτι παλαιὰ μέν τις διαφορὰ φιλοσοφίᾳ τε καὶ ποιητικῇ·

Pl. *R.* 607b3-6.

That there is a meaningful relationship in thought between 5th century Greek drama and 4th century practical philosophy, between poetic μῦθος and philosophic λόγος, cannot be simply taken as given. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, will be to establish a basis for the intellectual linkages that will in subsequent chapters be understood to underlie the movement of the argument on the nature of political κοινωνία in this period. What is not in dispute, it is safe to say, is that the poets were accounted the *de facto* educators of Hellas. Indeed, it is their unquestioned claim to this role, and the adverse consequences for the polis as a rational community which he understands to ensue from this, that Plato conspicuously confronts in the *Republic*.[1] However, to criticize the tenets embodied and portrayed in poetic works, as Plato undoubtedly did, does not of itself thereby argue an active intellectual role for the poets in formulating the nature of that content. Indeed, writing only two decades ago it was possible for Finley to refer to "persistently held notions" that Greek dramatists "are not to be studied as thinkers at all; or that there was no bridge of any kind between them and the handful of 'rational' theorists and philosophers."[2]

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[1] *R.* 376e-398b. Aristophanes' *Frogs* provides a good example of the fundamental place of tragic poetry in the ethical life of the 5th century polis. Euripides and Aeschylus are shown to be in agreement in their belief that they make the citizens better through their artistry and admonition (*Ra.* 1009-1010). 'For young children it is the schoolmaster who counsels, but for adults, the poets' (*Ra.* 1054-6). For a recent discussion of the significance of the poets as educators see Murray (1996:12-20).

[2] Finley (1983:124-5). Finley is not expressing his own view here it must be said. See too Saïd (1998:278). Others, while admitting a political content to tragedy, argue like Winton and Garnsey (1981:38) to the effect that it is clearly distinguishable from "the more rigorous analytic approach that developed around the middle of the fifth century" and which "marked the beginning of Greek political theory as such."

The view that tragedy is to be seen as only passively reflecting the values of the 5th century Athenian democratic polis by "offering simple didactic messages from the city's poets to the citizens," it has more recently been vigorously argued, can be no longer accepted as being in consonance with what is now known about the political structures and civic ideology of the Athenian polis.[3] To the contrary, Goldhill submits, the political importance that drama attains in being an integral part of a major civic festival is clearly demonstrable. The pre-play ceremonies of the Great Dionysia, he shows, "were all deeply involved with the city's sense of itself."[4] Following in this same vein, a 1998 survey of current scholarship by Saïd revealed a widespread consensus on tragedy's political import to have emerged in recent years. So much so that she was able to conclude that in fact the outright rejection "of the political dimension of tragedy has almost disappeared" so that "most scholars, whatever their national or political background, now agree on its political character."[5]

Much of what is central to any understanding of the relation between drama and political thought in the ancient polis is captured by MacIntyre when he points out that "Athenians had not insulated, as we have by a set of institutional devices, the pursuit of political ends from dramatic representation or the asking of philosophical questions from either."[6] Thus, Goldhill argues, significant parallels are evident between the dramatic production and the other great institutions, the law-courts and assembly, in which the citizens actively participated in the life of the polis.[7] The question to be considered has, therefore,

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[3] Goldhill (1990:124).

[4] Goldhill (1990:114).

[5] Saïd (1998:278). Thus, Raaflaub (1989:49), for example, argues that "elaborate explanation" should no longer be required to explain "why we are justified in perceiving and interpreting Greek tragedies as important manifestations of political thought." Rösler (1993:81) concludes further that "[d]ie attische Tragödie war eine Institution der attischen Demokratie. Das heisst: sie war eine politische Institution." Recent major works focussing attention on the political content of tragedy include Pelling (1997), Easterling (1997), Silk (1996), Sommerstein (1993), Euben (1990), Winkler and Zeitlin (1990), Meier (1993), Euben (1986), Corsini (1986-88), Rösler (1980). Schwinge (1992) is identified to be a singular exception to the general consensus during this period of growing endorsement of the importance of the political element in tragedy.

[6] MacIntyre (1984:138).

[7] Goldhill (2000a:62). Each of these institutions "congregates a body of citizens, constituted in a privileged way as the collective of the polis, and requires the hearing and judging of arguments in a competitive context." Rhodes (2003), however, cautions against too directly identifying the plays with the democratic *polis*" (105). He argues that in many cases, rather than being peculiar to the democracy, it is broader "*polis* presuppositions" and a "*polis* framework" that are being reflected in them (119).

come to be not *whether* tragic drama can be said to have been a distinct and inherent part of the discourse of the polis but *how* it is to be understood to have presented the idea of political κοινωνία to its citizen audience. The examination of this question will be central to the first part of this study.

2.1 Plato: tragic drama appeals to the irrational & is a potent force for strife

Plato, who was born and grew to manhood during the turbulent years of the Peloponnesian War, responds very directly in the *Republic* to the diversity and disorder which he finds characterizes all aspects of the radical democracy of Athens in this period.[8] It is for the alleged potency of their contribution to the furthering of this indeterminacy in the individual psyche, and hence in the political association, that the tragic poets stand most of all condemned. The antithesis of the disorderly soul and city is the order and simplicity which is to be sought as the ideal. Thus, the true nature of the soul (and city) once it has been divested of diversity (ποικιλία), dissimilarity (ἀνομοιότης), and difference (διαφορά), its deforming bodily accretions removed, is revealed in its truth as not multiform (πολυειδής) but simple (μονοειδής) in its being (*R.* 611b1-612a5).[9] It is highly significant in this regard that, side by side, at the very end of the *Republic* there stand Socrates' trenchant criticism of tragic poetry and his recounting of the myth of Er, which is just the kind of true μῦθος that in the best and most beautiful kind of polis will take the place of tragic drama in the education of the mass of the citizenry.[10]

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[8] For Plato's account of the political milieu of his day and his own response to it, which will be examined in more detail in Chapters 6-8 of this work, see, in particular, Pl. *Ep.* 324b8-326b4.

[9] The use of ποικιλία and its cognates by Plato to express the multiplicity and diversity which characterizes the disorderly soul and city is particularly notable in the *Republic*. The lowest part of the human soul is imaged as a many-headed multiform beast (θηρίου ποικίλου καὶ πολυκεφάλου, *R.* 588c7-8). It is to this part that the mimetic poet (μιμητικὸς ποιητής) naturally relates, the excitable and diverse character (ποικίλον ἦθος, *R.* 605a5) which provides for πολλὴν μίμησιν καὶ ποικίλην (*R.* 604e1), and not to the part of the soul that is prudent and quiet (φρόνιμον τε καὶ ἡσύχιον ἦθος, *R.* 604e2). In the polis, the democracy (*R.* 557c5, 6, 8; 558c5), the democratic man (*R.* 559d9, 561e4), and the army of drones who attend upon the leader in a tyranny (*R.* 568d6) are all characterized by their affinity with ποικιλία.

[10] Thus, Halliwell (1988:3) remarks that "Plato sets out his reasons for rejecting the finest Greek poetry, before offering his own philosophical, yet quasi-poetic, vision of a cosmic order of which the poets themselves had never spoken." Nussbaum (1986:131) observes that by contrast with the use of myth in tragedy, Plato in dialogues such as the *Phaedo*, *Gorgias*, and *Republic* uses myth "to show forth general philosophical truths for which he has already argued; and he is using it to dampen 'mad' passion rather than

As Plato sets up in the *Republic* a polar dichotomy between philosophy and poetry, reason and feeling, based on a logic of the true and the false, he draws to their extremes what he sees to be implicit in each. On the one hand, the philosophic rule of reason leads everything towards the Forms and the unity and simplicity of the Good itself. On the other hand, the rule of feeling and the pleasure principle espoused by the poets leads inexorably to the primacy of a fluctuating contradictory world of flickering shadows sustained only in the immediacy of sensory gratification. The unity of the polis in the *Republic* is bound uncompromisingly to the rational order of its polity, as a 'whole' from which the diversity and difference, the ποικιλία which marks the natural feeling side of humanity, must as far as possible be removed. Whereas the instinctual and feeling side of man's nature cannot be completely denied, it must be strictly harnessed so that, to the extent that it is humanly possible, soul is ruled by reason. Only then can man come to any rational self-conscious understanding of how things are arranged so as to be best, how the world of sensory experience is ordered to its principle and cause as the Good itself. So that, as has been well observed, it is true to say that "once Plato had attained the insight into the nature of the first principle" it became a problem for him how "to respond to what is revealed by the poets as the voice of Greek religion speaking through the Muses."[11] Reason and feeling are seen to fall to either side of an inherent divide in man, one which is symbolized in the political κοινωνία as 'an ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry' for control over city and soul (*R.* 607b5-6).[12] Thus, the Platonic

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arouse it."

[11] House (2003:1).

[12] Plato does not offer, as Aristotle does, a single treatise on poetry and his comments have always to be understood within the larger context of the dialogue in which they are set. Murray (1996:2) well notes that "to talk of Plato's 'view of poetry' is already to imply systematisation of his thought which diminishes its richness." Not surprisingly, reactions to, and interpretations of, Plato's comments on poetry, from antiquity to the present day, have been diverse and contradictory. Although the major issues will be touched upon as they impact on the argument, to enter this highly contentious debate in any detail would be to move far beyond the scope of the present investigation. Discussion in this chapter, in the context of the relation of tragic poetry and the political κοινωνία, will focus on Plato's most extensive evaluation and criticism of the influence of tragic poetry, which is to be found in *Republic* Book 10. His specific complaints against poetry in the education of the youth in *Republic* Books 2 and 3 will be discussed in Chapter 7 in the context of the foundation of the city in speech. The thrust of these criticisms Plato will carry forward to what is purportedly his final work, the *Laws*, a work in which Socrates does not appear. Plato was not the first to condemn the poets for the moral tenor of their work. Xenophanes (DK 21.B.11) asserts that 'Homer and Hesiod attribute to the gods everything that is shameful and a reproach among men' and Heraclitus (DK 22.B.42) declares uncompromisingly that Homer, along with Archilochus, should be expelled from the contests and beaten. For recent overviews of Plato's consideration of poetic creativity in his dialogues, see

Socrates declares, in the *Republic*, difficult as it most assuredly is for him to speak contrary to a life-long love and respect for Homer as the teacher and leader of all those fine tragedians, it must nevertheless be done; for no man ought to be honoured more than the truth (*R.* 595c2-3).[13]

As the traditionally accepted educators of Greece, the poets, in Plato's understanding, have laid claim not only to the divine inspiration of the Muses as the authority for their works but also to the possession of a τέχνη, a particular body of knowledge associated with the composition of their poems which allows them to teach others.[14] Indeed, Murray argues, "the two great themes which dominate Plato's treatment of poetry" are "the idea of poetry as *mimesis*, and the concept of poetic inspiration."[15] In addressing the poets' claims, Plato can be found to tease apart these two notions, turning in different places the spotlight on each individually, exposing its nature and the consequences which this implies. Before turning to the comprehensive analysis of poetic mimesis and the adverse effects of tragic drama on the polis which Plato details in the *Republic*, it is useful to briefly survey what emerges in other dialogues on the understanding of divine inspiration, and its continued significance in Plato, as the attempt to comprehend the human condition turns from poetic myth and image towards conceptual modes of thought.

It is central to Plato's complaint against poetry that the divine Muse of the poets, in its unmediated self-certainty, can give no account of itself. As Socrates, in the *Apology*, reports the result of his interrogation of the poets, including the tragedians, 'it was not through wisdom they produced their poetry but a kind of innate instinct or inspiration (φύσει τινὶ καὶ ἐνθουσιάζοντες), like the prophets and the seers who say many beautiful

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Murray (1996:1-32), Janaway (1995), Asmis (1992:338-64), Ferrari (1989:92-148), Halliwell (1988:1-16), Else (1986:3-64), Nehamas (1982).

[13] Cf. *R.* 607c7-8. For Homer as leader of the tragedians *R.* 598d7-8, 607a2-3. Madhu (1999) looks at the context of Homeric quotations Socrates himself employs and assessed their impact in interpreting the dialogue.

[14] Murray (1996:8) notes the "frequent references to the poet's expertise in early Greek poetry, expressed by terms such as *oida, epistamai, sophos*, and *sophia*." On the developing conception in pre-Platonic literature of poetry as a craft see, in particular, Verdenius (1983:20-4) and the references there cited.

[15] Murray (1996:3).

things but know nothing of what they mean' (*Ap.* 22a9-c4).[16] This picture is amplified by Socrates in the *Ion*, using the image of the force of magnetic attraction to illustrate how the divine power originating in the Muse is passively transmitted in succession through the poet and rhapsode to the audience, so that all share in the chain of enthusiasm. The poet himself has no knowledge of what he speaks, Socrates argues; he has no art (οὐ τέχνῃ ποιοῦντες). He is only able to compose when he is inspired (ἔνθεος), out of his mind (ἔκφρων καὶ ὁ νοῦς μηκέτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐνῇ), his beautiful poems divine and from the gods (*Ion* 533c9-535a1).

In the dialogue *Phaedrus*, the dichotomy between divine inspiration and τέχνη is found again. Here, the madness that comes to the poet from the gods is initially given a positive cast as, along with other forms of divinely induced mania, it is stated to be responsible for the greatest of goods (*Phdr.* 244a6-8). By contrast, Socrates argues, the one who comes to poetry without this madness from the Muses, persuaded that τέχνη alone will make him a good poet, is destined to failure (*Phdr.* 245a5-8). Murray remarks that the "compelling image" Socrates develops here is one "beloved of all who seek validation in Plato's work for the view of the poet as an inspired being in touch with some higher level of reality through intuitive powers which have nothing to do with the intellect."[17] This is not, however, the whole picture with regard to the assessment of poetry in the *Phaedrus*. Socrates will shortly go on to describe the highest kind of life as that of the philosopher, who it will emerge is the truly divinely inspired individual, the 'lover of wisdom or beauty, devoted to the Muses and to love' (φιλοσόφου ἢ φιλοκάλου ἢ μουσικοῦ τινος καὶ ἐρωτικοῦ, *Phdr.* 248d3-4).[18]

Ranged behind the philosophic life, in the myth Socrates recounts in the *Phaedrus*, are eight other kinds of lives each ranked successively lower, with the life of the 'poet or any other of those concerned with mimesis suitably accorded the sixth place (*Phdr.* 248e1-2). The highest kinds of life are those concerned most properly with the health of the soul in

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[16] Cf. Pl. *Men.* 99c11-d5.

[17] Murray (1996:11).

[18] Philosophy is the highest form of μουσική Socrates will assert (*Phdr.* 259d3-5). Rowe (1986:181) notes that "the crucial passage is 258e ff., which shows us how Socrates proposes to understand what it is to be *mousikos*-to engage in dialectic. In other words the *mousikos* in the proper sense *is* the philosopher, just as the lover of beauty and the lover himself will turn out to be."

the context of the good political community: the philosopher, the law-abiding ruler, and the life of those active in the proper running of the affairs of the polis and its institutions. The life of those who, like the trainer and physician, are concerned with the health of the body follows next, and only then come the lives of the seer and the poet. While far behind the life of the philosopher, it is significant nevertheless that the divinely inspired poet, although still considered to know nothing of what he says and so capable of offering a benefit to the community only incidentally, is here ranked ahead of the craftsmen, those with circumscribed technical skills. The poet is thus, in *Phaedrus*, separated decisively from sophists and demagogues, the deliberate manipulators of words and purveyors of ignorance in polis life who stand in eighth place, just ahead of that ultimate abomination, the tyrant.[19]

The poets, it is not denied here, have been responsible for many good things through the operation of their divine Muse. However, Socrates concludes at the end of the *Phaedrus*, if the poets have composed their works with a hold on the truth they must be able to give an account of what they have produced, able both to critique their own work themselves and to defend it appropriately when challenged by others. In this case, he argues, they would rightly be called, not poets, but lovers of wisdom, which is to say philosophers (*Phdr.* 278c2-e2). What the philosopher shares in common with the poet is that he is, through an innate capacity, divinely inspired (ἐνθουσιάζων, *Phdr.* 249d2).[20] However, the poet in his unmediated relation to his Muse remains ignorant as to the truth of what he ushers forth, no matter the time and care with which he attends to the arrangement and rearrangement of his compositions. For Plato, Murray notes, "myths and stories ...to have any value ...must contain some moral or religious truth, but the only people capable of perceiving such truths are philosophers. Hence art must serve the interests of philosophy."[21] It is the philosopher who, divinely possessed, is able through recollection to awaken in himself memories of the eternal truths upon which his soul once gazed, the

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[19] In the context of the *Republic*, as will be seen, the poet is ranked below the craftsman, on a par with the sophist.

[20] Murray (1996:11) suggests that "[t]he difference between the *Phaedrus* and other dialogues lies not in its conception of poetry, but in its conception of philosophy as a 'Muse-loving' activity in which inspiration and irrationality have a part to play." See further Nussbaum (1986:223-7), Else (1986:47-59), Ferrari (1989:142-8).

[21] Murray (1996:30).

forms of justice (δικαιοσύνη) itself, of moderation (σωφροσύνη) and of other things prized by the soul, and so come close to the divine comprehension (*Phdr.* 247d5-e2).[22] This is the best of all kinds of divine possession (αὕτη πασῶν τῶν ἐνθουσιάσεων ἀρίστη, *Phdr.* 249e1), that driven by love (ἔρως) for knowledge of the end as the Beautiful and the Good in their transcendent purity.

The problems inherent in poetic ignorance are compounded, Plato sees, not only by the fact that, thinking himself to be wise, the poet declaims on all and sundry matters but also, importantly, in the dangers attendant upon the manner in which the poets convey their message.[23] The τέχνη to which the poets lay claim is that of mimesis, the art of making representations of the changing external sensible world and its objects. In the *Laws*, Plato offers a vivid picture of the poet 'at the seat of the Muses, frenziedly (οὐκ ἔμφρων) letting forth a stream of words. Since his τέχνη is mimesis, he is often forced to contradict himself, representing people taking up opposed positions but not knowing himself where the truth lies' (*Lg.* 719c1-d1). It is with this in mind, that Plato can be seen to have coupled to the oft repeated charges of poetic ignorance a critical analysis in the *Republic* of the nature of mimesis and its objects and of the impact of the works of the poets on the soul and on society. Plato finds in the tragic poet the mimetic artist *par excellence*, and it is on the tragedian that Socrates' critical gaze in *Republic* Book 10 is focussed (*R.* 602b8-10).

If what Socrates says should, when taken at face value, seem extreme and hardly a fair assessment of the thought content of the great tragic dramas that have come down to us, it must be considered that the context in which Plato writes is that of awakening the political κοινωνία to the idea of the nature of its fully rational actualization, one in which, as he sees it, diversity (ποικιλία) must give way to simplicity (ἁπλοτής). Thus he presents the poets in the *Republic* as he sees them to be in their essence. Divorced from any consideration of particular instances of the καλοκἀγαθία that might be said to

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[22] Cf. *Phdr.* 249c8-d3. Rowe (1986:184) comments that "[i]t is just the absence of 'clear images' of justice and the rest which makes necessary the large-scale programmes for political and moral reform envisaged in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, and indeed the philosophical quest, whose end is the knowledge required for a successful life."

[23] Socrates claims in the *Apology* (22c2-6), for example, that the poets suppose themselves to be the wise about things which they are not. Similarly in the *Ion* (536d8-541b5) he attempts to disabuse Ion of his claim to be an expert on all subjects about which Homer writes.

incidentally attach to facets of their output, the poets are purely image-makers, purveyors of an endless ποικιλία. In the language of the later dialogues, they represent an indeterminate dyadic pleasure principle which must be brought under the limit and measure of reason.[24] Poets who might attempt to consciously introduce a rational ethical argument into their works cease in this understanding to be poets in the true sense. In the logic of the metaphors of the *Republic*, they have made the first tentative beginnings to a movement from the very bottom of the Line, or out of the Cave where they reside, and may come to be classified as a result rather as incipient sophists or politicians. The Athenian Stranger in the *Laws* is also quite clear on the question of the presence of the poet in the polis. Only when composing under strict guidance from one who understands the true nature of the object to be represented, and can be an intelligent judge of the accuracy both of the copy (ὡς ὀρθῶς) and the ethical significance of the work (ὡς εὖ ...εἴργασται), does the possibility arise that the poet as such will find a place for himself in the best kind of polis (*Lg.* 669a6-b3).[25]

At the bottom of the Cave the undivided and the divided, form and content, coalesce and are immediately one in products of the imagination, such as those the poet displays before his audience. The poetic images thus produced, Socrates argues (*R.* 597e3-8; 599a1-2, d2-3; 602c1-2) are indeed at a third remove from truth (τρίτος ἀπο τῆς ἀληθείας), a mere semblance (φάντασμα) of that copy of the true and unchanging reality which the objects of the changing sensible world exhibit.[26] The problem lies in either

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[24] See in particular on this the discussion of pleasure in Plato's *Philebus*.

[25] The poet would not even now be said to have a τέχνη since he is not himself in possession of the wisdom necessary to produce his objects, which is that of the statesman, the πολιτικὴ τέχνη.

[26] The poetic art is linked thus to the sophistic art which is that of creating semblances (Pl. *Soph.* 239cd). The argument of the *Sophist* demonstrates that these φαντάσματα can be said to exist as the objects of false statement and judgement (264c-d). Asmis (1992:340) remarks that the sophists, setting themselves up as "heirs and rivals to the poets" as educators of Greece, both "discovered new possibilities of language in prose" and "attempted to capture the power of poetry by modeling their prose on poetic usage." The prime example of sophistic language theory that has come down to us is Gorgias' *Encomium on Helen* (DK 82.B.11) which illustrates particularly well the nature of the problem with which Plato sees himself faced in opposing both the poets and the sophists in his re-forming of the political association. Thus Gorgias (B11.11) maintains that 'people are not able readily to remember the past, consider the present or foresee the future, so that on most matters the majority make opinion (δόξα) the counsellor to their soul'. The power of the spoken word (λόγος), Gorgias argues, when it is accompanied by persuasion (πειθώ) impresses upon the soul of the hearer whatever it wishes (B11.13). Poetry offers a prime example of this persuasive power, able at the behest of the poet, to instil itself like a drug into the soul of the hearer and establish there emotions such as grief and joy, fear and boldness and to drug and bewitch the soul though an evil persuasion (B11.14).

simply taking these images in their immediacy as primary or in subverting them to individual human subjective ends. Plato accords both kinds of activity to the poets, as indeed to the sophists, and in this lies the danger, as he sees it, of tragic poetry to the articulation of the just political κοινωνία; which is to say, to the possibility of beginning a meaningful ascent upwards out of the Cave and the bringing of the sensible particular under the universal Form.[27]

The poet, who speaks on all matters, whether concerning things of the heavens, on earth, or in Hades, can be accounted thus a wonderfully clever man, (δεινόν τινα ...καὶ θαυμαστὸν ἄνδρα, *R.* 596c3), a marvellous sophist (θαυμαστόν ...σοφιστήν, *R.* 596d1). As a maker of images, however, he understands nothing of the reality but only the particular immediacy of the appearance of what he makes (*R.* 601b10). Hence, only the most foolish person would surely be deceived into believing a claim by anyone to such seeming omniscience (*R.* 598d3-4). Nevertheless, Socrates states, we find the tragic poets, with Homer as their leader, considered to be knowledgeable about everything they write. So that, in addition to all the arts, they are thought to be cognisant of all human concerns about virtue and vice and the ways of the divine (*R.* 598d7-e2). If Homer and his successors had really been capable of educating men, if they had been even second and not third in removal from the truth, Socrates declares, they would have produced some lasting testament to their ability, a set of laws for the polis like Solon perhaps, or a reputation as a leader in the private sphere, like Pythagoras, who bequeathed to his successors a way of life.[28] On this consideration, even sophists, such as Protagoras or

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[27] Plato's Protagoras claims the sophistic art he employs is an ancient one practised clandestinely, for fear of opprobrium, by Homer and the poets among others (*Prt.* 316d3-7). Asmis (1992:364) draws a useful connection between the final division in the *Sophist* (267e11-268c4) and the relation of poetry to sophistry. Plato, she concludes (342), "generally draws a distinction between the disinterested creative activity of the poets and the sophists' self-interested manipulation of language; but at times his criticisms of the poets and sophists merge."

[28] No one who could copy the model of reality, as the craftsman does, would be content to make do with producing semblances and offer this as his best ability, Socrates submits (*R.* 599a6-b1). Plato's case against Homer may seem overly harshly promulgated, especially remembering Diotima's praise in *Symposium* of the 'immortal offspring' produced by Homer, Hesiod and the other good poets (*Smp.* 209d1-4). The poet is here classed with lawgivers, like Solon and Lycurgus, and all craftsmen. All the poets, states Diotima, generate practical wisdom (φρόνησις) and all the other virtues. The most beautiful part of this wisdom is that which concerns the ordering of cities and households, which is σωφροσύνη and δικαιοσύνη (*Smp.* 209a4-8). Socrates now specifically refutes this. The distinguishing point perhaps to be found here in *Republic*, in comparison with the position in *Symposium*, is that the traditional morality, an older piety based on Homer and Hesiod, to which Diotima relates, must now be seen to have crumbled, no lasting testament at all. Unable to withstand the rational challenge that has been made to its content, it has become

Prodicus and those like them, have a better claim to be educators than the poets since they do more than simply reflect the arbitrariness and contingency of the sensible world, professing a τέχνη by which they bring their images under the rule of mind, a measuring subject as the judge of what is useful or beneficial to society (*R.* 600c6-d4).

Poetic mimesis, by contrast, Socrates argues, presents the world of men in all the superficiality and particularity of its immediacy and ambiguity with no way of solving its contradictions. Thus, all mimetic poets beginning from Homer are imitators of images of virtue (μιμητὰς εἰδώλων ἀρετῆς, *R.* 600e5) who have no hold on the truth (τῆς δὲ ἀληθείας οὐχ ἅπτεσθαι, *R.* 600e6). In *Phaedrus*, the poets, although without knowledge, were adjudged capable of producing great benefits through their divine inspiration, and so were ranked ahead of the craftsmen and the sophists. In the *Republic*, the focus is on the poets' purported τέχνη. Once it is shown to Socrates' satisfaction, using the example of the painter (*R.* 596a5-98c4), that it is in the nature of artistic mimesis that it takes as its model not the universal Form (Bed) but the sensible object (this particular iron bed) in the partial aspect it reveals in its immediacy (for example, the side view of this particular iron bed), it is evident that the poet does not possess a τέχνη with respect to the objects he produces. There can be neither knowledge nor right opinion about what are merely ephemeral particularities; the poets simply act as a mirror mindlessly reflecting the flickering image of an image. Hence, from this perspective they fall behind the craftsmen, and even at least some of the sophists.

The poetic mimesis, it is contended in the *Republic*, is completely devoid of that rational measure and limit that the best part, the ruling part, of the soul provides (*R.* 602d6-603a8).[29] The mimetic poet, lacking either knowledge or right opinion about the beauty or baseness of what he represents in his works, will not know in what way each thing is good or bad (*R.* 602a8-9). Thus, he can be expected to represent to the masses what will appeal to them in their ignorance, colourful and moving images of life which they, taken

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subject to sophistic manipulations.

[29] In Laws (667e10-668a4), the Athenian Stranger argues that a mimesis should least of all be judged by the pleasure it affords or false belief concerning it. What is equal, or symmetrical is not so because someone believes it to be so, or someone is displeased at this being so. Its truth is the only acceptable standard for judgement of a mimesis.

in by the charm of the poetic devices, believe to be the truth (*R.* 601a4-b4).[30] The appeal of poetry is thus to the lower irrational part of the soul alone. Therein lies the most serious charge that Plato will bring against it, since its power over the emotions is conceived as so pernicious that even the best of men are susceptible to the corrupting effects it fosters within their soul (*R.* 605c6-8). The good man will steel himself through reason and the dictates of law to resist the desire to give way to personal grief and to bear his misfortunes with fortitude, and in this way his soul is orderly and composed (*R.* 603e3-604e6). For the poet, however, it is the uncontrolled expression of powerful emotion that is his stock in trade, as both easiest to imitate and most satisfying in its effect on his audience. The key to his success, to the attainment of a high repute (εὐδοκιμήσειν) among the masses, lies in the poet's ability to mimic the emotionally labile and disorderly character (*R.* 605a2-6). For there is a natural penchant in every man's soul to wallow in suffering and it is this side, Socrates argues, that gains satisfaction from surrendering itself to the sorrowing heroes and the choral laments.[31] Poetic mimesis thus establishes the irrational as ruler in the soul, where it should be ruled (*R.* 605c10-606d7). Lacking any rational ordering principle of its own and fostering in the souls of its hearers the unrestrained submission to the immediate dictates of feeling, tragic poetry is a powerful political force for στάσις, for the disruption of the rule of law

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[30] A man who is not to be in error (ἁμαρτήσεσθαι) must know the nature (τὴν οὐσίαν) of each composition in order to know its rightness (τὸ ὀρθῶς). Only then is it possible discern the goodness (τὸ εὖ) or badness (τὸ κακῶς) of the work (Pl. *Lg.* 668c4-d3).

[31] Adam (v. 2. 1963: 411) notes that "Euripidean drama forcibly illustrates what Plato says here." Poetry, Socrates and Callicles agree, when stripped of its melody, rhythm, and metre, is a form of public rhetoric (ῥητορικὴ δημηγορία) which can be described as 'flattery' (*Grg.* 502c5-d4). Tragic drama aims to gratify its spectators through pleasure rather than attempting to improve them by addressing what is unpleasant but beneficial (*Grg.* 502b1-8). The historical Gorgias, in his *Encomium on Helen*, (DK 82.B.11.9-10) also describes poetry as 'speech with metre', λόγον ἔχοντα μέτρον and goes on to dwell extravagantly on poetry's power to arouse the emotions. 'Its hearers shiver with fear, weep copiously in pity, and indulge in lamentation so that their soul affected by the words suffers the fortunes and misfortunes of others' actions and lives as its own private ordeal.' The persuasive power of the words combined with the emotion in the soul, Gorgias declares, has the power of dispelling grief and inducing pleasure. Plato's Ion similarly acknowledges that he plays to the crowd in this manner, admitting that if he can get the crowd weeping he will end up laughing when he receives his money (*Ion* 535c4-e6). Asmis (1992:344) observes that the link with the divine has now been broken, the power of poetry, in common with that of rhetoric now actively "shapes the soul by indulging the listener's craving for pleasure. This *logos* has no autonomous power; it is parasitic on the desires of the listener, and the author's creativity is nothing but an adaptation of words to the beliefs of the listener." Pappas (1992:88) argues similarly. It is at this point that poetry passes from being conceived as simple ignorant 'inspired' mimesis to being considered a form of sophistic demagoguery.

and order in both city and soul.[32] Hence it is that the poets are to be accounted among those who will be said in *Republic* Book 6 to pander to the wants of the masses, the 'great and powerful beast' (θρέμμα μέγα καὶ ἰσχυρόν), calling good what it enjoys and bad what angers it, forced by necessity to compose the kinds of things of which the many approves (*R.* 493a9-d9).

The whole πολιτεία, the Athenian Stranger insists in the *Laws*, must be established as a mimesis of the finest and best life which is in reality the truest tragedy (ἀληθεστάτη τραγῳδία). It is on this account that the legislators declare themselves rivals of the poets in the production of the finest and best τραγῳδία, that which is a mimesis of what is true; that which true law alone can be expected to be of a nature to bring to completion (*Lg.* 817a9-c1). The uncompromising conclusion, here as in the *Republic*, is that the activities of the poets are responsible for destabilizing the polis, dragging polities towards the extremes of tyranny and democracy (εἰς τυραννίδας τε καὶ δημοκρατίας) and away from the ideal as τὸ μέσον (*R.* 568b5-c5). Unless it can provide a satisfactory defence to these claims and prove itself worthy of its place, the legislators of the well-governed polis will not admit mimetic poetry to their city (*R.* 595a5).[33] Poetry has its undoubted delights. However, when all is said and done, Socrates insists, it is impious to betray what is believed to be the truth. It is up to those non-poets who would champion the cause of poetry to provide an account that shows that it is not only pleasurable but, more

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[32] Pleasure and pain will rule as kings in the polis instead of law and the rational principle, λόγος (*R.* 607a6-8).

[33] Cf. *R.* 398a1-b4, 607c3-7; *Lg.* 817d5-10. Poetry that praises the gods and eulogizes good men is the only kind of poetry that will be admitted into Plato's cities (*R.* 607a3-5; *Lg.* 801d10-802a3). On a putative discrepancy between Book 3 and Book 10 as to whether, despite the banning of ὅση μιμητική in Book 10, Plato does allow certain kinds of mimetic poetry see the synopsis of recent discussion provided by Murray (1996), especially pp. 3-6, 186-7, 228-9. Certainly Plato in the *Sophist* (267d8-268b8) still allows a distinction between four kinds of mimesis, which can be simply ignorant or ignorantly manipulative (demagoguery or sophistic) or an informed impersonation of the sort admitted in *Republic* Book 3 (97d4-5). For the view that there is in fact no contradiction between Books 3 and 10 see, in particular, Asmis (1992: 348-53), Halliwell (1988:105-6), Belfiore (1984:126-7). Nehamas (1982:49) has been influential in arguing, to the contrary, that this is ultimately an ineluctable conflict. His criticism, founded on the point that nothing in Book 3 "implies that 'imitation' has two senses; all that is implied is that one and the same activity can have different sorts of objects," good and bad, carries some weight against Asmis, Halliwell κτλ. but it misses the metaphysical nature of the argument. A mimesis based on ignorance (as, for Plato, by the very nature of their art are both dramatic poetry and sophistry) is quite different from one guided by a right opinion imbued by the law-giver, and this sort of controlled mimesis can find a place in the new polis, as noted above in the division in the *Sophist*. The discussion at *R.* 601c3-602a12 on the 'user', 'maker', and 'imitator' is also relevant to this point.

importantly, beneficial to the ordered government of cities and to human life (*R.* 607d6-e2).

2.2 Aristotle: tragic drama critically informs the ethical life of the polis

The challenge that Plato throws out to justify the presence of the poets in the polis does not long go unanswered as Aristotle, taking up the issues that Plato raises, recasts them on a new philosophical foundation.[34] It is from within the perspective of the broader context of his ethico-political works and his own metaphysical doctrine of substance that Aristotle's investigation of the nature of tragic drama can best be understood, and it is reasonable to deduce, based on the arguments he presents, that the serious ethical dilemmas which tragedy presents were themselves influential in the shaping of his own ethical theory.[35] The beginnings to ethical inquiry, Aristotle indicates in the *Ethics*, reside in the consideration of what is commonly held through experience to be the good for man. From these initial premises a rational progression can be made through dialectical discussion towards a grasp of the universal truths which the particularity and contingency of the sensible masks from view. In an analogous way, tragic mimesis, by exposing its audience to a fully articulated and completed action, limited by the likely or necessary, can be understood to bring to expression in the working out of the plot a universal statement which is reflective of the human condition. For this reason, Aristotle

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[34] A connection between Plato's condemnation of poetry in the *Republic* and the argument of Aristotle's *Poetics* is widely maintained. See, for example, Pappas (1992:83), who writes that "[t]he matter would seem too obvious to discuss." Davis (1992:158) argues likewise. Halliwell (1986) in his influential 'critical reassessment' of the *Poetics* provides a point by point comparison of "possible parallels" (331-6), concluding that it is "abundantly clear to anyone who reads the *Poetics* with a knowledge of Plato's treatment of poetry that Aristotle has Platonic material in his sights virtually throughout" (1). See also the commentary of Else (1957:636-42).

[35] Aristotle offers a very different understanding to Plato on the place of sensory images in the cognitive process, one which will be seen to be highly pertinent to his theory of tragic understanding. The place of the *Poetics* in the context of Aristotle's philosophical thought has been effectively demonstrated by Halliwell (1986). The collection of papers on Aristotle's *Poetics* edited by Rorty (1992a) specifically focuses interest on locating 'Aristotle's analysis of tragedy in its larger philosophical context'. See also Davis (1992:96), Nussbaum (1986). In stark contrast to these works, are the recently published conclusions of Husain (2001) who rejects any link between the *Poetics* and Aristotle's ethico-political works. Particularly damning to Husain's interpretation, however, are passages in the *Poetics* she fails to discuss such as, for example, *Po.* 1449b36-50a2 which clearly indicates that the tragic action is a representation concerned with individual human agents with distinctive qualities of both character and thought (διάνοια καὶ ἦθος).

can assert that poetry is more philosophical and more worthy of serious attention than history, for while poetry speaks more to τὰ καθόλου, to universal truths, history treats of τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον, the facts which on each occasion distinguish the action as particular (*Po.* 1451a36-b11).[36]

Tragedy, while it may be more philosophical than history, nevertheless is not philosophy. Whereas the philosophical investigations of the *Ethics* speak to the good man as a φρόνιμος, how he ideally ought to be, tragic drama portrays him as he more often is found to be, νοῦς πρακτικός blinkered and led astray in the flux of the sensible world of change. Thus, the tragic individual, although distinguished by great reputation and good fortune, the external goods that contribute to τὸ εὖ ζῆν, falls short of that excellence which characterizes the completely virtuous man. He is nevertheless a good person whose misfortune results not from baseness but from misjudgement (ἁμαρτία): one who, while aiming at the good, misses the mark and thus precipitates disaster (*Po.* 1453a7-12).

Through the catharsis induced by the empathetic arousal of the tragic emotions of pity and fear at the sufferings of one who is after all similar in many ways to ourselves, we, as audience, come to an awareness of the ways in which the human understanding can unwittingly fail to actualize its true end in praxis, and with this awareness there arises concomitantly an enhancement of our ethical comprehension.[37] It is important to

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[36] Aristotle is thinking here of history in the particular sense as a mere tally of events, with all the contingency that implies, as his example shows. There is no reason to suppose he would deny that, considered in terms of human praxis, the experiences of history cannot also be the subject of a philosophical reflection aimed at revealing general truths about human nature, a κτῆμα ...ἐς αἰεί, as Thucydides declares (1.22.4). Indeed, Aristotle goes so far as to say that the tragic poet may take his subject from historical events (τὰ γενόμενα) since these may well belong to the likely and probable (*Po.* 1451b29-32).

[37] The vexed question of the role of tragic catharsis in Aristotle's *Poetics* remains controversial. In recent years it has been argued that the proper effect of catharsis is an 'education' or a 'clarification' of the emotions. For the former see in particular Halliwell (1986) and House (1956), for the latter Nussbaum (1986) and Golden (1962). A provocative and stimulating, but to my mind ultimately unconvincing, counter-argument is presented by Lear (1992). His central contention (318-26) that the educative function could not be applicable to 'good' people in the audience since "education is for youths, tragic katharsis is ...for educated, cultivated adults" (320) holds little water and has been effectively demolished by Nussbaum (1992:282). Janko (1992:347) strikes a balance when he suggests that some, like Golden, go "too far in denying the importance of the emotions for *catharsis*" while others such as Lear and Belfiore "do not go far enough, since they neglect the way that practical wisdom involves feeling appropriate emotions in an appropriate way." Halliwell (1986:200-201) provides what can be considered to be a fair assessment of Aristotle's position understood from within the purview of his philosophy as a whole. He concludes "that tragic *katharsis* in some way conduces to an ethical alignment between the emotions and the reason" tending "to harmonise ...[emotions] with our perceptions and judgements of the world."

Aristotle that, in response to Plato, and to the χωρισμός that he sees to have emerged between reason and feeling, he establish that the natural feeling side of human nature can be admitted in a positive way, so as to be an integral component of that 'whole' which constitutes the good human life. Thought by itself moves nothing, Aristotle asserts, it is desire for the pursuit or avoidance of some goal, the side of feeling, which must first be engaged as the stimulant of practical reasoning (*EN* 1139a29-b5; *de An.* 433a10-b1). Thus the empathetic arousal of the tragic emotions of pity and fear can be seen to be a necessary beginning to engagement of νοῦς πρακτικός with the tragic predicament: a first step in subjecting it to practical reason and to the possibility of emotional catharsis. Yet this is not to say that Plato's comments are wholly inappropriate. Adam puts it well when he says that "it may fairly be argued that Plato's view is not less true to experience than that of Aristotle; for a spectacle which 'purges' the ἐλεεινόν in one man may strengthen it in another and make him more than ever inclined to self-pity."[38]

Central to the positive engagement of the emotions, and pivotal to Aristotle's revision of Plato's position on poetry, is a rethinking of the nature of the object of mimesis. For Plato, poetic mimesis is clearly focused on the particular, the representation of every kind of individual by simulating their character (*R.* 605a4-6, c10-d1).[39] However, although the life of practical activity requires both thought and character, it is, Aristotle insists, not διάνοια or ἦθος but rather πρᾶξις which must be considered to be most important in tragic drama. Thus, in a radical break with what can reasonably be construed as the traditional understanding, Aristotle argues that tragedy is a mimesis not of persons but of praxis, of actions and of life (*Po.* 1450a16-17). Whereas character is revealed in action in the moral choices that are made, these choices in turn are dependent upon the context which conditions them: the circumstance of the mental, and emotional interactions with other agents which confronts the individual in arriving at a decision on how to act. It is on account of the action that characters are brought in relation with one another: for the action, or plot, is the end of tragedy (ὁ μῦθος τέλος τῆς τραγῳδίας) and the end is the

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[38] Adam (v. 2. 1963: 415).

[39] See also *R.* 393a7-2, c1-3, 395c2-396e2. In Plato's *Sophist*, mimesis is defined as the simulation with voice or body of someone else (*Sph.* 267a6-8). The pre-Platonic classical usage of mimesis has been found on examination to support the conclusion that in this period "the dominant notion of mimesis ...is one of impersonation" (Pappas 1992:92). For a good selection of relevant sources, see in particular Murray (1996:3-4), Halliwell (1986:111-116) and Nehamas (1982:56-9).

greatest thing of all (*Po.* 1450a20-3). The well formed tragic plot, in Aristotle's consideration, must have its own integral causal unity as a single action, logically prior to the individual actions of which it is constituted and determining their ordered arrangement in such a way that the displacement or removal of any of these parts will disturb and disrupt the unity of the whole (*Po.* 1451a30-4).

Since the plot must contain everything which is necessary to actualize its end but nothing that exceeds these limits, it is essential, Aristotle argues, that the poet must establish from the beginning a universal (καθόλου) form for the plot (*Po.* 1455b1-2). Only with a clear picture of the whole before him, can the poet set in their proper place the various parts that constitute the subordinate actions of the plot such that all that is not fitting will be excluded (*Po.* 1455a22-6). The individual actions of human or divine agents, which comprise in their concrete particularity the smallest parts of the unfolding action, must themselves all also instantiate universals (τὰ καθόλου) in the sense that they reveal what a certain *kind* of individual will probably or necessarily say or do under certain circumstances (*Po.* 1451b5-12).[40] Not only must agency at every level depict a certain universality, it must also be specifically delineated in these terms through being confined by the limits of what is necessary or probable (τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον) so that all that is extraneous and contingent to the plot in speech, act, or circumstance is rigorously

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[40] The logic of Aristotelian metaphysical doctrines of substance, of potency and act, what is prior and posterior, are what I take here to be the basis for an understanding of the role of universals in the *Poetics*, bearing in mind the caveats which must result from the inexact nature of the subject matter which requires 'necessary' to be replaced by 'for the most part'. Thus, the universal form of the object, the tragic action, present in the mind of the poet, is actualized concretely in the minds of the spectators through the presentation of the tragic drama, much as the form of a beautiful statue comes into being as a τόδε τι enmattered in bronze, or marble. Other recent considerations of the nature of universals in the *Poetics* can be found in Halliwell (2001:95-107), Armstrong (1998:447-455), Heath (1991:389-402). Armstrong provides an account which is close to the one argued here, although developing a position around the account of process (κίνησις) in Book 5 of Aristotle's *Physics*, rather than that of substance in the *Metaphysics*. Halliwell sees as a "fundamental problem" with Armstrong's account the fact that "the agents ...and the actions of a dramatic poem are ...represented as particulars, so that if the plot of the poem is a structure of action(s) ...it cannot straightforwardly count as a universal" (98). Thus Halliwell concludes that universals must be there "as a kind of subtext" (99) "a sort of metaphorical presence" (101) because "universals are not, for Aristotle, substances" (102). Halliwell's comments, I believe, bring out the importance of an understanding of tragic action in terms of the metaphysics of 'substance' rather than the physics of 'process'. Universals are not substances but they must be understood as an essential moment of sensible (or ethical) substance (*Metaph.* 1045b18-19).

excluded.[41] Nothing whose presence or absence would leave no impact is any part of the whole (*Po.* 1451a35).

Aristotle's contention then is that, as far as is possible in a consideration of human action, the tragic plot should remove all those elements of particularity and contingency which in ordinary experience mask our understanding of the structure of ethical action. Thus conceived, tragic action will show how individuals of a certain general kind can be anticipated to act under a closely defined set of circumstances which draw out what is implicit in the nature of the protagonists. This is to say that we may think of the 'probable and necessary' as the conditions without which the formal cause, the universal around which the plot is structured, cannot be an effective cause. It is only when the plot action is thus conceived, Aristotle believes, that the general truths on the human predicament that are formally embodied within the tragic drama can effectively come to light.

Plot Aristotle speaks of as the principle, as it were the soul, of tragedy (ψυχὴ ὁ μῦθος τῆς τραγῳδίας, *Po.* 1450a38-9), a single action whole and complete (μίαν πρᾶξιν ὅλην καὶ τελείαν, *Po.* 1459a19) with all the unity and integrity of a living organism (ὥσπερ ζῷον ἓν ὅλον, *Po.* 1459a20). This is what it means for Aristotle for something to be a 'whole' and not simply a 'heap'. Just as the polis and the family, as human associations, are by nature unified 'wholes' whose parts are integral to their order, so too the best poetic representations of human life in these spheres of action must possess a unified plot as a κοινωνία of individual actions which are reflective of an integral internal structure. Purged of all that is accidental, tragic plot, in the terms Aristotle conceives it, is an essential unity defined in terms of everything that it is and nothing that it is not. As such, it is the τί ἦν εἶναι of a species of 'ethical substance': tragedy as an integral causal network of co-ordinated interactions which contains within itself its own intrinsic principle of change, through which its telos comes inexorably to be realized as the action unfolds in the dramatic presentation.

Set thus within its context, the human κοινωνία encompassed by the polis, tragic drama

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[41] Aristotle repeatedly stresses the importance of the poet confining himself to the probable and the necessary both for words and actions of characters and for plot incidents. See *Po.* 1451a12-13, 27-28, 38; 1451b9; 1452a24; 1454a34,35-6.

strives to encapsulate what is most significant to human association in terms of its ethical life. Rorty observes aptly that it is "crucial to civic life that individuals, acting for themselves, and acting as citizens on behalf of the *polis*, understand the deep and often hidden structures of the actions that are important to their thriving" in order that they may choose and act wisely.[42] On such consideration, any conception that 'political' is to be understood as referring in a narrow and particular sense to the historical exploits of the polis must clearly be disabused.[43] Perhaps Macleod put it as well as anyone when, in response to claims of Dodds and Dover that the *Oresteia* speaks specifically to certain topical Athenian political concerns, he stated emphatically that "the function of tragedy in its social and historical context is not to comment directly on the times, but to raise to universality and touch with emotion the experience of the dramatist and his fellow-citizens, to interpret in myth and drama their deepest concerns as human beings."[44] It is in this broad and encompassing Aristotelian sense that tragedy is to be construed as 'political' in its representations of suffering and ethical dilemma arising from disturbances within the nexus of human social relationships which link the good of individual and family with the common good of the polis order.

2.3 A sophistic perspective: tragic drama as intractable duality & polar opposition

Whereas the focus for Aristotle is on the composite 'whole' as the unifying principle of κοινωνία towards the comprehension of which tragic drama mediates an understanding, the vision of the tragic world, with its portrayal of human division and ambiguity, presents to the members of the postmodern academy a very different and indeed antithetical image. Tragic contradiction, it is asserted, draws upon "the logic of the

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[42] Rorty (1992b:17). Thus, she says, "[b]y presenting us with common models and a shared understanding of the shapes of actions, tragedy ...moves us beyond the merely individual or domestic, towards a larger, common civic philia."

[43] Narrowly conceived views of tragedy as commentary on specific contemporary political events and issues, which earlier held some sway among modern commentators, have been subject to telling criticism and have now fallen into disrepute. See Saïd (1998:278-81) and the citations listed there, in particular Zuntz (1955, 1958).

[44] Macleod (1982:131). It is on this account, he adds, that tragedy upon occasion "includes the use of myths which explain and legitimate something historical, as ...in the *Eumenides*, or the treatment of overtly political subjects, like the value of democracy (Euripides, *Supplices*), and the authority of the state as against that of the gods (Sophocles, *Antigone*); but such themes are completely bound up with the actions and sufferings of figures who belong in a drama." Cf. Dodds (1960), Dover (1957).

orators and sophists" who flourished contemporaneously with tragic drama and must be clearly distinguished from a philosophic logic of non-contradiction which argues a strict dichotomy between the true and the false.[45] Tragedy, declares Vernant, "did not seek to demonstrate the absolute validity of a single thesis but rather to construct *dissoi logoi*," countering arguments, each of which "at the will of the sophist and through the power of his words ...could be made to dominate the other."[46]

Thus, where Plato saw in the work of the poets only the flickering shadows of evanescent images which must be seen to be completely subordinate to the higher rational order, central to this contemporary account is the being of the relative, a privileging of conflict, of duality (or multiplicity) over unity, which sees these 'parts' as ultimately irreducible, standing independent and opposed to what has been mistakenly regarded to be the 'whole', but must under such considerations be recognized as nothing more than another 'part' competing for status in the social 'heap'. Tragedy on this 'sophistic' understanding is to be viewed as a "transgressive force" in political κοινωνία, its texts seeming "to question ...and often subvert the language of the city's order."[47] Gellrich argues typically when she claims that tragedy's "orientation towards the social context is interrogative and even adversarial, for it holds us within the grip of conflicts that the various mechanisms of culture aim to neutralize and dissipate."[48] So pervasive indeed have these views become in modern scholarship that, as Seaford aptly remarks, "they are in danger of becoming a disabling cliché, in which irreducible ambivalence (of various kinds) becomes the final destination of analysis."[49]

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[45] Vernant (1988a:417). Aristotle will indeed characterize the Platonic logic as that of 'the true and the false' and will find it problematic as such. He introduces his own logic of substance in potency and act to overcome the dichotomy between the one and the many entailed by the Platonic logic and bring the side of feeling in meaningful relation to reason. The extent to which he is thus able to address the real problems of a divided good that tragedy raises will be a concern of this investigation, one which will be examined in concluding chapter.

[46] Vernant (1988a: 417-8). Vernant's assertion that "when Aristotle in the fourth century set out, in his *Poetics*, to establish the theory of tragedy, he no longer understood tragic man who had, so to speak, become a stranger" (29) is very much coloured by his own entrenched conception of the primacy of contradiction: tragedy as a species of sophistry.

[47] Goldhill (1990:114). Among those also influential in the dissemination of similar views have been other followers of Vernant, including Vidal-Naquet, Loraux, Segal, and Zeitlin.

[48] Gellrich (1988:68). A survey of current literature indicated to Saïd (1998:284) "that these assumptions are now shared by a vast majority of scholars."

[49] Seaford (1995:203). Friedrich (1996:263-8), while heartily endorsing Goldhill's establishment of the

That ambivalence is a constitutive element in tragic drama as a genre is a truism. The danger, Seaford has rightly brought out, lies in allowing it to appear an all-consuming principle and concern of investigation.[50] The work of Goldhill illustrates particularly clearly the polar dichotomy which thus emerges, the existence of a "sense of tension," as he puts it, "between the texts of tragedy and the ideology of the city," between what is perceived as the flourishing of the 5th century polis ideal and what tragedy (on this reading) argues is its theoretical deconstructed reality.[51] Thus, on the one hand, the context in which tragedy is showcased, set amidst all the pomp and circumstance of a great civic festival, "promotes and projects an idea and ideal of citizen participation in the state, and an image of the power and glory of the polis of Athens."[52] Yet, on the other, the dramatic presentations which follow this protracted display of civic pride are seen to regard this ideal as contentious, and even to subvert it, so that "tragedy seems deliberately to make difficult the assumption of the values of the civic discourse."[53] Seen in these terms, tragedy, Vidal-Naquet maintains "n'est pas un miroir direct du social et du politique, elle est un miroir brisé."[54]

A closer look will perhaps reveal whether indeed it is on the broken shards of a polis image that must inevitably be shattered that tragedy focuses a sceptical and purely

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political context of tragedy (263), criticizes his assertion that Sophocles' *Ajax* exhibits tragedy's subversive and transgressive force. Saïd (1998:284) similarly criticizes Goldhill's discussion of Aeschylus' *Persians*. Griffin (1998) also argues forcefully against what he determines to be the misleading assertions of a one-sided orthodoxy (39). Although it has to be said that Griffin's own account, which would distinguish tragedy from other genres primarily through "its uniquely vivid and piercingly pleasurable enactment of human suffering" (60) and concludes that "it was above all pleasure that the state was paying for and the citizens wanted" (61), can scarcely be conceived as any less one-sided than those he takes to task. See also Griffin (1999b:73-94).

[50] Contrast the earlier and influential 19th century reflections on tragedy by Hegel (Paolucci: 1962). Hegel argues that "[t]he true course of dramatic development consists in the annulment of *contradictions* viewed as such, in the reconciliation of the forces of human action, which alternately strive to negate each other in their conflict" (71). And again: "The higher conception of reconciliation in tragedy is ...related to the resolution of specific ethical and substantive facts from their contradiction into their true harmony" (73). Cf. 51-2, 74, 324-326.

[51] Goldhill (1990:115). Hence, he concludes, "tragedy and comedy do not simply reverse the norms of society but inculcate a questioning of the very basis of those norms, the key structures of opposition on which 'norm' and 'transgression' rest" (127).

[52] Goldhill (2000a:63). See also Goldhill (1990:97-114, 1997:54-68).

[53] Goldhill (1990:124). Vernant (1988b:33) argues similarly.

[54] Vidal-Naquet (1992:18). Plato's complaint is that all that the poets can in fact offer is a superficial and partial one-sided reflection of reality as it is appears immediately imaged in a mirror (*R.* 596b12-e4).

destructive eye, or whether there is something more that can be said, a way the parts can be seen in relation to a whole: that a deconstructed world can be comprehended in terms of an objective order. Goldhill, himself, it is to be noted, recoils from drawing out to the full the logical implications which ensue from his proposals. As he takes trouble to make clear, what is not subject to question in tragedy, what he sees as incontestable, are firstly, claims that the polis, is "the necessary basis of civilization ...logically prior to individual and family," and secondly, that Athens is "the home of that civilization of the *polis*."[55] Yet tragedy's acceptance of the feasibility of the existence of a structured polis order must inevitably bring into question in its turn any simple undifferentiated conception of the conflict explored in tragic drama as of an essentially unremitting and implacable nature.

As is increasingly coming to be recognized, there is a demonstrable need to make an attempt to begin to break the stranglehold of a current mainstream orthodoxy that would argue "the privileging (not to say fetishization) of irreducible ambivalence, at the impenetrable heart of tragedy, as the object of a unitary, sui generis 'tragic consciousness'."[56] This is not say that the questions and issues that are raised by those such as Goldhill and Vernant are not of crucial concern. Viewed in a way that sees the many valuable insights that have emerged as contributing positively, 'par une image inverse' as it were, to an understanding of what is integral to the successful functioning of the political κοινωνία they find their place within the broader perspective.[57] Civic discourse, it has been well-noted, *contra* Goldhill, entails "civic exploration and not simply civic exposition."[58] So that it is reasonable to maintain that "what the pre-play

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[55] Goldhill (1990:114).

[56] Seaford (1995:203). On 'tragic consciousness' see, in particular, Vernant (1988b:29-48). Goldhill (2000a:69) provides a useful précis of the French school's position. Thus, he says, Vernant "has attempted to define what he calls 'the tragic moment', the socio-historical conditions of possibility for the genre and its conflicts. He contrasts the mythic and heroic tradition ...embodied in Homer and distinguished by its expressions of divine causation, with the civic world of law ...embodied in the institutions of the democratic city and distinguished by its demand of human agency and responsibility. Tragedy is a sign and symptom of the clash between these two systems, 'an expression of torn consciousness'- and thus what tragedy repeatedly sets at stake is precisely the notion of agency and responsibility central to any understanding of democracy and the citizen's role in the democratic process. In this way, tragedy's investigations of power, control, violence, authority (and so forth) constitute a public discussion of the *citizen as political subject.*"

[57] Thus Connor (1989:23) cites de Romilly's "observation that «le thème de la liberté, dans la tragédie grecque, sera le plus souvent traité par une image inverse» - tragedy affirms freedom by showing the nature and effects of oppression."

[58] Pelling (1997:235). Pelling cites as an example the recent change in understanding of the *Aeneid* in

ceremonies simply assert as civic *ideology*" can be translated "into a true civic *discourse* that articulates, and reflects upon, the tenets and presuppositions of the ethical life of the *polis*."[59] Hence, Pelling argues, there is a "need to reflect on what these clashes expose, and particularly beware the language of 'subversion'." The plays, he argues, "adopt ideological values in a more questioning way" than the pre-play ceremonies but can be seen as part of a single spectrum, "different aspects of the same thing" so that what is observed can be understood as "a shift of register, not a tension or a clash."[60] Connor too, while lauding Goldhill's "central insight," as pointing to "the potential benefits of re-contextualizing Greek drama, and looking more closely at the relationship between the individual plays, the festival setting and the civic order," warns of the risks of distortion that arise from an overemphasis on tension in this relationship at the expense, for example, of an understanding of tragedy's expression of Greek conceptions of freedom, which he argues have been shown to be not only a prominent theme of tragedy but also to undergo a "radical evolution over the course of the century."[61]

The brief period of tragedy's flowering and decline in Athens in the 5th century parallels precisely that time during which the Athenian democracy that nurtured it soared to its greatest heights and then fell.[62] This period can be seen to be marked also by a concomitant movement within society which sees faith in divine causation increasingly challenged by the assertion of the self-determining power of human reason; so that by the close of the century the bond that bound man to the traditional gods in piety has weakened to the extent that not only the ways of gods to men but even that the gods exist

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relation to Augustan Rome "where conceptions of propaganda and ideology seem much more subtle than they appeared a generation ago. We need no longer see the *Aeneid* as subversive of Augustan ideology, even though it sharply evokes the loss caused by empire, and calls attention to the suffering which Rome's glory has imposed on others" (225). See on this point also Laycock (1999).

[59] Friedrich (1996:264).

[60] Pelling (1997:234-5).

[61] Connor (1989:23). de Romilly (1989) explores the development the idea of freedom in ancient Greece. See too Raaflaub (2004).

[62] Between the end of the Persian Wars in 479 and the inglorious defeat of Athens in 404 in the Peloponnesian War, the great triad of Athenian tragedians, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, all lived and produced the works that have come down to us. Tragedy may well have had its beginnings under the tyrants, and certainly was enjoyed beyond the bounds of democratic Athens and long after the fall of the polis, as Griffin (1998:47) maintains. However, no evidence indicates anything other than that the finest tragedians and the greatest works in the genre were those produced in the 5th century Athenian democracy.

at all has become a question for public discourse. Not simply an undifferentiated flux of oppositions, as Vernant would have it, 'tragic consciousness' comes into being and passes away in historic time as the product of a changing point of dynamic equilibrium expressed in the interplay between the two defining moments which are its elements, the spheres of human and divine, but to which it remains logically posterior.[63] What can be argued is that, over the course of the period of around a century during which tragic drama actively flourished in Athens, a gradual movement took place, within which modal shifts in tragic understanding may be detected and elucidated in the course of ethical reflection.

Given thus a concrete determinate form in history, tragic ambivalence, Seaford maintains, will open itself up to the possibility of "a historically informed understanding" which reflects "the very different treatment of certain kinds of ambivalence in Aeschylus and late Euripides, a difference determined at least in part by the historical development of the Athenian law courts and of the concomitant awareness of the dangerous power of rhetoric to make both sides of an argument seem equally powerful."[64] Meier, in like vein, remarks that "Nietzsche's observation that Greek history ran at such an extraordinary pace is nowhere more strikingly witnessed than by the gulf between Aeschylus' *Oresteia* of 458 and Euripides' *Orestes*, which appeared exactly fifty years later."[65] Saïd, examining a major theme of tragic ambivalence, the relation between the polis and the family, makes a point of remarking the differences in emphasis between the tragedians. Aeschylus, she notes "focuses decidedly on the *polis*. Euripides, questioning the hierarchic relation between the two spheres, shifts his attention to the *oikos*: as usual,

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[63] Vernant (1988b:46-7) argues that tragic action requires "that a concept of human nature with its own characteristics should have already emerged and that the human and divine spheres should have become sufficiently distinct from each other for them to stand in opposition; yet at the same time they must appear as inseparable ...two opposed but complementary aspects, the two poles of a single ambiguous reality."

[64] Seaford (1995:203). In response to Vernant's assertion (Vernant and Vidal-Naquet 1981:9-10) that the conclusion of the *Oresteia* is "full of anxiety" so that to the questions that are posed "the tragic consciousness can find no fully satisfactory answers ...and so they remain open," Seaford (1996b:292) maintains that questions posed by the trilogy have indeed been answered and although anxiety certainly remains it is "precisely the salutary anxiety that is vital to the cohesion of the *polis*." Saïd (1998:284) also concludes that "it is difficult to fit Aeschylus into the role of a radical challenger of democratic values." On the other hand, she argues, "it seems impossible to find a validation of the existing social and political order in Euripides' tragedies." Friedrich (1996:266) too allows "that much of what ...[Goldhill] attributes to Greek tragedy *tout court* is attributable to Euripides."

[65] Meier (1993:33).

Sophocles is more difficult to place."[66] Using as an example to illustrate this point the interrelationships of family and polis in the Theban plays, she argues that "[f]rom Aeschylus to Sophocles and Euripides the relations between city and family, public and private duties, have become more problematic."[67]

Viewed in this light, the inherent tensions that are exposed and explored in dramatic conflict can be seen to be reflective of "the developing democratic dichotomies of civic and domestic, public and private, polis and household, internal and external" which mark the 5th century Athenian polis.[68] The family is not simply defined by the immediate natural and innate bonds of blood and kin which bind its members but implicitly also by the rational and ethical ties which draw it within the polis order. As a result, there persists an inherent tension between the demands made by reason and those of feeling; one which is ultimately reflective indeed of the divided nature of man himself as a rational animal. As the fissures between the public realm of the polis and the private realm of the family develop and widen, a division fuelled by the spirit of questioning of received values which characterizes the 5th century enlightenment, the individual comes to seek to determine his own ends independently of their relation to the common good and even to the detriment of his blood kin.[69] Thus the freedom that once saw itself objectively realized in the fulfilment of the duties of the good citizen becomes increasingly to be seen as the satisfaction of individual ambition and private gain. Coupled to the intellectual ferment, the added stressors of the demands of empire and the hardships of the protracted Peloponnesian War serve to further catalyze the degeneration and perversion of the older morality; a course which Thucydides and Euripides chart with insight and to which Plato responds in the *Republic*.

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[66] Saïd (1998:285).

[67] Saïd (1998:294). She notes the change in focus that takes place, beginning with an "exclusive concern for the polis" in *Septem* (287) to the increasingly more questionable case for the polis in *Antigone* and *Suppliants* and finally to *Phoenician Women* where Euripides "emphasizes the *oikos*" (291) and "there is no room any more for a well-regulated city-state where *oikos* and polis could cooperate harmoniously" (295).

[68] Henderson (1996:7). See also Humphreys (1993:70).

[69] Alcibiades is a notorious and often cited example. For the significance of 'father-son conflict' seen in terms of threat to polis ideology see Strauss (1989, 1993). Thus, he argues, "the anxiety or exhilaration which different Athenians felt about the growing freedom of individual citizens from traditional authority" could readily be expressed "in terms of that powerful metaphor, the power of the *kurios* over his sons" (1989:126). The clash of Stepsiades and Pheidippides in Aristophanes' *Clouds* might be recalled. It was in this vein also that Socrates was accused of undermining the authority of fathers and corrupting the youth.

3

Forming the Idea

The Polis in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*

ἔστην δ' ἀμφιβαλὼν κρατερὸν σάκος ἀμφοτέροισι, | νικᾶν δ' οὐκ εἴασ' οὐδετέρους ἀδίκως.

Sol. 5.5-6 W.

What has been found to distinguish the very different conceptions of the political import of tragedy espoused by Plato, Aristotle, and the self-described heirs to 5th century sophistic rhetoric, is not the assertion that tragic poetry must be considered integral to the discourse of the 5th century polis, nor indeed that it is capable of exerting a powerful emotional hold over its citizen audience. Upon both of these counts the protagonists may be said to be in broad agreement. The source of dissension lies rather in their divers determination of how natural necessity is related to reason in tragic drama, and how, in its turn, this relationship is to be understood in terms of the established order of the polis as a κοινωνία of the citizenry: in effect whether tragic drama is affirmative, contrary or even contradictory, to demonstrable Athenian conceptions of a polis ideal.[1] Each of these three perspectives, while ultimately mutually incompatible, can find evidence in tragic drama in support of its claims.

It is with these considerations in mind, that the texts to be examined in this section have been selected; for the light that they shed on the political κοινωνία will be found to strike from very different angles as the sun slowly sets upon the glory that was 5th century Athens. Vernant is surely right to see a primary opposition between the worlds of divine causality and human rational agency as a *raison d' être* for a 'tragic consciousness'. However, far from being a century long undifferentiated 'tragic moment', it will be argued that not only, in line with the concerns voiced by critics such as Seaford, Saïd, and Pelling, can tragic ambivalence be 'historicized', but that what is revealed in the

[1] As understood in this reading respectively by Aristotle, sophistic rhetoric, and the argument of Plato's *Republic*.

breakdown of the structure of the older order which the tragedians depict is, through the insights it provides into the conceptual problem of political κοινωνία, critical to the formulation of the ἀπορία which the philosophers will address as they seek in their turn to come to terms with the divided nature of humanity.

Discussion in this chapter will focus on the polis as it is conceived by Aeschylus in *Eumenides*. Here, it will be argued, the image of an ideal Athens emerges as a whole which is comprehensive of the division of its constitutive parts. Aeschylus, "the most optimistic of the tragic writers," as Vernant styles him,[2] images with a particular clarity for his audience the idea of political κοινωνία that underlies and structures the polis; an understanding that brings with it the potential to realize in practice all those ideals of the good life for the polis and its citizens which the pre-play ceremonies have been found to celebrate in 5th century Athens. Thus Griffith argues typically that "[w]hile 'political' readings of Sophocles and Euripides come in many different stripes, Aeschylus, writing in the glorious days after Marathon and Salamis, and before the horrors of the Peloponnesian War, impresses almost every modern reader as the proudest advocate of Athens and its new democracy."[3] Mills, addressing the question of the Athenian self-image in literature of the period, concludes in like vein that "[t]he ideal Athens is functioning as a model and example for its audience through tragedy as early as 458 BC, in the conclusion of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy."[4]

As a youth, Aeschylus, whose birth is most reliably dated to 525/4 BC, would have been witness to the increased harshness of the last years of Peisistratid rule, the attempted coup of 514, and the στάσις which erupted after the overthrow of the tyranny of Hippias in 510 as the rival aristocratic factions of Isagoras and Cleisthenes contested for power. Yet, only three years later in 507, in what on the surface seems a remarkable turnaround in affairs, the traditional domination of the social order by aristocratic factions gave way to

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[2] Vernant (1988b:33).

[3] Griffith (1995:63).

[4] Mills (1997:54). It might be noted here that the *Oresteia* is the 'weapon of choice' for those who, like Seaford (1995:208-212), wish to take issue with the conception of tragedy as questioning the ideals of the polis through its ubiquitous portrayal of unremitting ambivalence. Both Vernant (1988b:418-20) and Goldhill (1986:1-56, 2000a:74-81) have been prominent in promulgating such a position on the end of the *Oresteia*.

the establishment of the democratic polis in which each citizen, through his active participation in the political institutions of βουλή and ἐκκλησία, was able to both rule and be ruled.[5] A brief insight into the movement of thought which culminated in the radical reforms of Ephialtes and Pericles provides a meaningful context from which to begin a consideration of the foundation myth for the polis ideal in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. It will also continue to inform the subsequent discussion of the questions and challenges that arise as, during the course of the 5th century, collective and individual good are seen increasingly to diverge once again.

In reality the historic change from aristocratic tyranny to a direct democracy that Cleisthenes effected with the reforms implemented in 507 took place in a soil already well prepared to nurture the new growth, beginning with the reforms of Solon.[6] Recognizing that the travails that beset the polis of his day and threatened imminent civil strife (ἡ στάσις ἔμφυλον) did not result from any dispensation of Zeus but were of human origin, in particular the injustice of the aristocratic leadership (δήμου θ' ἡγεμόνων ἄδικος νόος), Solon sought through the discernment of human reason to reach a solution in which the good of the polis as a whole was conceived as prior to that of the oppositions it contained.[7] As Farrar summarizes his achievements, "Solon ...gave shape to the idea of the *polis* by absorbing the traditional aristocracy in a definition of citizenship which allotted a political function to every free resident of Attica."[8] The great accomplishment of Cleisthenes in completing the work that Solon had begun lay in his recognition that the

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[5] Aristotle's definition of the citizen in an unqualified sense is one who is able to share in the deliberative and judicial functions of the polis (*Pol.* 1275a1-b21). See further on Athenian citizenship Hansen (1991:97). Admittedly, by modern criteria, full citizenship in the Greek polis was limited. However, this should not be allowed to overshadow the importance of what was achieved in terms of actualizing human freedoms.

[6] Reforms effected by Solon in 594/3 B. C.

[7] Solon 4W.1-39. Solon, Aristotle attests, broke the monopoly of the oligarchy, assured that personal freedom was the right of every Athenian citizen, and established the 'traditional' democracy with its well balanced constitution (Arist. *Pol.* 1273b36-9). Aligning himself with neither the aristocracy or the masses, Solon sought through his key constitutional reforms to achieve a conception of the just polis as a whole somehow able to contain within it an accommodation of the disparities arising from both tribal interests and economic inequities. The common good is seen to be consequent upon εὐνομία. "The concept of εὐνομία," Raaflaub (2000:41) argues, "stands not only for a good social order, but for the political resolution of crisis and *stasis* and for the integration of the polis." See also the discussion of εὐνομία by Andrewes (1938).

[8] Farrar (1988:21).

political unity of Attica could not be assured unless the continuing source of disruptive στάσις, resident in the competing interests of traditional aristocratic tribal power bases, could somehow be ameliorated, an area Solon had been unable to adequately address.[9]

Cleisthenes' solution to the festering problem of internal factional strife among the aristocracy was, in Aristotle's words, to give the polity to the people (ἀποδιδοὺς τῷ πλήθει τὴν πολιτείαν) and this indeed is the key to his success (Arist. *Ath.* 20.1).[10] Looked at from the perspective of the polis as a 'whole of parts', what Cleisthenes was able to successfully accomplish was a political unification of Attica through the inception of a common Athenian identity within a centralized abstract rational order.[11] Effectively, Parker observes, Cleisthenes achieved his chief political objectives by diverting "the main flow of political life elsewhere, so that what had been main channels stagnated into backwaters."[12] There was, however, another side to the Cleisthenic reforms equally important to their success. While the main flow was thus diverted, ameliorating the major source of στάσις, the political waters of the local tributary streams, in the form of traditional associations, such as the phratries, and the cultic practices that helped define them, were able to hold to their ancient course (Arist. *Ath.* 21.6).[13] Indeed, Parker notes, to be successful "a democratic reformer could not but be conservative in dealing with

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[9] The failure to address this question led to an upsurge in social unrest resulting in the tyranny of the Peisistratids. However, Farrar (1988:21) notes, "[t]he rule of the Pisistratids, anxious as they were to stifle their fellow aristocrats, hastened the dissolution of the traditional hierarchy and promoted the self-conscious sense of unity and solidarity of the Athenians as a whole."

[10] Cf. Hdt. 5.66.2. By allying himself with the general populace, Cleisthenes was able to successfully overcome the opposition of his fellow aristocrats.

[11] Cleisthenes superimposed upon the existent order a completely new and rationally determined artificial tribal arrangement into which 'every Athenian from every corner of Attica was distributed'. The basic administrative units, the demes, were organized in such a way that the major regional distinctions which had been the root source of faction were eliminated. See Parker (1996:116-117). Frost (1994) notes that under Cleisthenes' reforms "registration of all Athenians by territorial deme was an immediately effective way of enfranchising all the citizens of Attica." At the same time, he adds, deme registration "obscured family connections and introduced an egalitarian element to the notion of being an Athenaios" (52).

[12] Parker (1996:116).

[13] The phratry was a form of local κοινωνία with its own territorial association and cult. Frost (1994:50) reports that it was to the phratry that the individual "belonged in the most meaningful sense." Parker (1996:116) observes that "no attempt was made to replace the phratry by the deme as a recorder of citizenship; rather the two rode on in cheerful tandem." See too Sourvinou-Inwood (2000a:28) who notes that subsequent to the institution of the new order, "the deme was the most important religious subdivision after the polis. The cults and rites that went into the making of the cult of these demes were undoubtedly not new; most would have been local rituals, now brought under the administration of the demes."

social groupings that all men loved because they had grown up with them."[14] Thus, while maintaining an important continuity with the past, Cleisthenes was able at the same time to contain the natural and particular side of Attic life within the unity of a common identity; to bring into being a conception of the polis as a whole comprehensive of both the changing element of diversity and the unchanging element of the constitutional structure.[15]

No longer subject to the arbitrary dictates of tyrants, the citizens of democratic Athens, following Cleisthenes' reorganization, see themselves as exercising their freedom equally and rationally in actualizing the good of the whole under the rule of the Νόμοι. As a result the Athenian polis can now be said in a real way to be a unity as a κοινωνία πολιτῶν πολιτείας in which justice is the organizing principle.[16] Herodotus will remark upon the increase in strength of the Athenians once they had thrown off the tyrannies and attained political equality (ἰσηγορίη). While they were under the rule of tyrannies, Herodotus maintains, the Athenians were no better at warfare than their neighbours. Once freed from tyranny, however, they became by far the foremost power, as each individual took upon himself, as his own cause, the cause of the whole.[17] Indeed the young democracy was less than two decades old when forced to face the greatest of tests, prevailing virtually single-handed over the might of the Persian empire at Marathon in a battle for survival. This success, attributed by Herodotus to the reforms instituted by Cleisthenes, can be seen to be the spur to the further democratic changes which led to the civic unrest familiar to Aeschylus at the time of writing the *Oresteia* and to the radical democracy of the late fifth century.[18] Aeschylus himself fought in this contest and it is

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[14] Parker (1996:117).

[15] Mills (1997:26-7) records the evidence which points to the Athenian recognition of "the necessity that Attica should be a unity, both as an ideological ideal, conveniently traceable to one founder [Theseus], and as a historical process which can be traced in the political and religious developments of the sixth century."

[16] Farrar (1988:20) aptly summarizes this understanding. "Political order is the image of intelligible (not obscure or arbitrary) divine order, mediated by the traditional rulers, the nobles, whose authority was both religious and political."

[17] Hdt. 5.78.1-8.

[18] Raaflaub (1998:19-20) argues that "[h]ad fighting against the Persians ended in 479, the full democracy familiar from the second half of the fifth century most probably would not have been realized." He sees Athenian sea power to be a crucial propellant of democratic change, citing a) the political empowerment it provided to the θῆτες, thus broadening further citizen involvement in decision-making, b) the increased importance and responsibility assumed by decision-makers as the issues they dealt with became more complex and the ramifications more far-reaching, c) the increased income from empire which allowed the

for this, the fight for freedom, and not his many triumphs in the dramatic ἀγών, that he himself chose to be remembered by posterity.[19] Thus, Podlecki remarks, it can hardly be "any cause for surprise that Aeschylus, who had lived through these years of danger and victory, of feverish activity abroad and political revolution, more or less peaceful, at home, should have reflected that interest in his plays."[20]

3.1 Justice as retaliation: blood & honour as principles in the pre-polis world

More than any other of Aeschylus' works, or indeed any extant 5th century tragic drama, it is the *Oresteia* that seeks to probe the underlying nature of political κοινωνία to ask how justice is present within it as the ordering principle of human community. Clearly and consistently throughout the trilogy it is the language of δίκη and what it is considered to entail that resounds as the central and sustaining theme.[21] Indeed, Goldhill asserts, it is true to say that "[t]o read the *Oresteia* is to engage with the question Socrates raises in Book II of Plato's *Republic*: what is the justice of a city?"[22] This is not of course to intimate that the *Oresteia* is a philosophical treatise but that the political considerations, concretely expressed through the medium of the poetic imagination, are a coherent expression of common concerns shared by poet, philosopher, legislator, and historian alike. Against the backdrop of "a society upturned, as in the body of the trilogy, or renewed, as at the end of *Eumenides*,"[23] Aeschylus charts in mythic form in the *Oresteia* the tortuous path from the violence and disruption of an archaic tribal world, in which 'Ares clashes with Ares, Justice with Justice' (*Ch.* 461), to the institution of the ordered life of the just political κοινωνία in the idealized polis of Athens, which marks the

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introduction of remuneration for office. However, he concludes, despite the significance of these factors, it was the "reforms realized in 462 by Ephialtes and supplemented over the next twelve years by several (perhaps Periklean) laws [that] decisively shifted the focus of power to the institutions that represented the entire demos" and "facilitated the political participation of all citizens." See further note 25 below.

[19] *Aeschyli Vita* 15.

[20] Podlecki (1999:124). Hence, he concludes that "[t]he relevance of Aeschylus' dramas to the political life of their day seems considerable."

[21] On the centrality of justice in the *Oresteia*, see for example, Podlecki (1999:63), Sommerstein (1989:19), Macleod (1983b:29), Zeitlin (1978:161).

[22] Goldhill (2000a:79).

[23] Macleod (1983b:40).

conclusion of the trilogy. In its charter for the foundation of the polis, *Eumenides*, it is well said, "fashions in mythical Athens the image of civilizing power and an ideal city, free from factional strife and successful in external wars, while guaranteeing justice internally."[24]

The first two plays of the trilogy have been played out against a background of primal natural forces, a world in which strife is king and Δίκη, as the order of the cosmos, seeks to assert itself through tooth and claw in endlessly reciprocated retaliatory action. In the tribal society centred upon kin relationships, which constitutes the pre-polis world, retaliatory justice, personified in divine form by the power of the Erinyes, is the established basis of social order. Now, as the trilogy approaches a resolution in *Eumenides*, the audience see coming into focus before them the very dilemmas with which they as Athenians have had to grapple in the political turmoil that has punctuated their steady march towards the democratic polis of the Periclean age.[25] Yet, even as they are able to relate in the immediacy of their own recent experience to these contentious events, they are drawn beyond the particularity of contingent circumstance to a newly heightened awareness of the forces which are at work within society threatening the persistence of the ordered ideal which they celebrate. Through the informing structure of myth, they have witnessed in the disordered and chaotic world of *Agamemnon* and *Choephori*, both what was once before and what could yet be again: a world of flux in which nothing is what it appears and everything is a contradiction, where justice and

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[24] Saïd (1998:281). See also Macleod (1983b). *Contra*, as earlier noted, are the positions of Vernant and Goldhill who resist any suggestion of closure.

[25] Dover (1957:230) observes that "*Eumenides*, like much that Aeschylus wrote, is unusual, and one of its unusual aspects is the clarity and persistence with which the hearers' attention is engaged in the political present as well as in the heroic past." Sommerstein (1989) also notes that "of all surviving tragedies it is *Eumenides* that has the closest connections with the internal and external affairs of the Athenian people at the time when the play was being written and produced" (26). Four years earlier, in 462/1, Athens had renounced its alliance with conservative, oligarchic Sparta and declared a new allegiance with democratic Argos, the traditional enemy of Sparta. Concomitant with these events, a major reform of the 'oligarchic' council of the Areopagus which saw it divested of most of its former powers, was successfully undertaken by Ephialtes, who shortly afterwards was found dead in suspicious circumstances. By 458, the year the *Oresteia* was produced, Athens was at war with the Peloponnesians, and threatened by στάσις at home from pro-Spartan oligarchic factions. Thucydides (1.103-7) records the events of this time. However, Macleod (1983b:28) maintains, if Aeschylus' audience can readily call to mind recent reforms of the Areopagus or the alliance with Argos "it is meant to see that, since they were indeed, as the play says, set up 'for all time', their value is confirmed by history." The arguments surrounding the political import of *Eumenides* have been reviewed in a balanced account by Conacher (1987:197-222). See also Podlecki (1999:81-100) and Bowie (1993:10-12).

injustice are one and the same and the distinction between beast and human, wild nature and the civilizing order of the polis is effaced.[26]

Epitomizing the forces at work in this confounded pre-polis world are the Erinyes, in mythological tradition members of a formidable group of chthonic goddesses associated with the potency of Hades, darkness, night and death.[27] At the time at which Aeschylus writes, the Erinyes are readily recognizable to Greeks as the avengers of a wide range of wrongs committed in violation of δίκη, whether δίκη be construed as that essential to the maintenance of ordered stability both in the human community and among the gods on Olympus, or more broadly as the natural order which governs the cosmos as a whole.[28] 'The sun will not overstep his course; else the Erinyes, the ministers of Δίκη will find him out', Heraclitus famously declares (DK 22.B.94). Although their thirst for vengeance may incidentally strike down the innocent as well as the guilty, the Erinyes do not act at random but in direct response to a disruption of the social order resulting from a violation of δίκη. Bloodthirsty and primitive as the Erinyes are as a personification of the revenge instinct, they possess nevertheless an implicit rationality and it is this that allows them to enlarge the sphere of their activities beyond the avenging of murder victims.

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[26] A particularly compelling account of the significance of the animal imagery is that of Heath (1999), who argues "that the human/beast conflation is one of the primary images of the *Oresteia*, from which most of the other famous polarities ultimately derive" (18). However, he concludes, "Aeschylus does not maintain the 'in-betweenness' to the end and thus defies most structuralist approaches" (17). Contrast, for example, the position of Charles Segal (1986a:60) who maintains that what is stressed is "not the orderly process of transition from one stage of life to another, but the in-betweenness, the marginality, the ambiguity in the juxtaposition of the two sides." See also Zeitlin (1978:171-2).

[27] See Visser 1980. The similarity between the Erinyes and the Κῆρες, daughters of Night, who are merciless avengers unrelenting in their anger against wrongdoers (*Thg.* 217f.) has been noted by Sommerstein (1989:8) and by Lloyd-Jones (1990:206) who cites the earlier insights of Jane Harrison (1922:213-7).

[28] As Henrichs (1994: 46), describes their archaic role, "the Erinyes presided over matters of life and death and embodied a distinctly primitive concept of justice older than any legal procedure or court of law and based on the principle of absolute retaliation: violence for violence, blood for blood, a life for a life." Sommerstein (1989:7), citing the evidence of Prag (1985:48-51) and Harrison (1922:223-39), notes that they are most commonly represented in ancient art associated with murder. In Homer, the Erinyes are most often invoked in this manner in the form of curses to avenge wrongs inflicted upon blood relatives, in particular in response to injuries suffered by parents at the hands of their own children (*Il.* 9.447f.; 9.567f.; 21.412f.; *Od.* 2.134f.; 11.271f.). However, the wrath of the Erinyes may also be incited against the individual who offends against any other of those established social norms which Zeus upholds; whether by violating an oath or failing to honour the demands of hospitality and supplication, (*Il.* 19.259f.; *Od.* 17.475-6). See too Hesiod (*Op.* 803-4).

3.2 Roots of justice in the family: the clash of the Erinyes & Apollo

As they take for the first time a physical form on stage in *Eumenides*, the Erinyes are manifestly at once both divine and bestial, and yet at the same time identifiable with no god nor beast.[29] Heath summarizes well the picture they present, arguing that they constitute "a combination of elements that makes them part beast, part human, certainly divine but excluded from the ranks of all three categories." It is only when the disparate elements that constitute them have been distinguished out, "that civilization itself can progress to the differentiated and differentiating world of the *polis*."[30] Cosmic powers without a determinate nature of their own, the problem inherent in the Erinyes' instinctual negative retaliatory justice, which catalyses a downward spiralling cycle of destruction which can only culminate in oblivion, is brilliantly crystallized in Orestes, a single human individual held fast by Hades whether or not he should choose to act. All the conflict and contradiction that has constituted the world of *Agamemnon* and *Cheophori* has focused itself now in the impasse arrived at in the soul of Orestes, a seemingly intractable ethical dilemma in which δίκη is locked in battle with δίκη so that to act justly is at once to act unjustly.[31] If the ἀπορία that has been presented as a knot in the soul of Orestes is to be successfully addressed, and Δίκη is to claim its place as a unified and comprehensive principle of cosmic order active in human society, then it must be shown how these contradictory appearances of justice at war within Orestes can be effectively reconciled.

It is in order to move beyond the dividedness of the appearances of justice and seek out the unity which can ground and stabilize their opposition, that Aeschylus brings on stage in *Eumenides*, to account in person for their ways towards men, the divine agents that lay claim to administer Δίκη at Zeus' behest. Thus, the rift that is there in the soul of Orestes is extended to expose a fundamental dichotomy within the order of the divine over the

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[29] Thus the Pythia cannot identify them as belonging definitively to any known species (46-59). Apollo condemns them as an object of loathing to both men and Olympian gods (73). Cf. 69-70, 196-7, 644, 721-2 where Apollo's castigation is repeated. The Erinyes themselves acknowledge that they are indeed divine outcasts (350-2, 365-6, 385-6).

[30] Heath (1999:34).

[31] Orestes will be punished by the Erinyes if he does not avenge the murder of Agamemnon, his father, at the hands of his mother, Clytaemnestra, so Apollo has led him to believe (*Ch.* 283-4). However, they will also pursue him for committing matricide (*Ch.* 924-5). The intractable contradiction within the retaliatory justice of the Erinyes itself will be superseded in the ensuing refining of the Erinyes' stance in relation to the social order so that the opposition becomes that of nature and reason: Erinyes and Apollo.

nature of Δίκη. A cosmic power struggle between opposed forces of instinct and reason, chthonian and Olympian is to be played out in the life of the human community. What must be discerned is how there can be a mediation between the natural and instinctual chthonic realm of the Erinyes, a world in which beast, man and god are conflated, and the rational order of the Olympians: a coming together of nature and reason, principles that will establish the proper relationship between beasts, men, and gods. As the mythical paradigm for the ideal of the just polis unfolds in the dramatic ἀγών, drawn within its orbit is a historical present in which familial and tribal values, traditionally sustained by a justice based on blood loyalty, must respond to the challenge posed by the demands of the new all-encompassing unity, the ethical justice of the polis order. What has to emerge is the understanding that man, if he is to successfully traverse the gap between a world of tribal vendetta and the civilizing sphere of the polis, must be able to contain the beast within, subordinating the irrational and instinctive aspects of his nature to a demand for a new and rational form of δίκη which originates, not in the particular ties inherent in kin relationships and tribal autocracy, but in the ethical bonds resident in the institutions which assure the collective good of the citizenry, as a whole which is prior to the distinctions it properly contains.

The knot in the soul of Orestes has its source not in himself, as individual, but in the social institution of the family, where contending principles of natural blood ties and ethical ties of reason have asserted in opposition to one another their own particular claims to justice. With the justice of Apollo, there comes into view a primary distinction between natural necessity and the ethical order. For it is at his specific directive, Apollo affirms, that Orestes has committed matricide (καὶ γὰρ κτανεῖν σ' ἔπεισα μητρῷον δέμας, *Eu.* 84), and it is Apollo who subsequently upholds Orestes' rights as a suppliant and defends the justice of his cause, thus drawing down upon them both the wrath of the Erinyes. Deprived of their own rights as traditional avengers of blood-guilt, a *leitmotif* of the *Erinyes* in this play will be their insistent accusation that Apollo and the younger gods of Olympus he represents have trampled down by force the age-old rights of an older order of divinities, and in so doing have overset necessity itself (παλαιγενεῖς δὲ μοίρας φθίσας, 172).[32] Apollo, however, in response, will prove equally adamant, holding

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[32] Awakened from the sleep induced in them by Apollo, the Erinyes, in the *parodos*, loudly decry in these terms the actions of the son of Zeus, who has robbed them of their rightful prey (150, 162-3, 171-2; cf. 323-5, 350, 391-4, 731). Following the acquittal of Orestes, the Erinyes continue to reiterate their charge

tenaciously to his own claim that it is solely according to his particular definition that δίκη is constituted. Thus they stand, at the beginning of *Eumenides*, chthonic and Olympian deities, divine solitudes seemingly complete in themselves, two sides of a single ἀπορία which asks: What is the nature of justice?

3.2.1 Structuring the problem: the essential nature of the polarity delineated (198-231)

If there is to be any possibility of a move towards a rapprochement, from duality to unity, it is of the greatest importance, as Aeschylus, every bit as much as Aristotle, here understands, that the problem be first properly constituted so as to expose clearly and unambiguously the true nature of the difficulties to be addressed.[33] The ἀπορία will be well structured if each side presents only what it sees to be fundamental and incontrovertible to its own position, excluding all that is contingent. The Erinyes are first to state the premise upon which their case is based, and immediately there emerges a key refinement to the position that has been attributed to them earlier in the trilogy as the guardians of social order in the widest sense. Thus, from being the acknowledged avengers of a range of wrongs against accepted social practice, the Erinyes themselves now redefine their own role in a context which is strictly limited, renouncing all claims to retribution that fall outside a narrowly defined blood bond, centred on the parent-child relationship.[34] It is on their unalloyed right to punish individuals who have incurred the greatest μίασμα, by killing those most nearly related to themselves, that the Erinyes make their stand, and it is to this intent that they declare that their assigned duty (τὸ προστεταγμένον) is to drive out matricides (208, 210).[35] As blind instruments of revenge in kin murder, the Erinyes respond mechanically and unremittingly to the stimulus of spilled blood. What is significant at this point in the play, however, is the very exclusive definition of kindred proffered. For, what the Erinyes now argue, is that

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that respect for the older laws has been destroyed by the decision to exonerate a matricide (778-9=808-9; 838=878).

[33] See, for example, Arist. *Po.* 1455a22-6, 34-b2, and the relevant discussion in Chapter 2 of this study.

[34] In *Agamemnon* and *Choephoroi* the mandate of the Aeschylean Erinyes can readily be identified with that of their Homeric counterparts, as instruments in the maintenance of social order in general (*A.* 48-63, 461-7, 744-9). Indeed, as avengers of kin murder, the σύγγονοι Ἐρινύες are permanently resident within the cursed house of Atreus. Even here, however, amid all the horrendous bloodshed their hatred, as Cassandra reveals, is focussed not on murder but upon Thyestes' adulterous liaison with his brother's wife as the πρώταρχος ἄτη (*A.* 1186-93).

[35] They have been appointed to this office (λάχος) by Μοῖρα they later reveal (334-5).

when a woman kills her husband, as Clytaemnestra did Agamemnon, it is beyond their area of concern since kindred blood has not been shed (212).[36] Essentially, in bringing the Erinyes on stage and having them specify exactly what they themselves understand by blood relationship and their sphere of responsibility, Aeschylus is establishing a definitive ground for the legal argument that will ensue at Athens under the tutelage of Athena. By affirming here that ties based on blood are not congruent with family ties, the Erinyes unambiguously separate themselves from the position that Apollo will champion. Conacher astutely observes that the Erinyes "explicit allegiance to the blood-line is here essential...to the expression of the larger polarities which it is the business of this play to reconcile."[37]

Apollo's response to the privileging of the parent-child blood tie by the Erinyes, is to insist that the primary bonds which hold together the family, as the basic social group, are not those of blood but the ethically based attachments which draw the realm of feeling beyond the limits of a purely natural will and within the sphere of the rational self-conscious, "the essentially spiritual and substantive medium of social morality," as Hegel terms it.[38] In making of no account the ethical bond of marriage, the Erinyes, Apollo maintains, while guarding so jealously the honour due to themselves as divine powers, cast aside in dishonour the Olympian protectors of marital unions (213-215).[39] The marriage between man and woman, safeguarded by δίκη, is even greater in significance than a sworn oath, Apollo proclaims (217-218).[40] Although not yet formally enjoined, the structure of the legal battle between the Erinyes and Apollo over the true nature of

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[36] Lloyd-Jones (1990:204-7), following Jane Harrison's lead (1922:217-23), concludes that Aeschylus' portrayal of a restricted role for the Erinyes at *Eumenides* 210-12 reverts to a more primitive nature as kin killers. It is, however, I would argue, not so much what is primitive but what is primary to the nature of the Erinyes, that is to say what is logically rather than temporally prior, that Aeschylus seeks here to bring out.

[37] Conacher (1987:145). The apparent contradiction between the role the Erinyes claim here and that Apollo attributes to them at *Ch.* 283-4 is also discussed in some detail by Conacher (144-5). Although he admits that none of explanations he proffers is "entirely satisfactory," he makes a number of insightful comments.

[38] Paolucci (1962:176). Thus Hegel argues that "[t]he notion and knowledge of the substantiality of married life is something later and more profound than the purely natural connection between mother and child, and constitutes the beginning of the State as the realization of free and rational will" (178). This, as he sees it, is the nature of the fundamental contradiction exposed by Aeschylus.

[39] Not only Aphrodite, and Hera, but Zeus himself suffers this dishonour.

[40] Sommerstein (1989:120) notes that Apollo seems to contradict his earlier position at *Ch.* 901 "where an oath associated with Apollo ...is held to bind Orestes to matricide." On the significance of this oath, see also Knox (1979:42) and Conacher (1987:123).

δίκη is already taking shape. In denying the 'absoluteness' traditionally attributed to a sworn oath, Apollo not only anticipates and further undermines the position the Erinyes will adopt, founded upon the traditional establishment of guilt or innocence based solely on the 'taking and receiving' of an oath, but calls into question, as Conacher expresses it, "one of the most ancient of sanctities," one "by which even the gods were bound with terrifying penalties attached."[41] Like the Erinyes, Apollo has moved beyond the position accorded him earlier in the trilogy and the argument is poised on the threshold, albeit as yet unrealized, of a self-conscious reflection upon what it is that an ethical conception of δίκη must essentially encompass.[42]

The radical opposition of the Erinyes and Apollo has been laid bare and the structure of the ἀπορία is in place. Each of these divine powers has claimed for itself the right to an actuality as the sole principle of the just order of the family. For the Erinyes, the realm of necessity, the natural and instinctual, based upon their particular definition of the blood tie, is seen to be everything; the rational and ethical can count for nothing whether at the level of the individual, the family, the polis, or the gods themselves. For Apollo, in direct contrast, it is the rational ethical order that is the whole of δίκη and demands emanating from the side of feeling and natural ties must be discounted. The polar contrariety, which immediately divides and sets apart the Erinyes and Apollo, is a dramatic reflection of the opposed interests which have been witnessed to separate the older tribal order centred on the family blood tie from the emergent polis order. The Erinyes' justice, grounded in the claim of individual and family to the blood right of revenge, is confronted by Apollo's position that the collective interest of the social order as a whole is paramount. Yet, even while Apollo's justice, as it stands, may already be recognized as an advance in the sense that it offers a means of resolving the dilemma, in this case through ritual purification, it nevertheless remains the case that these two expressions of δίκη are essentially the same in that that they are equally partisan and retaliatory; the anarchy which is the endless

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[41] Conacher 1987:147. Cf. Hes. *Theogony* 400, 783-806.

[42] The significance of line 217-8 will become apparent in two later passages in the play. In response to the Erinyes' claim that Orestes' refusal to swear an oath denying he killed his mother means that he must *de facto* be judged guilty (429), Athena will state that what they wish is to have a reputation for being just rather than to act justly (430). Injustice must not be victorious simply through the use of oaths (432). See further Conacher's (1987:146-7) concise and excellent summary of commentary on this contentious passage.

particularity of blood vengeance is simply countered and annulled by the despotism of an abstract rationality which seeks to equate itself immediately with a collective good.

3.2.2 Mediation of the opposition of reason & nature (397-489)

The change of venue from the wild and natural ambience of Apollo's temple at Delphi, the spiritual centre of the Greek-speaking world, to the acropolis of Athens and the temple of Athena heralds a transition from the rule of φύσις and βία to that of λόγος and πειθώ, and with it the opportunity to move beyond the seemingly intractable impasse which has been reached in the initial abortive encounter between Apollo and the Erinyes.[43] In Athena, who appears on stage in response to Orestes' summons, there will be found incarnated the unifying measure that is to sustain the Athenian ideal. In *Eumenides*, Athena is seen to be the idea of Athens personified.[44] Solicited by both sides, the dilemma which first took form within the soul of Orestes comes to reside firmly with the goddess. The rights of Orestes as a suppliant, rights upheld by Apollo (474-475), must be weighed against the ancient right (μοῖρα) of the Erinyes which if ignored, will precipitate an unremitting destructive vengeance (476-479). In fact, Athena concludes, the matter is too great to be entrusted to mortals or god alone for judgement; a decision must be reached in concert (470-472). A resolution will be worked out between the city's divine patron, Athena (χώρας ἄνασσα, *Eu.* 288), as Zeus' representative, and the best (τὰ βέλτατα) of her citizenry, chosen by Athena herself (*Eu.* 487-8). It is very noticeable that in *Eumenides,* by contrast with other extant tragedies set in Athens, there is no king as a focal point of civic unity and, as holder of the sceptre of Zeus, a link with the divine. In this ideal Athens, it is Athena herself who assumes the functions of the ruler of the

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[43] Heath (1999:32) commenting on the "falsely peaceful note" with which the Pythia's succession myth begins *Eumenides*, remarks that even before the surface calm is shattered by the appearance of the Erinyes, there are already indications "of just how thin is this veneer of civilization, how thoroughly mixed the world remains." Dionysus is also resident at Delphi, the Pythia reminds us, and it is from there that he led his Bacchants against Pentheus, hunting him down like a hare (24-6). The specific mention of Pentheus is interesting. It is significant that the Erinyes will later refer to themselves as maenads (499-500). Like Dionysus, the Erinyes will reveal themselves to be the cause, as nature principles, of both fruitfulness and destruction, as dyadic potencies for pleasure and pain. The danger of ignoring the presence of these powerful irrational forces and failing to allow them a place in the order, hinted at here in the prologue, becomes very evident in contrasting the conclusion of *Eumenides* with Euripides' *Bacchae.*

[44] Dodds (1973:47) remarks that "[i]n mythical terms, as her first words show (397-402), we are still within a few years of the Trojan war, but in historical time we have leapt forward to a new age and a new social order." See also Sommerstein (1989:132).

polis. In this role she will establish a court of justice to try the case, a mythical charter for the foundation of the historical Court of the Areopagus, which is to endure for all time (483-484), providing a legal forum in which the arguments presented by opposing sides can be weighed and judged objectively under law: reason grounded in the justice of Zeus and informed by the exigencies of particular circumstance.[45] What is to be understood is that the *appearance* of justice established through the mindless mechanical observance of external forms is not to be conflated with the *reality*.[46]

3.2.3 In their polarity the positions of the Erinyes & Apollo are incomplete (490-680)

Removed from a setting in which each protagonist has sought to prevail by citing authority backed by threats of physical force, the Erinyes and Apollo will present their case for judgement within the civilized space of the Athenian law-court where reasoned argument, persuasion, and not physical force are to hold sway. Already there has been evidenced in the initial encounter between the Erinyes and Apollo that which belies a simple categorization of their positions as two incommensurable solitudes, separate and complete in themselves. So that the thought arises, it has been aptly noted, that "[t]here may, in fact, be more in common between the two parties than either could willingly admit."[47] Indeed it has often been remarked that Apollo, the voice of divine reason, is abusive, contemptuous, and dismissive of the Erinyes in his encounters with them, arrogantly disdainful of their status as goddesses (179-197).[48] On the other hand, in marked contrast to the torrent of invective poured upon them by Apollo, god of wisdom and foresight, the Erinyes, 'the Angry Ones', are in their response to this outburst, respectful, polite and unemotional, replying to Apollo's vituperative jibes with studied

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[45] On the political significance of the Court's mandate in relation to contemporary events in Aeschylus' Athens, more ink has been spilt than blood in the house of Atreus. The Court in the play is, however, most reasonably understood as beyond partisan divide. Thus Macleod (1983b:24) concludes that it is "representative of law as a whole, and all the more because it is judging the first murder case of all time".

[46] Thus, Athena has already indicated that injustice must not prevail by means of oaths (ὅρκοις τὰ μὴ δίκαια μὴ νικᾶν, 432). In her initial exchange with the Erinyes Athena has secured a ready agreement to the suggestion that they would not want to be simply called just, as opposed to acting justly (430).

[47] Winnington-Ingram (1983:96).

[48] Not only does Apollo go so far as to deny the Erinyes due status as divinities but he places them outside of the civilized (Greek) world fit only to consort with barbarians. Among those commenting on Apollo's deplorable demeanour are Livingstone (1925:121), Winnington-Ingram (1983:96), Conacher (1987:143) and Heath, (1999:33).

logic, while at the same time pointing out firmly and unequivocally that their duty lies in driving out matricides from their houses.

There is more than a simple irony in the fact that reason is seen to lie with the Erinyes and passion with Apollo in this encounter. What is being brought to the fore is that, taken on their own, the positions of the Erinyes and of Apollo are radically incomplete. Although contrary, the Olympian and the chthonian are at the same time held in a determinate relation to one another in which each side of the opposition contains implicitly that which is considered to characterize the other. Hence, while reason may be distorted by passion in Apollo, it is also the case, as the Erinyes will come to amply demonstrate, that the forces of the irrational are open to being informed by reason.[49] What Aeschylus brings to the fore in *Eumenides*, is a recognition that if the tension and opposition which persists between these forces, and which constitutes the ἀπορία, is to be successfully ameliorated, it will not be by the complete rout of one protagonist by the other, the whole equated with one of the parts. What is needed is a measure that can comprehend and unify this primary contrariety so that the natural and the rational, whether in the soul, in the family, in the city, or in the cosmos, are seen not as opposed, but as contained within a whole which is comprehensive of their difference: the differentiated moments of a single activity which is the justice of Zeus, actualized in the human community as the ethical life of the polis.

As they prosecute more fully their own position, the Erinyes stress the strength of their claim to be seen as an integral part of society and not as outcasts, merely instruments of blind revenge (490-565). To allow a matricide to go unpunished, they point out, will be in effect nothing less than the overthrow of any established order (490-491).[50] As angry spirits, the Erinyes have a focus and a justification in their response to murder; their anger they claim is righteous: murder strikes at the very root of justice. Implicitly the

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[49] Aristotle will argue that the non-rational soul, although ἄλογος in the sense that it does not initiate a rational process can be said nevertheless to have a share in reason (λόγον ἔχον) insofar as it listens to reason and obeys it (*EN* 1102b30-1103a3).

[50] νῦν καταστροφαὶ νέων / θεσμίων has caused editors some puzzlement. However, this is the sense they convey, whether we understand with Dover (1957:230-2) and Conacher (1987:156) that they refer to the new order of the court of the Areopagus which Athena is about to establish or we accept Sommerstein's argument for Ahrens' amendment of νόμων for νέων and a consequent reference to the old established order of law.

goddesses recognize that murder offends against the most primary of human instincts, that of survival. The more closely related murderer and victim the greater, it can be argued, is the impact on this instinct for self-preservation. Thus, the goddesses claim, without the assured wrath of the Erinyes to deter them, men, freed from inhibition, will strike out indiscriminately and parents will ever and again be struck down by their children (494-498). In vain then will anyone call on them for assistance. Divested of the purpose ordained for them by fate, no longer charged to watch over the deeds of men, the Erinyes become simply pure indeterminate forces of anger, unleashing indiscriminately every sort of doom (μόρος, 502), a cosmic reflection and magnification of the anarchy ensuing among men with the collapse of the house of justice (δόμος δίκας, 516).[51]

The Erinyes paint a bleak picture of what will follow should δίκη as they conceive it not be respected: nothing less than the complete disintegration of society.[52] Although their perspective may be blinkered, their understanding of δίκη less than complete, the Erinyes have nevertheless recognized certain general truths. Under the mandate given them by fate, the anger of the Dread Goddesses follows inexorably in response to blood-guilt as a fundamental disturbance of the ethical and social order. Coextensive with this punitive role, however, and operative as a positive stimulus to the maintenance of that order, they now argue, is the fear (τὸ δεινόν) that they engender in man through his anticipation of their anger (517-525). Prior in significance therefore to any active exercise of their rights in the restoration of order, is the deterrent power the Erinyes wield. Laws to be effective must have teeth, they argue. Along with justice, there must go hand in hand the fear of retribution, as a necessary prerequisite if a man or a city is to continue to have respect for what is right (ἔτ' ἂν σέβοι δίκαν, 525).[53]

With an instinctive understanding of their role as agents of homeostasis in the human realm, the Erinyes have begun to articulate the rationale which underlies and sustains

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[51] The language and imagery of 503-17 has been well noted to be that of unremitting disease (ἄκεά τ' οὐ βέβαια). See Sommerstein (1989:174-5) who remarks the recurrence of such imagery in the trilogy and Thomson (v.2 1938:283-4) who makes the apt comparison to Thucydides' passage on the plague (2.51), itself considered a metaphor for στάσις. Cf. Podlecki (1989:171), who, while admitting the use of medical technology, thinks the reference to 'plague' to be 'an overstatement of the case'.

[52] Sommerstein (1989:172).

[53] Compare Th. 2.37 διὰ δέος δὲ μάλιστα οὐ παρανομοῦμεν. See also, for example S. *Aj.* 1073-6.

their power. The horrors which result from anarchy have been dwelt upon, certainly, but the answer is not to be found by turning to the contrary extreme and to despotism (μήτ' ἀνάρχετον βίον μήτε δεσποτούμενον αἰνέσῃς), which is what they see themselves facing in the demands of Apollo (526-528).[54] What is required is something that will bring to these extremes order and measure (σύμμετρος, 533). By divine authority, they proclaim, it is the intermediate, the mean (τὸ μέσον), which holds sway in everything (530-531). It is thus evident that they see themselves as guardians of δίκη applying τὸ μέσον, and that it is a lack of proper respect for this their divine mandate that breeds excess, whether this be expressed in the form of anarchy or tyranny (533-534).

This speech of the Erinyes, the second *stasimon*, which in many ways appears to be out of character for them, is central to the unity and development of the dramatic λόγος. The Erinyes are at once chorus and actor in the drama, undergoing their own ἠθοποιία.[55] They are certainly to be found here to be uttering "genial admonitions...and benevolent aphorisms" and "dwelling (in thoroughly Aeschylean fashion) on Justice in general and on the positive rewards of the pious life."[56] Yet it must not be forgotten that these recurring choral motifs are not merely pious platitudes but the ἔνδοξα which form the basis for development of an ethical framework for society. In *Eumenides*, these moral tenets, no longer simply externally given, are brought gradually to consciousness from within the natural itself, the chthonic realm of the Erinyes, and then subjected to rational scrutiny. Even in the first *stasimon*, Conacher rightly emphasizes, "for all the vampire fury" there was "at least a hint of the loftier and more universal aspect of the Furies."[57] As this theme is developed in the second *stasimon*, Athena notably is offstage and this only serves to highlight the significance of her later integration of the key points of the

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[54] Kitto (1964:56) summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of Apollo's position well. "Apollo, in defending the interests of the King, father and husband, is in fact defending the very fabric of civilised society. He is vindicating, like Zeus in the Prometheia no doubt, the necessary principle of order and authority; and he is doing it, like Zeus in the other trilogy, by methods that can be, and are, called tyrannical." Sommerstein (1989:177), discounts the significance of τὸ μέσον when he argues that "[d]espite the symmetrical phrasing of the injunction, the chorus are mainly concerned (as Athena will be) to warn against anarchy, whose terrors they have portrayed in 494-516.

[55] Cf. Rosenmeyer (1982:146).

[56] Conacher (1987:157). See also Sommerstein (1989:172).

[57] Conacher (1987:156). Specifically, "there they have described themselves as εὐθυδίκαιοι ('righteous-judging,' 312) and their prerogative as a 'covenant [θεσμός, 391] ordained by fate and granted by the gods'."

Erinyes' reasoning here into the charter she institutes for the Court of the Areopagus. The logical structure of δίκη will remain as the Erinyes expound it: law, buttressed by reverence and fear, will impose limit, containing the contrary excesses of anarchy and despotism. Essentially what is to take place is not an overthrow of the old gods by the new but an awakening of what is implicitly there in the old laws to a new and rationally self-conscious ethical actualization of τὸ μέσον in the institutions of the polis.

At its root, the struggle between the Erinyes and Apollo, between old and new, is over the nature of the family as the fundamental social unit, and it is here that their opposition is focussed. If the blood bond is what defines the family, then the tribal nature of society and the δίκη of vendetta is affirmed. For the Erinyes, the marriage union of husband and wife is to be discounted, the woman is held within the family unit through the blood bond between mother and child, so that to destroy this bond is to strike at the natural nexus of the family. Thus, they have insisted that it is Orestes who has incurred the greatest μίασμα and they have challenged him to deny this (608). Apollo, in response, assuming on behalf of Orestes the responsibility for the defence, is insistent that his is the voice of authority, since he prophesies only as Zeus commands (619-621). The ethical ties that bind husband and wife, he argues, stem ultimately from the will of Zeus. Thus, the circumstances of the murder of Agamemnon, a great warrior king, the holder of the sceptre of Zeus, by his faithless and duplicitous wife must surely arouse the righteous wrath of the jury (625-39). The murder of a king strikes at the heart of the polis, the murder of a husband, as the head of the household, at the very survival of the family as the basis of society.

Apollo has argued a necessity to accord priority to the rational ethical side of the family association as the basis of order and authority in society. Like the Erinyes, however, he seeks to assert the absoluteness of his position by denying any reality to the claims of his opponents; the rational side of the family association is everything, for Apollo, the natural nothing. Now, intent upon the destruction of his opponents' position, he impales them with their own weapon, declaring that the mother is not after all of the bloodline of the child, but merely the receptacle which nurtures the father's seed (658-661).[58] As an

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[58] The male, the one who mounts, is the one engendering the new growth, Apollo asserts. The woman is she who preserves the shoot, in a guest host relationship, ξένῳ ξένη. On this "surprising inversion" of the usual assignment of the roles of 'nature' and 'culture', see Bacon (2001:56). Euben (1990:80), drawing on

example of the truth of what he says, he points in dramatic fashion to Athena, the motherless goddess (662-666). If what Apollo says has substance, and the Erinyes certainly do not contradict his claim, then the woman as wife and as mother, with no blood tie to either husband or child, is not an integral part of the natural association which is the family unit as the Erinyes define it. This is not simply a specious argument on the part of Apollo. Scientific theories of the day lend credence to his account. It is of interest too in considering Antigone's much discussed claim that she would not sacrifice herself for a husband or a child (S. *Ant.* 909-912).[59] What Apollo seeks to do is to remove altogether the question of blood guilt from the equation, by neutralizing it in this way, and hence to ground both murders in an ethical basis, according to them a relative priority in the social order which will reveal that Clytaemnestra's was by far the more heinous crime and that Orestes acted justly in punishing it.

3.3 The justice of Athena & the foundation of the polis ideal

3.3.1 The rational rule of law is actualized in the deliberations of the citizens (681-753)

Sufficient has now been proffered in argument. Before the vote takes place, however, and a decision is arrived at in this the first trial for homicide, Athena, presiding over the proceedings, will formally proclaim the terms upon which her Court is to be founded, establishing its θεσμός in perpetuity (683-4). The Areopagus Court is to be both literally and metaphorically the rock upon which the polis is built, the unchanging foundation of the polis (*Eu.* 572, 683, 708), delineating and defining the nature of community. The reverence (σέβας) in which it is held by the citizens, coupled to a kindred fear (φόβος) will be the twin guardians of this θεσμός, stemming wrongdoing among the citizens

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earlier work of Bacon, also notes in very similar terms Apollo's overturning of the "conventional view that man belongs to culture and woman to nature." For the 'misogynist' view of Apollo's assertions see, for example, Zeitlin (1978) and Sommerstein (1989:209).

[59] For Aristotle (*GA* 729a10-12), the male provides the form and the principle of movement, the female the body, as the matter. For references to Anaxagoras and others who held this view see Sommerstein (1989:206). Vernant (1969:138) remarks that "[t]he dream of a purely paternal heredity never ceased to haunt the Greek imagination." The Euripidean heroes Hippolytus (*Hipp.* 616-624) and Jason (*Med.* 573-575) are two who fervently echo this hope. Sommerstein (1989:207) points out other ways in which Athenian society accorded a precedence to the importance of the bond between mother and child. For example, "if it was an atrocious act to strike one's father, it was even more so to strike one's mother (cf. Ar. *Nu.* 1443-4 with Dover's note)."

(690-2). The true rulers of the polis, and the guarantors of its order and stability, are its Νόμοι, of which the Court of the Areopagus is to be the ultimate guardian under the aegis of the city's divine patron, Athena. Thus Athena charges her citizens to keep the Laws unsullied, free from pollution: neither anarchy or despotism (τὸ μήτ' ἄναρχον μήτε δεσποτούμενον) is to be countenanced (693-696).[60] The particular focus of the argument, the adjudication of homicide, is paradigmatic of what the Laws ultimately protect, the most fundamental need of every individual and state, the need to survive. Dover emphasizes that "the Greeks did not put murder and stasis into separate compartments; they clearly perceived that an authority which restrains and punishes homicide is the first step in progress from the life of beasts to the life of a human community, and upon the preservation of that authority the continued existence of the community ultimately depends."[61] Athena's concern for the individual homicide case of Orestes extends from the individual to encompass the structure of the familial κοινωνία, and thence to the good life of the political κοινωνία as a whole through the containment of στάσις, and she employs powerful language to ensure the impact of what she says will not be lost.[62] Whatever the particular political arrangement and distribution of other laws necessary to maintain the πολιτεία, underlying and sustaining them are the homicide laws and the Court of the Areopagus that administers them.

In the solemn and seminal pronouncement which establishes a mythical charter for the foundation of the Areopagus Court in Athens, Athena noticeably adopts as her own certain concerns earlier raised by the Erinyes.[63] Thus, justice, as they both aver, is to be found in a mediation between those forces that dispose to anarchy and those that lead to

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[60] This is a particularly contentious passage with both textual difficulties (see Thomson v.2 1938: 295-6) and much wrangling over its political import with respect to the recent reform (462/1) of the powers of the Areopagus by Ephialtes, and whether or not Aeschylus is expressing support for one side or the other. Sommerstein (1989:217-8) provides a concise summary of the major arguments put forward. See also Conacher (1985: 199-205).

[61] Dover (1957:234). Thus, also Sommerstein (1989:217-8), Athena's "praise of the council is not necessarily excessive for a murder court: the most basic duty of a state is to protect the lives of its citizens." He goes on to note that, in practice, the reputation of the Areopagus as a homicide court "rose until it was regarded as the wisest, most impartial and most august body of persons in the Athenian state ([Lys.] 6.14; X. Mem. 3.5.20; Dem. 23.66; Aeschines 1.92; Lycurus Leucr. 12, 52.)."

[62] Conacher (1985:202) notes the use of the "terms ἔρυμα, 'bulwark'; σωτήριον, 'safeguard,' 701; φρούρημα, 'guardianship,' 706." All these terms, he says, "clearly draw attention not only to the august nature of this council ...but also to the authority and power which Athena intends it to enjoy in the state."

[63] Cf. 517-34.

despotism, between the purely instinctual and the abstractly rational. However, whereas the Erinyes, oblivious to the individual, partisan, and anarchical nature of their justice, envisage that they themselves, with their sure and certain δίκη of revenge in response to the infringement of natural blood rights, *are* τὸ μέσον, Athena locates the measure in the reason which orders and protects the integrity of the human community as whole. In so doing, however, it is to be noted, she moves also beyond the formal and autocratic imposition of νόμος that Apollo espouses, reason abstracted blindly and, freed from content, arbitrarily applied. In the final analysis, Euben remarks, "Apollo alone is as partial as a world that excludes him. His views, and the forces associated with him, are essential to civilized life only when they are completed, complemented, and incorporated within a larger whole."[64] If the will of Zeus is to be effected, and a transition made from the tribal to the polis order, Athena must constitute this encompassing whole, bringing together, in a concretion of reason and feeling, λόγος and φύσις, both unifying form and the realm of natural particularity and diversity. Both sides must be there, the side of Apollo and of the Erinyes, held in a reciprocal relationship.

Justice as it is espoused by both Apollo and the Erinyes is found to be radically incomplete, "a part masquerading as the whole."[65] In Athena's newly constituted tribunal of the Areopagus, justice will be administered on the basis of considered judgements which will take into account both the laws and the circumstances which pertain to each case. However, although Athena acknowledges that the instinctual and the rational must subsist side by side in mutual reciprocity, the partnership she will now indicate is not an equal one. Before the tokens are counted and the result of the human vote disclosed, Athena steps forward to announce publicly her own decision, not only in favour of Orestes, but for the primacy in general of the male principle (τὸ δ' ἄρσεν αἰνῶ πάντα, 737).[66] Athena's choice of the male in everything is not simply arbitrary, the stability of

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[64] Euben (1990:81).

[65] Euben (1990: 77) makes the point: "Injustice is a part masquerading as the whole, like some tyrant claiming absolute sovereignty precluding the participation of others. For instance, both Apollo and the Furies claim to be exclusive arbiter of the trilogy's conflicts."

[66] That Athenian, and Greek society in general was patriarchal is indisputable. Extant literature from the 5th and 4th century, not least tragic drama itself, provides ample evidence that women, while essential to the running of the household and the provision of an heir, were feared by males, thought to be characterized by dangerous sexual proclivities with an ever present potential for disruption of the household into which they were introduced by marriage. Aeschylus' account of the derivation of the name of the Areopagus from the mythical defeat of the Amazons by Theseus (685-90), rather than from the traditional myth of its

society, and indeed the order of the cosmos, is understood to entail the application of limit and proportion to sensible difference: an ordering of the natural to the rational, of female to male, family to polis, and as it will emerge, chthonian to Olympian.[67] Her reasons are succinctly and unequivocally expressed, the divine patroness of Athens reaffirming the established order. A wife who has killed her husband has destroyed her household by removing its head and her death cannot on this count be held to take precedence (740). Indeed, Clytaemnestra has done even more than that because she has killed the head of a royal household, the holder of the sceptre of Zeus, and thus struck at the foundation of her community (626).[68] Kitto observes that Athena, "although she recognizes to the full the strength of the Erinyes' case, ...recognizes too that the authority of the social order is logically prior."[69] If the jurors' votes are evenly cast Orestes will be acquitted, Athena declares, and indeed when the tokens are counted this proves to be the case (752-3).[70] In effect, what Athena has implicitly articulated for her polis is what Aristotle will conceive to be the essential structure of any κοινωνία, properly constituted, as a composite whole of parts ordered in a relation of ruling and ruled elements in accord

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origination in the trial of Ares, can be taken to establish patriarchy as an informing idea for the workings of the Areopagus court.

[67] Zeitlin (1978:171-2) posits that "[a] whole series of antitheses form about the polarization of male and female roles" in *Oresteia*, going on to identify 26 such contrarieties, including culture-nature, intellect-sense, reason-passion, Olympian-Chthonian. Not considered by Zeitlin but emerging from all the oppositions she lists is the presence of an underlying contrastive of order and disorder, unity and division which in political terms can be identified with the opposition of ὁμόνοια and στάσις, on the overcoming of which both the Erinyes and Athena will focus as integral to a final resolution. See also Goldhill (1984:194). Conacher (1987:206-12), provides a useful synopsis and appraisal of other interpretations placed by commentators on the gender conflict in the trilogy. Further on this issue see Winnington-Ingram (1948a:130-147), Gagarin (1976:87-105).

[68] Apollo makes this point.

[69] Kitto (1964:84).

[70] The actual number of jury members voting is not known and this leads some among current commentators, notably Sommerstein (1989:221-6), Kitto (1964:65-6), Gagarin (1975: 121-7), to consider that Athena votes as one of the jury to produce the tie vote. The evidence to the contrary is compelling, however. On this see the extensive analyses by Thomson (v. 2 1938:298-300), Conacher (1985:164-6), Seaford (1995:209-11). In particular, the descriptions of the trial of Orestes in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris* (965-9, 1469-72) and *Electra* (1265-9) have been noted to clearly draw upon Aeschylus' account and to support the interpretation that Athena provides a casting vote for acquittal in Eumenides. In *Eumenides*, Aeschylus is thus seen to be establishing a mythical precedent for the Athenian people in future homicide trials where the unseen presence of Athena can be imagined casting her vote for acquittal in the event of a tie. The practice of equal votes securing an acquittal is affirmed in Arist. (Ath. 69.1). Conacher (1987:165) rightly cautions, however, that it can not be said with certainty that it pertained historically at the time Aeschylus wrote.

with a common telos.

The division in the human jury, which accords an equal respect to the competing claims of instinct and reason, is a further manifestation of the ambivalence already witnessed in the soul of Orestes himself, and of the polarity which has been so patently on display in the clashes between Apollo and the Erinyes. In the individual, in the community, and in the divine, necessity and reason, φύσις and λόγος, have countered their claims. It is only in the person of Athena that this duality is finally seen to be taken up and overcome in the justice of Zeus as the ordering principle of the political κοινωνία as a 'whole'.[71] Dependent as it undoubtedly is upon her casting vote, this is nevertheless not to be seen as a decision unilaterally imposed by Athena, but as one achieved only in consort with her citizens and arrived at following the outcome of their own deliberations. In accepting Athena's ability to lead them out of their dilemma and direct the course of action, the citizens accord a priority to the authority of divine reason without effacing the side of natural difference which they represent. "Freed from the mechanical cycle of revenge and the life-destroying passions that paralyzed action in the *Agamemnon*, these Athenians will participate in framing their own destiny in conjunction with the gods."[72]

Amid all the disorder and contradiction of the natural tribal world of the *Oresteia*, there has emerged in *Eumenides* a rational governing principle of human society which directly challenges the primacy of the old tribal order. Through the practical wisdom that she embodies, Athena demonstrates that political reason begins with the universal of thought, the idea of what is good for the polis and, as ordering principle, what Aristotle refers to as ἕτερόν τι, gives form to the whole.[73] This is the very essence of Athena, the cosmic justice of Zeus made actual in the life of Athens through the rule of rational law.[74] It is in

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[71] Caldwell (1970:90) suggests that "[t]he final solution is symbolized by Athena, who embodies both the male and female principles, by Zeus, who is both father and mother to Athena and whom both Apollo and Athena serve, and by the transformation of the Furies into Eumenides, spirits of fertility and peace as well as of death and vengeance." Seaford (1995:215) argues on similar lines, concluding that Athena "is not only the guardian of the Athenian polis but, as a virgin warrior, as close to being male as a female can be."

[72] Euben (1990:85). See also Macleod (1983b:40).

[73] Burkert (1985:141) comments that what unites the various "spheres of competence" attributed to Athena "is not an elemental force, but the force of civilization; the just division of roles among women, craftsmen, and warriors and the organizational wisdom which achieves this. ...Poseidon violently sires the horse, Athena bridles it and builds the chariot; Poseidon excites the waves, Athena builds the ship."

[74] Podlecki (1999:63-100) notes Aeschylus' use of the language of the law courts throughout the *Oresteia*.

becoming the λόγος of the institutions of the polis, exemplified here in the deliberations of the court of the Areopagus, that reason ceases to be abstract and the just polis as a κοινωνία πολιτῶν πολιτείας becomes actual.

Like the abstract reason of Apollo, the principle the Erinyes espouse has also been found on its own to be wanting, anarchical in the unending cycle of violence it mediates. It is, in Hegel's words, a "purely abstract and external right" which, while it is "operative in the range of spiritual circumstances and conditions" does not make "the ethical organization of the same the content for justice."[75] Nevertheless, as Athena, unlike Apollo, has recognized from the outset, the Erinyes must be given their due, their ancient μοῖρα cannot simply be overset. The practical consequences of its disruption, the revenge the thwarted Erinyes will certainly wreak upon her land and her people if unappeased, is an intolerable burden (476-9). It is immediately evident following their perceived defeat, with the acquittal of Orestes, that this indeed becomes the new necessity for the Erinyes as they see their ancient rights (παλαιοὶ νόμοι), the δίκη of blood vengeance, overridden and trodden down by the Olympians (778-9). Divorced from any limiting and ordering principle at all, the natural is endlessly contradictory, incessantly at war. Thus it is that the Erinyes, primal natural forces of anger and destruction, deprived now of the limit of their ancient mandate, will wreak widespread and indiscriminate havoc upon the polis, unless Athena can persuade them otherwise.

The trial and acquittal of Orestes, it is evident, has been but the first step in the resolution of the deadlock. Caldwell judicially observes that the "apparent victory for the male principle ...is neither a real nor a final solution. The true conclusion to the long struggle is based on the acknowledgement that there are two sides to human life, neither of which may be frustrated without dire consequences. ...In such a conflict there is neither victory nor defeat; both antagonists must receive a share in a new and inclusive unity."[76] Indeed, Athena will argue, the Erinyes and the side of feeling that they embody have an essential part to play in the new order. Even a divinely mandated Δίκη embodied in the Νόμοι and

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"The ambiguity of the term dikê, with its emphasis now on the abstract force, now on the legal" is given concrete form in *Eumenides* as "Dikê, the maiden daughter of Zeus, is embodied and made operative in the dikai which assume the center of the stage" (75).

[75] Paolucci (1962:176).

[76] Caldwell (1970:90).

interpreted by a human tribunal constituted of the best of her citizens is not of itself sufficient to maintain order and prevent στάσις from breaking out in the polis, in the face of those innate individual human desires and passions ever-threatening to set private interest before the common good.[77]

To the employment of right reason there is an added necessity, one which has early been recognized by the Erinyes and subsequently confirmed by Athena, to maintain within society an essential element of fear (τὸ δεινόν), the presence of a force that through its potential to punish acts as a spur to righteousness.[78] Through the fear of retribution they are able to invoke in would-be transgressors, the Erinyes can rightly claim to be a restraining force, a powerful and indeed an essential bulwark of social order. However, if she is to harness this irrational fury to serve the needs of the polis, Athena must first be able to move the Erinyes beyond the polarity of old and new, defeat and victory, and integrate them into that higher unity within which their powers will be ordered and contained to serve the common good of the whole. The role of the Erinyes as agents of δίκη has not been usurped, as they suppose, Athena will argue. What has changed is not the need for the Erinyes as enforcers but the mandate under which they are to operate. Now, instead of responding automatically and arbitrarily to φύσις, to stimuli of blood and instinct, they will instead be asked to uphold the rule of λόγος through the justice of the polis and its law courts.

3.3.2 Strife is quelled by the statesman's power of persuasion (778-891)

Athena has demonstrated her statesmanship with her decisive leadership of the court proceedings. Now, in her handling of the anger and bitterness of the Erinyes, she provides an exemplary model of how through the power of persuasion the successful statesman is able to win over even the fiercest and most obdurate opposition and keep the ship of state on its true course. Whereas Athena is ruled by reason (νοῦς), the Erinyes have shown themselves to be dominated by considerations of honour (τιμή), which in accord with their ancient right has focussed on their pursuit of revenge justice.[79] It is to

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[77] Macleod (1983b:23) suggests that the citizen jurors are spoken of as ἀστῶν ...τὰ βέλτατα (487) "to emphasize not that they are superior, but that they perfectly represent the city, being the flower of its manhood."

[78] On Erinyes, (517-25). On Athena, (698-9).

[79] The Erinyes can be seen to be analogous in their pursuit of honour not only to the Homeric hero but to

this concern that Athena addresses her argument, first by stressing that the Erinyes have in fact suffered no defeat, no diminution of their honour.[80] Significantly, however, although indeed it will eventually emerge that the Erinyes will retain their responsibility for the maintenance of δίκη within the new polis order, this is not the argument with which Athena leads as she makes her attempt to persuade the Erinyes to give up their anger. Instead, she draws upon another side to these ancient goddesses, one which has lain latent and unconsidered in their single-minded pursuit of blood vengeance. As outcasts from the society of gods and men, the Erinyes have been honoured only in a very limited and negative way through the fear they instil in the exertion of their punitive role. Now, as Athena attempts to bring these instinctual powers governing the irrational within the civilized order, she recognizes and appeals to their unspoken need for a broader recognition and acceptance. Hence she offers them a place of honour in her city and a cult of their own, a chance to be an integral element in maintaining the integrity of the whole which is the just κοινωνία of the polis.

As chthonic powers, Athena's argument indicates, the Erinyes possess not only the capacity for destruction but a contrary and contrasting potential for beneficence. It has been argued convincingly indeed that "Erinyes ('Angry Ones') and Eumenides ('Kindly Ones') are the two names for the polar identities of the same group of powerful divinities who dwell beneath the earth."[81] Henrichs astutely remarks that "the Erinyes require the existence of the Eumenides to achieve their full meaning, and vice versa."[82] Seen thus,

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the θυμός dominated Guardian class of Plato's *Republic* and the θυμοειδές element of the tri-partite soul. They can also be likened to that part of the soul Aristotle describes as non-rational but capable of sharing in reason by responding to it (*EN* 1102b26-1103a1). These associations will be drawn out in later chapters.

[80] Since the votes were equally balanced, Athena argues, there can be no question of a slight to their honour (795-6). As the Erinyes remain fixated on the dishonour done to their ancient prerogatives and the vengeance they will wreak, Athena, Sommerstein (1989:240) notes, exhibits "a steady increase in persuasive power" so that finally they are won over.

[81] Henrichs (1994:28), Lloyd-Jones (1990:211). The work of Henrichs, (1994:27-58, 1991:161-201), is seminal to an understanding of the role these goddesses played in Greek religion.

[82] Henrichs (1994:54). See also Henrichs (1991:164-8). Although the term Εὐμενίδης is not present in the extant text, the thoroughgoing investigations of Henrichs, in particular, have brought together a wealth of evidence that would identify the Eumenides with the cult of the Semnai Theai whose underground home "was located near a cleft in the rocks on the northeast side of the Areopagus" (Henrichs, 1994:39). Cf. Paus. 1.28.6. With respect to the title of the play, Henrichs (1994:48) makes the interesting observation that this may have been conferred, even by Aeschylus himself, in honour of "the Argive alliance (289-91, 673, and 754-7) by adopting the Argive cult title of these goddesses, namely Eumenides." Indeed it is generally accepted that Aeschylus refers to the goddesses directly as Σεμναὶ Θεαί in the closing strophe of the

the polar contrariety of the Erinyes - Eumenides reveals the goddesses as a dyadic potency for benefit or harm, pleasure or pain, a potential which is to be actualized, as Aeschylus presents it in *Eumenides*, through being given limit and meaningful form within the rational order of the polis as τὸ μέσον.[83] The association of Eumenides and Semnai Theai as euphemisms for the beneficial propensity of chthonic powers, as well as, by intimation, their darker side, is further brought out by Sophocles a half century later in *Oedipus Coloneus*.[84] It is the disastrous consequences of the failure to achieve an integration of this polar duality of the irrational that Euripides will expose in *Bacchae*.

Under Athena's guidance, the Erinyes have been brought from a narrow concentration on blood vengeance to a broad social mandate, one which encompasses all of the natural side of human life.[85] The emotional energy and drive they embody which, unfocussed, represents a powerful disruptive force threatening to tear the polis apart, will when harnessed in the service of the common good prove equally potent in the catalysis of the cohesive bonds of φιλία which will bind the citizens together as one. Both sides, reason and passion, must be present in a human community.[86] It is Athena's assurance that there will be for these self-described outcasts a permanent home within society, coupled to the promise of a cult, just and lasting honours in accord with their status as an ancient divinity, that finally achieves the desired effect (890-894).[87] Swayed by the persuasive

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Eumenides (1041). Semnai <Θεαί>: Hartnung add. "restores metrical responsion by introducing the official Athenian cult name" (Henrichs, 1994:47). Lloyd-Jones (1990:208), West (1990:397), and Sommerstein (1989: 284) are among those accepting the Hartnung supplement. It is worth noting that the corresponding word in the antistrophe is Ζεύς (1045).

[83] With respect to the Erinyes-Eumenides polarity, there is no evidence prior to Aeschylus that the two groups of deities shared a common function. Sommerstein (1989:11) speaks of the likelihood that Aeschylus is here "making a startling innovation."

[84] The sacred ground upon which he has trespassed, Oedipus is told, is the possession of terrible chthonic goddesses who are locally known as Eumenides but elsewhere by other noble names (*OC* 40-3). Oedipus himself invokes the goddesses as of fearsome aspect (πότνιαι δεινῶπες, *OC* 84), and inquires where these Semnai Theai reside (*OC* 89-90). These designations of the goddesses are later reaffirmed, as Semnai Theai by Oedipus (*OC* 458) and as Eumenides, in propitiation of their kindly response to supplicants, by the Athenian Chorus (*OC* 486).

[85] The goddesses are to be accorded responsibility for all the affairs of men (930-1).

[86] The importance of the instinctual passions as motive forces in the political κοινωνία is highlighted by Euben (1990:88). Plato and Aristotle in turn will lay great emphasis on the significance of θυμός properly oriented as a cohesive force rather than a potent source of στάσις.

[87] The establishment of a cult for the Erinyes and a place of residence on the Areopagus allows Aeschylus to present in dramatic form an aetiological myth which links the Erinyes of myth to the Semnai Theai of historical cult (Henrichs 1994:40). The mythical Erinyes were not themselves the recipients of any cult

power of her argument, the Erinyes will give up their rancour and take up residence in the city, alongside Athena (916-920).[88] As earlier, with the loss of their ancient rights, they had threatened unlimited destruction, now properly Eumenides, the Goddesses urge unbounded blessings both material and social for Athens and her people. In return they will receive from the citizens not only honour but also, Athena reminds, fear and respect for the potent threat of retribution they still represent to those who incur the might of their wrath through their transgressions (932-935, 952-955). Thus, in a final exhortation, the goddesses decry the evils of civil strife and, repudiating altogether the arbitrary revenge justice which they earlier had held to be their right to administer, they express their understanding of the destructive consequences that result for the polis from the cycle of violence it precipitates (976-983). Only when factional strife has been banished from the polis (μήποτ' ἐν πόλει στάσιν | τᾷδ' ἐπεύχομαι βρέμειν, 977-978) does there come the possibility of a κοινοφιλὴς διάνοια in which citizens bonded to one another in friendship love and hate as one (984-986).[89]

3.3.3 The collective identity of the polis is a κοινοφιλὴς διάνοια (976-1047)

As the drama concludes, the Erinyes/Eumenides are ceremoniously conducted to their new home underlying the polis, fittingly described as "a downward extension to the towering monuments of Olympian cult on the nearby Akropolis."[90] Ares has clashed with Ares, Justice with Justice, but now the destructive forces of disorder and conflict which have hitherto prevailed seek a lasting resolution in the enthronement of δίκη and αἰδώς in polis law and cult.[91] The ethical order of the polis and its institutions, as the

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Henrichs (1994:38). Sommerstein (1989:10) aptly remarks that "[it] is a waste of effort and resources to offer prayer and sacrifice to beings who are by their nature implacable."

[88] On Athena's insistence on the importance of persuasion, see 885 (Πειθοῦς σέβας); 970-1 (στέργω δ' ὄμματα Πειθοῦς). Πειθώ has loomed large through the trilogy but previously most conspicuously as δόλος. For the use of πειθώ with the intent to mislead see in particular, *Ag.* 205-17, 385-6, 905-57; *Ch.* 726, 899-903. By contrast, Sommerstein points out (1989:255), "Athena's persuasion has been honest in itself and has been employed for a purpose that is unequivocally good (the well-being of the Athenian people). Thus at the end of the trilogy πειθώ, like so many other things, turns from a curse into a blessing." See also Macleod (1983:31). "Persuasion (πειθώ)...is now the agent of the continuing peace and happiness of the city."

[89] The Erinyes express the traditional Greek ethical precept 'help friends and harm enemies'. However, they acknowledge now, echoing the words of Athena (858-69), that the 'unit' is not the kinship group but the polis.

[90] Henrichs (1994:47).

[91] Henrichs (1982:150) notes that "'[g]roup solidarity reinforced by ritual' is instrumental in establishing

extension of the rule of Zeus into the human realm, will provide the rational order while the goddesses will govern the sphere of the natural and instinctual. As the city celebrates its collective identity, Zeus and Moira come together as one in endorsing the peace treaty that has been established between λόγος and φύσις, between reason and natural necessity (1044-1046). Images of hunting and trapping, whether physical or verbal, which have filled the trilogy have given way to rational civic discourse. In the reconciliation of Olympian and chthonian it is Zeus of the assembly (Ζεὺς ἀγοραῖος) who has prevailed (973). Seated close to Zeus are the citizens of Athens, beloved by Athena (998-1000). In justice and reverence, increasing in practical wisdom with time (σωφρονοῦντες ἐν χρόνῳ, 1000) the citizens under the Laws will implement the common good of the polis, now seen to be a concrete whole comprehensive of the potency of its parts as the abstract unity of the polity and the indeterminate natural difference of the citizenry.[92]

Moderation, order and stability mark the conclusion of the *Oresteia,* as in mythical Athens there comes into being "an ideal representation of human society which pointedly reverses the social disorder of the *Agamemnon* and *Choephori.*"[93] Thus, North argues, "[a]t the conclusion of the trilogy sophrosyne ('moderation') emerges as the force that will save the polis from the two extremes of anarchy and despotism, and it is specifically designated as the characteristic virtue of Athens."[94] In this way the 'idea' of Athens which has emerged historically in the reforms of Solon and his successors is engaged with by Aeschylus and afforded a divine sanction in myth.[95] At the centre of the polis, stands the Court of the Areopagus, its divinely given mandate to invoke that reverence and fear for the Νόμοι which is to sustain the just political κοινωνία. "To know the

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and preserving civic, cultural and religious identities." See also Seaford (1995:216) who points out that, in the case of the Erinyes, this has a particular significance in that "they are agents of reciprocal violence" who if not properly propitiated will destroy the polis.

[92] The idea that the good polis, once established, will become increasingly better in time if its standards are preserved is also expressed by Plato (*R.* 424a4-8).

[93] Macleod (1983b:28).

[94] North (1966:45). She notes that "[t]he final scene before the Areopagus demonstrates the need for sophrosyne in human society and does so by recourse to the theme of fear, restated in terms of awe and reverence (*sebas, deinon, deos*)" (48).

[95] Euben (1990:91) suggests, "as Athena is the political educator in the trilogy, so Aeschylus is through it." This is not to say, as Macleod (1983:40) stresses, that the drama is expressing a "narrowly topical" view. "The tragedian is influenced by his time and circumstances; but they are an influence on the work, not the meaning of it."

gods' power," Macleod remarks, "induces justice inspired by a conscious fear" which permeates society as a whole and each individual citizen alike: "the parallelism of city and individual is part of Aeschylus' thinking as much as it is of Plato's."[96] For both poet and philosopher the concern is there to identify τὸ εὖ ζῆν, the life of human flourishing, directly with the just community. Nevertheless, as will be shown, the differences between the justice of Aeschylus, founded on traditional piety, and that of Plato based on a rationally articulated objective good, will in Plato's view prove defining and will necessitate the removal of even the works of Aeschylus from the public life of Callipolis.

The desire for freedom which is expressed here in the classical polis of Aeschylus and the Marathon-Fighters is not the freedom of the modern autonomous individual, but the freedom to order oneself rationally to a collective ideal.[97] As a result, the laws of the polis are not seen to be externally imposed but as the outer reflection of the inner laws the citizen imposes upon himself. Reinforced by the positive emotive power of collective cult, the law is taken up into the minds and hearts of the citizens, promoting internal harmony and keeping at bay the menace of dissension and στάσις, as each citizen sees himself actualizing his own freedom objectively in attaining to the common good.[98] Yet amid the euphoria there is at the same time a note of caution that must be sounded. The natural world is characterized by movement and change; nothing remains forever the same. What has been achieved is not the finality of an indissoluble good but the respite of a peace treaty (σπονδαί) crafted from the primary contrariety of Apollo and the Erinyes, a division of opposing powers of despotism and anarchy which, through the mediation of Athena Πολιάς, has been overcome in the unity of Zeus.[99] Although

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[96] Macleod (1983b:32). See *Eu.* 522-5. Euben (1990:67) argues similarly.

[97] It is to the paradigm of the Athens of the Μαραθωνομάχαι that Aristophanes will repeatedly turn in urging a cure for the ills of the polis at the end of the 5th century. See, for example, Ar. *Nu.* 985-99; *Ra.* 1069-76; *V.* 1060-1102; *Eq.* 565-77; ἆρα δεινὸς ἦ τόθ᾽ ὥστε πάντα μ᾽ ἂν δεδοικέναι (Ar. *V.* 1091).

[98] Even when secure from within, the polis is nevertheless still vulnerable to external threats to its existence. Thus, complementing the Areopagus and the Erinyes/Semnai Theai as the source of internal order and protecting the integrity of the polis from assault from without, must be the establishment of political alliances with other states for mutual benefit. The Argive alliance, which like the Areopagus court has its historical counterpart, is to last for all time (*Eu.* 670, 672, 673), the guarantor of the integrity of the polis in the face of external aggression.

[99] It is Zeus, Hegel argues (Paolucci, 1962), who "is the necessity of the relation of the two to one another...The truth, however, of the opposing powers of content and consciousness is the final result, that both are equally right, and, hence, in their opposition (which comes about through action) are equally wrong (296)."

reconciled at the last in the justice of Zeus, these powers nevertheless retain the potential to break free, exhibiting themselves in that human recklessness which brings in its train disaster and ruin.[100] To understand that this is the case, however, is not *eo ipso* to bring into question or to subvert the ideal to which the polis is ordered, but rather to bring to consciousness a recognition of the difficulties to be addressed in its realization. In this way Aeschylus' ideal Athens, Plato's ideal city, and indeed Aristotle's unconditionally best constitution of *Politics* Book 3, will be seen to be analogous. Thus, amid the overt joy and optimism with which the trilogy concludes, the hope and expectation for the attainment of the polis ideal, Aeschylus is clearly not unmindful of the inherent fault lines that inevitably persist in human community as it alternately reaches towards and falls away from human happiness, the just political κοινωνία which is its telos. The "unusually positive note" on which the *Oresteia* concludes, Heath notes, "is an optimism in the potential, we have to live ordered lives. ...Aeschylus was too Greek, too much a student of human nature to believe that the bestial could either be hunted to extinction or allowed to run unchecked."[101]

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[100] Cf. H. *Od.* 1.32-4.

[101] Heath (1999:47). Euben (1990:90) argues similarly. Goldhill (2000a), while still maintaining his fundamental premise of 'unremitting tension and ambiguity' in the polis, shows signs of moderating his earlier uncompromising position, allowing that the *Oresteia* "articulates an aetiological account of how the polis and its institutions can deal with the potential for violence and transgression" (78). He now speaks of the *Oresteia* as "a resource for conceptualizing the city as locus of justice," using words such as "open to scrutiny" and "inform the political present" (81) where before he had spoken in terms of 'questioning' and 'subverting'. Cf. Goldhill (1984:283). See also Goldhill (2000b) where he argues that questioning of the polis ideology "must be set in relation to the recuperative, reassimilating power of an ideological frame" (47). Seaford is right, he concludes "to be suspicious of what he terms ...the 'fetishization' of ambivalence" (51) but wrong to conclude that at the end of the *Oresteia* 'the questions are indeed answered and the conflicts resolved' (55). Seaford (2003:162), in turn, is prepared to concede to Goldhill that "any spectator or reader of the drama may leave with a 'sense' that the tensions were 'not fully resolved'." However, he insists that Goldhill remains mistaken in locating this failure of resolution in the text itself.

4

Posing the Dilemma

The Divided Good in Sophocles' *Antigone*

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κοὐδὲν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει

S. *Ant.* 332

The conception of an ideal political κοινωνία, so magnificently achieved with Athena at the helm at the conclusion of the *Eumenides*, continued to sustain 5th century Athenian self-perceptions in the aftermath of the Persian wars as democratic Athens rose to become the cultural centre of the whole Greek world, the self-proclaimed paradigm upon which other Greek cities should seek to model themselves.[1] However, even as it celebrated the greatness of its achievements, Periclean Athens was to reveal only too clearly that the very spirit of freedom upon which the democratic polis prided itself contained within it the seeds of its own destruction. In the course of the intellectual enlightenment, as men sought to assert themselves as the self-conscious arbiters of their own ends, the good, no longer seen as held within an unchanging objective order to which all relate in common, appeared instead as divided and opposed. Sophocles, who was born in 495, was an active figure in public life during almost the whole of the period "which saw the creation, rise and fall of the Athenian empire," producing his last works towards the end of the disastrous Peloponnesian war.[2] Through the tragic conflicts he explores in dramas such as *Antigone* and *Philoctetes*, Sophocles brings before us with telling effect the seemingly intractable ethical dilemmas that emerge in the political

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[1] On Athens as the polis ideal, Mills (1997) Chapter 2, Blundell (1993:287-306), Loraux (1986).

[2] Knox (1983:4). Knox points out that although "he was by our standards a remarkably productive playwright (and we must not forget he was also director of his own plays) his record of public service is impressive: he served as στρατηγός at least once (in the campaign against Samos, a dangerous crisis for the empire)" (5). Indeed it is reported in the hypothesis to *Antigone* (*hypoth.* 1.12-14) that it was as a result of the success of the play that Sophocles was made general. Griffith (1999:3) notes that "[t]he Athenian campaign against Samos ...was in fact an operation to restore democratic, pro-Athenian rule in that island, after an attempted secession by oligarchs."

κοινωνία when the interests of feeling and reason stand opposed; the good of family and individual seen to be in irreconcilable conflict with the common good of the community as a whole.[3]

In *Antigone*, conflict between the spheres of the polis and the family is sharply etched in the clash between Creon and Antigone, a radically polarized opposition between rival conceptions of the good, which brings ruination to both protagonists.[4] "It is no coincidence," Segal concludes, "that the most influential interpretation of the *Antigone* ...comes from a philosopher of idealism and dialectics. The *Antigone* is certainly a play of antitheses and conflicts, and this state of conflict is embodied in the presence on stage of two protagonists, each diametrically opposed to the other."[5] How, Sophocles asks, when within the order of the political κοινωνία the good appears as divided against itself, can there be a concretion of reason and feeling that will contain and stabilize the oppositions that are brought to light? Formulated thus, the question can be seen to be analogous to that Aeschylus has asked in *Eumenides* and indeed the many parallels that can be drawn between the two works are emblematic of the universal nature and enduring significance to humankind of the fundamental opposition that is being explored.[6]

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[3] Meier (1993:178-9) remarks that "[h]istory is present in Sophocles' tragedy in as much as it is a reflection of the time in which it was written and, as far as we can make out, its heroes face problems which are informed by the problems of that time." Griffith (1999:2-3) offers a useful summary of Athens at the time at which Sophocles produces *Antigone*, in 442 or 441. See also Hansen 1991, Ober 1989, Sinclair 1988.

[4] Scholarly interpretations of *Antigone* have been extensive. Detailed discussion and evaluation of the trends in thought that have emerged in modern times are found in Griffith (1999:28-38), Oudemans & Lardinois (1987:107-17), Steiner (1984), Hester (1971:11-19, 48-54). Oudemans & Lardinois identify "two major interpretive trends" referred to as "the orthodox view and the Hegelian view" which they identify respectively with 'separative' and 'harmonizing' strategies for "dealing with contradictions and ambiguity" (107). The orthodox view sees the protagonists separated in terms of a simple dichotomy of good and bad, justice and injustice, with the majority of commentators extolling the virtues of Antigone, even to considering her a martyr to her cause in standing up to the villainous Creon, and a much smaller number asserting the moral superiority of Creon in face of Antigone's obdurate intransigence. Griffith rightly determines, however, that "neither of these extreme positions is tenable" if the text is to taken fully into account (29). See also Oudemans & Lardinois who conclude similarly (110). In the Hegelian view, justice is comprehended through the resolution of the collision of Antigone and Creon understood as one-sided implementations of ethical powers (*sittliche Mächte*) implicit in which is the "value each combats" Paolucci (1962:xxvi). Recent interpretations of *Antigone*, while they support a 'harmonizing' approach to the text, depart from the Hegelian position in their insistence that there can be no resolution in any real sense, arguing the ineluctable primacy of ambiguity, of duality over unity. On this see Oudemans and Lardinois (1987:116), Griffith (1999:49), Gellrich (1988:47-8).

[5] Segal (1964:46).

[6] Winnington-Ingram (1980: 119) remarks: "That *Antigone* is full of Aeschylean echoes has long been

Yet, while in the *Antigone* as in the *Eumenides* δίκη will clash with δίκη, there is an important difference in the way the possibility of a resolution emerges in each of these plays.[7] In *Eumenides*, the gods are brought on stage and it is Athena as δημιουργός who presents before the citizen audience a clearly articulated resolution to the dilemma which establishes the relation of the parts to the whole; one in which an affirmation of the agreement between divine necessity and human freedom is seen to be objectively realized. For Sophocles in *Antigone*, however, the time has already passed in which men's minds are content to be thus held within the bounds of a traditional moral order. Whereas Aeschylus has looked at the political κοινωνία from the divine perspective of the encompassing 'whole', Sophocles will site himself firmly within the human dilemma and the problematic relation of the 'parts' in a world where divine and human knowing are seemingly incommensurate and man has begun to actively assert himself as the measure of what is. Yet, Segal observes, it remains "primarily the realm of the gods which defines the boundaries of what man can know. Where the one realm ends the other begins, and to overstep the boundary-line is a dangerous violation of the things that are."[8] The polis in Sophocles is still the extension of the rule of Zeus into the human realm. It is the gods who thus remain the ultimate objective arbiter of the validity of man's actions. Their presence is everywhere felt in the fatal clash of Creon and Antigone, a confrontation in which "knowledge, or the presumption of knowledge, reflects the limits of human power and man's responsibilities to the areas of the unknown, the uncontrollable, the sacred."[9]

It is at this juncture, the critical nexus of the 'tragic consciousness' that I will in later chapters refer to as the 'Sophoclean point', that the path for man divides and the fate of the polis as a 'whole of parts' is played out. Faced with the inescapable recognition that the objective good that sustained the older order has fallen into a division in which he finds himself caught in the collision of public and private good, man has two choices. He can take the path that historically the Greek enlightenment was to take, the road that leads

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recognized. The discussion by Zak (1995:89-91) comparing the *Oresteia* and *Antigone* is helpful.

[7] Relating Sophocles' *Antigone* to Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, Hegel (Paolucci 1962:178) remarks the greater interest the same opposition invokes in *Antigone*, although completely concerned with human feeling and action.

[8] Segal (1964:49).

[9] Segal (1964:49). It is, he says, "a matter of 'know thyself' generalized to the human condition as a whole" and in this *Antigone* can be likened to *Oedipus Rex*.

to an ever multiplying diversity of conflicting human goods, the worth of which the individual human subject and those to whom he allies himself are deemed the sole judge. Thus we come to the end-stage polis of Euripides and Thucydides with its acceptance that 'might is right'. Alternatively, man can attempt to find a way of addressing the primary sources of tension and polar opposition within the political κοινωνία, seeking to bridge the tragic divide by restoring an ordered relation of the 'parts' to the objective good of the 'whole', a new rational understanding which can withstand the enlightenment challenge to its integrity. This is the path that the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle will take, their ultimate challenge to overcome a division of reason and feeling that has its source within the soul of man. As Segal astutely notes, "the greatest ambiguity lies in man himself. Man claims control and domination, yet he cannot control himself."[10]

Enlightenment man is δεινός, the Chorus in *Antigone* tells us, his ingenuity a propensity for both nobility and for baseness (365-7).[11] If he is successfully to address ethical dilemmas, such as *Antigone* discloses, man must seek to know himself, his own nature and its limitations. The problem that resulted in the impasse manifested in *Antigone* is not intrinsically insoluble by humans. Sophocles had himself already shown in *Ajax*, in the clash between the Atreidae and Odysseus over the burial of Ajax, that it is possible to negotiate a resolution to such an issue of contention. Indeed this, it will be argued, is the true human tragedy, the quintessential tragic divide that must be bridged. It is not the fact that intractable dilemmas arise in life in which two competing goods cannot, because of the constraints imposed by external contingencies (τύχη), both be satisfied that is at issue here. Unquestionably, conflicts arise in which two goods can be unequivocally identified but, due to force of circumstance, defects in the object, one can only be satisfied at the expense of the other. It is in this way that MacIntyre interprets the conflict in *Antigone* when he claims that "the demands of the family and the demands of the *polis* appear precisely as rival and incompatible demands."[12] However, if the opposition encountered

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[10] Segal (1964:53).

[11] Segal (1964:53) argues that "[t]here is little question that the ode reflects much of the optimistic rationalism of Sophocles' time." However, he adds, "Sophocles does not see in reason and technical control simply a source of human freedom ...but sees in them too a potential source of human bondage and limitation."

[12] MacIntyre (1984:132). As he goes on to elaborate his position: "There *is* an objective moral order, but our perceptions of it are such that we cannot bring moral truths into complete harmony with each another. ...In the conflicts of Sophoclean tragedy therefore the attempt at resolution unsurprisingly invokes an

between rival goods is indeed truly irremediable in this way, as MacIntyre argues, then it is not susceptible to ethical deliberation in any meaningful sense. No one deliberates about what cannot be otherwise, Aristotle points out (*EN* 1112a21-30). With goods thus simply opposed and incompatible, any choice that is made must be recognized as being arbitrary. By contrast, the true tragedy of the Sophoclean ethical dilemma is resident in the fact that, as a result of the inability of humans to understand the nature of what motivates them in the ethical choices they make, the good becomes irrevocably divided against itself in a way that is potentially avoidable.[13] It is in this way that Aristotle conceives of the tragic action as a whole from which all that is extraneous and contingent has been removed, one which is bound by the limits of the necessary and the probable, expressing thereby the choices that *certain kinds* of people will make.[14] It is in this way too that tragic action, with its deep intuition into the human dilemma and its emotive power, brings into view the end from which it has fallen away, the good life for man in the stable and well-ordered political κοινωνία.

The familiar polarities of female and male, the natural and the rational, demands of φύσις and λόγος, that constitute the tragic opposition so decisively etched in *Antigone*, arise from inherent and deep-seated tensions resident within society. Yet to concentrate solely on the polarity, on the conflicting obligations of family and polis, weighing the relative merits of the claims of one tragic protagonist against the other, is to see the play only in terms of structural oppositions. Seen in this way, what inevitably comes into focus at the end is the primacy of the 'parts', the inescapable persistence of ethical ambiguity, of the prevalence of duality over unity. Thus, MacIntyre maintains that the "*tragic* opposition and conflict" between Antigone and Creon, as also between Odysseus and Philoctetes, is "the conflict of good with good embodied in their encounter prior to and independent of *any* individual characteristics; and to this aspect of tragedy Aristotle in the *Poetics* is and

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appeal to and a verdict by some god. But the divine verdict always ends rather than resolves the conflict" (143).

[13] When I say 'potentially avoidable' I mean in relation to the essential nature of the problem as it presents, which in this case is the burial. It is not of course avoidable in terms of the structure of the individual tragic plot as a particular concretion of this problem. Aristotle's discussion of voluntary action, what is ἐφ' ἡμῖν, as a precondition for ethical activity is relevant (*EN* 1109b30-1115a3).

[14] Aristotle argues that we are responsible for the sort of character we possess, the kind of person we are and hence the voluntary choices we make as a result (*EN* 1114b21-23).

has to be blind."[15] However, to conceive the family and the polity to be prior opposing entities, as MacIntyre does here, I would argue, is to reduce them simply to abstractions which, separately instantiated, would result in the extremes of anarchy and despotism. Understood in this way, the 'parts' are accorded a reality that is denied to the 'whole'.[16]

By contrast, Reinhardt has well noted that the "unity of action" in *Antigone* is not in fact "to be seen in the isolation of one figure, but in the relation of each to the other and the relation of both to the centre of the daimonic ambience."[17] Even as they stand opposed, these contrarieties are at the same time bound to one another in a determinate relationship.[18] It is possible to go further in the direction Reinhardt identifies and argue that, even as this is not the tragedy of Antigone alone nor that of Creon, it transcends the particularity of their relation to one another to become a tragedy of the political κοινωνία as a whole which through its inability to instantiate its ideals must perforce witness the destruction that ensues when its most cherished principles are to be found standing abstracted and opposed.[19] Viewed in terms of the primary opposition(s) it generates, the action in *Antigone* pits contrary against contrary, locked in the sophistic logic of the *dissoi logoi*, of independent rational accounts implacably opposed and representing values fundamentally incommensurable.[20] However, when attention is turned to what

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[15] MacIntyre (1984:163).

[16] MacIntyre allows nevertheless (1984:135) "that the virtues have their place within the social context of the city-state" and that "[t]o be a good man will on every Greek view be at least closely allied to being a good citizen." The priority and importance the Greeks accorded to the polis and the public good in relation to the particular good of family and individual is stated emphatically and unequivocally by Pericles in Thucydides' account (2.60.2-4) and later echoed by Aristotle (*EN* 1094b7-10).

[17] Reinhardt (1979:74).

[18] Hegel argues on *Antigone*, that implicit in each ethical power is the "value each combats" Paolucci (1962:xxvi). This, as Gellrich (1988:46) describes it, is to be seen in the "essential reciprocity of each *sittliche pathos*."

[19] Segal (1964:46-7) suggests that "[t]his whole is not necessarily a Hegelian 'synthesis' of two opposing 'spiritual substances'." What is at issue, he argues, is "the nature of man, his place in the world, and the possibilities and limitations of his actions. Around these issues and derivative from them revolve the antinomies which have been conceptualized in so many different ways: divine versus human law, individual versus state, religious versus secular, private versus public morality." See too Griffith (1999:36) and Goheen (1951:5) who concludes that "full experiencing of the *Antigone* offers no banal or simple solution: it brings awareness of increasingly fine distinctions and of complex perceptions brought complexly into unity."

[20] This, it has been noted, is how MacIntyre (1984:163) appears to understand the "*tragic* opposition" between Antigone and Creon as a "conflict of good with good" which is prior to the individual character of the protagonists.

these polarities in their mutual reciprocity enclose, it can be seen that focussed around a central nucleus, the question of the burial of Polyneices, and held within the orbit formed by the primary opposition of Antigone and Creon, character and circumstance interlock in *Antigone* to form an intricate causal nexus which embraces all the participants in the drama in an action which is a unified whole.[21]

What Sophocles sets before his audience in a Periclean Athens caught up in the throes of the enlightenment is a portrayal of the tragic polis, its constitutive parts seen standing torn apart from one another and opposed, a society in which ideals however nobly expressed, have not been fully comprehended and thus are unable to withstand the force of events which put them to the test. While Athens itself and its ideals are not the subject of direct scrutiny in tragedy, the polis of Thebes, Zeitlin has argued, "provides the negative model to Athens' manifest image of itself."[22] However, Blundell cautions, Thebes "is not simply the negation of the ideal polis." Commenting on Sophocles' comparison of Athens and Thebes in *Oedipus Coloneus*, she suggests that in the contrast between the two cities there emerges the warning that "political chaos, weakness and defeat can threaten any polis."[23] Hence, she concludes that "Thebes of the drama is not merely the antithesis of the ideal Athens but a kind of alter ego, which serves to remind the real Athens of the dire consequences of abandoning its own political and moral ideals."[24] More than this, it will be argued here, it is through the concatenation of the

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[21] Thus Griffith (1999:33) concludes that "[t]he sense of closure is strong, for the play's action is indeed 'complete and whole' (Arist. *Po.* 1450b25, cf. 1449b25, 1450a31-5): but no less strong is our awareness that the conflicts fuelling this tragic catastrophe are incapable of easy resolution, and that the personal miscalculations and mischances that triggered it are of a kind all too likely to recur." In Aristotelian terms, this is to say that the play brings out 'universals' inherent to the human condition, to an understanding of the nature of which man aspires. On the centrality of the burial, see Jones (1962:200) and Winnington-Ingram (1980), who sees this to "present ethically as the question of the nature of τὸ φρονεῖν (122)." Nussbaum (1986) argues similarly that "*Antigone* is a play about practical reason", pointing out that "it is unusually full of words for deliberation, reasoning, knowledge, and vision." Thus, she notes that "[e]leven words connected with practical deliberation, occurring 180 times in the seven plays of Sophocles, occur a total of 50 times in the *Antigone*. ...The word *phronêma* occurs six times in the *Antigone* and in no other play" (436). See also Griffith (1999:41-2).

[22] Zeitlin (1986:102). She concludes that in tragic drama "Athens is not the tragic space. Rather it is the scene ...where reconciliation and transformation are made possible."

[23] Blundell (1993:303).

[24] Blundell (1993:304-5). Zeitlin (1990:144-5) understands the representation of Thebes in tragedy not merely as warning of inherent dangers to the polis order, but as a means whereby the Athenian polis "can experiment with the dangerous heights of self-assertion that the transgression of fixed boundaries inevitably entails, where the city's political claims to primacy may be exposed and held up to question" (145).

'necessary and the probable' in the unfolding of the structure of the tragic action that there comes about the possibility of an understanding, not only *that* the Athenian polis ideal is a fragile one but *why* it is so. It is for those who witness the tragedy of Thebes enacted before them, to learn from the suffering that the city endures.[25] If the implications for human coexistence that the tragic conflict lays bare are to be made concrete in the life of the polis, the citizen audience must themselves attempt to encompass the full import of the action, through taking up and resolving within their own souls the dilemma the poet explores. Griffith argues cogently, that "[i]t is not so much that a particular artistic representation is likely to propose a permanent solution to such divisions and conflicts ...rather that the very process of working through the conflict, and 'resolving' it in dramatic terms, may make it more manageable and endurable, or at least more intelligible, in the future."[26] Segal maintains similarly that the polis by "[e]mbodying these tensions in art, ...can confront them and work toward their mediation, even though mediation is not permitted to the tragic heroes within the spectacle itself. The play in its social and ritual contexts achieves for the society what it refuses to the actors within its fiction. Its context affirms what its content denies."[27]

4.1 Justice as the abstract rational rule of Creon

The ideals of open discussion and of citizen participation in deliberations, so prized by democratic Athens, are not those on display in Creon's Thebes as Sophocles portrays it in *Antigone*. In the aftermath of civil strife, with the very survival of the polis at stake, it

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[25] Jean-Pierre Vernant (1988d:114), foremost proponent among those championing the primacy of ambiguity in tragedy, while agreeing that it is in the spectator that "the tragic message becomes intelligible," insists that it does so only "to the extent that, abandoning his former certainty and limitations, he becomes aware of the ambiguity of words, of meanings, and of the human condition. Recognizing that it is the nature of the universe to be in conflict, and accepting a problematical view of the world, the spectator himself, through the spectacle, acquires a tragic consciousness." For Seaford (1995), by contrast, such a "path of subjectivity quickly becomes the uninteresting cul-de-sac of undecidability." Hence, while agreeing that it is in its "reception" the work as a whole becomes intelligible, Seaford maintains that this may take the form of ambivalence or of a resolution (204). Responding to the claim of Oudemans and Lardinois (1987:159) that "tragic ambiguity ...continues to reign" at the end of *Antigone*, Seaford asserts that "what is enacted is precisely an end, from which the democratic *polis* may persistently benefit" (207).

[26] Griffith (1999:43).

[27] Segal (1986:205). For a consideration of "emotion and cognition in classical dramatic audience response" see Lada (1993).

quickly becomes apparent that Creon, as ruler, is prepared neither to tolerate the voicing of any opinion other than his own nor to repose any trust whatsoever in those with whom he interacts.[28] This notwithstanding, the ideals that Creon professes to hold most dear as ruler, as he will repeatedly make clear, are those of rational purpose (φρόνημα) and friendship, (φιλία), the very virtues that Aristotle will himself deem most befitting the concern of the legislator.[29] The friendship of a ruler, Aristotle asserts, includes the responsibility of beneficence (εὐεργία) in attending to the well-being of those he rules. Indeed this is why Homer calls Agamemnon the 'shepherd of the people' (*EN* 1161a11-15). Promotion of the well-being of its citizens is synonymous with the flourishing of the polis.

4.1.1 Creon's decree: the good of the polis transcends all personal ties (162-210)

Creon too, in his opening address to the Chorus of assembled elders of Thebes, commences by identifying his own end as ruler with the good of the city. His assumption of complete authority, upon the deaths of Eteocles and Polyneices, will allow him to put his principles into practice in ruling and law making. Without such opportunity it is not possible to fully discover a man's character (ψυχή), purpose (φρόνημα) and judgement (γνώμη), he points out (175-177).[30] In essence the ideals that Creon sets forth as his political platform are unexceptional and indeed will even come to be seen as providing a paradigm for responsible political action.[31] His policies, he states, are to be founded

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[28] Knox (1964:83) comments on the significance to the action of the political instability that persists at Thebes.

[29] On the very different understanding of φιλία espoused by Creon and Antigone see Knox (1964:80-8). Blundell (1989:39-49) summarizes succinctly the manifold Greek conceptions of φιλία extending outwards from natural bonds to self and family to embrace fellow citizens. Aristotle will speak of this in terms of a ὁμόνοια which is a political φιλία. Indeed, it is φιλία, more than anything else, even more than justice, he argues, that holds the city together and prevents insurrection (*EN.* 1155a23-6).

[30] Dodds (1951:139) notes that in the 5th century "the word *psyche* is normally the emotional rather than the rational self." He argues that Sophocles is here "arranging the elements of character on a scale that runs from the emotional (*psyche*) to the intellectual (*gnômê*) through a middle term, phronêma, which by usage involves both." Bowra (1944:69) notes "a lurking irony" in this assured assertion of Creon's, which is based on the proverb 'rule reveals the man'. Aristotle remarks on this point that 'many are able to exercise virtue with regard to their own concerns while unable to do so with respect to what relates to another. And on this account the saying of Bias seem to hold well, that ἀρχὴ ἄνδρα δείξει' (*EN* 1129b33-1130a1). See also Brown (1987:146), Reinhardt (1979:69), Griffith (1999:158).

[31] Hence Demosthenes (19.246-50), quoting the passage 175-191, chides Aeschines for neglecting to follow the guidance Sophocles' Creon offers here in *Antigone*.

upon two basic contentions: first that whoever is to guide the polis should never be deterred by fear from following the best counsels (τὰ ἄριστα βουλεύματα) and second that a φίλος should never be considered of more importance than one's own country (178-181).[32] However, as Creon proceeds to put these principles to effect in this their first real test, it is possible to observe how, under the exigency of the civic unrest with which he sees himself faced, Creon's character is captured by Sophocles, as Podlecki puts it, "in the very act of *becoming* a tyrant."[33] What is already emerging in Creon's first speech, along with his insistence on the absolute priority to be accorded to the safeguarding of the interest of the polis, is the identification of the common good with the particularity of his own deliberative judgement (τοιοῖσδ' ἐγὼ νόμοισι τήνδ' αὔξω πόλιν, 191). Segal remarks to the point the fact that "[t]he whole of his little political speech begins and ends with 'I'."[34] The 'best counsels', to which Creon will defer are those achieved in dialogue with himself.

Creon's contention, illustrated by the 'ship of state' metaphor, that the safety and stability of the polis as ἡ σῴζουσα is paramount for preservation of the social order and that the welfare of the polis must always be placed ahead of that of a φίλος, would not seem *per se* out of place to an Athenian audience, indeed rather the opposite.[35] However, there is again a subtle and disturbing undercurrent contained in Creon's assertion that it is only while the polis flourishes that friendship is possible (ταύτης ἔπι | πλέοντες ὀρθῆς τοὺς φίλους ποιούμεθα, 189-190). Goldhill identifies this when he argues that "for Creon the correct establishment of the state is the very condition of possibility of having *philoi* at all."[36] The natural relationships of the family, subsumed under the rational by Creon,

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[32] These are very much the sentiments Thucydides will later attribute to Pericles on the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. See, for example Thuc. 2.21.2-2.22.2 and 2.60.1-7, in particular 2.60.2.

[33] Podlecki (1996:359). See too Reinhardt (1979:69). Lane & Lane (1986:169) remark that "Creon is oblivious to the manner in which genuine power, civic morality, and clarifying common deliberation are inseparably related."

[34] Segal (1981:169). Griffith (1999:156) also remarks this point.

[35] Knox (1964:85-6) points out that "[l]oyalty to the *polis* was not an abstract 'cause'; it was a practical necessity." Blundell (1989:118) remarks that "[t]his view that 'loyalty to the city is an essential qualification for being a *philos*' ...is one that harmonises well with the patriotic spirit of democratic Athens." See also Knox (1983:1-27), Winnington-Ingram (1980:123). On the 'ship of state' image as "a traditional and respected figure" see Goheen (1951:46-7), Nussbaum (1986:58-9) and the references cited there on the uses of the image in Greek literature.

[36] Goldhill (1986:94). Brown (1987:147). Nussbaum (1986:57) notes that Creon "recognizes no bond that

have in fact no substance for him, and it is his decrees that are his 'brothers' (192).[37] It is clear to Creon that no enemy of the land, as Polyneices has indubitably shown himself to be, can ever be deemed to be a φίλος, whatever his claims of kinship and irrespective of whether he is alive or dead (187).[38] Hence, Creon determines, no one is to perform burial rituals for Polyneices or to mourn him. His body is to be left exposed for birds and dogs to prey upon: such is τὸ φρόνημα of Creon (203-210).[39]

As Creon will later inform the Chorus when he learns that Antigone has defied his specific edict against the burial of Polyneices, even if she, his sister's child, was the closest of all his kin she would not escape the direst of dooms for her act (486-489). The polis is the only good and is the sole embodiment of the concept of φιλία. Anyone who is to be a friend of the polis must identify completely with Creon as its rational voice, and hence with his edicts. Creon's equation of the good of the polis, which is to say its safety, with an unquestioned obedience to his dictates as leader is early evident in his description of the proper disposition for the citizenry as submitting rightly to the yoke of his domination.[40] Obedience is the criterion for friendship; a friend to Creon is someone who unquestioningly submits to his will and everyone else is an enemy, even when dead. The distinction is absolute. Reinhardt points out rightly that Creon's edict is not "an

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he has not himself chosen." See also Winnington-Ingram (1980:123-4), Hogan (1991:135). For Griffith (1999:159), by contrast, these lines are "a resoundingly 'democratic' assertion of community over individual and family."

[37] ἀδελφὰ τῶνδε. Creon's adoption of kinship terms to describe political relationships is noted by Segal (1981:188). See also Connor (1971:99-108).

[38] Knox (1964:87) considers that the metaphor "used here to introduce a decree which splits the duality of the two brothers ...suggests that Creon is fully conscious of the stand he is taking. ...The polis assumes the right to punish and reward, in death as in life, without regard to the family." Nussbaum (1986:57) argues that Creon, in asserting the primacy of civic friendship over kin ties is, like Plato, maintaining that "[c]ity-family conflicts cannot arise if the city *is* the family, if our only family *is* the city." However, Blundell (1989) rightly observes, by contrast with Creon, Plato's intent was to extend "*philia* to the whole city not by dissolving natural ties, but by expanding them to embrace all fellow citizens" (124). Creon, she argues, resembles Plato's tyrant more closely than a philosopher-king (125).

[39] Griffith (1999:29-30) notes that there is evidence to indicate that burial rites were on occasion denied as "an extreme and shocking measure." Nevertheless it remains the case, as Blundell (1989:118) points out, that, since Creon is "Polyneices' closest surviving male relative," he has an added responsibility which makes his edict particularly significant. Knox (1964:87) observes that "Creon's decree strikes at the very heart of family loyalty." On the issues surrounding burial, and the extent to which practice might differ when an enemy, and worse a traitor, was concerned see, in particular, Parker (1983:43-8), Hester (1971:19-21 and App. C); also Nussbaum (1986:55, 437n14), Linforth (1961:190-3).

[40] The image is that of master and slave, as Hogan (1991:139) points out.

expression of blind revenge" but rather "a touchstone of political allegiance."[41] Aware that his decree is unpopular in certain quarters (289-292), in constant fear of duplicity and intrigue, Creon is racked by suspicion and mistrusts all those he encounters. Hence, it will emerge, he debars from the decision-making process, not only his own son, but also those like the Chorus and Teiresias whose loyalty to the state has long been established.[42]

Aristotle, in considering the nature of the political association, will look first to the particular and the good of the individual citizen, as he perfects himself in virtue through friendship and justice in his relation to family and fellow citizens. It is only while such friendship flourishes, he argues, that the just polis as the embodiment of the εὖ ζῆν in a κοινωνία πολιτῶν πολιτείας is possible. By contrast, political reasoning for Creon begins with the universal, the idea of the polis as a contentless abstraction which is prior to what he, as ruler, determines to be its good; to that political arrangement which will preserve it in its being as a stable entity. The existence of the polis has, in effect, been differentiated by Creon from its essential nature: τὸ ζῆν from τὸ εὖ ζῆν, the life of human flourishing. Aristotle would agree with Creon on the importance of φιλία in holding cities together. However, whereas Creon assimilates φιλία to justice as unquestioned obedience to the imposed rational order, Aristotle argues that the kinds of friendship that characterize the πολιτικὴ κοινωνία, are formed by mutual agreement, ὁμολογία, among various groups of citizens (*EN* 1161b11-15, 1167a26-28). Like the polis itself, φιλία is seen by Aristotle to have its roots in the realm of necessity in that primary bond of feeling which exists by nature between blood relations (*EE* 1242b1-2, *EN* 1162a16-19). That the closer the bonds of φιλία the greater are the demands of justice, Aristotle recognizes, along with Antigone. For it is, he says, more terrible to fail to help a brother than a stranger (*EN* 1160a3-7). In fact, it is clear that Creon, himself, despite the fact that he consciously embraces the rational and eschews the sphere of the natural, grounds the polis inexorably in a natural necessity through his equation of the good of the polis with its survival. That the polis is, however, ostensibly for Creon simply a purely rational and

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[41] Reinhardt (1979:70).

[42] The demonstrated prior loyalty to the polis of the Chorus of Theban elders is acknowledged by Creon as his reason for calling on them at this time (165-9). The sage past advice he has received from Teiresias is also commended by Creon (995). For the distrust he now shows, not just towards Antigone but towards anyone at all, see, for example, his responses to the Chorus 280-4; Guard 310-12; Ismene 493-4; Haemon 746; Teiresias 1055.

undifferentiated community is reflected in the emptiness of his abstract formal reasoning in which everything can be absorbed into a rigid relationship of logical contrariety and ultimately reduced to the simple opposition of good and bad.[43] By contrast, it will be Aristotle's contention that ends, as goods, must be given content and brought into existence in their concrete particularity through the interplay of ὄρεξις and βούλευσις in practical decision-making. Even prior to the onset of the specific conflict between Creon and Antigone, it is clear that pursuit of the good of the community as the body of its citizens with all their diverse needs and specific interests, the excellence in practical reasoning Aristotle ascribes to the φρόνιμος, is not the end Creon accords to τὸ φρονεῖν.

It is not only the order of the polis that Creon assimilates to his own φρόνημα but the cosmic order of Zeus. This notwithstanding, Creon does not conceive of himself as impious. Zeus the all-seeing, he proclaims, is his assured witness confirming him in the actions he undertakes on behalf of the polis.[44] However, secure in the superiority of his own intellectual powers Creon is blind to signs of disparity between his own knowing and that of Zeus, the overt expressions of his ὕβρις in relation to the gods punctuating disclosure of the full course of his undoing (278-279,1039-1044).[45] Thus, in the dramatic space between his dismissal of the Chorus' concern that the gods may be at work in the burial of Polyneices and his refusal to heed the advice of Teiresias with respect to the divine pollution that has fallen upon the polis, Sophocles provides Creon full reign to exhibit the extent to which his blinkered understanding falls short of his own expectations

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[43] Foley (1996:60) remarks that Creon "approaches every dilemma that requires judgement through descriptive and prescriptive generalizations about money, human types, and the behavior expected from such types." See too Nussbaum (1986:54-8), Blundell (1989).

[44] ἴστω Ζεὺς ὁ πάνθ' ὁρῶν ἀεί (184). Griffith (1999:159) sees this as indicative of "the strength of Kreon's convictions." See also 162-3, 304-5. Knox (1964:101-2) also argues for the sincerity of Creon's professions of piety. He notes, however, that Creon does identify his own will with that of the gods. See too Bowra (1944:71) who compares Creon to Pentheus in his delusory pride. Segal (1981:165) sees Creon's 'secular rationalism' as the basis of his impiety. He cites as examples 486-7, 658-9, 1039-40; 575, 580-1, 776-80.

[45] Creon is vehemently dismissive when the Chorus, trusty advisors in times past, venture their suspicions that the mysterious burial of Polyneices may be god sent (θεήλατον), repudiating out of hand the possibility that the gods might accord burial honours to one whom he, Creon, can rationally argue to have forfeited such rites through his wickedness. When he finally rejects arrogantly Teiresias' counsel that the gods' disfavour is indicated by the pollution of the city's altars by carrion from the body, rationalizing that 'no human has the power to pollute the gods' (1039-44), Creon's fate is sealed. Segal (1981:174) suggests that Creon's "generalization is the sort of rationalistic principle that one might find in Protagoras or Prodicus." Cf. Dodds' (1960:91) similar comment on Pentheus, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.2.1.

of it. In successive encounters with Antigone, with Haemon, his son, and finally with the blind seer Teiresias, Creon will reject, in turn, the universal unwritten laws of feeling which bind together the human race, the role of persuasive deliberation in decision making for the common good of the polis, and finally the inspired utterances by which the will of Zeus is conveyed to man. The elements that have been established by Athena as constitutive to the κοινοφιλὴς διάνοια, the ideal polis as a composite whole of parts, are here in Creon's Thebes seen, under the stress of adversity, detached and opposed.

4.1.2 Antigone's challenge: the priority of the unwritten laws of feeling (446-525)

The absolute rational distinction that Creon has made between his nephews, Eteocles and Polyneices, in terms of 'friend' or 'enemy' to the polis is challenged by Antigone with an equally unequivocal assertion of the unassailable demands of kinship bonds in honouring the claims of Hades to receive the rites that Polyneices has been refused.[46] Creon's edict, she insists, is of merely mortal contrivance and runs counter to 'the unwritten and undying laws of the gods'.[47] Thus, Antigone declaims: neither Zeus nor that Δίκη which belongs with the gods below have laid down such laws for man, (450-455).[48] It is on the authority of these ancient religious sanctions that Antigone founds her claim as a φίλος to have an inalienable duty to bury her own brother, in defiance of Creon. In so doing, she implicitly acknowledges, in Segal's words, "the distinction between the man-made and the 'natural', the artificial and the eternally existent."[49] For Creon, by contrast, the universal unwritten laws of the nether gods to which Antigone defers have no standing in comparison to his own rational distinction of what the city determines is due to a friend as opposed to an enemy.[50] Whereas it is possible for an astute political φίλος of the

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[46] It is in her inability to respond to these demands of family that Ismene becomes for Antigone ἐχθρά.

[47] Griffith (1999:201) notes that "[t]his is the earliest extant mention of 'unwritten laws', which by the late fifth and early fourth century are frequently invoked in appeals to universal codes of morality, as against the letter of a particular statute (e.g., Thuc. 2.37.3, Lysias 6.10-11, Xen. *Mem.* 4.4.19-20)."

[48] Antigone's claim, Jebb (1971:89) comments, is that "Ζεύς is opposed to Creon's edicts, not only as supreme god and therefore guardian of all religious duty, but also in each of his two special qualities, -as χθόνιος (*OC* 1606 n.), -and as οὐράνιος, since the denial of burial pollutes the realm of οἱ ἄνω θεοί (1072)". For an effective refutation of the position of those who, like Knox (1964:99), consider that Antigone appeals only to the gods below see Reinhardt (1979:251).

[49] Segal (1964:47). Cf *Ant.* 458-60.

[50] To Antigone's assertion that Hades desires these rites (519), rites which belong to the universal unwritten νόμοι of the gods, Creon retorts that the good man and the bad are not to be accorded an equal lot (520).

stature of Odysseus to overcome the opposition of Agamemnon to the burial of Ajax, even if in so doing he fails to convince him that he is wrong, what Creon sees before him is no φίλος of standing, but rather an irrational hubristic female whose defiance in transgressing his edict is a threat to rational order identified with male dominance, and who must therefore be broken like a slave.[51] The point Antigone makes is essentially that which Aethra, mother of Theseus, makes in Euripides' *Suppliants* (*Supp.*19) and that Odysseus establishes in Sophocles' *Ajax* when he tells Agamemnon that it is not Ajax but the νόμοι of the gods he will be destroying in forbidding the burial (*Aj.*1343-4). Like Creon, Agamemnon has insisted that the good man must be obedient to human authority and that an enemy remains an enemy whether alive or dead (*Aj.* 1352, 1372-3).

The overt distinction that emerges in *Antigone* between the apparently conflicting obligations of the universal unwritten laws of nature and of human reason rationally asserted in positive law, is symptomatic of an incipient breakdown of an older ethical order for which, Heraclitus declares, 'all human laws are sustained by the one divine law' (DK 22.B.114) and human freedom can be found, as at the end of *Eumenides*, objectively realized in a universal necessity which is one with the divine rule of Zeus. In *Antigone*, the human sphere of the polis has begun to assert for itself a self-determinate existence distinct from the divine, as man brings φύσις under the dominion of human νόμος.[52] Guthrie, commenting on the changing understanding of the intellectual basis of νόμος during the 5th century, observes that "so long as religion remained an effective force, the devising mind could be the god's, and so there could be *nomoi* that were applicable to all mankind."[53] It is this quest, central to *Antigone*, for an understanding of the nature of

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[51] In his response to Antigone, Segal (1981:183) remarks, Creon "identifies his political authority and his sexual identity. 'If this victory (κράτη) rests with her without punishment, then I am not the man, but she's the man' (S. *Ant.* 484-5)." Antigone's relationship to himself as a natural φίλος, Creon not only holds to be of no account but harshly repudiates. No natural bond of kinship can override for Creon the rational ties through which he determines the integrity of the polis to be solely preserved. Creon's rejection of family ties here is absolute. Linforth (1971:205) notes that Creon's use of Ζεὺς Ἑρκεῖος as a metonymy serves to emphasize "the sacred bond he will disregard [and] his own godlessness."

[52] The φύσις of the polis has been yoked by Creon to his own νόμοι as human ruler; it is he who will determine the essential nature of τὸ εὖ ζῆν. In turn, the traditional universal νόμοι of feeling, divorced from the ethical life of the polis, are assimilated by Antigone to φύσις in the sphere of the family as τὸ φιλεῖν. Man's transcendence of nature, and the benefits and harms that ensue, is the theme of the choral 'Ode on Man' (332-75). οὐδὲν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον (332-3).

[53] Guthrie (v.3 1969:55). Guthrie notes (v.3 1969:130) a correlation between the "decline of religious sanctions" and the "rise of democratic government, for which positive, written law appeared as a safeguard

those universal norms considered most constitutive of the human good in praxis that will lead Aristotle in his turn to a consideration of the distinction between natural and political justice and back to the specific question Sophocles raises. There are two kinds of law, Aristotle observes. On the one hand there are the particular laws, both written and unwritten, which are held by each community, laws which are in themselves conventional, relative to the time, place, and circumstance of their execution. On the other hand, there are the overriding universal laws based on nature (κοινὸν δὲ τὸν κατὰ φύσιν) which all men divine in some way, regardless of whether they intercommunicate (*Rh.* 1373b1-10).[54] This is indeed what Sophocles' Antigone infers, Aristotle concludes, when she argues that it is by nature just (ὡς φύσει ὂν τοῦτο δίκαιον) to bury her brother Polyneices, in contravention of a specific decree of Creon, arguing that 'not today or yesterday, but eternally this [natural justice] lives and no one knows from whence it appeared' (*Rh.* 1373b10-13; 1375b1-2).[55]

Ideally, what is just by nature should hold the same power everywhere whether it appears to do so or not, Aristotle argues (*EN* 1134b19-20). However, while there is a general recognition that there are natural laws concerning just and unjust action (φύσει κοινὸν δίκαιον καὶ ἄδικον) which are of widespread applicability, they are not *necessarily* without exception. Rather, these laws are ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ, holding with such a high degree of probability that to all intents and purposes they can be said to be true (*EN* 1134b28-32). This being the case, it has to be recognized that, since no law operative in the natural world of motion and change can be said to be completely without exception, at every level the possibility for division and conflict exists. Hence, while the gods will eventually affirm the burial of Polyneices to be in accord with both natural and polis justice this is not *eo ipso* to exclude the possibility that in other circumstances the matter of burial might be differently construed.[56] At the same time it must also be allowed,

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against the return of tyranny or oligarchy based on the new conception of 'nature's law'." This, he argues was the understanding of νόμος and φύσις in Plato time: "at one extreme the equality of all citizens under a written and published code of law, at the other the ideal of the strong man, nature's hero, who spurns the law in his march to absolute and selfishly exercised power."

[54] Cf. Arist. *EN* 1134b18-22.

[55] οὐ γάρ τι νῦν γε κἀχθές, ἀλλ' ἀεί ποτε | ζῇ ταῦτα, κοὐδεὶς οἶδεν ἐξ ὅτου ' φάνη (S. *Ant.* 456-7).

[56] The climax of *Oedipus Coloneus* also finds a grieving Antigone and Ismene denied the opportunity to perform burial rites for their kin, in this case their father Oedipus. However, far from the disaster this might be anticipated to precipitate, Antigone attends to the words of Theseus and the Chorus who urge her

Aristotle argues, that those posited laws which are found to vary widely from state to state are not simply arbitrary but have their proper origin within the context of the conception of an ideal polity, however inadequately this may be realized in practice (*EN* 1135a3-7). Underlying all the manifest diversity there is an order to the natural world, albeit only incompletely understood by man. For Sophocles, as for Aristotle, and indeed all of the classical tradition, the polis is an extension into the natural of a divine and unchanging order.[57] Thus the workings of a universal natural justice and the particular laws which organize and safeguard the polis are not to be considered as standing *a priori* apart and opposed but rather to be held in a determinate relation to one another. Nor can the chasm that has opened up between Antigone and Creon be said to be in principle beyond the reach of human closure; the tragedy lies in their inability, being the *kind* of people they are, to bridge the gap that separates them by means of effective communication.

4.1.3 Haemon's appeal: the failure of the political art of persuasion (635-723)

With the binding force of traditional νόμος contemptuously dismissed, in company with the sisters of the dead Polyneices, the attempt at exploration with Creon of the larger consequences of his edict devolves upon his son Haemon, who will attempt by means of the political art of persuasion to move his father from his entrenched position. Reassured by Haemon's initial profession of respect for his judgement, and the picture this invokes of filial submission, Creon is encouraged to discourse further and at some length (639-80) upon what is inherent to his own philosophy of governance, which as he now makes quite explicit, is founded upon a principle of unswerving obedience. The model upon which his political authority is based is that of the household patriarchy, an irony indeed, Blundell remarks, since his "demand for unconditional filial loyalty depends on just the kind of blood tie whose force Creon has belittled."[58] It is the man who is able to exact

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to yield to the divine plan, the expressed wishes of the dead Oedipus contained in his pledge to Theseus and the Athenian polis. In the presence of Theseus' calm and measured authority, coupled to his respect for religious sanctions, a healing can take place between reason and feeling which is not possible in Creon's Thebes. See on this Markantonatos (2002:163-5), Segal (1981:400-3).

[57] Cf. Hom. *Il.* 16.431-458.

[58] Blundell (1989:120). She points out that "[t]he relationship is portrayed in simple, authoritarian terms without reciprocity or the spontaneous pleasure of natural affection." Children serve the purely functional purpose for Creon of helping their father's friends and harming his enemies (641-4).

obedience in the household who can best effect justice in the polis, Creon insists (661-662).[59] Whoever is placed in power by the polis must have obedience to even his least command, irrespective of whether he is in the right or not (666-667).[60] There is no greater evil that can affect society than civic disobedience, for it is through such ἀναρχία that cities are destroyed. The distinction between πειθαρχία (676) as an unquestioned obedience to his dictates as ruler, and ἀναρχία (672) as the breakdown of social order, is for Creon an absolute one, admitting of no mediation (663-676).[61] Creon's sentiments will be later echoed by the demagogue Cleon who argues in Thucydides' account of the Mytilenian debate that what is worst of all is if decisions are not firmly established. A polis having inferior laws which it keeps unchanged is stronger than one having good laws which lack authority. Ignorance accompanied by self-restraint is more beneficial than cleverness with lack of discipline (Thuc. 3.37.3).

As far as Creon is concerned, there is the true good of the polis which is equated with the absoluteness of his own reason, then there is the reason of the male citizens which must be brought in line with his own, and finally there is the irrational voice of women with whom a man should have no intellectual commerce (667-680).[62] Yet Creon's speech is not to be dismissed as simply that of a 'stage tyrant'. His words invoke generalized conceptions, including the respect to be accorded the city's Νόμοι as the ordering principles of society, that will strike a chord with his 5th century audience. Goldhill notes the parallel that Creon draws between obedience to the polis and service on the field of battle. This, he says, "together with his normative picture both of the household and of the value of obedience, invests his speech with considerable force as a statement of

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[59] Griffith (1999:237) comments that "Kreon sees the 'nurturing' (θρέψω) and 'ordering' (-κοσμ-, cf. 677) of both children and citizens as being entirely his own responsibility."

[60] Lines proposed for deletion by editors such as Dawe and most recently Lloyd-Jones & Wilson, but see Griffith (1999:238-9) for a defence of their retention. Griffith points out that "'Do what you're told, right or wrong!', is proverbial ...especially in association with slavery" (239).

[61] Goldhill (2000:82) comments on this passage: "In the polarized world of political argument, what is not obedience is an absence of all forms of control."

[62] Creon repeatedly expresses his determination not to yield in any way to the demands of a woman. If he has to be beaten it must be by a man, for nothing is worse than to be called inferior to women. Women are identified with the overcoming of good sense by pleasure (τὰς φρένας γ' ὑφ' ἡδονῆς), the rational by the irrational (648-9). Cf. also 484-5, 525.

political principle."[63]

Commencing his own attempt to mediate a resolution to the impasse through the power of persuasion, Haemon exhibits a considerable diplomatic skill. Thus, Foley comments that "Haemon's mediating speech brings some of Antigone's concerns into play in a justice-oriented morality explicitly attentive from the first to the interests of the *polis*, and hints at a possible and better mode of public deliberation."[64] The metaphors that Haemon employs to illustrate the points he makes are striking, contrasting sharply with Creon's images of shattering, breaking, and mastering.[65] To the unbending autocracy that belongs to the rule of the tyrant, Haemon opposes the democratic art of political persuasion with its images of yielding appropriately.[66] Avoiding a direct confrontation, by either an outright challenge to the wisdom of Creon's decree or an overt espousal of the cause of Antigone to whom he is betrothed, Haemon identifies himself with both his father and the voice of the polis. Hence, while reassuring Creon that he himself has only his father's best interests in mind, Haemon reminds him at the same time that the gods have implanted good sense (φρήν) in man and that other men may have useful thoughts to contribute (683-689).[67] Indeed, out of his earshot, Haemon informs his father, the citizens themselves are lauding the devotion Antigone has shown her brother and mourning her fate, saying that Antigone has undeservedly been condemned for what is in fact a glorious deed (692-699). Although it would be best by far for a man to be born

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[63] Goldhill (2000:83). The importance of respecting the judgements of the polis, even when wrongly applied by men, is eloquently articulated by the Laws, as they are personified by Socrates in *Crito*. A country is more sacred to the gods and to be honoured more than family. 'Therefore, in war, the courts and everywhere one must either do what the polis or country orders or persuade it as to the nature of justice' (Pl. *Cri.* 50c5-51c4). The allowance for input through persuasion is of course what is missing from Creon's conception of the rule of law. On the disparate understandings of the nature of νόμος in *Antigone* see the excellent discussion by Goheen (1951:86-93), also Segal (1981:168-70), Kirkwood (1958:239) and Blundell (1989:127-8).

[64] Foley (1996:67). Knox (1964:70) also notes Haemon's diplomacy. In his mediating role, Haemon occupies a position similar to that assumed by Athena in *Eumenides* and Odysseus in *Ajax*. All his diplomatic skill, however, cannot make up for his lack of authority in the eyes of his father (726-7).

[65] Images employed particularly in connection with Antigone (473-9).

[66] Thus, even if a man is wise (σοφός) Haemon urges, it is in no way shameful to continue to learn, and to bend where necessary, as a tree must to survive when caught in a flood, or as a ship in a storm must slacken its sails to avoid capsizing (710-17).

[67] Griffith (1999:240) notes that "Haemon presents himself as a devoted son and counsellor ...with repeated reminders of the fallibility of human judgement, and the value of free comment and open minds."

fully knowledgeable (ἐπιστήμης πλέων), Haemon argues, failing this it is good to learn from those who speak sensibly (721-723). The point, central to the workings of Greek democratic thought, has been voiced by Athena in *Eumenides* in declaring her own inadequacy, even as a goddess, to act alone in the political dilemma she faces. When the law comes under question on a particular momentous issue, Aristotle agrees, the citizens of the polis, although individually they may be inferior in judgement to the legislator, are in assembly a better judge of many things than any single individual (*Pol.* 1286a28-31).

Haemon makes the case for a reconsideration of the edict through a reasoned argument, backed by his claim that the whole community of Thebes (ὁμόπτολις λεώς) considers Antigone to be innocent of wrongdoing (732-733). However, in the mind of Creon, the polis remains inseparably identified with the primacy of his own reasoning. It is not the part of the polis to tell him how he ought to rule, he insists, for the polis is the sole property of the ruler (738). Haemon has failed utterly to move his father who, as he bitterly protests, wishes only to speak and not to hear (757).[68] In his single-minded intransigence, Creon, while supposing only himself to be wise (φρονεῖν) is exposed by his son as κενός, devoid of content (707-709), fit only to rule well over a deserted (ἐρήμης, 739) land with his empty propositions (κεναὶ γνώμαι, 753). Whereas for Haemon the polis is the body of its people, a κοινωνία πολιτῶν seeking input into the actualization of the polity, for Creon, the πολιτεία, equated with the polis as a whole, is reaffirmed to be an empty abstraction existing independently from the life of its citizens, in effect a principle of nothing, as Haemon has discerned.

4.1.4 Teiresias' warning: the justice of Zeus made manifest in the polis (988-1114)

To the claims of family feeling and the natural rights of the lower gods Creon has proved impervious. His dismissal of 'holy Πειθώ', the power of rational persuasion in the decision-making activities of the polis, has now shown itself to be equally uncomprehending. The gods are not yet satisfied, however, that Creon has exposed to its full extent the hubristic blindness of his supposed wisdom. A more powerful lever still will be brought to bear on him in the person of the blind seer, Teiresias, the inspired voice of the Olympian gods themselves, and a trusted counsellor of Creon in times past

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[68] μηδὲν κλύειν might be said to be the rallying cry of the Sophoclean tragic protagonist.

(993). The polis is polluted as a result of your counsel (φρήν), Teiresias tells Creon (1015). The altars of the gods in the city are being defiled by carrion brought by dogs and birds feasting on the body of Polyneices and the gods will no longer accept prayer and sacrifices (1015-1020).[69] The repercussions of an infringement of the unwritten laws of the lower gods have extended to the heights of the rational order on Olympus, but even so there still remains the possibility to set things right. 'Consider (φρόνησον) these things,' Teiresias urges Creon. 'It is common for all men to err' (ἁμαρτία) but to persist in such stubbornness through self-will (αὐθαδία) can only be accounted folly, for 'the claims of the dead must be allowed' (1023-1030).[70]

The pollution, not only ethical but tangibly physical, that follows upon Creon's rejection of the universal law requiring burial of the dead, even without the prophet's counsel, is itself a testament to the law's implicit rationality as integral to the good of the community as a whole. This notwithstanding, the pleas of Teiresias, like those of Haemon and Antigone before him, arouse only suspicion and hostility in Creon and indeed are met with outright, even blasphemous rejection (1039-1044).[71] Creon has been warned fully and fairly but, through his own folly (μὴ φρονεῖν), he has ignored at his peril the prophet of Zeus, thus assuring for himself a terrible destiny (1051-1052). In refusing burial to the dead Polyneices, and instead in his place burying the live Antigone, Creon both inverts the natural order and robs the gods of the lower world of their due (1068-1071). For this outrage the gods will destine Creon to become himself a νεκρὸς ἔμψυχος (1167). Too late he yields, and not through reason but through fear.[72] Only in face of the terrible portents which Teiresias is constrained in face of the king's obduracy to reveal, does

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[69] The "universal fear of pollution" which pervades Greek thought is discussed by Dodds (1951:35-7). See also Segal (1964:61).

[70] Teiresias' words (Ἀλλ' εἶκε τῷ θανόντι, μηδ' ὀλωλότα | κέντει· τίς ἀλκὴ τὸν θανόντ' ἐπικτανεῖν; 1029-30) epitomize Athenian self-conceptions embodied in both in tragedy and in funeral oratory where the legendary topos of the Athenian championing of the cause of the burial of the Theban dead is lauded. See Loraux (1986a:56-72), Bennett & Tyrrell (1990:441-56), Foley (1995:131-50).

[71] Not even if Zeus' eagles carry the pollution to the throne of Zeus himself will Creon allow Polyneices to be buried. For, he declaims, 'no man has power to pollute the gods'. Knox (1964:109) echoes the sentiments of many critics when he says that Creon's "blasphemous defiance ...is unparalleled for its ferocity in all Greek tragedy." See also Blundell (1989:130).

[72] Blundell (1989:132) noting this, points out that Creon "is scared, not persuaded into compliance, while his passions still resist (997, 1097, 1105f., 1113)." This, she adds, can be compared with "Agamemnon in *Aj.* who is truly persuaded but whose hatred persists."

Creon come to accept that the unfailing laws of the gods transcend his human pronouncements and must be accorded their proper respect (1113-1114).

As the bodies, first of his dead son and then of his wife, are placed before him, Creon in his grief learns too late, through the destruction of his own family, that the ties of φιλία cannot be simply dissolved into an overarching conception of the state. Yet even while he accepts responsibility for their deaths, he blames the gods for driving him astray (1273) and fate for striking him down (1344). It is not the gods but the beast in man that distorts his intellectual vision, Aristotle contends, and indeed Zeus would be the first to agree.[73] Properly constituted and justly administered, the laws of the polis allow god and reason alone to rule, but where a man rules there is also the element of desire which is beast like. Passion (θυμός) can pervert the minds of rulers, even those who are the best of men (Arist. *Pol.* 1287a20-34). Creon, for all his vaunted claims to rationality, destroys himself and all he holds most dear through his passions, in particular the anger and unbending pride he exhibits in the face of reasoned counsel; it is not the gods but the irrational force of his θυμός, the very side of his own nature to which he perforce remains blind, that is the inexorable source of his undoing.[74]

In conceiving the good of the polis solely in terms of his own abstract rational determinations, Creon has attempted to divorce himself from what it is to be truly human, a rational animal bound necessarily to φύσις, the sphere of the natural and particular. At the last he has been brought to an understanding both of the limitations of human reason in relation to the cosmic order of the divine and of the poverty of a human life that is bereft of kin bonds. Yet it is not that Creon is constitutionally bad, his expressed desire to achieve the good for the city is doubtless sincere, and it is evident that he has in the past been amenable to accepting wise counsel (992-994).[75] What Sophocles has thrown

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[73] As the Homeric Zeus points out, men blame the gods for their evils but is through their own recklessness (σφῇσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν) that they bring down upon themselves sorrows beyond their lot, as did Aigisthus who was forewarned by Hermes not to kill Agamemnon or marry his wife (Hom. *Od.* 1.32-41).

[74] An effective picture of Creon's irrational response to all those with whom he interacts is painted by Blundell (1989:130-2). Segal (1964:56) also comments on "the sudden shifts of mood" by which Creon "undermines the 'rational' bases of his actions."

[75] Winnington-Ingram (1980:126-7) sees Creon in terms of his first speech as "a narrow and dangerous man, but not ignoble, a man of principle" (124). Later however he takes a more pessimistic view describing Creon as a coarse politician, devoid of the capacity for statesmanship, and capable of comprehending only motives of power and greed, "a pasteboard tyrant" (126-7). Both of these pictures

into sharp relief, however, in his portrayal of Creon in *Antigone* is how under the stress of civic strife the ideals which hold together the polis as a community of free living citizens may become subverted and the institution of the polis in its fight for survival can take on a life of its own as an abstract formal entity divorced from the rationale that justifies and sustains it. Indeed the polis is a delicate organism thriving only within certain limits and any substantial change to its environment, including the trend to military imperialism to which Sophocles was a witness, threatens it with extinction.

4.2 Friendship as the fierce family loyalty of Antigone

Antigone, by contrast with Creon, presents a remote figure, insulating herself dramatically from those that surround her on stage by the primal intensity of her emotional focus and her seeming indifference to the claims of the public world of rational discourse in which she is immersed. Goheen captures incisively the essence of Antigone when he remarks that she has about her "a certain untouchability ...coupled with a kind of internal vehemence that eludes close sharing."[76] As events disclose, Antigone is undoubtedly in the right to actively pursue the provision of burial rites for her brother in accord with her understanding of the 'unwritten and unfailing laws of the gods' (454-455). However, while she is able to intuit the end, the burial of Polyneices, as the good to be sought in practice, and in so doing presents a noble and pious figure, Antigone is nevertheless unable to articulate within the social context of the polis, the realm of language, an appropriate means to achieve this end.[77] The undoubted 'rightness' of her cause notwithstanding, in the absoluteness of her open and public revolt against the decree of the ruler, she not only backs Creon inexorably into a corner from which his pride will allow him no escape, but in the manner of her actions she both isolates herself

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contain some truth. For it is only once a ruler has been put to the test in demanding circumstance that the full measure of what lies latent in his character will be revealed, as indeed Creon himself has confidently asserted (175-7).

[76] Goheen (1951:79).

[77] This remains the case, even when it is considered that whatever mediation she might have sought would surely have been unsuccessful against Creon. The guard's depiction of Antigone's shrill cry as she tends the body of her brother as like that of a bird on finding its nest empty of chicks (*Ant.* 424-5) portrays graphically what will emerge as central to her nature, a powerful all-consuming visceral drive which, as Segal (1995:120) puts it, "is akin to the wildness of nature and lies beyond familiar human discourse."

irrevocably from her living family, and further destabilizes her own polis, the scene so recently of the disastrous outcome to bitter infighting in its royal household.

4.2.1 Antigone & Ismene: the polar duality of a single nature divided (1-99)

The opening words of Antigone, the first words of the play (Ὦ κοινὸν αὐτάδελφον Ἰσμήνης κάρα), ring forth in proclamation of the closeness of the natural bond that exists between siblings, a bond which when enjoined with a noble nature (εὐγενής), Antigone will argue, entails certain duties that are inalienable, the honouring of which defines what is to be φίλος.[78] Central to her every concern is Antigone's conception of φίλος, founded in the natural bonds that tie her to her blood kin. More than this, Antigone intimates, not only are the sisters joined by blood, but they are held together yet more firmly by the common blows they have been dealt by fate (1-10).[79] The sense of this shared unity Sophocles conveys most effectively through the extensive use of the dual number in the early interactions between the sisters, both in reference to themselves and to their dead brothers. It can be accounted significant that this form of address is dropped once Antigone repudiates her relationship to Ismene, deeming her no longer φίλη but ἐχθρά.[80] What Antigone intuits in the drama through the strength of her feeling on the bonds that bind siblings naturally to one another, Aristotle will come to articulate formally in his *Ethics*. In their relationship to one another through their common genetic origins, siblings, he says, are somehow the same thing divided into different subjects, held in a natural relationship which is further strengthened by the shared experience of their common interests (*EN* 1161b30-34).

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[78] Knox (1964:79) points out that Antigone's complete and "overriding loyalty" to blood relations "is urged upon us from the start by a host of phrases (many of them containing words which seem to be fresh coinages of Sophocles) which emphasize the physical intimacy, the near unity, of those born of the same mother."

[79] By extension this joins them also to the fate of their other siblings, newly dead, notably in this case Polyneices.

[80] Knox (1964:79-80) well remarks this point. Lines 21-2, he notes, highlight brilliantly the distinction between "a family loyalty which regards the brothers as one [νῷν τὼ κασιγνήτω] and the loyalty to the *polis* which separates and opposes them" [τὸν μὲν προτίσας, τὸν δ' ἀτιμάσας ἔχει]. See further Griffith (1999:127). Ismene will become an enemy both to herself and to Polyneices through her refusal to assist in his burial, Antigone declares (93-4). It is difficult to reconcile Antigone's rejection of Ismene with her unswerving loyalty to her traitorous brother on grounds other than the absolute priority to be accorded to burial rites for a natural φίλος. "Relationship is itself a source of obligation, regardless of the feelings involved," Nussbaum (1986:64) suggests. For a summary of related literature on Antigone's motivation see Nussbaum (1986: 439-440).

At the heart of *Antigone* lies the determinate opposition of Antigone and Creon, an antithesis of feeling and reason in which, Segal remarks, each in their incompleteness seems to generate the other so that "the two exist as complementary parts of a whole."[81] Looking back to the *Eumenides*, a parallel can readily be drawn to the stand off between the Erinyes and Apollo, so that in the confrontation of Antigone and Creon their clash is enacted once again, now at the human level.[82] The Erinyes, as the disruptive force that emerges when the natural order, inclusive now of all the concerns of φύσις within the polis, is disturbed, find on this analogy their Sophoclean counterpart in Antigone.[83] However, mindful of the progression that takes place at the end of *Eumenides*, it can be fruitfully asked if there is not the possibility of a further insight to be detected in Sophocles' portrayal in *Antigone* of the natural side of human difference in its relation to the rational order of the polity. As *Semnai Theai*, the dread goddesses of the end of *Eumenides* were found to encompass a bipolar potency, as Erinyes/Eumenides, one made actual in the rational order of the polis by the goddesses' assumption of responsibility for 'all the affairs of men' through the power they wield to harm or benefit, as befits the circumstance (*Eu.* 930-931). In the civilized world of the well-ordered polis, which is Athens at the end of *Eumenides*, στάσις has been quelled; the side of the natural is satisfied and contained peacefully within the prior whole which is the polis actualized concretely as a κοινωνία πολιτῶν πολιτείας. However, as Athena makes very clear, this state of concord, the κοινοφιλὴς διάνοια in which the Eumenides are active, holds only as long as the chthonic goddesses are accorded their proper due; should this fail to be the case the dread faces of the Erinyes will be seen once more exacting retribution (*Eu.* 990-995).

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[81] Segal (1964:46).

[82] Segal (1981:184) noting this, points out further that Antigone vests the blood-tie in the common origin in the same mother's womb (ὁμοσπλάγχνος) as opposed to Apollo's determining it to originate in the father's seed. In so doing Antigone allies herself with the Aeschylean Erinyes who assert the primacy of the 'mother blood' (A. *Eu.* 230-1). Zak (1995:89) arguing the ease with which the "intellectual distance between *The Oresteia* and the *Antigone*" can be bridged, notes that the "very same antinomies between male and female, public and private, civic and familial, Olympian and chthonic" which foment conflict between Apollo and the Erinyes "resurface again in the persons of Creon and Antigone."

[83] Segal (1964:54) remarks that it is not simply Antigone herself but "perhaps, at another level, the 'woman' in him that Creon must subdue." To take the analogy further, since Creon identifies himself with the polis as its rational polity, it is the whole realm of feeling and difference that Antigone represents that is under threat from Creon. Hence the tenor of Creon's riposte at line 510 is: Are you not ashamed to think other than those (who are in agreement with me)?

In *Antigone*, it can be postulated that Sophocles develops, in his consideration of the relation between Antigone and Ismene, this same bipolar conception of the natural side of feeling held in a relation to the sustaining rational order of the polis, but understood now within the context of the disordered world of a Thebes in which στάσις looms ever imminent. With the instigation of Creon's edict, the honours due to the chthonian divinities are overturned. The consequent disturbance of the political order, sees those abstract and opposed rights which had been negated in the concrete unity attained in Athena's polis become actual once more as the implacable Erinyes, embodied now in the fierce human will of Antigone, seek to reassert their allotted due in response to reason abstractly imposed. Viewed in this light, Antigone's relation to her sister Ismene takes on an added significance, their actions related not just in an external and superficial way to show Ismene as simply a foil for Antigone, but as manifest expressions of the natural order in its determinate bipolarity.[84] The existence of an analogous relationship between Electra and Chrysothemis in Sophocles' *Electra* argues that the poet did attach a particular importance to this expression of a polarity in the natural. The prologue of *Antigone* can be usefully compared with *Electra* 938-1057. There, many of the same arguments are proffered in relation to Electra's plan to avenge her father and Chrysothemis' inability to come to her sister's help, although acknowledging the justice of Electra's proposed action.[85] By contrast with *Antigone*, however, the polarized natural fury of Electra is found acting not in opposition but in consort with the rational purpose of Orestes, as through a double blow (παῖσον ...διπλῆν, *El.* 1415) brother and sister, reason and feeling, jointly effect a restoration of the true political order in Argos.

With the harmony that is initially shown to characterize their relationship disrupted by Ismene's inability to respond positively to the challenge that faces them, and Antigone's fixed and unwavering identification with the immediacy of the ethical imperative, the sisters are wrenched apart, their unity unnaturally polarized and divided against itself. By contrast with her sister, Ismene, although equally cognizant that the end Antigone seeks

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[84] Tyrrell & Bennett (1998:38) comment on the harshness with which Ismene, "who pales ...before Antigone" has been treated by critics. Typical is Meier's (1993:197) castigation of her as "weak" and "vacillating." A review of relevant literature is to be found in Steiner (1984:144-8).

[85] Hogan (1991:127) offers a useful synopsis of "the shared motifs" to be discerned in the two passages. Knox (1964:179) notes in addition the use of duals by Electra as "she tries to win her sister over to her side ...(fourteen dual forms in *El.* 977-85).

is the good to be sought, is unable to make the same choices as Antigone and opts for what is for her the more immediate and pressing good, that of life in passive conformity to the will of the stronger. Whereas Antigone properly asserts their Erinyeic rights that have now been trampled upon, Ismene remains inappropriately in the guise of Eumenides, accommodating herself to the dictates of the ruler.[86] Thus, Griffith notes, in place of the "moral imperatives" Antigone invokes, Ismene urges what appears to her to be simply "good sense."[87] To act against the will of Creon, in defiance of law, outside of the traditional role of a woman, against insuperable odds and in the face of horrendous punishments is, in Ismene's view, beyond any reasonable expectation of them (49-64). Rather than act, she will seek pardon from those below, on the grounds that she is thus forced (βιάζομαι) by those who hold the ultimate power, for it would be excessive (περισσός) and senseless (οὐδεὶς νοῦς) to do otherwise (65-68).[88] Ismene's pragmatic conclusion is that what Antigone proposes to attempt is pure folly. If nothing that is materially tangible is to be achieved, who of sound mind, she asks, would risk the consequences of such an act? However, in rejecting that absolute requirement to act which Antigone understands to be predicated upon their relationship to their dead brother, and by conforming to traditional 'female' social norms of behaviour when what gives them meaningful content has been violated, Ismene shows, in Antigone's view, that she has become an enemy not only to her sister but to all of her family dead (93-94). In the larger perspective, Ismene can be understood in this argument as representing the passive, conforming side of the citizenry as a whole in relation to their leadership when the bond that contains φύσις within the rational ethical order of the political κοινωνία has been severed.[89]

In Aristotelian terms, Sophocles' portrayal of Ismene's action can be considered to be akratic and hence blameworthy.[90] Her recognition of the burial of Polyneices as a good

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[86] The fundamental natural dyadic principle of pleasure/pain is here seen operative as flight or fight.

[87] Griffith (1999:132).

[88] Ismene's implication at line 68 that she will consider Antigone's act οὐδεὶς νοῦς is quickly affirmed by her (ἄνους, 99) and later endorsed by Creon (ἄνουν, 462), and the Chorus (ἄνοια, 603).

[89] Commenting on the role of the Chorus, Gardiner (1987:93) remarks that tyrannies like that of Creon "which essentially operate on the principle that might makes right (666-7, 738), must rest upon the passive consent of timorously self-concerned and fatalistic men like these."

[90] On ἀκρασία see Arist. *EN* 1145b8-14, with succeeding chapters of *EN* Book 7.

end in accord with a universal premise, is overborne by her more immediate knowledge of what lies in store for her if she attempts to accomplish it, and so she chooses not to act. Reason, reinforced by the desire for her life, as itself a good, is more immediately realized in this way for Ismene. By extrapolation, the same can be said for the citizens of Thebes as a whole who, whatever private doubts they harbour, are not willing publicly to oppose Creon. Thus, despite their expressed concerns over the possibility of divine intervention in the burial, the Chorus quickly back down in face of Creon's impending wrath (278-280).[91] The Guard sums up best perhaps the view of the ordinary citizen when he indicates that, while trouble befalling φίλοι is painful, everything else is of less concern than one's own self-preservation (437-440). Survival is the watchword, it would appear, not only for Creon's polis as a whole, but for its citizens, both individually and collectively. Creon's own proudly proclaimed principle that the ruler of the polis must employ the best counsels and not remain silent through fear is clearly seen to be belied by his demonstrated determination to accept no counsel at all and keep everyone silent through fear. Aristotle himself, unlike Antigone, has some concern for the kind of predicament in which Ismene finds herself. Thus, he argues that, whereas such an action is not forced, in that it originates voluntarily within the agent and hence remains subject to praise or blame, the severe duress to which she is subject must be taken into consideration. There are conditions that overstrain human nature and that no one would endure so that in these circumstances a wrong action can be pardoned (*EN* 1110a23-26). By contrast, it can be argued that it is the very fact that Antigone does endure the unendurable that makes her a tragic figure of such imposing stature.

4.2.2 Antigone & Creon: the absolute polarity of political reason & family feeling

In her intractable single-mindedness lies both the source of Antigone's heroic greatness and her ἁμαρτία. Goheen remarks that "she moves in her own realm ...separated by her own immediate sense of goal and by the concentration of her determination."[92] Having made her choice, her commitment to it is absolute and she must actively and relentlessly pursue it to its conclusion. Hence, Antigone does not dissemble when Creon offers her the opportunity to plead ignorance as a possible way out (446-447). Nor, in her

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[91] Antigone (509) and Haemon (688-695; 733) claim the silent support of the citizenry for the burial.

[92] Goheen (1951:80).

performance of burial rites for Polyneices, does she refrain from returning to the scene having escaped detection once.[93] To Ismene's urging that they keep what she is doing secret, Antigone replies that she wants it known (84-87). Justice, for Antigone, must not only be done it must be acknowledged openly and publicly as the right thing to do. The purity and piety of her choice cannot be sullied by any attempt to lessen its consequences. Nor will she be deterred from acting by the seemingly impossible task of achieving what she sets out to do. The eventuality that Creon might be brought to change his mind, if not by her then through the intercession of others who also share her concerns, is beyond the compass of Antigone's vision.[94] It is this, her independent self-will (αὐτόγνωτος ὀργά, 875) that is her downfall, the Chorus concludes; she goes to her death of her own free choice, a law unto herself (αὐτονόμος, 821).[95]

Both Creon and Antigone claim the support of the people for their respective positions. In answer to Creon's edict forbidding the polis to bury Polyneices, Antigone issues her own proclamation to the citizens of Thebes, asserting her natural god-given right to bury her brother.[96] The edicts of the polis and the natural sanctities stand thus apart and starkly opposed, threatening the integrity of the political κοινωνία. For, as the Chorus will solemnly pronounce, it is only when both the laws of the land and the right of oaths sworn in the name of the gods are respected that the polis will ride high (368-370).[97] Antigone's sense of self-sufficiency, like that of Creon, has led her to assume for herself the prerogative of the gods in her assertion of their laws. As Creon subsumes the will of

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[93] According to the guard the necessary rites have been performed by the first burial, θάψας ...ἃ χρή (245-7). The reason for Antigone's repeat performance (407-440) is never clarified. For a summary of critical comment on the two burials see Griffith (1999:191).

[94] We are given every indication to believe that Creon has been amenable to counsel in the past, so that this is not an unreasonable presupposition.

[95] Hogan (1991:161) notes that "compound adjectives (with *auto-*) denoting what is self-chosen, voluntary , or personal occur fifteen times in the *Antigone*, nineteen times in the other six extant plays, and seven times in the fragments."

[96] Proclaim (κηρύξῃς, 87) this to all, Antigone instructs Ismene. I have proclaimed (κηρύξας, 192) to all the citizens, declares Creon.

[97] ὑψίπολις (370). The Chorus' utterance lends itself to ambiguity, whether intentional or not. Overtly they appear, as they will until after Teiresias speaks, to lend their support to Creon, but below the surface the need for a conception of divine justice which can encompass both partial expressions (the individual good claimed by Antigone and the common good asserted by Creon) is making itself felt. See further Goheen (1951:54-5).

Zeus and of his fellow-citizens to his own particular conception of polis order, so Antigone sees vested in herself the power of the nether gods, of the unrelenting Erinyes, to set right the disturbance that has rent the natural order. Thus she adjures Ismene to proclaim to all her noble rebellion in defiance of the citizenry and in violation of law, oblivious to the fact that in so doing she herself transgresses mortal bounds.[98] So it is, the Chorus say, she is cut down, through the folly of her speech and the Erinys that pervades her mind (λόγου τ' ἄνοια καὶ φρενῶν Ἐρινύς), the last scion of the house of Oedipus claimed by the bloody dust of the nether gods (600-603).[99]

4.2.3 Antigone & the polis: righting of the natural order is the prerogative of Zeus (801-943)

Only as she is about to be led away, no friends, no tears, to accompany her, having known nothing of her marriage rites, does Antigone for the first time express an awareness and regret for all she has sacrificed and lament her imminent demise (806-812, 876-882). Engaging directly with the citizens of her native land (ὁρᾶτέ μ', ὦ γᾶς πατρίας πολῖται, 806), she appeals for their support on this her final journey. From the outset, Antigone speaks of herself as ὅσια πανουργήσασα (74), a holy criminal, and with her final words, deserted as she sees it even by the gods whose divine law she has sought to uphold at such cost, she will reiterate that it is for her piety she stands condemned as impious (τὴν δυσσέβειαν εὐσεβοῦσ' ἐκτησάμην, 924), (τὴν εὐσεβίαν σεβίσασα, 943).[100] Nevertheless, despite that fact that they are reduced to tears by the thought of her fate, the Chorus are still prepared to offer little sympathy for her actions. A self-proclaimed champion of the cause of δίκη, Antigone has in the eyes of these elders of Thebes progressed to the furthest extremes of boldness (ἔσχατον θράσους) only to

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[98] Ismene (79) and Antigone (907) both express their understanding that to bury Polyneices is βίᾳ πολιτῶν. Ismene (44, 59-60) and Creon (449, 463) speak of transgressing the νόμος of the polis/ruler. The Chorus are willing to agree with Antigone that there is a kind of piety in the reverence she shows towards her brother's obsequies. However, they add, authority, for the one whose concern it is, can in no way be transgressed (872-4). On the surface, the Chorus is taken to be speaking of the power of Creon, who is present. However, in the larger religious sphere it is the power of Zeus, in whom the ultimate authority resides, that can be understood to be inferred.

[99] The Chorus go on to aver (604-14) that no human transgression can withstand the power of Zeus. It is not after all, in the final analysis, Antigone but Zeus, who reveals to Creon the error of his ways. Zeus' punishment will indeed extend beyond the immediacy of the tragic action to include retribution for the all the unburied Argive dead (1080-1083).

[100] Euripides' Hippolytus, also blind to the last to any possible shortcomings to his self-professed piety, will echo these sentiments (*Hipp.* 1364-7).

stumble against the high pedestal of the goddess, Δίκη herself (854-856).[101] Antigone, however, sees nothing but further taunts (γελῶμαι, 839) in the Chorus' continuing admonitions, reminders of her ill-fated destiny and not indicators of her αὐτόγνωτος ὀργά.[102]

In her final speech, as she reiterates her unswerving devotion to her dead kin, Antigone reveals at the last, something of the particularities of the reasoning which gave substance to her decision to stand alone against the power of the polis, and of the human cost that she knows she must pay. Not for the sake of burying either a husband or children would she have defied the citizens, for a husband or a child could be replaced. Here indeed is further confirmation that Antigone is not indifferent to the larger claims of society. However, she goes on to argue, with mother and father both dead never could she have another brother (909-912).[103] What forces Antigone to a decision to override the edict of the polis, the νόμος (908, 914) to which she defers in its stead, it emerges, is not an absolute unqualified adherence to an abstract universal principle of natural right which asserts that 'the dead must be buried', although of course her act conforms to such a principle as a particular instance of it. Rather it is her specific conclusion that in the present circumstances the responsibility for the burial of this particular dead person, because he is an irreplaceable brother, falls inescapably to his sister(s), as his immediate and sole surviving blood relative(s), regardless of the obstacles to be overcome.[104]

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[101] Antigone does not deny the authority of the polis *per se*, as her self designation as a holy criminal indicates. Rather she sees herself, in the matter of the burial of Polyneices, impelled by an inalienable ethical imperative to defy its human edicts. Nevertheless, the Chorus maintain, while her cause is good, in her relentless prosecution of it she has presumed too much, attempting to mount to the citadel of the gods and assume their prerogatives. Euben (1997:169) notes the increased isolation Antigone suffers, lacking as she does, even the solace of a female Chorus to provide comfort.

[102] The Chorus are prepared to see both a divinely inherited fate (πατρῷον δ' ἐκτίνεις τιν' ἄθλον, 856, cf. 596-7) and her own self-will as contributing to Antigone's downfall. Gardiner (1987:90) remarks that "[f]or the chorus, life is fraught with the danger of misfortune, whether inherited or incurred."

[103] μητρὸς δ' ἐν Ἄιδου καὶ πατρὸς κεκευθότοιν | οὐκ ἔστ' ἀδελφὸς ὅστις ἂν βλάστοι ποτέ (911-2). These two lines which many, notably Goethe (*Conversations with Eckermann*, March 28, 1827), have wished to excise from the text, are directly quoted and commented upon by Aristotle writing just a century after they were written (*Rh.* 1417a28-33). Little serious doubt is now expressed as to their authenticity. Useful recent discussions of the passage include Griffith (1999:277-9), Cropp (1997), Neuburg (1990:54-76), Murnaghan (1986), Kamerbeek (1978:158-9).

[104] Thus Cropp (1997:152) notes that while "the formulation as a nomos is new, the essence of this claim is not. In the debate with Creon she has claimed that her duty to her brother would be generally recognized." Reinhardt (1979:83) argues similarly, concluding that "the 'calculation' is not as 'illogical' as commentators have thought. Knox (1964:107) is typical of those who, on the other hand, find Antigone's explanation

The primary distinction that Antigone makes draws a divide between the obligations due to those who are products of the same womb, tied to each other by φύσις, and the ethical contractual relationships, the polis νόμοι, by which an Athenian woman was considered to be related to both her husband and also her children.[105] It is thus in terms of a natural instinctual necessity that Antigone has invoked the universal divine laws to which she sees herself bound, a necessity limited for her by the blood bond in much the same manner as the Erinyes of Aeschylus defined their role when confining themselves to avenging the 'mother-blood'. Like that of the Erinyes in *Eumenides*, the natural necessity driving Antigone is not simply an irrational force but is implicitly, instinctually, rational. Blundell notes that "although she does not acknowledge the authority of the *polis*, she never explicitly rejects it, as Creon does the family."[106] Properly encompassed within a political κοινωνία in which its natural rights are protected, the emotional feeling side of human nature will express itself, as at the close of *Eumenides*, in bounteous fertility. Deprived of these rights, however, as Antigone amply demonstrates, it becomes a potent force for destruction.

In the form the argument takes, this passage in *Antigone*, it has been oft noted, parallels Herodotus' account of the wife of Intaphernes who chooses to save the life of her brother rather than that of husband and child because 'with mother and father no longer living, she could never have another brother.'[107] The difference between the two accounts

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illogical. He concludes that Antigone "has abandoned her claim to be the champion of the nether gods, and, also, by her statement that she would not have risked as much for her own child, her position of champion of the blood relationship." Hogan (1991:163) claims likewise that "religious piety cannot quibble on the availability of another husband or child." Blundell (1989:134) argues that Antigone's "distinction between irreplaceable and other relatives for purposes of burial is highly unorthodox, and the assumption that the gods condone her priorities is even stranger."

[105] Should the woman be widowed or divorced she returned to her natal family. Her children, however, remained a part of her marital family. Murnaghan (1986:198) provides a succinct analysis of the passage. She concludes that "Antigone is defining 'husband' not as the unchanging identity of a specific individual but as an abstract role that could be played by several different men. In doing so, she is pointing to the way in which marriage, unlike ties of kinship, is not created irrevocably by nature but instituted by society." Cf. Creon (569). The institutions of the political order are what are prior and persistent. It is in this way too that Murnaghan (200) reads Pericles exhortation in the Funeral Speech to the bereaved parents of the war dead to produce more sons for the polis (Th. 2.44.3).

[106] Blundell (1989:146).

[107] Hdt. 3.119. Euripides' Alcestis offers a somewhat similar argument (E. *Alc.* 282ff.). Neuburg (1990) summarizes the evidence that links Sophocles and Herodotus (57). He points out that the question of choice "between one's obligation to a blood-relative and one's ties to a (replaceable) marriage-relative" has significantly already been raised earlier in the play by Creon who expects Haemon to "accept the loss of a

centres, of course, on the fact that whereas in Herodotus a living brother is saved from death by his sister, in *Antigone* a sister dies in the effort to bury a dead brother. It is in this that there has been encountered the greatest difficulty in understanding the logic of Antigone's argument.[108] Antigone is very clear that she is presenting a rationalization of her νόμος for the consideration of people of good understanding (904). Aristotle, commenting on the passage only a century after Sophocles writes, agrees that the ethical choice Antigone makes would seem at first sight incredible (ἄπιστος). When such is the case, he argues, then the reason (αἰτία) must be given, as indeed Sophocles does here in *Antigone* (*Rh.* 1417a27-32). The fact that Aristotle chooses this particular passage from the wealth of material available to him and the context in which he sets it within his own argument in the *Rhetoric* are of interest in exploring its meaning as reflective of morally choiceworthy action. Clearly he must believe that Antigone has provided a rational account. Aristotle's discussion in this part of the *Rhetoric* centres on how to make a narrative express moral character (ἠθική). In order to accomplish this the choices involved must be made clear, he argues, for it is moral choice (προαίρεσις) that reveals the sort of character (ἦθος) depicted (*Rh.* 1417a16-18). For this purpose, the choice of words used, therefore, should indicate not why an action is profitable, but why it is the action of an ἀγαθός (*Rh.*, 1417a23-27).[109]

What has been evident throughout is that Antigone's concern, the fierce loyalty and φιλία she exudes, is directed not towards the living but to the dead and it is from this

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replaceable spouse and cleave to the decision of his blood-φίλος, his father" (73).

[108] Foley (1996:54), following Neuburg (1990:69), defends Antigone's logic on the grounds that "she would not have challenged the state for a set of relations that are hypothetical to a virgin." Despite the vigour with which Neuburg promulgates this argument, it requires an initial unwarranted assumption on his part that Antigone does not comprehend and intend what she actually says, so that the problem is sidestepped rather than resolved. While Foley's interpretation, which is that Antigone's purpose in this speech is to make plain that she acts only because it is her irreplaceable last remaining brother is enticing in that it makes sound practical sense, it is not the argument Antigone employs, and this in itself is significant. Blundell (1989:134) finds "Antigone's argument ...most peculiar." Knox (1964:107), discussing the point, considers Antigone to be undeniably illogical, but understandably so. Brown's (1987:199-200) comments are, however, are crude and extreme: "The lines simply do not make sense ...in the end I cannot believe that Sophocles wrote this rubbish."

[109] Foley (1996:50), citing this source out of its context, arrives at the unwarranted conclusion that Antigone's rationale "is described by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* as *apiston*" Blundell (1989:134) notes correctly that "[a]s Aristotle saw, such a set of priorities require some justification to carry credibility."

perspective, the inversion of death over life, that perhaps she is best to be understood.[110] Thus, in what appears to be a highly conscious adaptation by Sophocles of the Herodotus passage, Antigone both 'saves' her irreplaceable brother for Hades and joins him and the rest of her family, her own private κοινωνία, in the netherworld. In choosing to wed herself so inexorably to the cause of her dead brother, 'I will lie beside him, a loved one with a loved one' (72-73), Antigone, as her name denotes, has consciously rejected the life affirming ethical ties of marriage and procreation, the expected natural fulfilment of her life as a woman.[111] Like Creon, she has herself inverted the natural order, arguing a primacy to the dead over the living to the extent that she ruthlessly excludes her only living sibling from the bounds of natural φίλοι, and deprives a part of the natural order of its rightful due. The fact that Ismene and Haemon, her living φίλοι, love her and have need of her has been made of no consequence by Antigone.[112] Abjuring those reciprocal relationships of φιλία which, Aristotle will argue, radiate outwards from the immediacy of self and family to bond the larger social unit, she has retreated into a heroic isolation.[113]

Rejected at the last by the civilized world of the polis (ὦ πόλις, ὦ πόλεως πολυκτήμονες ἄνδρες, 841), Antigone ἔρημος (887, 919), turns, like Philoctetes, to the natural world, to φύσις. Her final address is to the rocky tomb that will enclose her and to the dead φίλοι that will receive her. Entombed alive, a μέτοικος belonging neither to the living nor the

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[110] Thus she says, ἡ δ' ἐμὴ ψυχὴ πάλαι | τέθνηκεν, ὥστε τοῖς θανοῦσιν ὠφελεῖν (*Ant.* 559-60, see also 555, 460-6). Knox (1964:107) comments along similar lines that "for Antigone the distinction between living and dead has ceased to exist. She has for some time now regarded herself as dead and she talks to Polyneices as if he were alive; she is dead and about to be entombed in the land of the living, he is alive in the world of the dead." It is possible to go further and argue that Antigone has not simply confounded the living and the dead, but accorded the dead a priority over the living in a way that carries with it its own peculiar logic.

[111] Goldhill (1986:102) remarks that Antigone's "marriage to death ...tragically inverts the functioning of marriage in the *oikos*." On Athenian conceptions of marriage as the focus of female expectations see Burkert (1985:260-4) and Pomeroy (1995). Further on the theme of marriage in *Antigone*, see Ormand (1999:79-103), Murnaghan (1986:192-207).

[112] Murnaghan (1986:205-6) observes that "Antigone not only emphasizes the idea that the role of husband is not specific to one individual, but also speaks of marriage exclusively in abstract and hypothetical terms." Hence, "she adopts the same limited perspective of which Creon is guilty." Euripides' Medea can be said to provide an instructive contrast.

[113] It is within the family, Aristotle argues, that there are to be found the origins and wellsprings of φιλία and of the πολιτεία and justice (*EE* 1242a40-b2).

dead (851-852), never again will she see the light of day, never be a bride now to anyone but Hades (807-816).[114] All Antigone's thoughts and all her attention throughout the drama have been focussed on those silent unresponsive φίλοι who lie waiting below, on reuniting them in Hades through the unifying force of her own love for them.[115] For Antigone, death is the great leveller, the final end to the troubles that have plagued the Labdacids; only when all are together in Hades will they be united in love.

Far from seeing the polis as a whole, greater than but comprehensive of the order of polity and family as its constituent parts, Creon has sought to identify the polis with political abstractions and to negate altogether the impact of the natural distinctions which belong to feeling, to the individual and their family. Through the instinctually fuelled driving force of the will of Antigone, the order of nature has violently reasserted itself in Thebes in its tragic clash with the blinkered human reason of Creon, but only at the enormous cost of the destruction of its own living regenerative capacity in both branches of its ruling family. Goldhill remarks that "Antigone seems to support 'civilized values', but she also seems to destroy them in the rejection of the *oikos's* essential aim of continuity."[116] In her inwardly turned concern for her own particular family, with its excessive focus on the dead and the past, Antigone isolates the sphere of feeling and natural distinctions from the living self-perpetuating organism which is the political κοινωνία every bit as effectively as does Creon: empty, sterile autocratic decrees are

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[114] Antigone will speak of herself as μέτοικος οὐ ζῶσιν, οὐ θανοῦσιν (852). Cf. 868 where she again speaks of herself μέτοικος, and 890 where Creon announces she will be sent below a μετοικία. Juffras (1988:113-4) observes that "three references to the legal concept of residence without full civil rights within forty lines is surely deliberate." See also Winnington-Ingram (1980:144).

[115] Although people must certainly be praised for taking seriously concerns for honour, or parents or children, Aristotle states, it is possible nevertheless to go to excess (ὑπερβολή) in the pursuit of a good, as did Niobe in her challenge of the gods (*EN* 1148a28-34). Nevertheless, although, this sort of excess is to be avoided, Aristotle continues, it is not in itself blameworthy, as is ἀκρασία. Antigone will, in fact, compare herself to Niobe (832-3), only to be chided by the Chorus for likening herself, as a mortal, to a divinity (834-5). While Antigone herself may mean no more than they are both immured alive in a cavern by a god, the reminders of Niobe's own ὕβρις and impiety, are nevertheless there, allusions that can be further drawn upon. Else (1976:60-1), downplaying Niobe's defiance, sees their excessive concern for φίλοι to be the point of comparison between Niobe and Antigone. However this may be, it can still be envisaged as the cause of the ὕβρις that resulted in divine punishment. Hester (1971:34), by contrast, concludes that Antigone mentions Niobe as a fellow "victim of divine injustice."

[116] Goldhill (1986:105). Teiresias, as is generally noted, although implicitly endorsing the rightness of Antigone's act, never mentions her in the course of his long *rhesis* (*Ant.* 998-1032).

opposed by inbred and empty wombs.[117]

4.3 Effectively mediating the oppositions is the key to resolving tragic dilemma

As the action is brought to a close, it is Creon, his own family destroyed, who alone remains to dwell upon what he now sees to be the errors of his 'ill-disposed mind' (φρενῶν δυσφρόνων ἁμαρτήματα) and 'ill-starred deliberations' (1261-1265). Yet, although the ending of *Antigone* is very far from the joyous optimism of the celebrations which marked the close of *Eumenides*, there nevertheless remains alive amidst the carnage the hope that man can learn from his mistakes and that the κοινωνία of the polis can heal itself and reform under a new understanding. In exploring the simmering tensions between the sphere of the polis and the family which threatened his own society, Sophocles has drawn out to the fullest extent the logic entailed in the collision of goods rendered incommensurable by opposed and contradictory conceptions of the end to be pursued in human action. Yet, as the drama shows, the conflict that thus emerges between divine and human law is not in itself intractable; it is susceptible to human resolution if the opposing positions can be brought into a meaningful relation to one another.

For those in freedom-loving Athens who watch the tragic outcome at Thebes, the choice is there: pursue either of these paths, family concerns or the exercise of public power, to the complete detriment of the other and the future of the polis is put at grave risk.[118] On stage, Creon has been brought belatedly to acknowledge that it is best to preserve throughout life those prevailing laws (οἱ καθεστῶτες νόμοι) which Antigone has upheld (1113-1114). With this recognition comes the possibility that the family can become once more a viable part of the polis order in Thebes, reborn in τὸ φιλεῖν from the darkness and potency of Hades to which it has retreated. At the same time, the Chorus have reassumed the advisory role they had abnegated through most of the play, so that there exists once again the opportunity for conflict resolution through the mediating

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[117] Goldhill (1986:105) speaks of the "distorted and distorting idealisms" of both Creon and Antigone in which "neither the city nor the household can be maintained as the locus of order, value or principle."

[118] That the just polis, in order to endure, must pursue the mean between anarchy and despotism has been argued by the Erinyes and by Athena in *Eumenides* (A. *Ev.* 26-8, 696-8).

practical reasoning of the 'best of the citizens'.[119] The bonds that hold the 'parts' of the political association in relation to one another have been strained by the exigencies of circumstance but not as yet completely severed. What is needed is the enlightened leadership and common will to make the polis once again a living whole, a κοινωνία of citizens aiming at its end in the common good of the community as τὸ εὖ ζῆν.

What Aeschylus, Sophocles, and later Aristotle, in their different ways seek to bring out is that the movement out of natural necessity towards the political κοινωνία, which depends upon successfully addressing the tensions arising from the particularity of individual interest, in fact has its roots deep within the family itself and draws strength from that primary bond of family feeling which is τὸ φιλεῖν. The immediate natural bond of φιλία in the family is implicitly the rational bond of friendship which, when actualized in the polis, joins the citizenry in a realization of their individual ends within the common good of the whole. Yet, slowly but inexorably the traditional basis of the ethical order which sustains the political κοινωνία, the conception of justice as piety, the universal divine order of Zeus and the common religious rituals which bind the populace in a κοινοφιλῆς διάνοια, continues to be eroded in face of the insistent spirit of intellectual inquiry which is the hallmark of 5th century Athenian culture. The rational pragmatism of Creon and the spirit of independence and self-assertion which characterizes the heroic θυμός of Antigone, albeit contesting in pursuit of noble principles, are poised nevertheless on the threshold of a movement in which νόμος and φύσις, no longer at one in the universal objective order of Zeus will come increasingly to be seen to stand attached to the subjective concerns of individual human nature.

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[119] Segal (1964:62) argues that *Antigone* "at one level is almost certainly a statement about the nature and ideals of Athenian democracy. It rejects autocratic materialism and narrow rationalism implied in Creon's outlook," affirming "the ability of the state to take into itself sanctity of blood relations, the value of affection and emotional ties, uniqueness of the individual." See too Cropp (1997:153).

5

Power & Paradox

The Endgame Polis of Euripides *Bacchae*

ἡγούμεθα γὰρ τό τε θεῖον δόξῃ τὸ ἀνθρώπειόν τε σαφῶς διὰ παντὸς ὑπὸ φύσεως ἀναγκαίας οὗ ἂν κρατῇ ἄρχειν·

Th. 5.105.2

Euripides' *Bacchae*, written in the final years of the brutalizing Peloponnesian War and posthumously produced in Athens following the poet's death in Macedonia in 407/6, looks out on a polis world in disarray, beset both from within and without.[1] In *Antigone*, the goods espoused by Creon and Antigone, although radically opposed to one another, are ultimately seen to be held in a determinate relation, so that polity and family remain distinctions held within the political κοινωνία as a whole sustained by an objective ethical order which still defines and delineates the boundaries of human freedom. However, as the intellectual enlightenment gathers strength in Athens during the second half of the 5th century, the lessons to be learned from the actions of Creon go unheeded and fundamental to the changes to be observed is the continued detachment of the traditional νόμοι from the divine foundation that has sustained them.[2] Decisions on the

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[1] For the place of the play among Euripides' works, see the commentaries of Dodds (1960:xxxix) and Seaford (1996a:25) and the references there cited. Euripides reportedly left Athens for Macedonia in 408 at the invitation of Archelaus, ruler of the region. The *Didascaliai* indicate that, following, the poet's death, three unpublished plays were found among his effects, including *Bacchae* and *Iphigeneia at Aulis* (Schol. Ar. *Ra.* 67). These plays were produced shortly after in Athens at the City Dionysia by the poet's son, and were awarded the first prize. While the exact date of this performance is unknown, the date most widely proposed is 405, one year before the disastrous Peloponnesian War ended with Athens complete surrender to Sparta. See Kovacs (1994) for the biographical evidence on Euripides.

[2] Man is now to be the measure. The choral ode on man in *Antigone* (S. *Ant.* 332-71), it is often remarked, offers a purely natural account of the development of man's technical prowess. The myth of *Protagoras* (Pl. *Prt.* 320c-322d) provides an account of the relation of φύσις and νόμος in the origins of human society which is widely agreed by scholars to be the position of Protagoras (Guthrie v. 3 1969:64). See also A. *Pr.* 442-506. The *Sisyphus* fragment (DK 88.B.25), variously attributed to Critias, the uncle of Plato, or to Euripides, offers a similar account of the development of human society. See further Kerferd (1981:168), Guthrie (1971:60-8, 79-84), Cole (1967).

employment of νόμοι come to be seen to be properly the domain of human reason, guided to its end by pragmatic considerations, and not the inspired utterance of poet or prophet. Thus, Socrates suggests in *Theaetetus*, Protagoras would argue that whatever each polis believes to be just and noble is for it as long as it considers it so (Pl. *Tht.* 167c4-6).[3] Polis justice, no longer conceived in terms of ancient pieties universally operative, readily can come to be perceived in terms of a will to power, whether by individual, faction, or state. "Against the old conception of law, thus stripped of its prestige," Dodds writes, "it was inevitable that men should set up the new conception of human nature, that they should contrast νόμος as the variable with φύσις as the constant."[4] Thus it is that the sophist Antiphon can declare that whereas laws are imposed, nature is of necessity (ἀναγκαῖα) and, since much of what is just κατὰ νόμον is hostile to nature, wherever possible one must follow the dictates of human nature rather than those of law (DK 84.B.44).[5] This is the case both for the individual and for the polis as a whole. As Thucydides' Athenians declare in 416 BC to the Melians they are proposing to subjugate to their rule, any attempt to justify on ethical grounds (μετ' ὀναμάτων καλῶν) what they are about to do would be pointless. Both sides know the realities: 'the strong do what they can, the weak acquiesce' in what they must.[6]

It is against the background of this intellectual and socio-political milieu, as "instinctive forces and primitive drives surge up through the legal and political structure" that the conflicts of *Bacchae* take shape.[7] Bernard Knox expresses forthrightly what will be

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[3] Cf. Pl. *Prt.* 323a5-328d2d. On the political activities of the historical Protagoras, see Podlecki (1998:93-99). Aristophanes' *Clouds* offers a masterful exposition of the dangers inherent in the pursuit of self-interest that the 'new learning' engenders. Despite the controversies that attach to interpretation of positions attributed to the sophists, through the paucity of direct evidence available, it is widely accepted that the sophistic movement was a potent intellectual force in the last half of the 5th century. As teachers they offered to impart the skills which would best prepare men for successful participation in public life. See the recent article by Winton (2000:89-121) in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*. Guthrie (v. 3 1969) remains a standard work on the sophists. See also de Romilly (1992), Kerferd (1981), Classen (1976). The extant fragments are collected in Diels & Kranz (1934-7).

[4] Dodds (1973:99).

[5] On Antiphon the Sophist see Pendrick (2002). See also Ostwald (1990:293-306). The "earliest evidence for the *nomos-phusis* antithesis," he argues, "comes from Aristophanes' comedies and Euripidean tragedies datable in the 420s" (296-7). Antiphon is considered to be a contemporary of these writers (299).

[6] δυνατὰ δὲ οἱ προύχοντες πράσσουσι καὶ οἱ ἀσθενεῖς ξυγχουροῦσιν (Th. 5.891).

[7] Euben (1990:130). See also Arthur (1972:169). Allan (2000:148) observes that the fate of "basic decencies when a society faces crisis" is every bit as much a concern for Euripides as it is for Thucydides."

understood here: "Euripides is the poet of the crack-up ...a disordered universe, the nightmare in which the dream of the Athenian century was to end."[8] Nowhere is the import of these sentiments more vividly imaged by Euripides than in the confounded world of *Bacchae*, a world where nothing is as it seems.[9] No longer shaped as it is in *Oresteia* by justice as the common good of the whole, the polis is dominated instead by the interest of the most powerful force applied. Hence necessity and freedom come to coincide not as before in the universal order of Zeus, but in the individual subject and, 'writ large', in the will of the δῆμος as a 'tyranny of the majority'. As a result, the political ideal, understood as a 'whole' which is comprehensive of its parts, effectively ceases to exist and what remains in its stead is nothing other than a 'heap', a mere aggregate of parts to be shaped and bent to the will of the stronger.[10]

Aeschylean Athens, faced with the challenge posed by the vengeance seeking Erinyes threatening blight and destruction to the polis and its citizens, was able under the leadership of Athena not only to pacify but to effectively incorporate into the polis these irrational divine powers, revealing in the process the essential polarity of the goddesses as catalytic agents of not only the greatest harm but also the greatest benefit. The secret to the city's success, Athena and the Erinyes as its divine guarantors agree, is to be found in the pursuit of τὸ μέσον through the avoidance of the extremes of anarchy and despotism,

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[8] Knox (1985:6). See also Allan (2000:), Conacher (1998:10). Allan remarks that the "capacity to shock and to provoke reflection about basic issues is what links Euripides and the sophists most closely" (155). A similar connection can be drawn between Euripides and the aporetic Socrates. Parallels between Euripides' *Hippolytus* and Plato's dialogue *Charmides* can readily be made.

[9] Versnel (1990:96), surveying recent trends, notes that critical interpretation of *Bacchae* has provided a plethora of conflicting, not to say downright contradictory accounts of what the drama is about. Dodds (1960) and Oranje (1984:7-19) provide insightful surveys of scholarship on *Bacchae* over the last century. A central issue for debate is the nature and significance of the Dionysiac, the current understanding of which has been powerfully influenced by Nietzsche's portrayal. Thus, Goldhill (1986:78) calls Dionysus "the divinity of illusion and change, paradox and ambiguity, release and transgression." See too Segal (1982:282), Dodds (1960:xvi). Versnel (1990:97) and Seaford (1996a:34), while conceding that structuralist, deconstructive, and psychoanalytic readings of *Bacchae* have their place, offering "a wealth of subtle analyses," maintain that there is a need to 'historicize' interpretations of the play, in order to "take full account of the practice of Dionysiac cult in the polis." This is turn brings with it its own set of difficulties, Henrichs (1993:26) points out, since "the prevailing conceptions of Dionysus ...are almost exclusively derived from the mythical record; the Dionysus of non-tragic literature and of actual cult, who is much less violent or disruptive, is largely ignored."

[10] Against the growing divergence of common good and individual interest Socrates raises a lonely but insistent voice. In *Gorgias* Socrates suggests that alone among the Athenians of his day he attempts to puts into practice the true πολιτικὴ τέχνη, speaking not in order to gain favour but with a view to the best (τὸ βέλτιστον) and not the most pleasant (Pl. *Grg.* 521d6-e1).

the bringing of natural difference and feeling into an ordered relationship with the rational order of the polity, itself sustained in the justice of Zeus. In *Bacchae*, Arthur has well noted, we see this process reversed as, with the polis "no longer able to function so as to grant a minimum satisfaction to each of the elements and interests that compose it, the covenant is broken, and the preservation of order then depends upon the ruthless exercise of authority."[11] Thus, some 50 years after the production of *Eumenides*, an Athenian audience in a very different political clime watches as once again a powerful divine dyadic force governing the sphere of the natural and irrational sets itself in opposition to an arbitrary dictate of the established rational order and stakes its claim to a place within the city. With the Athenian democratic polis approaching its own nadir, the citizens see before them how the mythical polis of Thebes, unable to comprehend τὸ μέσον, to hold within one grasp the conflicting claims of reason and feeling, is torn apart and destroyed.

5.1 Feeling: the eruption of the power of the irrational in the polis (1-63)

The action of *Bacchae* brings to life in dramatic form the birth of the Dionysiac religion in Hellas with the introduction of the orgiastic rites of the god Dionysus into the polis of Thebes, the god himself encapsulating in the prologue (1-63) both the circumstances which have led to his present epiphany and the nature of his intent.[12] Having swept through the East, establishing his rites, seemingly unopposed, among barbarians and the Greeks of the coastal cities of Asia Minor alike, Dionysus has now arrived first in Greece itself at his birthplace of Thebes, the home of his mother Semele, only to find himself summarily rejected, his claim to divinity denied, rationally explained away (26-31); and on the orders of the Theban ruler, his cousin Pentheus, all cult honours refused to him (45-46). His godhead thus affronted, Dionysus, appearing in mortal guise as a Lydian Stranger, is prepared to personally avenge to the full the dishonour done to him as an Olympian, the son of Zeus (Διὸς παῖς Διόνυσος, 1-2).[13] Whether it wishes to or not, the

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[11] Arthur (1972:169).

[12] Unlike Aphrodite in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, Dionysus will remain in person an integral part of the action, putting Pentheus through a succession of trials which allow him, and through him the whole polis (39, 48, 50, 61), the opportunity to discover (ἐκμαθεῖν, 39) the truth of Dionysus' divinity. Cf. Conacher (1967:59).

[13] On the mythical background of *Bacchae*, see Segal (2001:15-16), Dodds (1960:xxv-xxviii), Guthrie

polis of Thebes must perforce become fully cognizant of what it means for it to be uninitiated in the Bacchic rituals. Dionysus will show to Pentheus and to all the Thebans that he was indeed born a god and that all without exception must show him honour (208-209).[14]

A difficulty that quickly presents itself, as the god effects his plan, is how Dionysus' own claims to be an Olympian, which carries with it his expectation that his cult be made an integral part of the polis order, can be reconciled with the form that his rites are shown to take in the play which would seem to be the antithesis of the 5th century polis ideal, culminating as they do in the Dionysiac frenzy, in an unconscious, unfettered unity with the natural world of necessity. In addressing this, it will be suggested that Euripides in *Bacchae* inverts and confutes mythical and historical understandings in such a way that what belongs properly to maenadic myth appears in the play to be actual ritual practice, while the ethical norms that belong historically to the polis world take on something of a mythic tenor, in particular in the utterances of the Chorus.[15] What is being played out before the audience under the guise of the mythical introduction of a new god into the polis is not so much the "the irruption of Dionysian *physis* into the ethical universe of the polis"[16] as rather, under this guise, the 'eruption' of the original nature-god, in all the savagery attendant upon his mythical representation, from out of a polis in moral decay.[17] Arthur aptly observes that there is found in *Bacchae* "what is in some sense a crisis of

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(1950:165-73), Otto (1965:74-8).

[14] Cf. 859-861. The question Dionysus' inexorable progress raises, Winnington-Ingram (1948b:31) suggests, is whether there is "that about this worship which, being universal, transcends ...differences" between Greek and barbarian, "something that is ...inherently a part of what it is to be human."

[15] Henrichs (1990:257-8) points out that the Dionysus of *Bacchae* "is anything but typical of the way the god was perceived, let alone worshipped, in Attica and other parts of Greece between 500 B.C. and A.D. 200. The maenadic ritual that is the core of the Pentheus myth is a divinely-induced perversion of actual cult. Genuine cultic elements are not lacking in *Bacchae*, but they are so completely incorporated into the dramatic reenactment of the myth that myth and cult become virtually inseparable." See also Henrichs (1978:121-60) and Bremmer (1984:267-86).

[16] Friedrich (1988:539).

[17] Friedrich's (2000:147) suggestion that "*Bacchae* might be dramatizing not the coming of the polis-god but the return of the physis-god, the savage Dionysos of myth" can fruitfully be expanded in this direction. On the influx of orgiastic cults, including those of Cybele, Bendis, and Sabazius, in the Athenian polis during the Peloponnesian war period, see Versnel (1990:102-31), Dodds (1960:xxiii). The cult of the Phrygian wine-god Sabazius, referred to in a number of places by Aristophanes (*Av.* 875; *V.* 9; *Lys.* 387-97; *Horae* fr. 566.), is particularly relevant. Dodds speaks of him as "an unhellenized Dionysus whose cult retained the primitive ritual which the Attic Dionysus had long since lost."

internal subversion, rather than the less complex, less ambiguous, and certainly less interesting problem of naked foreign aggression."[18] In the failure of human wisdom to successfully transcend and comprehend the endless cycle of nature, myth offers a telling comment on *Realpolitik*; Dionysus is seen to be at once both a new god whom the polis must civilize and accommodate, and at the same time an old god reborn, escaped from the bonds of a bankrupt morality that can no longer contain him.[19]

The question of the nature of wisdom (τί τὸ σοφόν; 877=897) lies at the very heart of the tragedy of *Bacchae*. The emotional and physical σπαραγμός that Dionysus will instigate as the fate of Pentheus is in its turn reflective of the spiritual σπαραγμός which has already invaded and taken hold in the Athenian polis, the heart of empire, questioning and destabilizing the foundation of a traditional piety which held its νόμοι to be the unchanging rational determinations of the universal order of Zeus. As the city moves inexorably ever closer towards the complete demise of its material power in the closing years of the 5th century, the wisdom that was once recognized as the prerogative of Zeus has been claimed by men. Fallen to earth and shattered, its broken shards are now ends in themselves, pieces of wisdom gathered up by individuals and factions to reflect and serve their own perceived needs. In the sphere of the divine, the eclipse of Zeus' justice has exposed to full view a darker force resident in his offspring Dionysus, purveyor of an underlying natural, instinctual universal necessity (656), at once most terrible and yet, it is important to note, also most gentle to mankind (δεινότατος, ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἠπιώτατος, 861). The conception of a dyadic potency for benefit or harm, pleasure or pain, which has been encountered in the Eumenides-Erinyes of Aeschylus, and implied also in the relation of Ismene and Antigone in Sophocles, reappears in a particularly potent form in *Bacchae*, emerging in a tragic world which is without an Athena, or a Theseus, or Pericles standing ready to harness the powers of Dionysus and draw them within the civilizing bounds of polis cult.[20] Understanding Dionysus as a dynamic synthesis of

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[18] Arthur (1972:155).

[19] Winnington-Ingram (1948b:36) remarks that "if in the myth Dionysus is a new god revealing a new religion ...essentially that religion is as old as the human race, the god as old as nature itself."

[20] Otto (1965:114) notes the relation of Dionysus to other chthonic powers, "the Erinyes, in particular, who like him have a dual nature." At A. *Eu.* 500 the Erinyes refer to themselves μαινάδες. Segal (1982:328) aptly remarks that "[t]here can perhaps be no clearer contrast in the response to the social, moral, and intellectual crises of the fifth century" than that offered by *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Bacchae*.

polar opposites offers, it has been argued, "the most successful attempt to deal with the multiple identities of Dionysus."[21] Thus, Otto maintains, the duality of Dionysus is to be seen expressed "in the antitheses of ecstasy and horror, infinite vitality and savage destruction ...in the immediate presence which is at the same time absolute remoteness."[22] Whether he is envisaged as a traditional god, a contradictory flux, or an elemental principle, Dionysus wields power over a world of contrariety, a world which is ultimately resolved into a primary overarching opposition of life and death: 'Hades and Dionysus are the same', declares Heraclitus (DK 22.B.15).[23]

There is indeed more than a passing similarity between the Dionysus of Euripides' *Bacchae* and what has come down to us in certain fragments of the thought of the 6th century philosopher, Heraclitus. The god of Heraclitus is seen to be the unity of polar contrarieties, 'day-night, winter-summer, war-peace, satiety-hunger', an essential principle (ἕν τὸ σοφόν) that 'steers all things' out of which all things come into being and into which all things return (ἐκ πάντων ἕν καὶ ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντα).[24] Like Heraclitus' principle, the two sides of Dionysus are related in a determinate polarity, regarded by the Greeks, Henrichs notes, "as closely connected and inseparable, a tendency that finds its parallel in the case of other deities such as Artemis or the Erinyes/Eumenides, whose myths and rituals, like those of Dionysus, reflected the biological life cycle with its alternations from birth to death."[25] Guthrie makes the further important point that it

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[21] Henrichs (1993:31). Otto (1965), Segal (1982), Henrichs (1982:158-9), Vernant (1988:398-400), Goldhill (1990: 126-7), Versnel (1990: 131-7), Bierl (1991: 13-20, 128-9, 227) are among recent commentators who bring out the polar nature of Dionysius. Colouring much of this current interpretation, however, remains the still powerfully felt Nietzschean conception of the Dionysian as a subversive force which perverts and destroys the social order. Vernant (1988:398), Zeitlin (1990:66), Burkert (1985:165), Goldhill (1986:78, 1990:127) are among those who, like Nietzsche himself, divorce Dionysus from the productive life of the polis which is reflected in the god's historical cultic involvement, concluding, as Burkert does, that it is in the inversion of "the normal order of the polis ...that Dionysus fulfils his true nature." Seaford (1995:207) points out in response that the Dionysus called upon by the citizens of Thebes in the 5th *stasimon* of *Antigone* was "not an embodiment of the irresolvable contradiction between order and disorder." Henrichs (1993:26) too asserts that "the Dionysus of non-tragic literature and of actual cult, who is much less violent or disruptive, is largely ignored." On the god's accommodation into the polis, see also Henrichs (1990), Bierl (1991:17-19), Segal (1982: 328-36, 344-7), Arthur (1972:154-5, 174-5).

[22] Otto (1965:121). Henrichs (1993:15) too emphasizes that for the Greeks "Dionysus was neither a figure of the imagination nor a projection of the human psyche. He was instead a supernatural being."

[23] Otto (1965:121) concludes that the Dionysian paradoxes "[a]t the height of ecstasy all ...suddenly unmask themselves and reveal their names to be Life and Death."

[24] DK 22.B.67; DK 22.B.41; DK 22.B.10 (Arist. *Mu.* 396b20).

[25] Henrichs (1984:212).

would be natural "[f]or Heraclitus, as a child of his time" to conceive of his "divine principle as immanent as well as external."[26] It is in this way too, it can be argued, that Dionysus is to be best understood in *Bacchae* in his relation both to the psyche of the individual and to the socio-political institutions of the polis.

5.2 Reason: the splintered voice of the enlightenment polis (170-369)

5.2.1 The sophistic reasoning of Cadmus & Teiresias

As the dramatic action commences, Dionysus has already made his initial move towards asserting his primacy, stinging with manic frenzy the women of Thebes so that they have abandoned their households and the civilized world of the polis to dwell upon the mountain in communion with nature.[27] On stage, the Asian followers of Dionysus who constitute the Chorus extol the blessings they enjoy in that communion of soul which is the θίασος (θιασεύεται ψυχάν, 75-76) engaged in the rites of its holy purifications (64-166). It is against this background of the sublime beauty, purity and sheer joy the Lydian Bacchants evoke in their worship of the god, a bucolic bliss to which the discordant undertones of a savage cruelty inject an ominous air of foreboding, an anticipatory thrill of fear induced by a sense of the raw natural power the god embodies, that the contrasting world of the polis and its institutions comes suddenly into view. As the choral ode dies away with an evocative image of the swift-footed Bacchant leaping foal-like for joy, the physical appearance on stage of the two elderly Theban converts, Teiresias and Cadmus, incongruously garbed as maenads complete with fawn-skins, thyrsoi and ivy crowns, could hardly, in the context, present more of a shock.

In the persons of Cadmus, the celebrated founder of the polis of Thebes, and the familiar figure of Teiresias, the venerable prophet of Apollo, are constituted, Seidensticker notes, "the two main authorities of the city, the representatives of state, family, and official

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[26] Guthrie (v. 1 1962:471).

[27] παράκοποι φρενῶν (*Ba.* 33). Cf. E. *Hipp.* 238 where Phaedra's condition is similarly described as a god-induced mental derangement (παρακόπτει φρένας). Dionysus' effect on the Theban Maenads as a stinging (οἶστρος) of the mind or soul is found again at *Ba* 119, 665, 979, 1229. Cf. also Phaedra's frenzied desire for Hippolytus (E. *Hipp.* 1300) and Heracles' madness (E. *HF* 1144). Plato (*R.* 577e) speaks of the disordered soul of the tyrant as ὑπὸ δὲ οἴστρου ἀεὶ ἑλκομένη βίᾳ. In a different context Socrates refers to himself as 'the gadfly (μύροψ) of Athens' (Pl. *Ap.* 30e). See further Leinieks (1996:87-105).

religion."[28] If the leaders of the polis and its institutions, the self-styled upholders of the physical and spiritual integrity of the polis, are thus portrayed and if they do indeed cut a grotesquely comic figure to the watching audience, this can be understood to be because of what they represent; the ethical order of the polis is itself now a parody of the noble ideals it once embodied.[29] Here in *Bacchae*, it has been well said "the polis is shown as a spent force which has lost its hold on the citizens and no longer functions as the ethical universe that civilizes and humanizes them."[30] The leadership and wisdom that Cadmus and Teiresias represent belongs to a time past, its tottering forms now leaning on one another for support while about them the earth heaves and crumbles. The power of Dionysus and his claims to be accorded honours by the polis, Cadmus and Teiresias have recognized the need to acknowledge. Indeed, they are the only ones in the polis to have done so for, as Teiresias asserts, they alone have sense (εὖ φρονοῦμεν, 196).[31] In so far as this is the case, they feel the god's energy working within them and rejuvenating them, or so they tell each other at least; for as they eventually shuffle off stage holding each other up there is little outward sign that this is really so (363-365).

Both Teiresias and Cadmus assert that the acceptance of Dionysus conforms to the traditional time-honoured practices for which they are the spokesmen. 'We do not employ clever sophistries (οὐδὲν σοφιζόμεσθα) in matters concerning the gods', Teiresias proclaims, 'for no argument can cast down these ancestral customs (πάτριοι παραδοχαί) possessed from time immemorial, not even if wisdom (τὸ σοφόν) is attained through extensive thought' (200-203).[32] The sense of Teiresias' words, as those of Antigone, is

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[28] Seidensticker (1978:316). Cadmus is formally introduced as the leader who first fortified Thebes, and Teiresias is pointedly addressed by Cadmus in his opening words as a wise (σοφός) man offering words of wisdom (179, 186)

[29] Gregory (2000:74) argues caution in discussing Euripidean humour. Segal (2001:19) concludes that "[t]he scene may have its comic aspect, but it also shows Dionysos's universal power. He transforms Thebes' most sober citizens to roles completely different from their accustomed ones." See also Friedrich (2000:120-1), Seidensticker (1982:115-29, 1978:303-20), Dodds (1960:90-91) and Deichgräber (1935:322-49).

[30] Friedrich (1988:543).

[31] Winnington-Ingram (1948b:42) notes the "competition throughout the play for the right to claim this quality." Unlike the women of Thebes, Teiresias and Cadmus have not been stung to frenzy by the god, but have come to an agreement that it makes good sense to partake of Dionysus' rites. This Teiresias early makes clear (174-7).

[32] There is disagreement on how this passage is to be understood, particularly in so far as it colours the interpretation of τὸ σοφόν in the Choral odes. Reynolds-Warnhoff (1997:90), although agreeing there are

that these ancient customs are not to be overthrown by any human wisdom. This conclusion is not affected by whether or not that human wisdom is deemed sophistic. The irony contained within the passage, as I see it, is that Teiresias, in stalwartly espousing the old traditions, remains sublimely oblivious to the fact he himself, as he will shortly demonstrate, is a consummate exponent of that sophistic cleverness which undermines them. Cadmus will later urge Pentheus similarly not to dwell outside the bounds of the customary practices (θύραζε τῶν νόμων, 331). This appeal to time-honoured customs, so reminiscent of *Antigone*, has often been remarked as paradoxical in view of the fact that Dionysus is a new god.[33] However if, as is here suggested, looming behind the mythical new god, and his historical 5th century congeners who are 'irrupting' into the polis, there can be seen, running counter-currently, a conscious historical reflection upon an older tradition, now 'spent', from out of which the god has 'erupted', the seeming anachronisms can perhaps be ameliorated if not completely reconciled. Viewed from this perspective it is the fading memories of what once was, remembrances of a Dionysus domiciled within the polis as the god of wine and festivity, that the old men, Teiresias and Cadmus, formally invoke as they attempt to confront the problem of bringing the wild 'physis-god' within the bounds of civilization.[34]

Yet if they echo the beliefs of the older tradition in their intercourse with one another, it soon becomes evident, as they respond to Pentheus' vehement rejection of Dionysus, that Cadmus and Teiresias are very much men of the late 5th century. In their outward appearance, dressed in maenad garb and espousing traditional religious sentiments, they conform to what they believe to be their ritual requirements, but very self-consciously

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problems in interpretation, argues that the passage is central to "understanding τὸ σοφόν in *Bacchae*." She translates ἄκρων ...φρενῶν as "deep reflection" (92). Seaford (1996a:79) translates similarly as "utmost thought." Others see sophistic implications. Winnington-Ingram (1948b:43) suggests "cleverness subtle minds achieve," Kovacs (2002:29-30) and Dodds (1960:95) "subtleties invented by deep wits" and Arthur (1972:176) "sharp wits."

[33] Dodds (1960:95) considers that Euripides introduces the contrast deliberately as a "glaring anachronism" in order to signal "to the audience that the debate which follows will represent a fifth-century controversy transposed into the mythical past." The many and varied interpretations of the import of the new god/old god apposition are summarized by Versnel (1990:178-9). For Dionysus as a new god, see *Ba.* 219, 256, 272.

[34] It is in the Chorus, as will later be discussed, that there is most fully expressed in the course of the action a contrapuntal movement which marks the simultaneous decline of the polis and its traditional νόμοι and the increasingly strident demands of φύσις.

and deliberately so. Performance of cult is for Cadmus and Teiresias a rational not an emotional enterprise: an expression of self-interest. There is nothing of the loss of self, the immediate sense of oneness with the god, that the Asian Bacchants celebrate. It is not through divine possession but by mutual agreement (ἅ τε ξυνεθέμην πρέσβυς ὢν γεραιτέρῳ, 175) that Teiresias and Cadmus have come to a decision to follow Dionysus.

The primary concern for Cadmus (181-183) is that the god, Dionysus, is a member of his own family, his grandson in fact. The honour which attaches to having a god in the family is something that Cadmus shows himself patently eager to exploit (330-342). On this account alone, any doubts he himself may have about the divinity of Dionysus must be cast aside and he urges Pentheus to do likewise and not to step outside customary practices (331).[35] Even if Dionysus is not a god, Cadmus argues, they should consider him to be, for they will be telling a lie for the sake of a good cause (καταψεύδου καλῶς, 334), bringing honour to their whole clan. It is clear that, whereas the forms of the older religious piety remain for Cadmus, they no longer carry with them the untroubled convictions they once commanded, nor are they to be divorced from utilitarian considerations of personal benefit, the furthering of individual and family interests.[36]

Teiresias, in his turn, reveals himself to be of quite a different ilk than the august and fearsome seer whose divinely inspired auguries held sway in Sophocles' Thebes.[37] Indeed, it is not prophesy that moves Euripides' Teiresias to speak as he does but the facts, as he assures Pentheus (μαντικῇ μὲν οὐ λέγω, | τοῖς πράγμασιν δέ, 368-369). In the age of enlightenment, a seer needs new skills to maintain his influence and it is quickly evident that Teiresias no longer looks beyond himself to divine inspiration as the source of his power but turns instead to rational explication, bringing theology firmly within the bounds of pre-Socratic physics. Myths, no longer to be accepted at face value,

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[35] Dodds (1960:113) notes that what Cadmus refers to here "are the prescriptions of religious tradition, the πάτριοι παραδοχαί of 201."

[36] Cadmus, while he may have his doubts about Dionysus, is not a disbeliever and intends to err on the safe side just in case. He is worried, rightly as it turns out, that Pentheus may suffer the fate of his cousin Actaeon, who was torn apart by his own dogs after boasting that he was better in the hunt than Artemis (337-40).

[37] Teiresias' speech, Segal (1982:293) concludes, "is vital to the meaning of the work ...its intellectual focus ...forces us to ask the moral, aesthetic, and intellectual questions raised by Dionysus' presence in the city. Contrast Oranje (1984:49) who asserts that "[t]he Teiresias scene is ...a more or less disconnected event within the course of the action."

must now be recognized as allegorical, their true meaning revealed to be in accord with accepted scientific belief, their more bizarre features explained away by rhetorical skill. Like Cadmus, Teiresias seeks to impress upon Pentheus the need to recognize Dionysus' claims to be a god who must be accommodated within the bounds of civilized life. However, the means he employs to this effect owe much more to the power of sophistic eristic than to the threat of Zeus' thunderbolts.[38] His exhortation of Pentheus (266-327) is replete with the rhetorical cleverness characteristic of the age, so that, Dodds notes, he gives every appearance of being a 5th century intellectual, "one who has read his Protagoras and his Prodicus."[39]

There is a certain self-satisfied complacency that attaches to the portrait of Teiresias here, reminiscent in many ways of Plato's Euthyphro.[40] Confident in his own wisdom, Teiresias remains quite oblivious to the fact that in his rhetorical exposition he actively gives lie to his earlier pronouncement that 'we do not employ cleverness (οὐδὲν σοφιζόμεσθα, 200) with respect to the gods'. It is, as often remarked, in very much the manner of a Prodicus, that Teiresias proffers his allegorical rationalization of Dionysus, arguing that the god is to be seen as a primary principle of human nurture, "a personification of wine just as indeed Demeter is of bread" (δύο γάρ ...τὰ πρῶτ' ἐν ἀνθρώποισι, 274-5).[41] When myth is allegorized in this way, so that the gods are identified "with palpable substances" it is possible, Rosenmeyer points out, "to dispense with whatever is not concrete and intelligible in the traditions about Dionysus."[42] Yet,

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[38] See Rosenmeyer (1983:385).

[39] Dodds (1960:91). Goldhill (1988:146-7), Roth (1984:61), Oranje (1984:44), Deichgräber (1935:332-7) all argue similarly.

[40] For the seer Euthyphro's skill as an etymologist, see in particular Pl. *Cra.* 396de. Roth (1984:59-69) notes the connections that can be drawn between Teiresias and other 5th and 4th century μάντεις, Euthyphro in particular. In light of the evidence he adduces it seems not unreasonable to see the development of such 'theological sophists' as a recognizable phenomenon in the late 5th century.

[41] Dodds (1960:91). See also Winnington-Ingram (1948b:48). Prodicus is reported to have said that the ancients considered everything beneficial to life to be gods and it was for this reason he called Demeter bread, Dionysus, wine (S.E. *M.* 9.18). See further Guthrie (v. 3 1969:238).

[42] Rosenmeyer (1983:386). Not only is the nature of the god rationalized, but those elements of the myth of the double birth of Dionysus so anachronistic and distasteful to Pentheus (*Ba.* 243) are likewise explained away by Teiresias, in Prodican fashion through a linguistic sleight of hand (*Ba.* 286-97). Winnington-Ingram (1948b:50) notes, however, that while the physically offensive is removed what is morally repugnant" remains. Compare Socrates' (Pl. *Phdr.* 229c-30a) refusal to join with οἱ σοφοί in offering such clever accounts (σοφιζόμενος) of divine myth. In Socrates' view, pursuit of what he calls this ἄγριος σοφία is ridiculous while the much more significant problem of man's ignorance of his own ethical nature

even as Teiresias extols the benefits the god, conceived now in practical terms as a 'culture hero', brings to man with his gift of wine, it is to be remarked that it is the older concept of the civilized polis-god that is in spirit invoked. Winnington-Ingram notes that "throughout the play the properties and uses of wine are assumed to be familiar."[43] All this is in marked contrast to the new and wild god that has actually arrived at the gates of Thebes, and indeed to the anachronistic figure Teiresias himself cuts in his maenad garb, blissfully unaware of his own perversion of polis ritual, and the striking symbol he presents of the disastrous consequences attendant upon this unmediated apposition of old and new σοφοί.[44]

Just as Cadmus very evidently promotes the concerns of his own family, Teiresias, it can be reasonably concluded, seeks actively to further the interests of what Dodds terms "the ecclesiastical politics of Delphi."[45] Thus, he takes the opportunity presented by the accusations Pentheus has brought against Dionysus to offer some additional reflections designed to site the god within a wider theological context as a deity associated with other μανίαι, in particular, like Apollo, a prophetic power (298-299).[46] Dionysus, Teiresias proclaims, is a god who will gain acceptance throughout Hellas, even to being found at Delphi itself, drawing at this point a rare expression of approbation from the Chorus for the good sense he exhibits in honouring Dionysus, their leader (328-329). Teiresias, Dodds observes, has astutely recognized the political necessity for the established religion to harness the raw emotional power and charisma of the Dionysiac experience to its own mandate.[47] Nevertheless, it cannot be ignored that neither for

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remains unexamined.

[43] Winnington-Ingram (1948b:49). For Dionysus as a 'culture hero' see Roth (1984:61).

[44] Henrichs (1982:139) points out that "[r]itual wine-drinking in the name of Dionysos was the privilege of Greek males, whereas ritual maenadism was practised exclusively by women." Thus Euripides' portrayal of Teiresias, Cadmus, and later Pentheus, as maenads would be seen as "artificial and provocative." As indeed, it can be added, would the corresponding sight of drunken females that Pentheus fears.

[45] Dodds (1960:91). Winnington-Ingram (1948b:58) and Deichgräber (1935:337) remark the respective concern of Cadmus and Teiresias with family and ecclesiastical interests.

[46] The fear induced in enemies by Ares is also a Dionysian μανία, Teiresias claims (*Ba.* 305). A nice political touch since Ares is a founding god of Thebes. On the other hand, whether or not a woman exhibits τὸ σωφρονεῖν (*Ba.* 316) with respect to matters of Aphrodite is something that is inherent to her nature (φύσις, *Ba.* 315) and is not, as Pentheus supposes, to be laid at the door of Dionysus, a patent sophistic sleight of hand.

[47] Dodds (1960:91). On the strange partnership that existed at Delphi, which saw Dionysus given free reign for his rituals in the winter months when Apollo was absent, see Dodds (1960:110), Otto (1963:202-8).

Teiresius nor for Cadmus is it the good of the polis as a whole conceived as a κοινωνία πολιτῶν πολιτείας, that motivates their concerns in urging the god be admitted within the bounds of civilized society.

In the context of introducing the appearance of king Pentheus, as the major protagonist in the resistance to the acceptance of Dionysus, Euripides has opened a window onto the late 5th century polis world. The picture that Teiresias and Cadmus present in their expected role as senior policy advisors to Thebes, when considered in conjunction with what we later learn about Pentheus himself, as the city's self-willed autocratic ruler, illustrates very effectively how the polis, which in *Eumenides* was seen to be informed by a single encompassing moral order sustained by the divine rule of Zeus, has fallen apart. The individual no longer sees his freedom as inseparable from the objective good of the polis as a κοινοφιλὴς διάνοια in accord with traditional divinely mandated νόμοι. The religion of Delphi, the order of the polity, and the claims of the family, all set themselves up in *Bacchae* as distinct rational enclaves, spheres of influence which, no longer ordered to one another and to an overarching principle in Olympian Zeus, are effectually ends in themselves, competing κοινωνίαι in search of the attainment of a particular good conceived in the light of their own self-promulgating wisdom. The question then as now is 'Whose Justice? Which Rationality'? Ranged against these foci of rational interest is to be found that powerful irrational force which is the Bacchic κοινωνία of Dionysus, echoing through the Chorus the collective voice of a late 5th century δῆμος for whom there is another wisdom, a νόμος which transcends that of human relativity and is coincident with a universal enduring φύσις.

5.2.2 The rational pragmatism of Pentheus

The dramatic action of *Bacchae* inarguably has at its centre and pivot the confrontation between Pentheus and Dionysus which culminates in the eventual punishment of a persistent θεομάχος.[48] Yet, as the action unfolds, always to be kept in mind is that this is more than a conflict between the god and a hubristic individual (39-40, 47-52). Ranged behind the opposed principals, their fate dependent upon the outcome of the contest, are their respective constituencies, the citizenry of Thebes and the Bacchic θίασος, in what

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[48] Kamerbeek (1948:274) notes that, whereas the concept of the θεομάχος is clearly "as old as Greek literature itself," it is in *Bacchae* that "the *term* θεομαχέω is first encountered in extant literature."

can be considered the larger clash between culture and nature, city and mountain.[49] As the lawful human ruler of Thebes, Pentheus sees vested in himself the sole right to pronounce on behalf of the citizens what will provide and maintain the polis order. However, like Creon in *Antigone*, he will be found to equate the defective wisdom of his own individual human reasoning with the good of the polis as a whole. The inevitable result, Euben remarks, is that just as "Creon finds himself alone and helpless; Pentheus imprisons himself even as he attempts to imprison others. Both are powerless because of their definition of power and create chaos because of their definition of order."[50] Those who might be expected to advise Pentheus best in reaching a decision on the good for the polis, Teiresius and Cadmus, while they urge the admittance of the god into the city, have presented a somewhat less than noble picture, a marked contrast to the paradigm offered by Teiresias and Haemon in their efforts to win over Creon in *Antigone*. Now, deaf and blind in his solipsism, Pentheus will vainly oppose himself to Dionysus and attempt to shut fast the gates of Thebes against the incursion of the irrational.

Responding to reports that the women of Thebes have abandoned their homes and the polis, and are revelling on the mountain in the company of a seductive barbarian stranger claiming to honour a new god, Pentheus, has returned in haste to the city (215-262), exhibiting as he does so a noticeable agitation (ὡς ἐπτόεται, 214). This is something that will characterize him throughout the action, in clear distinction from the calm moderate demeanour his divine opponent will consistently exhibit.[51] By contrast with the aged Teiresias and Cadmus, Pentheus is very young and no memories of a bygone age will be found to intrude upon his thoughts as he attempts to exercise his authority as ruler of Thebes in face of the disruption to polis order he perceives the Dionysiac to represent. What becomes immediately evident as Pentheus enters the fray and what will continue to characterize him throughout his subsequent encounters with the disguised Dionysus, is the pragmatic nature of his reasoning. This, when coupled to an outright rejection of the

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[49] On the significance in *Bacchae* of city and mountain and the movements that take place between these contrasted dramatic spaces, see Segal (1982:80-124), Friedrich (1988:538-45).

[50] Euben (1990:143). Comparisons are often made between Creon and Pentheus. Segal (1982:100) notes their self-identification with the polis. See also Seidensticker (1972:46). Dodds (1960:97) remarks their shared "suspiciousness," "prickly egotism," and reliance on "physical force" to solve any problem.

[51] Dodds (1960:120) notes that Dionysus "is repeatedly represented as ἥσυχος (435ff., 622, 636) in contrast with Pentheus, the excitable man of action (214, 647, 670f., 789f.)."

existence of the god, fatally distorts his vision.[52] In the picture that Euripides presents of Pentheus as polis ruler, Arthur observes, there comes into view a conception "of the city-state as a temporary alliance for order and progress, whose continued existence is sanctioned only by the repressive forces which it ultimately controls."[53]

At the core of Pentheus' reaction to the Lydian Stranger, the disguised Dionysus, colouring his whole attitude, is the fixed belief he holds that the son of Semele, Dionysus, was destroyed by Zeus, along with his mother, in punishment for her having falsely claimed Zeus to be the father of her child (244-245).[54] This being the case it inevitably follows, for Pentheus, that the Lydian Stranger must *de facto* be an impostor, motivated by an agenda of his own in luring the women from the polis.[55] Since he is thus convinced that Dionysus is not a god, it is not difficult for Pentheus, nor would it be for any red-blooded Greek male in the circumstances, given the lascivious terminology in which the description of the Stranger has been couched to him (233-238), to arrive at the conclusion that the orgiastic rites that the Stranger promulgates are but a shallow pretext for sexual licence.[56] Hence, it is filled with a righteous indignation that Pentheus insists that the Bacchants are to be hunted down, restrained by force and imprisoned, and that their leader, the Lydian stranger, must be put to death; all attempts by Cadmus and Teiresias to persuade him otherwise Pentheus angrily dismisses. Driving the women out of Thebes to dwell in ecstatic communion in the wilderness of Mount Cithaeron, Dionysus has effectively struck at the very roots of civilized society. With the abandonment and consequent destruction of the household, the connection between the rationally ordered civilizing world of the polis and the natural order which sustains it in its being is severed: the polis has been rent in two and rational and irrational stand now simply opposed.

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[52] Pentheus is repeatedly criticized through the drama on this count: E. *Ba.* 45-6, 263, 325, 370-5, 490, 502, 516-8, 635-36, 794-5, 1080-1, 1255, 1293.

[53] Arthur (1972:175). "Pentheus is first and last the policeman, inspiring fear (1310), chastising wrongdoers (1312), and prohibiting transgression (1322)."

[54] This view Pentheus shares in common with his mother and her sisters (*Ba.* 26-31) and can be considered one in which he has been nurtured. See Oranje (1984:40-1). Further educated in a secularizing rational polis milieu, such as Teiresias and Cadmus project, Pentheus, would only be confirmed in this understanding.

[55] See further Gregory (1985:27), Oranje (1984:41).

[56] Podlecki (1974:149) remarks that the whole description of Dionysus and his followers "is very unGreek, calculated to arouse the suspicions and hostility of a Greek politician."

When he argues that it is only within the ethical life of the polis that man's natural end is to be fully achieved, Aristotle articulates a principle central to Hellenic Greek conceptions of community: the polis comes into existence originating in the household which supplies the basic needs of life but continues in existence for τὸ εὖ ζῆν, the sake of the good life (*Pol.* 1252b28-30).[57] Separated from the ethical universe of the polis and the bounds of law and justice, man is the worst of animals, most unholy and savage (*Pol.* 1253a19-39). Euripides in *Bacchae* illustrates well enough what Aristotle asserts. In the long shadow cast by Thucydides' description of events such as Corcyra, the ferocity of Euripides' mythical Theban maenads, can readily be envisaged to invoke for an Athenian audience a contrast between the polis ideal they have long held dear, and which they continue to celebrate in the pre-play ceremonies, and the harsh and brutal political realities in which they are immersed and to which they must respond.

The eruption in *Bacchae* of female irrationality from its containment within the confines of the household to violence on the mountain can perhaps be envisaged as a dramatic metaphor for the excesses of destructive male θυμός that in reality continue to threaten the integrity of the polis. Nevertheless, in his own urgent insistence on the capture and return to the polis of the Theban women, Pentheus is implicitly acknowledging the fact that the irrational has an essential place even in the most rigidly ordered polity.[58] However, with his simplistic dogmatic approach to problem-solving, he fails to articulate for himself why this is so. His response to this the god's initial barb provides a first inkling of an obtuseness which is to characterize him throughout. The mass exodus of the city's females, which is itself a remarkable event, Pentheus, simply and reductively attributes to the irrational nature of women and their inborn and inescapable susceptibility to sexual lures. Pentheus will hunt (θηράσομαι, 228) the Theban maenads, including his own mother and her sisters, from the mountain like wild animals. Those who are caught will be fastened in iron nets and, their evil Bacchic revels at an end, they will be held shackled in the public gaol (226-232). Impervious to the end to the true nature of the powers mustered against him, Pentheus loudly decries the 'wanton insolence' of the

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[57] See too, for example, Pl. *Cri.* 48b6-7; *Prt.* 320c8-322d5.

[58] The existence of the polis is predicated upon the household, the realm of regeneration and growth, rooted in necessity. So that, although Pentheus adheres to the rational and considers women to epitomize the irrational, he cannot simply let the women go.

Bacchants (ὕβρισμα Βακχῶν, 779), a great stigma for the Greeks (ψόγας ἐς Ἕλληνας μέγας, 779). Against this assault on the primacy of Greek manhood and its rationality, every force the polis has at its command must be mustered if the ultimate ignominy, humiliation and defeat at the hands of women is to be avoided (εἰ πρὸς γυναικῶν πεισόμεσθ' ἃ πάσχομεν, 786).[59]

5.3 Wisdom human & divine: the clash of Pentheus & Dionysus

Pentheus has made his position very clear and in his ὕβρις has no doubt already merited a νέμεσις at the hand of the god.[60] Nevertheless, Dionysus calmly bides his time. Pentheus will not be 'stung' immediately; he will be given the opportunity to learn that all is not as it seems, to come to know the inadequacy of his understanding of the true reality that prevails. Pentheus and the polis he rules, as Dionysus makes explicit in his prologue, stand and fall together. Indeed, since Dionysus himself has revealed his own vested interest in the incorporation of his ecstatic rights within the rational order of civilized society, achieving thereby his full status as son of Zeus, a failure to win around Pentheus is in a way also a defeat for the aspirations of the god on his first incursion into Hellas. In the ensuing series of direct encounters between king and god, Dionysus will effect a trial of Pentheus, attempting to open the eyes of the king to the distinction to be made between the pragmatic determinations emerging from within the narrow confines of his blinkered human reasoning and a larger encompassing divine wisdom which transcends these mortal bounds.[61]

5.3.1 Power: the strong do what they can, the weak suffer what they must (443-518)

The arrival of the disguised Dionysus, in the custody of one of Pentheus' men simply affirms for the king his own conception that he has everything under control. Supremely confident from the outset in his own superior power and wisdom, Pentheus is conscious

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[59] To allow the female to triumph over the male, and thus be called inferior to a woman, is a disgrace not to be countenanced by any Greek male, running counter as it does to the natural order of things. Cf. Creon (S. *Ant.* 678-82), Orestes (A. *Ch.* 304). Aristotle concisely summarizes what is to be understood: τό τε γὰρ ἄρρεν φύσει τοῦ θήλεος ἡγεμονικώτερον (*Pol.* 1259b2).

[60] Compare the fates of Hippolytus and Heracles at the hands of vengeful goddesses in Euripides.

[61] The conflict between Pentheus and Dionysus, man and god, as Dodds (1960:131) notes, is played out "in three stages" which form "the dramatic kernel of the play."

only of the superficial aspect the Lydian Stranger presents, standing meekly before him, hands bound. Significantly, however, quite a different appreciation of the situation emerges from the short report of the soldier who brings the disguised Dionysus to Pentheus. Alive himself to the presence of some divine power, he informs the king of the Stranger's unnaturally calm demeanour upon capture (436-442), and of the simultaneous miraculous escape of the Bacchants from imprisonment, the chains and bolts that held them released by no mortal hand (443-448). 'This man has come to Thebes full of many wonders', warns the soldier. However, he knows his place; Pentheus rules the polis and as an ordinary citizen he can do no more than tentatively suggest caution, for the rest this is a matter for the king's concern.[62] Completely indifferent to the import of the guard's words and the portent of the inexplicable escape of the women he had imprisoned, Pentheus remains convinced he himself is in complete control of the situation; the Stranger, caught in the king's net, will be unable to escape him (οὐκ ἔστιν ...μ' ἐκφυγεῖν, 452).[63] Nor, as he critically appraises the god's appearance, does Pentheus evince any hint of an awareness that the Stranger might be something more than just an exotically attired barbarian whose description fits the preconceptions he has already formed concerning him. There is for Pentheus, supremely confident in the power of his human intellect, nothing of the instinctive awe aroused in the soldier by the presence of the god; Pentheus sees simply what he expects to see.[64]

From his position of assumed strength and dominance, Pentheus can afford to be magnanimous. Indeed, he exhibits a curiosity to learn more about his prisoner: who he is, and what he claims to be, the origin and nature of the rites he brings (460-88). As he conducts his interrogation, however, it quickly becomes evident that meaningful communication between the two is impossible; Pentheus and Dionysus, purveyors of contrasting wisdoms, speak in effect different languages. Pentheus speaks the language of the φυσικός, attempting by means of his examination to define his opponent by rationally categorizing him in terms of determinate empirical parameters which will tie

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[62] Dodds (1960:131) comments that the soldier "shows that he possesses the αἰδώς or moral sensitiveness (443) that his master lacks (263).

[63]Oranje (1984(52) points out that "as spectators we will notice that in the action Pentheus never reacts to a miracle: miracles do not seem to exist for him."

[64]Compare 453-9 with 233-8: λέγουσι ...

him down once and for all. Pentheus, concludes Vernant, is not a sophist but "he is a king who is too royal, too tyrannical (671-676), ...a man of the city who turns reasons of state into a narrowly positivistic concept."[65] Dionysus, with whose voice the Stranger speaks, is, by contrast, beyond the divisions of discursive reasoning: the "elusive god who defies definition."[66] Unable to be pinned down in any way, he assumes whatever characteristics he wishes (478). To the audience, who are well aware of the Stranger's true identity, this first interaction between the two is an ominous precursor of what can be expected to materialize in the ensuing action.

Just as he has observed nothing in the god's appearance to disturb his equanimity, neither will Pentheus allow anything Dionysus says in response to his questioning to intrude upon his complacent certainty in his own superior reasoning. Hence he argues that if, as Dionysus claims, all the barbarians have accepted his rites (482), this can only be because their power of reasoning (φρονοῦσι, 483) is so much inferior to that of Greeks. The significance of the god's seemingly mild rebuke that οἱ νόμοι ...διαφόροι (484) and that in these matters the barbarians have more sense is simply lost on Pentheus and draws from him no further expression of interest. Since the practice of Dionysiac rites is to be universal among Greeks and barbarians alike (13-22, 48-9), what Dionysus has to be taken to mean is not that all νόμοι are relative but that human νόμοι which differ from city to city must be distinguished from divine νόμοι which pertain for all mankind. In other words νόμοι operate at distinct levels, human (changing) and divine (unchanging). The same distinction will be found to pertain to the Chorus' similarly enigmatic assertion that 'wisdom is not wisdom' (395). Oranje misses this important distinction when he questions whether in line 484 "the last four words are genuine" in view of "Dionysus' objective ...that his rites should be celebrated everywhere, worldwide."[67] Here as throughout their encounter Pentheus remains oblivious to the universal truths contained in the god's utterances and passes on unconcernedly from point to point, wedded to his own agenda, convinced that the Stranger is simply being evasive (475) and manipulative

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[65] Vernant (1988:403).

[66] Friedrich (1996:257). See also Segal (1982:7-26). Henrichs (1984:209) concludes that the only point of consensus among critics is that "a balanced and unified view of Dionysus ...is not only difficult to achieve but is essentially incompatible with the complexity of the god and with his disparate manifestations."

[67] Oranje (1984:58).

(479). As it seems to Pentheus, impervious as he is to the god's repeated charges of ignorance (ἀμαθής, 480, 490) and impiety (ἀσεβής, 476, 490, 502), the Stranger is to be dismissed as simply a crass sophist, a brash (θρασύς 491) manipulator of words, for which he must be held to account (δίκην σε δοῦναι δεῖ σοφισμάτων κακῶν, 489).[68] If Pentheus cannot see the god with his own eyes (501) then in his blinkered pragmatism *ipso facto* the god does not exist. The Stranger must thus be punished for so scorning (καταφρονεῖ, 503) both Pentheus and Thebes in his attempt to delude them.

An impasse it seems has been reached; the warning signals have been there for Pentheus but he has paid no heed. Asserting his perceived authority (κυριώτερος, 505) over the Stranger, Pentheus orders him bound and imprisoned. 'You do not know what your life is, what you do, who you are' comes the chilling riposte of the god.[69] Oranje notes that there is in these two lines "an abrupt switch ...from the appearance (505) to the reality of power (506)."[70] Pentheus, however, with no insight into his own inner nature as human, cannot apprehend the true import of the Stranger's words. His response, defining himself externally in terms of the specifics of his lineage, his particular material causality as the son of Agave and Echion (507), in its prosaic literalness only serves to reinforce for those watching the reality of the mismatch of these protagonists; this is indeed the misfortune, the πένθος, of Pentheus (508). Dionysus, the god who rules over the irrational life forces, he whom Pentheus claims does not exist (Διόνυσος ...ὃν οὐκ εἶναι λέγεις, 517), will duly exact a compensation for the insults to which his divinity has been subjected by this ignorant ὑβριστής (516-517). Only then, at the last, will come the dawning of a realization for Pentheus that as man, suspended between the gods and the beasts, he not only retains a partial and incomplete hold on a wisdom which is properly that of the gods, but he is at the same time possessed of an essential animal vitality that is inescapable and will not be denied its own place in the divine order of things.

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[68] Earlier, Teiresias (267-71) has counselled Pentheus that a man who speaks out boldly (θράσει) with a smooth tongue, but without understanding (φρονῶν, φρένες), is a bad citizen (κακὸς πολίτης). Pentheus now makes a similar accusation against Dionysus.

[69] οὐκ οἶσθ' ὅ τι ζῇς, οὐδ' ὃ δρᾷς, οὐδ' ὅστις εἶ (506). See Dodds (1960:140) Seaford (1996a:191). With these commentators I take ὅ τι as an internal accusative with ζῇς.

[70] Oranje (1984:62).

5.3.2 Paradox: the collapse of the sensory world of Pentheus (604-862, 922-972)

Pentheus has been unable to comprehend the words of the god and thus to penetrate his mortal guise as the Lydian Stranger. Now, one after the other, striking at the mind of Pentheus, come the visual proofs of the god's power. A powerful creator of images destined to sway the human mind, it is Dionysus, the embodiment of the dyadic principle, who dons the mantle of the master sophist. The sophistic logic can be equated with that of Heraclitus, a flux of oppositions to be acted upon by a δημιουργός. Like Heraclitus' god, and like Dionysus, the sophist wields a power which allows him to bring together in φαντασία, being and non-being, same and other, so that everything is 'true'.[71] Against the background of earth tremors which threaten to topple his palace (605) and fire leaping up from the tomb of Semele, Pentheus endeavours futilely to make the appearances of reality the god conjures up to challenge him, conform to the simple empirical physical laws upon which he relies. Thus, thinking his palace is on fire, he struggles in vain to extinguish flames that will not be doused by water. Seeing the Stranger apparently escaped from his clutches, he tries to run through with his sword an enemy that is not there (624-631). None of this is, however, sufficient to give Pentheus pause for thought, for nothing that cannot be contained within the compass of sensory experience and subjected to logical explication can have any reality for him. Pentheus simply ignores what he cannot explain. Despite all evidence to the contrary, he remains convinced that what *seems* empirically to be so to him *is* so; certain even now that by locking all the gates of the city (653) he will confine Dionysus and subject him to his own rational will.

The physical destruction wrought by the god on Pentheus' royal palace (633), the centre of Theban power and order, is powerfully emblematic of the impending spiritual and physical disintegration of Pentheus himself which will set in motion a chain of events culminating inexorably in the break-up of both his family and his polis.[72] One last small hope remains, however, that Pentheus, after all he has already heard and witnessed, will realize the import of the account the herdsman who arrives as a messenger from Mount

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[71] Vernant (1990:403) compares the powers "that Dionysus puts to work throughout the play" to those extolled by Gorgias in *Encomium on Helen*: powers that "so bewitch the mind that no human being can resist them."

[72] Segal (1982:93) notes the parallel with Euripides' *Heracles Furens* in which "[t]he hero's self-disintegration in madness operates in close conjunction with the literal disintegration of his palace (e.g., *HF* 864, 919ff., 943ff., 1006-12)."

Cithaeron will provide. The herdsman has come, he says, wishing to inform both Pentheus and the polis (φράσαι σοὶ καὶ πόλει, 666) of the incredible and terrible marvels he has witnessed. Yet, for fear of how the king will react, his sharp temper (τοὐμοξύθυμον, 671) and imperious manner (τὸ βασιλικὸν λίαν, 671), he is uncertain whether he should proceed, further evidence if such were needed of the inherently self-destructive nature of Pentheus' autocratic and blinkered rule.[73] Pentheus, however, confident still of being told what will reinforce in him the beliefs he already holds, is only too eager to learn what the messenger has to say; the more terrible (δεινότερα, 674) things he hears about the Bacchants the more he will punish the one who led them to this pass (674-676). Nothing of the supernatural wonders and horrific events that the messenger describes will leave the slightest impress in the blind self-confidence that still wraps king Pentheus in its delusory mist. Further confirmed in his preconceptions, in accord with his expectations, it is paramount for him now to mount an immediate armed attack on the Bacchants with the intent of putting the women to slaughter (θύσω, φόνον γε θῆλυν, 796), thus ending once and for all their insolent rebellion (ὕβρισμα βακχῶν. 779). Dionysus' final offer to resolve the issue peacefully by himself bringing back the women to the polis, the essential first step it can be argued in any rapprochement between city and mountain, is dismissed out of hand as a mere ruse by Pentheus, ever suspicious of ulterior motives. City and mountain will stand to the end locked in a destructive opposition. Dionysus, son of Zeus, demands that the polis incorporate his Bacchic rites; however, while his power over the irrational allows Dionysus to effect the destruction of Pentheus and the polis, he cannot accomplish his own appointed end without the active cooperation of human wisdom.

What Pentheus lacks in other respects in tragic stature he more than compensates for in his obstinate recalcitrant blindness. Fixated in his narrowly pragmatic and rigidly authoritarian stance, from which no evidence to the contrary will dissuade him, the tragic fate of Pentheus can no longer be denied: unable to respond to reason he must be stung into submission. His soul possessed by the power of the god, his surrender to the Bacchic madness is complete (850-852). The warrior king, the proud leader of the polis, the epitome of human male rational prowess, will be paraded through the streets of Thebes

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[73] Fear of Pentheus' reaction was earlier expressed by the soldier who brought in Dionysus (450). The Chorus, at the close of this messenger speech express similar sentiments (777-8).

decked out as a woman in ritual maenad dress (854-856), an object of public ridicule and a proof-positive to the watching citizenry that the claims of Dionysus are not to be denied. Stripped of their rational constraints, the baser chthonic desires of Pentheus now rule his soul (957-958). Both figuratively and literally, Pentheus leaves behind the world of the polis to meet his end on the mountain: to be brutally slaughtered at the hands of his own mother who takes him for a beast (1114-1115).[74] Only then, when face-to-face with the inevitability of his appalling fate, does his mind clear as the god leaves him, so that at the last he comes to recognize his errors and know, too late, that Dionysus is the son of Zeus, a god whose rites must be accomplished (859-860).[75]

Considered as opposed and polar principles of the rational and irrational, the respective wisdoms espoused by Pentheus and by Dionysus become an abstraction beyond their product, the polis concretely realized as the truly human community.[76] However there is at the same time detectable in the dispositions of the protagonists that which would argue that while they appear completely opposed Pentheus and Dionysus are nevertheless to be seen as held in a determinate relation to one another. Thus, as has been noted, it is Pentheus, the pragmatic arbiter of reason who is from the outset shown as being in a state of both mental and physical agitation, whereas his divine opponent, the god of the irrational and ecstatic, maintains throughout an air of calm, arguing that the part of the wise (σοφός, 641) man is to exercise self-control (σώφρων, 641).[77] Half a century earlier, as has been seen, Aeschylus portrayed, in the confrontation of Apollo and the Erinyes, a very similar opposition. In *Eumenides*, it was possible to conceive of a resolution, a higher divine unity that could contain these principles in their potency and thus avoid the extremes of anarchy or despotism which must result from the overwhelming of one side

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[74] Pentheus' chthonic heredity, has been averred to by the Chorus (537-44). Pentheus himself in the exultation of his Dionysiac possession he anticipates will be able now to lift and tear apart mountains (945-6, 949-50).

[75] For comment on the rendering of ἐν τέλει, see Dodds (1960:182). Once Dionysus has brought Pentheus to the point of no return, in full view of the maenads and unable to escape, the Stranger disappears and it is the god himself who is manifest in all his power (1076-85). At the same time, as suddenly as it had come, the madness leaves and Pentheus can appreciate to the full the impending disaster (1113) and admit his ἁμαρτία (1120-1).

[76] Dionysus can sting Pentheus to madness but significantly cannot imbue him with the wisdom necessary to achieve his goal.

[77] The importance of σωφροσύνη as the virtue that allows the irrational to achieve its proper place in the polis emerged at the end of *Eumenides* and will be further emphasized by Plato and Aristotle.

by the other (*Eu.* 693-696).[78] Reflecting back on this, the parallels that can be drawn in *Bacchae* are clear as are the differences. Like the Erinyes, Dionysus, as his prologue and his historical incorporation into the polis bear witness, is ultimately capable of accommodating his irrational ecstatic religion to the rational polis order and indeed has come to Thebes for this express purpose. Clearly absent from Euripides' Thebes, however, are the wisdom and persuasive leadership skills seen eminently displayed by Aeschylus' Athena. Indeed it is possible to go further and argue that in a very real sense the polis as 'whole', a κοινωνία πολιτῶν πολιτείας in Aristotle's terms, has already ceased to exist in the Thebes of *Bacchae* before ever Dionysus wreaks his vengeance.[79] The polity, as the νόμοι embodied in the rational will of Pentheus, rigidly administers a sterile, lifeless order in which the desiring feeling side of the soul, the wellspring of friendship and community, is subject to harsh repression, and its traditional foci of family and religion, portrayed in the pictures of Cadmus and Teiresias, are revealed as enclaves of rationally calculated self-interest.

5.4 The Bacchic κοινωνία of feeling & the transformation of community

Fruitful comparisons can certainly be made between the tyrannical nature of the rule of Pentheus and that of Creon in *Antigone*, and the lack of wise and effective polis leadership they display. However, there is significantly in *Bacchae* a further striking indication of the ongoing degradation of polis ethos evident in the very marked absence of any communal voice within the polis. Segal points out to good effect that there is in this play "no chorus of citizens who can speak as a community of involved fellow citizens."[80] Not only does the Thebes of *Bacchae* lack its own internal centre of community as a κοινωνία πολιτῶν but it is opposed by an external κοινωνία in the collective barbarian choral voice of Dionysus' Lydian maenads, which during the course

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[78] See further on this the discussion at 3.2.3 of this work.

[79] Segal (1997:66). What remains of the "landscape of a polis" in *Bacchae*, he astutely observes, is Pentheus' palace, the symbol of his centralized authority, and the confining bounds of the city's walls. Contrast E. *Hipp.* 30-3; *Med.* 824-45; S. *OT* 19-23, 159-63; *Ant.* 152-4, 1015-18, 1246-9; *OC* 14-18, 55-63, 668-719; *El.* 4-8.

[80] Segal (1997:65). This, as he points out, is in marked contrast to most Greek tragedy where the collective viewpoint is provided by "members of the city or household whose fortunes are closely identified with those of the protagonists" (67). See also on this point Flaumenhaft (1994:63), Segal (2001:26).

of the dramatic action exhibits an increasing vehemence. The Chorus of avenging Erinyes who threaten Athens in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* comes immediately to mind as a comparison with the Chorus of *Bacchae*, and in the very different outcomes that are effected in these two plays can be found reflected the pathology of the Athenian democratic polis. In the final years of the 5th century to be active in public life is no longer seen for those who shape its course to be, as in Aeschylus' day, a common participation in a rational objective good which is an extension of the divine. The destruction which falls on the polis from without follows hard upon the heels of the internal corruption, the violence and demagoguery, which divides the polis in faction and tears apart the ethical and religious foundations on which it is built.[81] Thucydides' account of the effects of the plague at Athens (2.47.3-2.54.5) and of the evils attending the Corcyran revolution (3.82-4) are central to this understanding. Reflecting on Athenian public life in the post-Periclean era, Thucydides charts the emergence of a persistent factionalism fuelled by individual ambition and interest (κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας φιλοτιμίας καὶ ἴδια κέρδη, 2.65.7) which marks a breakdown of the old moral order. Macleod comments pertinently that στάσις, "as Thucydides describes it, is the undoing of human progress by the very means of that progress."[82] There is we are reminded again οὐδὲν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον, the power over the natural world his wisdom affords him a resource for both evil and good (S. *Ant.* 332-375).

Against the intransigent authoritarian stance of Pentheus and his pragmatic rational abstractions, Dionysus in *Bacchae* has spearheaded his own efforts to bring to the polis what he insists is a more necessary and universal wisdom (ἃ δεῖ μάλιστα, ταῦτ' ἔγωγ' ἔφυν σοφός, 656), one resident in φύσις and in the instinctual response of τὸ κοινόν.

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[81] On Thucydides' recognition of the destructive impact of war on the underlying religious fabric of society, see Jordan (1986:147). In *Bacchae*, the itinerant practised talker (714-21) who turns the herdsmen gathered in a κοινοὶ λόγοι from their shared awe and wonder at the works of the god to a narrow self-interested concern to gain favour with Pentheus, by hunting down the maenads, is evocative of the moral decay persisting in the late 5th century polis. Segal (1997:66) and Dodds (1960:165) note the suggestion of an urban demagogue at work.

[82] Macleod (1979:54-55). The major disaster of the Sicilian expedition in 415, a turning point in Athenian history, Thucydides attributes to Athenians occupying themselves with internal struggles for political supremacy at the expense of the external war. The result, Thucydides states (2.65.11-13), was that for the first time the internal affairs of the Athenian polis were subject to upheaval (ἀλλήλοις ἐταράχθησαν) and the city fell into a state of στάσις which in the end was to bring them to ruin. For a recent detailed discussion of Thucydides' account of στάσις in Athens, see Price (2001:304-329).

Beyond the civilizing bounds of the polis, with its imposition of rational limit and measure, the escaped women of Thebes in their θίασοι form a purely natural κοινωνία in which νόμος is identified immediately with φύσις and all distinctions which demarcate human and beast have been negated.[83] The first messenger speech, centrally placed at a pivotal point of the play (664-774), dramatically evokes for its hearers the full dyadic range of the Dionysiac experience, as it moves from the peace and sheer bucolic bliss of the undisturbed θίασοι to the raw violence and savagery of the hunted maenads, the excesses portrayed, whether pleasurable or painful, heightened and magnified by the supernatural powers imbued in his followers by the god. The contrary extremes of the delights associated with the streams of water, wine, milk, and honey flowing on demand (704-11) and the horrors of σπαραγμός and even possible ὠμοφαγία (734-68) are indicative of the unlimited nature of this indefinite Dionysiac dyadic, ranging from life at its most pleasurable to death and destruction at its most painful.[84]

Like the animals amidst whom they live on the mountain and with whom they identify (699-700), the Theban maenads, under the power of Dionysus, respond collectively and instinctually to external stimuli, a herd (ἀγέλα, 1022), feeling and acting as one (θιασεύεται ψυχάν, 75-76): a complete loss of self which entails a negation of all individuality.[85] Man, however, is more than a herd animal (παντὸς ἀγελαίου ζῴου μᾶλλον), Aristotle argues, for he is by his very nature a πολιτικὸν ζῷον, uniquely fitted for life in the political association (*Pol.* 1253a2-8).[86] Not simply, like the beasts, capable of experiencing and transmitting vocally to one another pleasurable and painful impulses, the human through the power of language can communicate in addition an articulated conception of good and bad, of what is just and unjust, which allows him to assume an

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[83] The account of the women succouring the young of wild animals is juxtaposed to the reminder that they have abandoned their own offspring (701-2). See Friedrich (1993:235), Winnington-Ingram (1948:92).

[84] Contrary to what Pentheus believes, however, the messenger is quite clear that the Theban maenads behave modestly, (σωφρόνως,), being neither drunk nor licentious (685-8). Indeed, it could be argued that to break apart from the unity of the female collective, to move into division by forming individual liaisons with males, is to destroy the emotional solidarity of the κοινωνία, which is its cohesive power, and take that necessary first step towards the natural reforming of the rational and ethical bonds of family and polis they have left behind.

[85] Winnington-Ingram (1948b:97) notes the homogeneity of the Bacchants, their "community of thought emotion and aim."

[86] An impulse (ὁρμή) to such a κοινωνία is by nature (φύσει) present in everyone (Arist. *Pol.* 1253a29-30).

ethical responsibility for his actions. It is just this kind of association that makes a household and a polis (*Pol.* 1253a9-18). Yet while law and justice are necessary they are not themselves sufficient to sustain the εὖ ζῆν in the absence of the emotional bonds that draw the citizens together in a common feeling, a κοινοφιλής which militates against the internal divisions which lead to civil strife; to the στάσεις that indeed have come increasingly to plague the cities of Greece in the Peloponnesian War period during which Euripides writes.

Dionsysus has announced himself as a god both most terrible and most gentle to men. In the account of the herdsman messenger, this divine polarity is reflected in the actions of Theban maenads, as the tranquillity they exhibit on first encounter is transformed, following their ambush by the herdsmen, into an awful violence. By contrast with these women of Thebes who have gone from polis to mountain, abrogating in the transition their distinctly human ethical nature, the Chorus of Lydian Bacchants have made the reverse journey, transposed from the wildness of the Phrygian mountains to the civilized world of Greece with its rationally ordered polities. Like their Theban counterparts on the mountain, the Lydian Bacchants too express the full range of the Dionysiac experience, tracing through their choral lyrics, Conacher well notes, "a gradual declension from the serene joy of the early odes to savage fury as the destructive power of Dionysianism is finally unleashed.[87] In the course of this movement what will be reenacted is in essence an anatomy of the 5th century revolution.

As the Lydian Chorus make their entrance (64-169), the emphasis is on the peaceful and harmonious aspects of Dionysianism as a communal religious experience and they adjure the people of Thebes to join with them in their ritual dance.[88] References to traditional practices (τὰ νομισθέντα, 71) and to the dances of the biennial festival (χορεύματα ...τριετηρίδων, 132-133) lend from the outset very much the air of a cult already established in the polis as opposed to the initial approaches of the votaries of a new god. The *parodos*, indeed, is generally considered to be "in form and content ...fairly closely

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[87] Conacher (1967:69).

[88] Winnington-Ingram (1948b:93) remarks the fact that the "yearning imaginations of the Chorus" are "ratified and reinforced by an objective account of an actual scene of worship," in the first messenger's depiction of the Theban maenads at peace. The correspondence between these two accounts, he shows, is "close and detailed."

modelled on an actual cult hymn."[89] Yet even here amidst all the piety and exuberance there are small hints that the cult of the god may be less than completely benign. Thus the violent wands (νάρθηκαι ὑβριστάι, 113) must be handled with reverence (ὁσιοῦσθε, 114)[90] and in the *epode* there emerges a disquieting reference to the sacrificial bloodshed and ὠμοφαγία (139) in which the Dionysian rites culminate on the mountain.[91]

In the first *stasimon*, the Chorus' apparent recognition of, and identification with, values and customs pertaining to the civilized polis world paradoxically belies their overt status as wild exotic barbarian women. Drawn within the bounds of the polis for the very first time, they are nevertheless able to awaken in themselves an understanding of the harmonious life of order, limit and moderation which belongs not to maenadism but to the civilized rationally ordered world of a polis at peace. Thus the Chorus are inspired to invoke their god, Dionysus, not as the wild untamed nature god of the mythical past in which the drama is set, but in terms of the civilized historical polis god of wine and the festival that he has as yet to become (375-385, 417-424).[92] In concert with their praise of the beneficent gifts of the polis Dionysus, the Chorus present themselves, equally unexpectedly in the adherents of a god of excess and dissolution of social bonds, as champions of a traditional Greek moral order.[93] What holds together households (δώματα, 392), they declare, is the calm life and good sense (τὸ φρονεῖν, 390). The god, the son of Zeus, loves Peace and hates excessive men (περισσοί φῶτες, 429), those who,

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[89] Dodds:1960:71. See also Conacher (1967:60, Seaford 1996a:155-6). On the ritual ὀρειβασία which took place every other year see Dodds (1960:xiii-xiv). Henrichs (1978:153).

[90] "The startling conjunction of ὁσιότης with ὕβρις," Dodds (1960:82) suggests, "expresses the dual aspect of Dionysiac ritual as an act of *controlled violence* in which dangerous natural forces are subdued to a religious purpose. ...The thyrsus is the vehicle of these forces; its touch can work beneficent miracles (704ff.) but it can also inflict injury (762)." See also Seaford (1996a:161-2).

[91] Henrichs (1978:148) emphasizes, however, that there is no evidence to indicate that σπαραγμός or ὠμοφαγία were a part of historical maenadism.

[92] Arthur (1972:152-3) notes that "assignment to Dionysos of certain areas of influence ...was a way of incorporating him into an existing mythological system, and of canalizing the wilder aspects of his nature. His Hellenization was further accomplished by assigning him an Olympian lineage as the son of Zeus. Euripides' treatment of Dionysos in this ode ...accords well with what we know of the way in which the god was, in fact, introduced and integrated into Greek religion."

[93] Arthur (1972:147-8) observes that throughout the drama the Chorus utter "injunctions to moderation and to knowing one's limits in the spirit of the Delphic precept μηδὲν ἄγαν." Such moral sentiments, she notes, "seem incongruous in the mouths of Asian maenads, ...the doctrine of moderation ...at odds with the extremism of both the spirit of Dionysus and the principle of violent revenge which the chorus also adopts." See also Segal (1997:65), Bierl (1991:71).

like Pentheus, are characterized by an unbridled mouth and lawless folly (ἀφροσύνη, 387). The cleverness exhibited by Pentheus is not wisdom (τὸ σοφὸν δ' οὐ σοφία, 395) as far as the Chorus is concerned, for it exceeds mortal thoughts (θνητὰ φρονεῖν, 396) and must inevitably precipitate in the course of time a divine retribution. The only wisdom the Chorus acknowledges is whatever the great mass of ordinary people (τὸ πλῆθος ...τὸ φαυλότερον, 430) considers to be acceptable.

For a sense of how these apparently incongruous utterances of the Lydian Chorus, soon to be put to the test by Pentheus, might be understood in terms of the political ambience of the late 5th century, Thucydides' account of the debate on Mytiline, and in particular the speech of the demagogue Cleon, offers certain interesting insights. Thus, in words that are very reminiscent of the Chorus of *Bacchae*, Cleon exhorts the Athenian assembly (τὸ πλῆθος) to be true to what he will argue are its own instinctually arrived at ideals. It is for the most part the more ordinary men (οἱ φαυλότεροι), rather than the those that are more intelligent (οἱ ξυνετώτεροι), who are better at managing cities, Cleon declaims. Ignorance (ἀμαθία) combined with self-restraint (σωφροσύνη), he charges, is more beneficial to the polis than cleverness (δεξιότης) accompanied by lack of discipline (ἀκολασία).[94] It is the clever individuals, who wish to appear wiser (σοφώτερος) than the laws who, in their efforts to outdo one another, are more apt to bring about the downfall of the polis (Th. 3.37.3-5).[95]

While he urges moderation (σωφροσύνη) and respect for the laws (οἱ νόμοι), what is to be stressed is that Cleon is intent at the same time to dispel any notion of judgements rationally arrived at through deliberation in consideration of a commonly held polis wisdom. The laws that he invokes are those of feeling, of φύσις, and not those articulated through rational debate. Hence, with the Athenian assembly poised to reconsider through a further deliberation the import of its initial harshly vindictive response to the news of

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[94] This is very much as the Lydian Chorus portrays itself in relation to Pentheus in the first stasimon.

[95] ἀμαθία τε μετὰ σωφροσύνης ὠφελιμώτερον ἢ δεξιότης μετὰ ἀκολασίας, οἵ τε φαυλότεροι τῶν ἀνθρώπων πρὸς τοὺς ξυνετωτέρους ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλέον ἄμεινον οἰκοῦσι τὰς πόλεις. οἱ μὲν γὰρ τῶν τε νόμων σοφώτεροι βούλονται φαίνεσθαι τῶν τε αἰεὶ λεγομένων ἐς τὸ κοινὸν περιγίγνεσθαι, ὡς ἐν ἄλλοις μείζοσιν οὐκ ἂν δηλώσαντες τὴν γνώμην, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ τοιούτου τὰ πολλὰ σφάλλουσι τὰς πόλεις· οἱ δ' ἀπιστοῦντες τῇ ἐξ αὐτῶν ξυνέσει ἀμαθέστεροι μὲν τῶν νόμων ἀξιοῦσιν εἶναι, ἀδυνατώτεροι δὲ τοῦ καλῶς εἰπόντος μέμψασθαι λόγον, κριταὶ δὲ ὄντες ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγωνισταὶ ὀρθοῦνται τὰ πλείω. ὡς οὖν χρὴ καὶ ἡμᾶς ποιοῦντας μὴ δεινότητι καὶ ξυνέσεως ἀγῶνι ἐπαιρομένους παρὰ δόξαν τῷ ὑμετέρῳ πλήθει παραινεῖν.

the Mytilenean revolt, Cleon exhorts them to be true to their instinctual emotional response. He thus decries the lessening of anger which the passing of time has brought about in the assembly, arguing that the most appropriate response to injury is the one that is on a par with what has been endured (Th. 3.38.1). This being the case they should when coming to their decision keep as close as possible to their original response to their suffering in striking back at the Mytilenians (Th. 3.40.7). It is in departing from this mantra, Cleon is effectively arguing, that the κοινωνία which is the Athenian assembly can be charged with exercising a lack of self-control. What can be seen to have taken place is in fact nothing less than an inversion of traditional polis morality, and with it a return to the tribal ethic of revenge justice.[96]

In the Athenian polis of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, the κοινωνία of the citizenry bonded together by the emotive power of collective cult saw itself at the last realizing, both individually and collectively, a rational objective good in the divine order of Zeus through the mediation of the ethical institutions of the polis. The κοινωνία of Asian Bacchants in *Bacchae*, in its unity, the unwavering reverence in which it holds the divine, and in its expressed concern for justice and moderation seemingly has much in common with its Aeschylean counterpart.[97] Yet, considered in terms of polis ethos, what was there in reality at the end of *Eumenides* is present in *Bacchae* only as a chimaera: an appearance masquerading disconcertingly as the real thing.[98] Thus the κοινωνία of Bacchants, while using the language of the citizen κοινωνία and expressing a solidarity with the moral precepts and cultic practice of the civilized polis, is nevertheless alienated inexorably from the rationally mediated relationship which in the Aeschylean polis of *Eumenides* brought the side of feeling into an ordered relation with an objective ethical order through the justice of its πολιτεία. The Asian Bacchant κοινωνία is physically

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[96] Compare Pericles' decision not to call an assembly, fearing that the people might fall into error if they met animated by passion rather than by judgement (Th. 2.22.1). The contrast with Thucydides' picture of Pericles as a leader whose consistent aim was to counsel and instruct the δῆμος to promote effective deliberation, and to hold in check their emotional susceptibilities to changing events (1.140.1, 2.61.2-3, 2.64) is clearly being made.

[97] Arthur (1972:170) concludes that despite their "change in attitude, ...the chorus remain dedicated throughout the play to the principles of justice, wisdom, order and piety."

[98] Segal (1997:71) remarks that *Bacchae* "explores the paradoxes of the presence of Dionysus and the Dionysiac within the established religion of the community and potentially within every human community. It examines the delicate balances within the polis that would be necessary for a healthy acceptance of the Dionysiac."

present in the polis but it is not of the polis in the sense of being an integral part of a higher encompassing whole. Separated from τὸ μέσον as the rationally articulated common good, the Lydian Chorus is a purely natural κοινωνία invoking an unmediated unity with the unlimited dyadic power of Dionysus as their divine principle.

As the unremitting and violent nature of Pentheus' hostility becomes increasingly evident, the picture that the Chorus has presented in the first *stasimon* of a civilized polis cult of Dionysus, in tune with the traditionally established moral order, is rapidly disturbed to reveal a more primitive and dangerous underlying reality. Thus in the third *stasimon*, as Dionysus prepares to lead Pentheus to his doom, the Chorus, while continuing to profess the tenets of popular morality they appealed to in the first *stasimon*, exult at the same time in a fierce natural justice which extols wisdom as 'holding one's hand over the head of one's enemies' (877-81=888-91).[99] Arthur aptly notes that the Chorus in this and the succeeding odes, "become, in their bloodthirsty delight in vengeance, more and more like the Erinyes."[100] Thus, like the Erinyes before them, the Lydian Bacchants express themselves as being of one accord with φύσις, asserting the power of a divine justice which belongs to the timeless universal laws of nature (τό τ' ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ νόμιμον | ἀεὶ φύσει τε πεφυκός, 895-896). Echoing the sentiments expressed by Cleon, they insist that one must never think or act above these laws (890-892). The final ode, Conacher observes, "is a καλλίνικος ὕμνος-a pure song of triumph without pity for the violent destruction of Pentheus-and nothing more. The Chorus has come full circle in its declension from innocent joy to savage delight in the destruction of the enemy."[101]

Just as Cleon has been found to do in the debate on Mytilene, the Chorus here have inverted polis virtues, moving seamlessly from their earlier espousal of what the mass of ordinary people consider normal practice (430-431) to the identification of this traditional

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[99] Winnington-Ingram (1948b:109) remarks that Euripides puts "into the mouths of the Bacchanals an equation of the wise, the fair and the dear ...with the desire and act of vengeance." Cf. Arthur (1972:162-3).

[100] Arthur (1972:162). She remarks, in particular "certain suggestive affinities" with the second *stasimon* of *Eumenides* (307-96). In *stasimon* 4 of *Bacchae* the Chorus call upon the hounds of Lyssa, akin to the Erinyes (Dodds 1960:199). While still dwelling on piety, the pursuit of wisdom and the mortal life of moderation (1002-10), the Chorus calls upon the sword of Justice to slaughter what they see as the godless, lawless, unjust Pentheus (992-6=1011-16).

[101] Conacher 1967:70.

morality with the universal natural and instinctual laws of φύσις. With the central polis virtues of justice, and moderation assimilated to the immediacy of φύσις as itself now the universal νόμος underpinning and ratifying human action, civilization is overthrown and what rises to take its place is the νόμος τῆς φυσέως, as Plato's Callicles defines it.[102] What the Lydian Chorus and their Theban counterparts on the mountain enact verbally and physically, Thucydides describes in his paradigmatic account of the στάσις at Corcyra as symptomatic of the underlying human condition (ἕως ἂν ἡ αὐτὴ φύσις ἀνθρώπων ᾖ). Whereas in times of peace and prosperity, when unrestrained by necessity, both cities and individuals show better judgement, war is a violent teacher (ὁ δὲ πόλεμος ...βίαιος διδάσκαλος) and under its constraints the passions (ὀργαί) of the majority come to match their circumstances (Th. 3.82.2). In the spread of civil strife that was the result and the ever greater excesses these στάσεις generated in their turn, Thucydides declares (3.82.3-4), the traditional moral vocabulary lost its original force and came to be applied however men saw fit to justify their course of action.[103] In this 'transvaluation of values' the traditional virtues of the polis were inverted, as indeed they are seen to be here by the Chorus of *Bacchae* and by Cleon on the Mytilene question.

5.5 Piecing together the 'parts' will not suffice to make the polis a 'whole'

In the pre-polis world of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, the reconciliation effected by Athena between the conflicting claims of the Furies and the Olympian Gods, between the forces of necessity and freedom, establishes the universal order of human community as the polis justice of Zeus. Through the mediation of the wisdom and leadership of Athena, the cosmic justice of Zeus is envisaged in *Eumenides* to be made actual in Athens in the λόγος of the institutions of the polis; the νόμοι, written and unwritten, are taken up into the hearts and minds of the citizenry to be freely actualized as the common good of the whole. Νόμος and φύσις (Ζεύς and Μοῖρα) in this understanding are ultimately to be conceived to be at one in an objective rational order. The confrontation in *Antigone*

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[102] Pl. *Grg.* 483e3

[103] καὶ τὴν εἰωθυῖαν ἀξίωσιν τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐς τὰ ἔργα ἀντήλλαξαν τῇ δικαιώσει (Th. 3.82.4). In short, Macleod (1979:52-64) well notes, "Thucydides shows how the political virtues, in a deviant form, could destroy the *poleis*, and just how easily under the pressure of war ...they could take this form."

shows how fragile in reality is this polis ideal when subject to stress. Human reason, even when motivated by the best of intentions, can as in the decree of Creon mistake its proper end, asserting itself all unsuspecting in dissonance with the universal divine order of νόμος and φύσις, only to be thus tragically revealed in its limitations. Nevertheless, although in *Antigone* the absence of good leadership saw νόμος, clash destructively with νόμος, human with divine, the building blocks of an effective political κοινωνία were still very much in evidence within the polis. So much so that, even amidst the devastation of the ending, there could persist an understanding, made actual in the minds of those who witness the tragic action, that, given truly wise leadership and skilled deliberation, a resolution to the conflict as it takes form in *Antigone* was within human grasp, and with it the possibility of restoring the political κοινωνία as the good of the whole. In the Thebes of *Antigone*, there is clear evidence that due honour and reverence can yet be accorded to both Zeus and Dionysus in a κοινωνία of reason and feeling (S. *Ant.* 1116-1152). Henrichs comments pertinently on the "benign and salutary" nature of "*this* Dionysus and his imagined return to Thebes in comparison with the vengeful and violent homecoming of the god dramatized in Euripides' *Bacchae*."[104]

The final moments of the action of *Bacchae* finds the human survivors Cadmus and Agave painstakingly attempting to piece back together the dismembered body of Pentheus (ἦ πᾶν ἐν ἄρθροις συγκεκλημένον καλῶς, 1300), symbolically significant not only as a recognition of the importance of ritual but also perhaps in the reflection it offers on the larger order of the polis, whose parts can be reassembled in imitation of what once was but not thereby be brought back to the fullness of a life now departed: a whole that is a unity prior to the distinctions it contains. In the end it is sympathy for the human predicament in the face of such relentless uncaring deity that is elicited.[105] The overall picture that Euripides paints of the Olympians is indeed, Knox remarks, "a disturbing

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[104] Henrichs (1990:265). Thus the citizen Chorus of *Antigone* invoke Dionysus and call upon him, as son of Zeus (παῖ ζηνός, 1150), to come to Thebes from his wild haunts and cleanse the whole polis of its dreadful sickness (*Ant.* 1140-1145). Henrichs (1990:264-5) notes that this "urgent prayer to Dionysus [is] cast in conventional hymnic style" and occupies "a pivotal position at the tragic turning point of the action."

[105] Easterling (1987:16) concludes that in the face of such destructive forces, "the only means ...of coping ...is through the institutions of society, which depend on carefully observed ritual action" as "the context for expressing the essential values of human society in the face of suffering and death." See too Whitehorne (1986:59-72).

one."[106] Although modelled on the anthropomorphic Homeric gods, the gods of Euripides "are more cruel and indifferent to human values," a fact which Knox suggests may be reflective of what is to be found in "the conduct and language of the imperial city-states" in their relationships with one another in Euripides' day.[107] Something to this effect has been suggested already in the comparison between the reactions of the Chorus of *Bacchae* and the instinctual response of the Athenian assembly to the revolt at Mytilene. In perhaps its most cynical and rationally self-serving form, it is to be found in Thucydides' Melian dialogue where the Athenians, brutally frank as to the necessities of empire, justify their unwarranted attack on the unoffending Melians with the blunt assertion that 'of the gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a necessity of nature (ὑπὸ φύσεως ἀναγκαίας) wherever they have the power they rule.' (Th. 5.105.2).[108] What has come to light amidst the burgeoning relativism and scepticism of the intellectual enlightenment, is the realization that the older morality which had sustained human community on the basis of traditional νόμοι and a customary αἰδώς is unable to give an account of itself that will withstand the challenges mounted against it. Everything in the cosmos, man included, can now be understood to be ultimately subject to the primacy of an underlying law of natural necessity, so that νόμος is identified not with an objective rational order but with the demands of φύσις as a primal instinctual drive. Wisdom and justice reside in obedience to the dictates of nature and to argue otherwise is to be seen merely as a device of the weak to thwart the interests of the strong.

In Euripides, the human association is brought to the very threshold of a Hellenistic world in which the individual not the citizen is primary. More specifically, there emerges in the frustrations and criticisms so many of his characters express towards the Olympians a recognition of what will become concrete for the Epicurean in the

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[106] 'Long ago my father, Zeus assented to these things', Dionysus affirms (E. *Ba.* 1349). The conception of Zeus as an overriding natural necessity (ἀνάγκη φύσεως) is given its strongest articulation in Euripides by Hecuba (*Troad.* 886). Cf. E. *Alc.* 965, *Hel.* 514 where nothing is said to be stronger than ἀνάγκη. Dodds (1960:xlv) observes that "in man's justice there is room for pity, but there is none in the justice of nature."

[107] Knox (1991:228). Thus, he says, "[t]he prime concern of the city state is maintenance of its prestige, manifestation of its power as a warning to potential rebels or ambitious neighbors. As with Euripides' gods, no insult, offense or threat to that power can be allowed to pass unnoticed. Honor must be maintained" (229).

[108] See further Knox (1991:229-30).

understanding that, if freedom from perturbation for the individual is to be achieved, the gods must be banished from rule in human affairs. It is to each other, to a fellow human, and not to the gods that Cadmus and Agave, like many another Euripidean character before them, turn in their extremity.[109] It is no accident, as indeed is often noted, that Euripides, who in his own time achieved only a modest success on stage when compared with his confreres Sophocles and Aeschylus, will become the tragic poet of greatest renown in the 4th century and beyond, nor that *Bacchae* will be prominently celebrated among his works.[110] Yet, even as Euripides was able to vividly project the forces at work in the destruction of the traditional polis ethos, he is at the same time not thereby to be simply divorced from the ambience of a polis world of which he was a part. The recognition and charting of forces active in the dismemberment of the polis, which brings with it the questioning of old unexamined assumptions of a πάτριος νόμος, does not *eo ipso* eliminate the human requirement for life in a social order. For the Greeks the polis, whatever the problems that beset it, would continue to remain the embodiment of human κοινωνία and the εὖ ζῆν through the 4th century until, finally overthrown not from within but from without, it was superseded in the rise to power of the Hellenistic kingdoms.

Aristotle, in his reflection on the history of philosophy to his time, records that Plato, his predecessor, was influenced by and drew upon both the Socratic search for definition in ethical matters and the Heraclitean doctrine that all sensible things are in flux (*Metaph.* 987a29-b4). In poetic form, it can be argued, the same radical oppositions found in the aporetic Socrates and the Heraclitean flux, with all that is consequently entailed for human society, have been exposed to light, powerfully and ruthlessly laid bare, in *Bacchae* by the imagination of Euripides. So that, while it is possible to immerse oneself in the scepticism and negativity of what emerges from the drama, it is also by the same token from within this darkness that the 'owl of Minerva' will take flight and the polis will be given a new and rationally articulated form for thought. Like Socrates, Euripides is acutely aware of the significance of the issues raised by the contention that virtue has

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[109] So too at the conclusion of Euripides' *Hippolytus* and *Heracles* it is from the cruelty of the gods to the love and friendship of their fellow humans that the survivors turn. 'If only men might be a curse to the gods', Hippolytus cries (*Hipp.* 1415) and his anguish is echoed by Heracles: 'Who could offer prayers to such a goddess' (*HF.* 1307-8).

[110] Knox (1985:11-12) writes that "[a]ll through the Hellenistic and Roman centuries, in the theaters of Asia Minor, Palestine, Egypt, and farther east, it was Euripides who held the stage."

no nature of its own so that its 'truth', moving in the sphere of language and opinion, is what it *becomes* for each human individual in the pursuit of his own ends.[111] While it is not the work of the poet to provide a philosophical exegesis, in the contrasting positions his characters adopt on the nature of wisdom in *Bacchae*, Euripides brings to light the problematic nature of current understanding and the need to look beyond these partial conceptions if the problem they present is to be resolved. Further opposed to these conflicting dictates of human reason in *Bacchae* stands the Heraclitean, a world of appetite and feeling contained within the powerful dyadic flux of opposites which is the sphere of the Bacchants, who in the immediacy of their relation to their principle respond instinctually to the dictates of φύσις, bereft of the light of considered reason, of holy Πειθώ and τὸ μέσον, as the civilizing principles of political κοινωνία.

Central to any understanding of human association will be the role that σοφός and σωφροσύνη must play in tempering the powerful instinctual animal drives that continually threaten the stability of man's ethical nature and with it the very existence of civilized society. This is the challenge Euripides bequeaths to philosophy: to Plato and Aristotle. Traditional morality based on an external and customary αἰδώς, which finds its expression in the life of honour bestowed in the community cannot answer the kind of questions Euripides' Phaedra grapples with.[112] A new beginning must be made to the investigation of the essential nature of political κοινωνία, one which focuses on the question of the nature of virtue as it is to be found both in the individual soul and in the polis as a whole. What must be sought is the unifying λόγος that is the innate ordering principle determining how the active and passive sides of the soul and society, the sides of reason and feeling, can be brought together in a concretion of unifying form and content so that justice and friendship will pertain in the political κοινωνία.

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[111] For example, the problem which underlies the dramatic action of Euripides' *Hippolytus*, the question of the nature of σωφροσύνη, and how it is acquired, relates very closely to the questions raised with Socrates by Meno at the beginning of the Platonic dialogue which bears his name. The Platonic dialogue *Charmides* can also be interestingly compared with *Hippolytus*.

[112] E. *Hipp.* 380-7. See also 317, 329, 335.

6

Reflecting on the Images

Perceptions of Justice in Plato's *Republic* 327a-354c

ὁ δὲ ἀνεξέταστος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπῳ

Pl. *Ap.* 38a5-6

Writing in the *Seventh Letter* on what he saw going on about him in his day and taking stock of the kinds of men involved in political life (*Ep.* 324c1-326b4), Plato observes that the written laws and customs of the polis (τά τε τῶν νόμων γράμματα καὶ ἔθη) were to an astonishing degree being corrupted and given up.[1] So that, although he had himself been at first eager for public life (ἐπὶ τὸ πράττειν τὰ κοινά), seeing the affairs of the polis borne about in every which way made his head spin, and he finally came to the conclusion, after much consideration, that all existing states had bad systems of government (ὅτι κακῶς σύμπασαι πολιτεύονται). It was this experience of public affairs Plato says, that brought him to the realization that only from the standpoint of correct philosophy (ἡ ὀρθὴ φιλοσοφία) is it possible to discern always what is just both for political communities and for individuals (τά τε πολιτικὰ δίκαια καὶ τὰ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν). From this developed his firm conviction, the central tenet of his political philosophy, that humankind will have no respite from evils until either those who are the genuine and true followers of philosophy come to power, or those now in power in the cities by some divine dispensation (ἔκ τινος μοίρας θείας) come to philosophize truly.

In this and the following two chapters, the investigation turns to the first five books of Plato's *Republic* and the task that falls to Socrates to consider, in the light of what has

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[1] Although there can be no certainty, the *Seventh Letter* is widely regarded by scholars to be authentic. See, for example, Brumbaugh (1988a:84-92), Sayre (1988:94-5), Deane (1973:113-7), von Fritz (1971:408-47). Even if Plato's authorship cannot be attested with certainty, the *Seventh Letter* remains, Ferrari (2000:xii) concludes, "the most important interpretation of Plato's political motives to survive from antiquity." *Contra* see Edelstein (1966).

been seen to come historically to pass, the re-establishment anew of a charter for the just polis as a whole which can comprehend the division of reason and feeling in its parts; so that individual interest can once again be seen to be meaningfully related to the common good. Barker expresses well what will be understood here: "It is easy to interpret the *Republic* as a Utopia, a city in the clouds. ...But the *Republic* is not a city of nowhere. It is based on actual conditions; it is meant to mould, or at any rate to influence, actual life."[2] Yet the political held to the level of the polis, the community as a whole, does not fully disclose the way in which πολιτεία is conceived in the *Republic*, as Sallis makes clear. "At the very least, it can be said that the πόλις whose πολιτεία is at issue in the dialogue is not only the city in the usual sense but also a city of the sort that one might found within himself. In fact the tension between these two cities is an expression of the central paradox of the *Republic*."[3]

This tension is well-evidenced in the scholarly literature where, despite the acknowledged standing of the *Republic* as a classic of political philosophy, it remains an issue for on-going debate among commentators whether the dialogue should in fact be interpreted as a work of serious political intent or rather as a treatise on moral philosophy concerned with the well-being of the individual soul, the account of the polis seen simply as a metaphor for this 'inner city'. Barker observes that the question Plato asks in the *Republic* on the nature of the good man "might seem to belong to moral philosophy, and to moral philosophy alone. But to the Greek it was obvious that a good man must be a member of a State, and could be made good only through membership of a State."[4] By contrast, the position that the *Republic* is purely a work of moral philosophy has recently been vigorously promulgated by Annas who finds the idea "that the *Republic* was written in the context of, or even as Plato's answer to, contemporary problems anachronistic."[5] Many of the particular textual arguments Annas brings up in support of her claims will be addressed as part of the ensuing discussion. It is sufficient to bring out here that it is

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[2] Barker (1918:277). For an overview of readings of Plato's political thought, ranging from Popper to the post-modern see Ober (1998:156-62).

[3] Sallis (1996:313).

[4] Barker (1918:169). "Moral philosophy thus ascends into political science; and the two, joined in one, must climb still further ...[to] the ultimate knowledge of which a good man must be possessed in order to be good."

[5] Annas (1999b:73).

important for Annas' position to detach Plato's ethical thought from the environment in which he lives and writes, the public life of the classical Hellenic polis as a mediation between the individual and the attainment of his good, and to assimilate it directly to that of the ahistoric atomistic individual. Thus, for example, she asserts that "posing and answering of ethical questions does not alter in any important way as a result of the massive political changes in the Greco-Roman World."[6]

If Annas' view of the ethical life of the Greek polis is patently reductive, the realities of the polis of this period can also be said to belie Barker's serene account. There is present in Plato, as in Euripides, an emergent ethical individualism, as Annas detects, a tension found in the *Republic* between the philosophic life and duties to the political community. Friedrich puts the problem into an appropriate historical context when he notes that the polis of Socrates' time had "created the conditions ...for the rise of a free individuality that claimed independence in thought, feeling, and action, and sought to liberate itself from the total guidance in these matters by the *patrios nomos*"[7] It is to this scenario that Plato will be seen to respond in the *Republic*. The nature of the challenge with which Plato's Socrates now finds himself faced is succinctly articulated by House: Socrates must on the one hand, recover "the older traditional belief in an objective, divine, moral order" but at the same time "he must secure it on a rational scientific foundation against the arguments which progressively undermined and corrupted it."[8] Only by coming to understand the causes of dissolution of civic order and addressing them can a new beginning be made. As he develops his own account of the ordered and unified just political society, Socrates will be found to have before him those very real and present concerns that have been found in the first part of this study to emerge from within the works of the tragic poets. The immediate and pressing problems of sophistic relativism (Chapter 6), the evident limitations of customary morality as the basis of the just community (Chapter 7), the dilemma of the divided good (Chapter 8), are all raised and addressed in their turn as the argument of *Republic* Books 1-5 takes shape. Before

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[6] Annas (1999b:89).

[7] Friedrich (1993:238). "Since it could not be accommodated by the polis, the new subjectivity tended in many to «go natural» and to define itself in terms of a sophistically conceived *physis* against the *nomos* of the polis."

[8] House (2002:1.6). The chapters on the *Republic* are indebted throughout to the thought expressed in this work which permeates the argument.

turning to the *Republic* itself it is pertinent, therefore, to revisit briefly the context in which it will be understood.

As the polis has slipped deep into decline in the troubled later years of the 5th century, its traditional virtues, as Thucydides and Euripides so graphically portray, have come to be replaced by the values of the individual, and private and partisan interest takes the place of the common good of the whole. Liberated from what now appear as the constraints of the established moral order, individual and polis both are caught up in conflict, tossed about on a battleground whose weapons are opinion and rhetoric and whose goal is self-aggrandisement. Thus, House argues, "the ideality of a divine order of justice which had provided the basis for an established moral order, and a view of the city as imaging the divine order, seemed defeated by the experience of the world the Athenians found themselves in."[9] Yet, even so, it is to the remembered ὁμόνοια of the polis ideal enshrined in civic ceremonies, a world epitomized by the glorious exploits of the Μαραθωνομάχαι that Athens vainly attempts to cling as a lifeline in the midst of its extremity.[10] In particular, the work of the comic poet serves to recall to mind the lost integrity of the older moral order with its stable values. The plays of Aristophanes are rich in such examples, not least among which are the mighty comic contests between just and unjust discourse in *Clouds* and between Euripides and Aeschylus in *Frogs*. Not for nothing is it Aeschylus whom Dionysus sends forth from Hades to attempt save the polis from corruption.[11]

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[9] House (2002:1.6).

[10] de Romilly (1972:199-209) notes that the word ὁμόνοια itself (the noun and the corresponding verb) is, in practice, with rare exceptions absent from Greek texts prior to 411 (199-201). From this time on, however, it becomes increasingly employed: "A partir de 404, tout le monde en parle" (200). The word, she argues, of which there are two occurrences in Thucydides Book 8, is particularly connected with the crisis in the polis: "De fait, l' emploi du mot est lié, de façon très étroite, à la crise de la cité: il désigne le remède aux guerre civiles et la valeur à rétablir pour sauver l' État, menacé par ces guerres" (199). In Plato and Aristotle, ὁμόνοια, is used very much in this sense as the contrary of στάσις. While the word ὁμόνοια may be absent from 5th century literature the concept is certainly present in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* in the expression κοινοφιλὴς διάνοια (984) to which links will be drawn in the present account. This particular connection was indeed earlier remarked by de Romilly: L' absence du mot dans les textes antérieurs à 411 est d' autant plus remarkable que l' idée s'y fait parfois jour-ainsi *Eumenides*, 984, où la formule est κοινοφιλεῖ διανοίᾳ" (201). See also Edmunds (1987).

[11] Ideas present in Aristophanes, particularly the communism of *Ecclesiazusae* and the ideal city of *Birds*, draw comparisons with the *Republic*, although they are generally thought to have been independently developed. In *Ecclesiazusae* private interest is abolished. There will be no individual families and property and sexual relations will be shared in common. A recent concise comparison of *Ecclesiazusae* and

In the wake of the Persian wars, Aeschylus in the *Oresteia*, as has been seen, provided Athens with a charter myth that established the ideal of the just polis as a unified whole, drawing together the citizenry in a κοινοφιλὴς διάνοια which enjoined individual interest and feeling within the larger rational order of the πολιτεία. Now, half a century later, it is no longer possible to call with authority on a single all-encompassing defining image of polis justice as the justice of Zeus and Athena, or to invoke τὸ δεινόν in the form of the awful faces of the dread Erinyes as anything other than an inescapable natural necessity. In the harsh glare of the new scientific rationalism with its focus on the observed realities of human nature, justice has come to be accepted to be calculable in terms of what serves the interest of the stronger, or is at best seen to be a societal convention. The myth and imagery which once held the citizens in a relation of piety and awe before the might of the Olympian order are seen by the children of the enlightenment to be woefully inadequate as an objective ground of morality, as Euripides' characters time and again attest.[12] In the *Republic*, Socrates will seek to restore the conception of an essential polis unity which for many has been lost, identifying and addressing the weaknesses which caused the Aeschylean edifice to crumble before the onslaught of the enlightenment, as he rebuilds the just polis order stone by stone through a rational account.

Sophoclean drama has exposed unerringly to view the tragic consequences for the political order that ensue from the divided nature of the human good. Viewed as in *Antigone*, with flawed insight as it appears in a world in flux, justice is found to assert itself in the form of the collision of two substantial goods; conflicting ethical obligations which remain implacably opposed, incapable of being humanly reconciled. This is perhaps the most formidable of the problems that face the Platonic Socrates, one that will call forth from him in response the most drastic of measures. How is it possible, he must inquire, to overcome the division between the demands of reason and feeling that is there intrinsically in the human soul and looms large within the political community in the

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Republic Book 5 is that of Halliwell (1993:224-5). In *Birds* the comic hero ends up replacing Zeus and wielding absolute power over gods and men. Interpretations of *Birds* abound but one common view sees Aristophanes as presenting his version of the ideal city. See, in particular Ehrenberg (1951:57-60).

[12] This is not to deny that there are also many who still firmly subscribe to the older order and seek to revive it. The problem, as Socrates sees it, is that they have been unable to provide a rational account that will counter the arguments the sophist makes.

tensions and inevitable collisions between the interests and claims of the individual and his family and what is rationally determined to be the common good of the polis as a whole? It has been suggested earlier that Sophocles is not presenting opposed goods that are intrinsically incommensurable due to defects in the object, but those that remain tragically unresolved due to human lack of insight into the nature of man. The origins of both kinds of oppositions, however, are resident in the divided nature of man as rational animal. Socrates in *Republic* 5 will want to go further than Sophocles and explore the problem at both levels, taking up into his new city both what belongs by necessity to the feeling appetitive side of the soul and gives rise to intractable oppositions between the good of τὸ ἴδιον and τὸ κοινόν and what belongs to the rational soul as a knower in determining the end as a good. The solution to the first will be sought in the elimination of all that pertains to individual interest from among the decision-making classes, and to the second in the conception of τέχνη as a rational ordering principle of the individual and the polis, whereby each individual only acts within the circumscribed limit of what he knows.[13] To the philosopher king(s) alone it will be given to gaze upon the Forms of the Good itself, and through the wisdom thus attained to bring unity to the polis as a whole.

The problems Socrates faces in responding to Sophocles' exposure of the essentially divided nature of man, as he attempts to re-establish the framework of the polis on a new and philosophical footing, are further compounded by enlightenment claims that appearance *is* the only reality, so that there are no objects of knowledge as such, determinate goods that can be substantially opposed. The sophists offer an alternative solution to the 'Sophoclean problem', one that argues that all purported goods are simply the objects of opinion.[14] There can be, on this understanding, no stable forms of justice at all *per se*. Experience, they can argue, clearly shows that this is so. Justice as it is claimed by the Athenians, for instance, is not as it is perceived by the Melians and the

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[13] An understanding of how virtue can be thought of as a kind of τέχνη will be important to the argument that Socrates develops in presenting his own conception of the just city and soul. Essentially what he does is to internalize the model of the practitioner of a τέχνη as acting for the benefit of those on whom he practises his art. Thus, within the tripartite soul, the ruling part, τὸ λογιστικόν, exercises its ruling τέχνη over the lower parts of the soul for the benefit of the whole.

[14] A stance most famously attributed by Plato to the sophist Protagoras (*Prt.*333d): man as the measure. The anonymous *Dissoi Logoi* (DK B.90 1 and 2) expresses in some detail a similar view of the relativity of virtue.

only way of judging between them, the Athenians insist in Thucydides' account, is on the basis of expediency (Th. 5.104-5).[15] As Euripides has been found to illustrate well in *Bacchae*, justice in any particular instance can acquire whatever form best serves the interest at hand. Thus the justice of Dionysus' claims are, for Pentheus, seen in terms of the perceived welfare of the city, for Cadmus of the family, for Teiresius of the religious power of Delphi. In this deconstructed world, the one who wields ultimate power is the one who, like Dionysus, is able to form and reform the appearances as they present to the various factions, moulding at will through the power of words the opinions of those drawn within his orbit. This is the sphere of the sophistic, the unholy πειθώ of the successful teacher, or rhetor, able to convince an audience that black is white, and to sway at will the masses to his bidding.[16]

In response to the very real challenge the sophistic recognition of the power of language as a generator of opinion and values presents to philosophy, through its establishment of measure as relative to the perceiving subject, Plato will attempt in the *Republic* to bring to light the nature of that due measure which alone, as he understands it, can provide an absolute objective ground for thinking the order of the sensible world.[17] Conacher aptly notes that "the Sophists generally appear, on the one hand, to have questioned the absolute value of specific traditional virtues, or virtuous activities, and, on the other, to have introduced the important philosophical/ethical idea that what in some circumstances was traditionally considered virtuous might in other circumstances be considered the opposite."[18] It is important that these two strands of thought be kept separate. On the absolute relativity of virtue, Plato knows he must successfully challenge and refute the sophistic position. However, with the contention that an action can in certain

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[15] Thucydides' Diodotus similarly bases his response to Cleon in the Mytilenian debate on expediency (Th. 3.44-48.).

[16] That this is an accomplishment that the historical Gorgias, for example, would claim he possessed, is well evidenced in his two surviving short treatises, *Palamedes* (DK B.82.11a) and *Encomium on Helen* (DK B.82.11). Plato *Phaedrus* (267c8-d2) attributes to Thrasymachus the same powers of manipulating the emotions of the masses and making them believe in anything he might say. See also Aristophanes' attack in *Knights* on the leadership in the Assembly of the demagogue Cleon.

[17] Thus Doull (1982:121) argues that the question the sophists raise on "whether justice is more than a name destabilized by whoever cares to show the deceptiveness of language is answered by taking the argument back to the good itself ...human desire has an endlessness which must receive its limit from rational soul."

[18] Conacher (1998:44, with 29-30).

circumstances be rightly judged virtuous and in others not, that the good can appear to be divided as it does in Sophocles' *Antigone*, Plato will certainly be in agreement. Virtue in the changing sensible material world, he recognizes, is forever inadequate to its ideal. The Socratic inquiry in the early dialogues brings out again and again the fruitlessness of the search for stable definition in the sensible world. This is the pivotal common departure point, the 'Sophoclean' point, around which the sophist and philosopher orient themselves prior to going their separate ways. Unlike the sophist, Socratic ἔρως knows itself in its incompleteness not in relation to the endlessness of sensible difference, the indefinite dyadic of the sophist as Plato understands it in the later dialogues, but in its separation from the ideal to which it is ordered as the objective rational Good. Thus Plato will argue that, whereas the relative standards of opinion the sophists adopt are not nothing, they must be recognized as only a first step in bringing the external sensible world in all its difference under a more primary standard, the determinate intelligible Forms of the Good itself, as that ultimate measure to which the relativity of the sensible is to be compared.[19] Doull remarks that "[t]he question whether there is a true justice which is the good alike of the individual and of a community living according to a rational law has its answer thus in a principle beyond both."[20]

The *Republic* begins with a series of images of justice, which on investigation can be seen to be particular reflections upon the nature of political κοινωνία, paralleling the concerns seen to be raised in tragic drama during the course of the intellectual revolution of the latter half of the 5th century.[21] It is in the Piraeus, amidst the glitter and splintered fragments which make up the radical Athenian democracy, that Socrates will begin his own search for the ideal constitution and the nature of justice itself.[22] The brief glimpse Plato offers of contemporary life in his native city in the closing years of the 5th century is a telling reminder of the polis world that Euripides and Thucydides have exposed to

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[19] Cf. Pl. *Plt.* 283d11-284c4.

[20] Doull (1982:121-2).

[21] Cf. Lycos (1987:32) who suggests *Republic* 1 provides "a kind of review of the change of attitudes towards justice that Plato thought had gradually come to govern the behavior of Athenian democracy during the war."

[22] The Piraeus became a stronghold for the forces of radical democracy particularly during the στάσις of 404/3. Plato's relatives, Critias and Charmides were themselves associated with the tyranny and he and his 4th century readers would certainly have this very much in mind.

view.[23] Unlike the autocratic Thebes of *Bacchae*, however, the radical democracy of Athens can embrace orgiastic religion as a polis cult in which all without distinction can bond together in the immediacy of feeling. In the imagery of the dialogue, what we seem to have already conveyed is the sense of a natural human κοινωνία in search of a defining πολιτεία. Thus, ranged about the purely natural κοινωνία which forms to celebrate the feast of Bendis, are what Plato identifies as the competing claims to be the rational organizing principle of the political community, the justice to be expressed in its πολιτεία. These pretenders to the throne of Δίκη will successively put forward their claims through the persons of Socrates' interlocutors. It is from this point that a beginning will be made in the search for the foundations of the just community. Aristotle's words, with which this study began, come once again to mind. 'It is not possible to solve a problem while remaining in ignorance of its nature'. The problem must first be formulated in such a way that the difficulties it presents can be seen through and overcome. As Aristotle himself does in his *Metaphysics*, and as he argues the well-formed tragic plot accomplishes, universals must be brought to birth in the soul and point a way to the resolution of the ἀπορία. This is what the aporetic method of *Republic* 1 must initiate. Before it can turn itself inwards and upwards to be filled with the light of the Good, the soul must first be emptied of all those encrusting preconceptions which hold it at the bottom of the Cave. Only with the dissipation of these false images of justice can there a μαίευσις in the souls of Socrates' philosophically-minded interlocutors, the bringing to birth, through dialectical investigation, of justice in the individual soul and in the political κοινωνία as a whole[24]

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[23] The participants in the dialogue were all real persons active in the life of Athens during the period. Lysias, the orator, a son of Cephalus, is a primary source of information for the excesses of the time and records in his speech κατὰ Ἐρατοσθένους the fate of his family. Cephalus, a wealthy Syracusean shield maker was invited by Pericles to move to Athens built his factory in the Piraeus. In 404, during the atrocities perpetrated by the Thirty, Cephalus' son Polemarchus was put to death, and Lysias barely escaped the same fate. Niceratus, son of Nicias, the unfortunate commander of the Sicilian expedition, suffered the same fate as Polemarchus. Thrasymachus of Chalcedon was a well known rhetor/sophist active in the latter part of the 5th century. Glaucon and Adeimantus were the elder half-brothers of Plato himself. The picture Plato draws in Book 1 of the *Republic* will be brought to mind again in his later description of the democratic polis as a flawed constitution, one filled with liberty (ἐλευθερία), freedom of speech (παρρησία), and the power (ἐξουσία) to do whatever one pleases (557b2-4). As a result of its ἐξουσία, the democracy is home to every conceivable kind of polity, a veritable bazaar full of examples (παραδείγματα) from which to choose and so there should be no difficulty in selecting a model (557d1-9).

[24] The relation of Book 1 to the rest of the *Republic* has been a source of some disagreement. Those who focus primarily on analysis of methodology argue there is a fundamental discontinuity that must be recognized. In marked contrast with these commentators, are those who concentrate on the origins of ideas

6.1 Cephalus: justice as piety in accord with customary morality (328c-331d)

Although the conversation between Socrates and Cephalus is quite short, it is nevertheless revealing both as a look backwards to the mores of the older order of the justice of Zeus and also as a look forward to succeeding Books of the *Republic* in which justice both in the individual and in the political κοινωνία will be seen to have its foundation in the σώφρων soul.[25] Cephalus consistently reveals himself to possess the habits of an orderly well balanced man, and as such he is a σώφρων ἀνήρ in whom reason with the help of spirit rules appetite.[26] Deeply wedded to received wisdom and the exemplars the poets and other great men provide for human action, Cephalus is confident that he knows well what is required of him as a pious man and a just member of his community.[27] When pressed, however, like others of that older moral order whom Socrates interrogates in the aporetic dialogues, it becomes evident that, whereas Cephalus can offer instances of virtue as it appears in the sensible world in particular acts such as truth-telling and repaying debts, he is not able to articulate a connection to the universal, the objective end to which these particular acts relate and from which they derive their meaning as ethically significant.[28] Yet, at the same time, he expresses no interest in pursuing the matter further. Comfortable within his own moral universe, alive to its values, Cephalus returns instead to the conduct of his sacrifice. Lacking the desire to

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developed in the *Republic*, an approach that will be adopted in the present study. Proponents of the former view include Vlastos (1991:248-51), Annas (1981:57), White (1979:8), Irwin (1977:183-4), Cross and Woozley (1964:61) and Friedländer (v. 2 1964:50-66). Arguing, to the contrary, for the philosophical unity of the *Republic* are Stauffer (2001:1), Aune (1997:291-308), Sallis (1996:328), Kahn (1993:131-42), Reeve (1988:xi-xii) and Lycos (1987:2).

[25] Like his father and grandfather before him, Cephalus tends the traditional family business of shield making, exemplifying the contention Socrates will repeatedly go on to make that integral to the just polis is each man performing the one work to which he is naturally fitted (433a4-6). Little scholarly attention has been accorded to Cephalus. Among those who do comment, reactions to the picture Cephalus presents have been quite disparate. Those who view him positively include Beversluis (2000:200), Reeve (1988:6-9), Guthrie (v. 4 1975:39), Friedländer (v.2 1964:53), Cross and Woozley (1964:2), and Nettleship (1901:15). Others, like Annas (1981:18-20) see in Cephalus a moral complacency or worse, like Bloom (1968:312-4) and Dobbs (1994:670-3), a complete fraud. These criticisms, however, Beversluis (2000:191-4) demonstrates, stem from "an unduly selective and highly distorted version of what Cephalus actually says" (191).

[26] Note, for example, 329d3-4, 331b1.

[27] It is notable that Cephalus' responses on each new topic are accompanied by a reference to the authority of a poet, Sophocles (329c1-d1), Pindar (331a3-9), or great man, Themistocles (329e7-330a3).

[28] Cephalus readily acknowledges that justice cannot, in fact, be universally unequivocally defined in terms of such specifically delineated activities (331d1). See further the comments of Stauffer (2001:25).

make it rationally actual within his soul, true virtue for Cephalus remains as a potency. Walled off literally and figuratively in his inner courtyard and insulated by maxims and money, he will not be readily dislodged from this position either by sophists who frequent the house or indeed by any efforts of Socrates to disturb his equanimity.[29]

Unlike Socrates, Cephalus is unwilling, unable perhaps, to let go the stability which was afforded by an older morality that has in practice run its course. Whereas there is in Cephalus' firmness of character much that Socrates can admire and which will later be found consonant with the life of a just man (591cd), ultimately he sees that it is undermined by being based on an unreflective wisdom which, relying as it does on what is passively given in the traditional mores of the polis and an external and customary αἰδώς to determine what actions are appropriate, is unable to withstand the challenges mounted against it by the forces of the Greek enlightenment.[30] What Socrates will discern in Cephalus nevertheless is an embryonic form of justice, a beginning point in the old order from which he can move to develop a relationship to a new and effective principle of justice in the individual and the polis. That which is there in Cephalus, and which in the old order, as portrayed in the polis ideal of Aeschylus' *Eumenides* and Pericles' Funeral Speech, would be considered to epitomize the good and just man, will still find a place in the new polis ideal that Socrates will establish for thought. In this new rational and objective order, however, rather than being the highest form of justice achievable in a polis, the kind of wisdom that Cephalus espouses will be seen as constitutive of that justice characteristic of the lowest level of the social order.

Cephalus leaves the scene but he is not lost to the work of the *Republic* for he will be a paradigm for τὸ χρηματιστικόν the lowest of the three classes in the new city. Looking back on the structure of Socrates' conversation with him, it can be seen to have been designed by Plato to bring out specifically the key characteristics to be sought in the members of this class whose virtue lies in their σωφροσύνη. Thus we find revealed, in

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[29] Beversluis (2000:201) remarks that "Cephalus' inability to defend his views does not call his life into question. It reveals that his practical ability to be just outstrips his theoretical ability to explain justice."

[30] Cephalus, with his fixity of purpose, has to be seen as an exception. In one way this is good, insofar as he can indeed be considered to be 'dyed' in right opinion within the structure of an accepted moral code. But in another way, in not seeking to actively determine himself rationally to the good, as Socrates does, Cephalus abrogates an essential part of what it is to be human, to be a rational animal, and is so is unable to respond when the values that sustain this older code are called into question.

turn, in Cephalus: self-control exhibited in relation to bodily appetites, a measured attitude to the acquisition and possession of wealth, and a firm adherence to the ethical principles in accord with which he has been nurtured, coupled to the inability to actualize further the rational side of his nature. By contrast with Cephalus who remains at home in an ancient piety, what Socrates seeks in the *Republic* is the beginning point for a philosophical science which will afford a transition from μῦθος and πίστις to λόγος, from image and belief to an articulated rational account. The difficulty that is experienced in trying to explain the particular by another particular, revealed in Socrates' persistent failure to arrive at a stable definition through finding a self-identity in natural difference, brings with it a recognition that the sensible world of change is not in fact self explanatory. Virtue is not a natural activity but an activity of the thinking soul as the ordering principle of the sensory world of pleasures and pains.

6.2 Polemarchus: justice is divided: 'help friends & harm enemies' (331d-336a)

For Cephalus, acting justly is a determinate moral activity in unmediated accord with an objective good; it is not difficult to envisage him as part of that triumphal procession with which Aeschylus' *Oresteia* is brought to a close.[31] His son Polemarchus, by contrast, shows from the outset no hesitation in breaking down this universal objective ethical order by making the division into friends and enemies a first consideration in the determination of what is just (332a9-b8). Lycos comments that "Polemarchus' defence of his father converts obligations which could be thought of as demanded by justice into obligations imposed by what is deemed behaviour 'appropriate' to different types of relationships."[32] Thus while Polemarchus retains what can be called an 'objective' conception of justice it is no longer a fully comprehensive one: different groups will subscribe to different and potentially competing goods. This is, of course, the ever present danger to polis order that Athena and the Erinyes recognized and sought to keep

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[31] A. *Eu.* 1021-47. Beversluis (2000:192) notes the point that "Cephalus does not think it just to harm anyone." He suggests that "of all the interlocutors in the early dialogues there are only two who join Socrates in rejecting the *lex talionis*: one is Crito, and the other is Cephalus."

[32] Lycos (1987:34). That justice consists in helping friends and harming enemies is well-evidenced to be prevalent in Greek popular morality from Homer on. See Adam (v.1 1963:12) and Blundell (1989), in particular Chapter 2 for a full exploration of this issue. Plato's Meno states explicitly what Polemarchus implicitly understands here (*Men.* 71e2-4).

at bay and that Sophocles explores in *Antigone* and other of his works to such telling effect.[33] Once the justice of Zeus, mediated through polis law, custom and ritual, ceases to be effective, there is nothing in place to keep the forces of στάσις in check. With the ground of ὁμόνοια undermined, the loyalties of the individual readily revert to the tribal primacy of ties of kinship and other associations that provide a mutual interest and benefit. This in its turn leads to the re-emergence of a conception of justice as the *talio*.[34]

Loyalty in Polemarchus' Athens is to a particular faction and helping friends and harming enemies to serve party interests is considered to be primary in determining what is just. Those who share a common interest come together as friends both to promote their own mutual benefit and to harm those who oppose them. Popular maxims, such as those Polemarchus inherits from his father, their former objective content and context lost, now find their meaning in serving the immediate ends of the radical democratic κοινωνία, and the various factions and party interests which range themselves in opposition to it. Polemarchus' eager and unhesitating response to Socrates request for a definition of justice reveals only too clearly the measure of his own personal commitment to the conception that justice is a function of the will of the group to whom one allies oneself (331d-332b). The inevitable result Plato, like Thucydides and others of his contemporaries comes to see is, as Lycos comments, to "turn the 'injustice' of yesterday's treatment of some people into the 'justice' of tomorrow's treatment of yet other people. In such a situation there will be no invariant content one can expect a just act to have."[35]

In confronting Polemarchus and exposing what he sees to be inherently insupportable in his stance, Socrates is by extension intent upon calling to task a predominant precept of Greek popular morality, laying bare with λόγος the problems Sophoclean tragedy poetically images in μῦθος. Unlike Cephalus, who locates justice in character, in the disposition of the agent, Polemarchus understands justice to be resident in the knowledge (τέχνη) required to decide what is appropriate for whom in the dispensation of benefit

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[33] That there is a naturally competitive and aggressive spirit innate in man both Aeschylus and Plato acknowledge as they arrive at their polis ideals. Thus Athena and the 'dread goddesses' deplore internal στάσις and urge harmony and friendship among the citizenry who must 'love and hate with a single heart', reserving their fury for external wars (A. *Eu.* 858-66, 977-87). Plato will adopt the same understanding in the education of the warrior guardians of the *Republic* for their social role.

[34] Blundell (1989:28) argues, "[t]he bridge from the evident pleasure of Help Friends/Harm Enemies to its elevation as a positive norm is the justice of the talio, whose essence is reciprocation, payment in kind."

[35] Lycos (1987:38).

and harm. Under the impetus of Socrates' probing, however, Polemarchus comes to recognize for himself that the good must *be* good and not just *appear* to be good; that it is not the one who *appears* to us to be helpful but the one who really *is* so who is a friend (334e-335b).[36] For Socrates, Bloom (1968:324) observes, "[o]nce the distinction between what is good and one's own is made, the principle of loyalty to family and city is undermined. ...If the good must be pursued, then caring for one's own must be extinguished, or it will make one unjust and impede the quest for the good." This is the problem that Socrates will come to grips with in Book 5 of the *Republic* where he will seek to establish on a new basis what Aeschylus portrays poetically as a κοινοφιλὴς διάνοια. The great challenge to achieving this goal concretely, as Sophocles brings out so well, lies in overcoming the tragic inadequacy of human knowing which allows the good to stand before it in the sensible, divided and opposed.

What Socrates leads Polemarchus to comprehend at this point is that the knowledge embodied by a τέχνη, such as that required in order to help friends and harm enemies, is of itself ethically neutral, 'value free'. The power it exerts over contraries is a purely instrumental means to bring about the predetermined end: the same body of knowledge that brings about a just end can equally effect one that is unjust (333e-334b).[37] While his spirit is undisciplined and readily subject to being led astray by the unscrupulous, Polemarchus has not completely separated himself from the traditional limits on behaviour. Although he has lost the content of that older conception of polis justice that still sustains his father, with Socrates' help he can be turned away from a partisan conception of justice which to Socrates' mind leads ultimately by means of the sophistic way of thinking to the tyrannical rule of the wealthy and powerful despot.[38] Thus,

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[36] For Socrates, the question is whether in fact it is ever just to harm anyone at all (335b2-e5). What he seeks to establish is that justice is grounded in a principle which operates universally, determining how the good man acts when he acts justly. Joseph (1935:11) remarks that it has already been indicated "indirectly that there is no restriction on the occasions when justice must inform a man's action; we are now to see there is no restriction on the persons to whom it places him under obligation."

[37] A physician, for example, can as readily employ his art to heal or harm (333e). See on this point Warren (1989:103), Annas (1981:128).

[38] Periander, Perdiccas, and Xerxes are cited by Socrates as notable examples of despots. See Adam (v.1 1963:22). It is hardly an accident that it is at this juncture that Thrasymachus enters the fray. For Socrates, the conception of justice as 'helping friends and harming enemies' is to be associated with one wielding the power of a tyrant (336a5-7). It is into tyranny that democracy naturally deteriorates he will argue in Book 9 of the *Republic*.

Polemarchus can still feel shame at the thought of being considered an advocate of unjust actions (334b) and is ready to acknowledge that there is an objective reality, a universal justice, which transcends the relativity of group loyalty (335d). The discussion with Polemarchus is in a way the fulcrum of the argument in *Republic* 1; harnessing the spirit of the noble youth, hovering here between the unexamined wisdom of Cephalus and the insatiable will to power of Thrasymachus, soon to be exposed, will be key to the renaissance of the polis in the succeeding books of the *Republic*. In Polemarchus, naturally present, are those characteristics that Socrates will associate essentially with the members of the warrior Guardian class, those whose justice will lie in their tenacity of purpose in guarding the integrity of the polis and its ideals in both war and peace. What Polemarchus has innately is a firmly held intuitive belief. However, what Socrates discloses is how, without being dyed fast in the truth, this belief can be manifested serving ends that are relative and partial. Once educated in right opinion, Polemarchus too will have his place in the newly restored polis that Socrates will build in thought.

6.3 Thrasymachus: justice is the interest of the stronger (336b-354c)

Like Callicles in the *Gorgias*, Thrasymachus, the 5th century rhetor and sophist is portrayed as epitomizing an extreme towards which Plato believes the new intellectualism inevitably tends.[39] Everything about Plato's introduction of Thrasymachus into the dialogue speaks to the forcefulness of the man: the power of his demeanour and of his loud angry words to intimidate and silence any opposition to his own arbitrary will (336b1-d4). Thucydides' description of the demagogue Cleon as βιαιότατος τῶν

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[39] Barker (1918:181) remarks that "Callicles and Thrasymachus are representatives of the revolt of an awakened self-consciousness against the traditional morality in which it has hitherto passively acquiesced, but which it now brings to the bar of its new sense of self for judgement." There are, however, not only similarities but also distinct differences in the positions the two sophists are found to espouse in Plato's representation. Hence, while both Callicles and Thrasymachus distinguish a natural justice, resident in the demands of human nature, from the arbitrary dictates of conventional justice prescribed in posited law, they differ markedly in how they see the two to be related. See de Romilly (1992:118). Human laws, for Callicles, are a construction of the weak for the purpose of controlling the strong, and thus in direct contravention with the universal law of nature itself by which each seeks to dominate over everyone else. Callicles' rampant individualism is inherently destructive of any social order at all and would, carried to its logical conclusion, place human nature beyond the bounds of the polis. For Thrasymachus, by contrast, justice is a construction of the strong to manipulate the weak in his own interest and viewed in these terms the ruler maximizes his injustice to attain his ends. It is the very fact that Thrasymachus recognizes a limit in what is other than himself, the political κοινωνία, that allows Socrates to engage him productively in a way that was simply not possible with Callicles.

πολιτῶν is vividly evoked and there seems little doubt that Plato must himself be thinking back to his own youth and the terrible tyranny of the Thirty and its aftermath which caused him, as he reports in the *Seventh Letter*, to turn away from the life of practical politics and seek to ground the just state in a philosophical ideal.[40]

Induced to give his own definition of justice, Thrasymachus declares emphatically that justice can be nothing other than the interest of the stronger (338c1-2): ultimately the strongest must prevail and rule over the rest.[41] It becomes immediately clear, however, that the site of this primal struggle is not rooted by Thrasymachus in nature, in tribal conflict. Rather Thrasymachus requires as a prerequisite to the implementation of his particular form of justice the pre-existence of a civilized polis order within which to operate. What Thrasymachus exploits is the fact that in actual practice morality based on obligation to a predetermined objective order of justice has no longer any effective hold over the leadership of the states in which he plies his trade.[42] Nevertheless, when he argues that it is the ruling party in every polis, whether it be a tyranny, democracy, or oligarchy, that makes the laws defining as just whatever is in their own interest (338e6-339a2), Thrasymachus retains an assumption that others not so empowered can be expected to remain disposed to acquiesce in these laws.[43] Thrasymachus subscribes in

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[40] See Siemsen (1987:4), Gadamer (1980:78). Coupled to the picture of crude physical power in its most politically successful advocates, exemplified in the literary portrayals of Cleon and Thrasymachus, is the powerful persuasive capacity afforded by their mastery of the art of rhetoric. Little is known of the historical Thrasymachus, but he appears by all accounts to be a sophist. That is to say he belongs to the broad general category of those influential itinerant teachers and rhetors, mostly foreign, who came to Athens during the last half of the 5th century to ply their trade in return for monetary recompense.

[41] Noticeably it is to Thrasymachus' love of money and his craving for esteem that Socrates must appeal, and not the love of wisdom, in persuading him to contribute to the discussion (337d1-338b3).

[42] Thus Thrasymachus dismisses Socrates' concern with the moral qualities integrally associated with justice (336c6-337b5). See Lycos (1987:44). Friedländer asserts (v.2 1964:61) that Thrasymachus introduces into the argument "a radical sense of subjectivity." In contradistinction to the later developed sense of an introspective intellectual subjectivity, however, what develops in the late 5th century, where an individual like Thrasymachus still views himself however fractiously in relation to a polis community, might better perhaps be termed a form of 'ethical subjectivity' evinced in the clash of individual and common good. The ἀγών between Thrasymachus and Socrates offers Plato a means of examining the forces at work in the tensions between these opposing demands shaping the nature of polis, the beginning to a critical analysis of the tragic dilemma.

[43] There has been disagreement among commentators over whether Thrasymachus subscribes to a form of natural or conventional justice: whether one assumes complete precedence over the other, or whether Thrasymachus' argument is incoherent. On the former interpretation, see in particular the exchange between Kerferd (1947:19-27, 1964:12-16), and Hourani (1962:110-2). See too Hadgopoulos (1973:204-8), who rebuts Hourani's claim that Thrasymachus is a 'legal conventionalist'. Others emphasize what they

fact to both a conception of natural justice, actualized in the will to power of the ruler himself, and a consequent conventional justice to be practised by those who are to be ruled by the laws he instigates.[44] Lycos makes an important point when he states that it is crucial to note "that for Thrasymachus it is the fact of power which 'converts' the advantage of the ruler into ...what will be permitted as 'just and lawful' in the polis."[45] The successful parasite is not the one that destroys its host but the one that is best able to utilize the host's own organizational structures for its own benefit, while at the same time maintaining sufficient symbiosis in the relationship to keep its 'benefactor' alive. To survive, the Thrasymachean ruler (and the sophist who teaches this art) requires the polis in which to establish his ascendancy. His ideal is to bring the common will of the political κοινωνία in line with his own particular will. What must be acknowledged is the primacy of a politics of reality in which justice is to be equated with power; might is right and the successful individual is the one who is able to take advantage of this to further to the utmost his own particular end. As each looks to his own benefit, the notion of a common good which embraces all in the unity of the polis falls from sight.[46] Where once it had been Athena who held Athens together and gave it meaning, now it is man who sees himself as embodying this inner connectivity of experience.

The force of Thrasymachus' contention is undeniable given contemporary 5th century political realities. Thucydides grimly recounts what experience shows: by natural necessity (ὑπὸ φύσεως ἀναγκαίας) humankind rules wherever it can (Th. 5.105.2). That it is just for the stronger to prevail over the weaker is evident throughout both the natural world and in all human association, the sophist Callicles argues in Plato's *Gorgias*. It is hence according to natural justice (κατὰ φύσιν τὴν τοῦ δικαίου) and the law of nature

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see as an unresolved inconsistency between Thrasymachus' contention that 'justice serves the interest of the stronger' and his subsequent statement that 'justice is another's good'. See Stauffer (2001:71), Maguire (1971:142-163), Sparshott (1966:432) and Cross and Woozley (1964:41). Those arguing that there is in fact no inconsistency include Nicholson (1974:211-32), Henderson (1970:219-28), Kerferd (1947:10-27). Cf. Pl. *Lg*. 714b-c where these issues are all raised again in connection with political systems being criticized. See also Arist. *Pol*. 1279b4-10.

[44] Justice as the 'interest of the stronger' (ruler) and justice as ἀλλοτριον ἀγαθόν, the good of another (the stronger), which is the justice exhibited by those ruled (343c3-d1).

[45] Lycos (1987:46)

[46] Bloom (1968:328) remarks that the polis "is not a unity but a composite of opposed parties, and the party which wins out over the others is the source of law."

(κατὰ νόμον γε τὸν τῆς φύσεως) that men act in this way (*Grg.* 483d1-e3).[47] Based on his own observation of sensible appearances, Thrasymachus too has declared that there is a natural justice which is universally applicable, through which the end of each community is achieved in the rule of the most powerful and naturally superior elements within it. With this general equation, Socrates does not take issue. Indeed the lesson the sophist teaches is the ineffectiveness of political wisdom in one lacking the power to achieve it in praxis. For the sophist, however, this natural justice, although universally active is not to be regarded as an external shaping force, an objective due measure. Rather it is seen now as embodied in the individual, in human nature, as an internal drive whereby each man naturally seeks to exert himself to establish his dominance over the rest. For Thrasymachus, the ultimate maximization of this power is the life of the tyrant wedded to promulgating to the fullest extent his own particular interests.[48] Nothing other than the autocratic will of the ruler can be allowed, be this a tyranny, oligarchy, or the radical democracy.[49] The end to which things are ordered in the life of a polis is that which the ruler understands to be most useful or advantageous, not to the polis as a prior whole, but in relation to himself as individual; the 'whole' is thus subsumed to the 'part'.[50] There are, in fact, for Thrasymachus, no limits to the extent to which the fully unjust man will go to get the better (πλεονεκτεῖν) of everyone (349b2-c21). Thrasymachus

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[47] In *Gorgias*, the Persian invasion of Greece under Xerxes is cited as an example of this natural justice in action (Pl. *Grg.* 483d6-7). As earlier noted, Plato flags the intervention of Thrasymachus with a reference to the tyrants Periander, Xerxes, and Ismenias, wealthy men who believe they hold great power (*R.* 336a5-7). Thucydides records on a number of occasions, of which the Melian dialogue is a prime example, the Athenian empire as a τυραννίς exerting might as right in just this manner.

[48] Thus, Bloom (1968:328) argues that Socrates and Thrasymachus "agree that the character of the ruling group is the core of politics, that the rulers are the stronger, and that justice is a political phenomenon which must be embodied in the laws of the city. The issue between them is whether all rulers, all lawgivers, must be selfish in the way Thrasymachus insists they are."

[49] The ruler is only deserving of that title, Thrasymachus insists, when he is *really* ruling in his own best interest and not when he simply believes that he is. If Thrasymachus were to allow, as Cleitophon thinks he should, that the advantage of the stronger is what he *believes* to be his advantage (340b6-8) this would mean that the laws would assume priority over the advantage of the ruler, and this is a point on which Thrasymachus will not compromise. He is emphatic that the practitioner of any τέχνη as such never errs so that justice is what is truly advantageous to the stronger (340e2-341a4). Thrasymachus, Shorey (1933:211-2) observes, "thereby delivers himself into Socrates' hands." See also Sallis (1996:338), Joseph (1935:17). Kerferd (1947:21) concludes that Thrasymachus' decision shows that he hold neither the legalist or nihilist view of justice. Other interpreters, including Annas (1981:42-3), Findlay (1974:162), Sparshott (1966:424) and Cross and Woozley (1964:46), find little merit in the argument, calling it 'inconsistent' or at least 'very counterintuitive'.

[50] Plato will be seen to invert this order and subsume the part to the 'whole'.

exemplifies in his overweening desire for personal aggrandisement and glory (πλεονεξία καὶ φιλοτιμία) that 'will to power' which Thucydides sees as the root cause of strife (Th. 3.82.8). With these contentions, Thrasymachus stakes his claim to have liberated himself completely from the bonds of αἰδώς that still contain men such as Polemarchus and Polus. Yet, unlike Plato's Callicles, he is not content to exercise his power blindly, attempting to fill a vessel full of holes (*Grg.* 493b1-d4). Thrasymachus lays claims to an infallible τέχνη by which he effects his ends.

Socrates accepts the necessity of making a beginning from within the argument of Thrasymachus, in order both to expose its limitations and at the same time draw upon the insights it has to offer him. It is crucial, he sees, that its spurious claims be effectively refuted if there is to be an exposition of the basis of an objective ethical order of the polis. The beginning is to draw a link between the particular and the universal. Thrasymachus seeks to arrange the world to his own subjective advantage by imposing his will upon it. At the same time, however, he recognizes that, in order to do so unerringly, he has to know objectively what is other than himself so that he can determine where his true advantage lies.[51] The sensible world of experience, for Thrasymachus, is therefore found to be dependent upon the intelligible, the particulars of sensation brought through memory and experience under the universal of thought as a judgement. Thrasymachus' ruler, Socrates effectively demonstrates, does not function independently of the polis he feeds upon, so that, within the sphere of self-aggrandisement in which he operates, Thrasymachus himself must acknowledge that freedom is not freedom from all constraint on will but rather freedom to make those rational choices appropriate to achieve the desired outcome.[52]

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[51] Thrasymachus not only accepts but requires a ruling τέχνη to attain his ends in the life of praxis in the polis. It is with the consequences that must ensue from this implicitly acknowledged dependence that Socrates confronts him. See Henderson (1970:222). Friedländer (v.2 1964:62) posits that "[c]arried through consistently...this view leads to the Socratic-Platonic thesis that the ruler and wise man cannot make a mistake because he possesses knowledge."

[52] Thrasymachus does not in fact admit that he himself identifies with the extreme argument he proffers here; his purpose is *ad hominem* to refute Socrates' account (349a9-10). Language, for the sophist, moves in its own realm of appearance, divorced from any necessary foundation in truth. de Romilly (1992:119) remarks the danger of assuming these statements are expressions of "personal commitment." Within the political context of the age, she points out, for Thrasymachus to say that "justice 'does not pay' is simply a statement of fact." It is to be noted that the historical Thrasymachus observes in an extant fragment that 'the gods do not see human affairs otherwise they would not have overlooked the greatest of all blessings among mankind, Justice-for we see mankind not using this virtue' (DK 85.B.8). In another fragment (DK

In the *Republic* and again in the *Laws* Plato will directly oppose the claim that the stronger should rule the weaker to what he himself believes to have the greatest claim to authority, which is that the wise should rule the ignorant. The willing and unforced acceptance of the rule of rational law is not against nature (παρὰ φύσιν) but rather according to nature (κατὰ φύσιν), he argues (*Lg.* 490b3-c3). This is to restore once again the relation between νόμος and φύσις which was understood to prevail in the old order under the justice of Zeus, an understanding epitomized in the resolution effected in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. At the other extreme, however, νόμος and φύσις can be seen to come together in the immediacy of the natural human will, as epitomized in the professions of a Callicles, and in the words and actions of Euripides' Bacchic κοινωνίαι, positions ultimately incompatible with civilized society. In effect, as Aristotle will be seen to argue, there is at this ultimate point no true κοινωνία as an ordered 'whole' of mutually interacting individuals from which truly human society can take form in friendship and justice.

Looked at in terms of the general principles it invokes, Socrates' response to Thrasymachus has exposed a crucial distinction between the purely natural and instinctual existence in which individuals compete tooth and claw with one another for dominance, and the life of what Socrates understands to be a truly human community, a κοινωνία πολιτῶν πολιτείας in which justice flourishes as an ordering ethical power in relation to a commonly held good. That the unjust do indeed rise to power, as Thrasymachus maintains, and experience amply affirms, Socrates does not contest. What he argues to good purpose, however, is that injustice cannot be the primary principle underlying communal action, for it is impossible for any completely unjust human association to persist, as such, without the assistance of justice (351b6-9).[53] Whether in a polis, an army, or among a gang of thieves, or in any other association, there can be no jointly achieved action, no point of common identity, unless those involved refrain from wronging one another. When each individual independently pursues his selfish ends, in the attempt to assert himself as the stronger, the outcome is inevitably στάσις, faction,

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85.B.1), which appears to be from one of his orations, Thrasymachus, de Romilly (1992:128) notes, "seems to recognize the importance of harmony within the city and points to the merits of a good political regime."

[53] This has been tacitly acknowledged by Thrasymachus in his argument that for all but the ruler a conventional justice must pertain (343a-344c).

hatred, and infighting. Whereas, by contrast, just action is productive of ὁμόνοια and φιλία (351d4-6). What is true of men in association is true also even within a single individual, Socrates further avers. Wracked by internal strife and divided in his mind (στασιάζοντα καὶ οὐχ ὁμονοοῦντα αὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ) the individual becomes both his own worst enemy and an enemy to all who are just (352a7-8). The parallel introduced here between the action of justice and injustice in the individual and the community will be central to the analogy that Socrates will draw between justice in the soul and the city. Its particular significance, Nettleship observes, is to be found in the transition it marks "from the view of justice as a matter of external conduct to the view of it as a living principle in the human soul which works itself out in the conduct of life."[54]

Thrasymachus has trenchantly advanced the ideal of *l' êtat c'est moi*, carrying to a logical conclusion what has already been witnessed implicitly and explicitly in tragedy in the actions of Apollo, Creon and Pentheus: the injustice of the despot who would unify and rule the polis by appropriating everything in it to his own will, achieving order at the cost of all freedom for the citizenry. In this conception of absolute despotic unity, the mediating institutions of the polis are dissolved or emasculated, persisting only formally, and the universal will of the ruler directly confronts and negates the particular will of the individual citizen. Abhorrent as Thrasymachus' picture of despotic rule must be to Socrates, he nevertheless recognizes that it is not simply a negation of the truth that he himself seeks, but rather a perversion of it. Thrasymachus' ruler of the ideal unjust despotic city can be seen as the inversion of the philosopher ruler Socrates will place in charge of the completely just city. Knowledge and power cohere for Thrasymachus in the tyrannical ideal, as they will with a very different understanding for Socrates in the philosopher king. Both rulers enact a set of laws for their citizens to obey as 'just' and rule by interpreting these laws unerringly in relation to their acknowledged end, which in the case of Thrasymachus is seen to be realized in a will to power, while for Socrates it will be found in the mediated relation to a universal objective Good.[55] Thus it is not through outright rejection but in relation to the defining parameters of Thrasymachus'

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[54] Nettleship (1901:41).

[55] The opposition of ἀρχή in its philosophical meaning as first principle and cause to its sophistic embodiment, as the will to power is fundamental to Plato's thought. Bloom (1968:329) notes the contrast between Socrates' "perfectly public-spirited" rulers and those of Thrasymachus "who are perfectly selfish." What they hold "in common, however, is that they are knowers."

position that Socrates will develop his own response which will culminate in the account of the philosopher ruler as the completely just man. The despot and the philosopher king, contraries held together nevertheless in their difference, will be seen to occupy the poles of a single continuum.[56] What Socrates will try to do, as he develops his own argument on the just polis in the *Republic*, is to draw the sophist along a path that will bridge the divide that separates them, by revealing to Thrasymachus that his logic inherently leads to the understanding that what is *really* to his own advantage *qua* ruler of the polis must encompass acting in accord with knowledge of what is to the best advantage of the community as a whole.[57] The ultimate measure of justice, it will later be determined, is not to be found by looking to the external world of becoming and the life of praxis, as Thrasymachus supposes, but by turning inwards to the life of the soul and looking to the reality of the Good itself as that objective ruling principle in accord with which every man must justly rule himself.

Thrasymachus has ordered nature to himself as the measure of the good as the unjust (348b8-349a3). He is prepared as a result to assert that injustice is really εὐβουλία, by contrast with which justice can be dismissed as a well intended naivety (πάνυ γενναίαν εὐήθειαν, 348c12). While he eschews speaking in terms of virtue and vice, preferring to consider things in terms of profit and loss it is in reality, Thrasymachus maintains, the unjust man who is both prudent (φρόνιμος) and good (ἀγαθός), so that excellence (ἀρετή) and wisdom (σοφία) are therefore found associated with injustice and not with justice (348d3-e4).[58] Socrates, the philosopher, by contrast, will seek to order himself as a just soul to the universal objective Good as first principle and measure of all. The

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[56] Siemsen (1987:1) remarks that the tension between the philosophical and the political expressed in *Republic* 1, marks the beginning of the ordering of politics to philosophy.

[57] In mounting in *Republic* I a direct challenge to the Thrasymachean ideal Socrates offers a first insight into what he himself understands to be the true nature of justice and its relation to the good. White (1979:69) and Lycos (1987:117) note the significance of this. Contrary to what Thrasymachus has asserted, Socrates insists that what forces a good man to rule, is not any advantage to be gained for himself, but rather the threat that he will otherwise be ruled by someone who is inferior in character to him. For Socrates' conclusions on the ideal ruler's governance in the polis see, in particular, 520b5-521a8.

[58] Εὐβουλία, de Romilly (1992:119) notes, is the word which comes at this time "to denote the eminently practical kind of wisdom encouraged by the new ideas." Adam remarks (v.1 1963:49) that Thrasymachus' "contempt for εὐήθεια recalls Thucydides' description of contemporary morals: cf. especially III 83.1 καὶ τὸ εὔηθες οὗ τὸ γενναῖον πλεῖστον μετέχει, καταγελασθὲν ἠφανίσθη." Indeed this whole section, with its perversion of the traditional values through the manipulation of language echoes Thucydides' account of the pathology of the polis.

confrontation between the two," Bloom remarks, "has only served to heighten the sense of disproportion between the private and the public good, to make justice more problematic than ever."[59] Plato sees, however, that if the foundations of the new polis are to be sound he must reach down to and encompass within the argument everything that can be marshalled against it by the sophist.

6.4 Glaucon: justice is a purely human convention & not by nature (357a-367c)

Thrasymachus, in developing his account of human nature to its logical culmination, has constructed a picture of the perfectly unjust man in relation to whose interests justice for all other citizens is determined. However, although he can readily point to practical instances of what he means, there is a fundamental sense in which the perfectly unjust ideal Thrasymachus propounds is antithetical to any conception of human socio-political association. What Glaucon contrives to do, in his refinement of Thrasymachus' position, is to take a step back and look at what is implicit in Thrasymachus' stance in terms of human nature and the kind of society in which the despot emerges to take control. To this end, he himself will renew the argument and put forward to the fullest extent possible the case for injustice within society. Against this, Socrates in return must argue in praise of the just social order, providing an account which will elucidate what justice is in itself of its own nature quite apart from its consequences, and what effects it has on the soul.[60]

The natural condition of humanity is considered to be a state of war, Glaucon argues, one in which, struggling with each other to achieve power and serve their own advantage, men continually both do wrong and suffer it in turn. Every individual is, like Thrasymachus, desirous of getting all that he can to benefit himself personally, since it is the nature of all men alike that they seek their own self interested gain (πλεονεξία) as a good (359c1-5). Accepting that man does naturally seek to maximize his own particular

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[59] Bloom (1968:334).

[60] Justice Socrates submits belongs to that class of goods which is to be welcomed, both for itself and for its consequences, by any man who would attain to happiness. Cf. *R.* 358a, 361b-362c, 362e-363a, 366d-e, 376b-e, 392b, 392c, 444e-445a, 580b-c, 612b-c. Nevertheless, he cannot but agree with Glaucon's claim that for the majority of people justice is sought solely for its consequences (358a1-5). Reeve (1988:25) notes "that unlike Polemarchus, who identifies being just as primarily a property of actions, or Thrasymachus, who identifies it as primarily a property of laws, Glaucon presupposes that being just is primarily a property of a *psyche*." See too Heinaman (2002:327).

good, thus selfishly conceived, it is also seen to be the case that he does so while living in company with others of his kind so that inevitably a compromise must be sought. The benefits to be gained by wronging one's fellows are calculated to be far outweighed by the harms that must be endured in retaliation if caught. Hence, as a result of their fear of suffering irreparable injury at each others hands, men come to see the necessity of agreeing upon laws and covenants to regulate their interactions. It is this that is the basis of what we know as justice; for men are only forcibly by law brought to honour equality. Thus, Glaucon contends, law and justice arise purely through convention, agreed upon as a mean between the capacity to commit injustice with impunity and that of suffering wrong without the ability to exact redress (358e3-359c6).[61] Whereas the completely superior individual, as Thrasymachus has argued, has the power to impose his will unilaterally, without the necessity of compact, the rest of men judge it expedient to agree to a social contract which permits νόμος to subjugate φύσις in their κοινωνία.[62] For Thrasymachus, φύσις is ideally exercised through the human individual's untrammelled will to power in assertion against all that confronts him. Socrates, in response, seeks to (re)establish that φύσις is grounded in divine νόμος as a universal good to which the good of everything else, man included, is subtended. Glaucon's account of a conventional basis for society emerges as the practical outcome of the principle Thrasymachus espouses. In a similar way, Plato stepping back from his own ideal can allow that, in the absence in practice of the rule of the divine principle itself through the wisdom of the philosopher-king, the rule of universal divine law posited in human enactments is man's nearest approach to the objective order of the Good.[63]

Since they are artificially constrained to act in a way that is contrary to their true nature, Glaucon argues, all who must practice justice, through lacking the power to act otherwise, do so unwillingly. Individual freedom thus stands conceived as inherently opposed to what public good necessitates (359b6-7). Given, like the mythical Gyges, the

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[61] Callicles argues along similar lines the opposition of νόμος and φύσις (Pl. *Grg.* 482e3-484b1). However, his conclusion, that morality is an invention of the weak to protect themselves from the strong, falls short of recognizing a rational basis for the implementation of a social contract. Adam (vol.1 1963:68) cites evidence of the currency of such views at the time.

[62] The hypothetical origin of the state in an original compact imposed upon a state of nature articulated here reappears many times in history, perhaps most notably in Hobbes and Rousseau.

[63] This second city, the city of ὀρθὴ δόξα, is to be developed in *Republic* 2-4 and in the *Laws*.

power and opportunity to act unjustly with impunity, experience teaches that all men, including those considered just, would rob, rape and murder in pursuit of the same acquisitive and licentious end, deeming this to be the freedom of a god. Justice, one can only conclude, is not the good of the individual since no one is willingly just, *every* man believing injustice to be much more profitable for himself than justice.[64] Nevertheless, anyone who acts justly and does not take advantage of opportunities to behave unjustly for personal gain would certainly be publicly praised since, at the same time, all pay lip service to justice, for fear of being wronged. In private, however, among themselves, those in the know would account such a one most wretched and foolish (360b3-d7).

The stark reality, Glaucon maintains, is that in the world of appearances in which we live the life of complete injustice is the ideal which we naturally seek to actualize. If one were to oppose in their pure ideality the lives of the perfectly just man, who cares solely for being just and yet is to all appearances completely unjust and suffers all the adverse consequences thereof, and the perfectly unjust man, who successfully maintains the appearance of justice and reaps all its rewards, while being in reality totally unjust, there can be no doubt who will be said to have the happier life (360e1-361d7).[65] Sadly the truth is that what regulates behaviour in society is not the reality but the appearance of conforming to societal expectations, the life of honour determined through conformation to an external and customary αἰδώς. If only there were some physical mark that would reveal a man's true character, groan Euripidean heroes over again in despair.[66] Stripped of any consideration of its socially desirable consequences, justice would seem to have

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[64] As is often remarked, the Thrasymachean maxim 'οὐδεὶς ἑκὼν δίκαιος' is in direct contrast to the Socratic claim 'οὐδεὶς ἑκὼν πονηρός'.

[65] The completely successful unjust man, fully in command of the power his τέχνη affords him, will have the highest reputation for justice, which he will maintain using all the means he has at hand. Helping his friends and harming his enemies, propitiating the gods with the magnificence of his offerings, he will be dearer to both. By contrast, the truly incorruptible just man, stripped of all outward appearance of justice, suffering every indignity and punishment comes to realize that appearing just is to be preferred to the reality.

[66] Theseus' wrongful condemnation of his son Hippolytus provides a very pertinent example. Theseus laments (ironically in the circumstances) that a man has not two voices, a just as well as an unjust so that the former might confute the latter and truth could be distinguished from falsity, friend from foe (E. *Hipp.* 925-31. Medea too bewails the fact that while Zeus has given to men a sure way of telling pure gold from its counterfeit, there is no mark of a man's true character (οὐδεὶς χαρακτὴρ ἐμπέφυκε) upon his body (E. *Med.* 516-9).

nothing to offer a man.[67] In practice, even if this is not the position they consciously adopt, all are in agreement that there is no advantage to being just unless one also appears so. Appearance is what is taken to be primary, so that the secret of the good and happy life is to act only in accord with a rationally calculated expectation of achieving the consequences desired, while maintaining at the same time an unimpeachable reputation for justice.

What is fundamental to the *fin de siècle* account of the foundation and nature of society that Glaucon puts forward, with Adeimantus in close support, is that the gods no longer hold any power over mortals. If the gods do exist and take an interest in human affairs it is very clear, says Adeimantus, both from the accounts of the poets and from the laws and customs of the polis, that they are open to persuasion, particularly by those who have the means to purchase their forgiveness (364d3-365a3).[68] Gone are the fear and reverence which were to sustain the Aeschylean polis by holding the citizenry in check, grounding the life of δίκη and αἰδώς in the justice of Zeus. As long as a unifying principle of nature was recognized in Zeus, there was a λόγος of the natural, a means whereby for Aeschylus and the older morality the ongoing clash of justice with justice in a disordered natural world governed by primal instinctual forces could be resolved through the extension of the justice of Zeus into the polis, as the substantive objective good which grounds and sustains it. The Aeschylean polis, as a community of citizens held in a common bond of δίκη and αἰδώς under the law, is bound in friendship by a shared understanding in a κοινοφιλὴς διάνοια (A. *Eu*, 985-7). However, while this world has a rational ground in Zeus, its laws and customs, and the content of the poetic μῦθοι that shape its moral ethos,

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[67] Glaucon has focussed upon the natural propensities he sees resident in human nature, but this is not the whole story. Adeimantus points out that the extent to which injustice gains a hold in society can be seen if one examines the education of the youth. Thus, even as they stress the importance of justice to their sons, fathers characterize it only in terms of the high repute and good things of life which are said to accompany it (362e4-363e4). Prominent among those undermining any conception that justice must be considered a good in itself, apart from the social benefits that accrue from it, are the poets. Thus, Adeimantus observes (363e5-364a4), anticipating the charges that Socrates will shortly bring more specifically to bear, while they extol justice and virtue in general, the poets emphasize at the same time how arduous it is compared to the sweet and easy rewards of undetected vice. See Ferrari (1989:111), Lear (1992:206 n. 111).

[68] Even the promise of reward and punishment in the afterlife is not correlated to a life of virtue since through participation in the mysteries the greatest wrongdoings may be routinely absolved from guilt regardless of merit (365e-366b). Protagoras is well known to have expressed scepticism on the existence of the gods (DK 80.B.4). The historical Thrasymachus reportedly stated that the gods ignore human affairs for otherwise they would not disregard the fact that, while justice is the greatest human good, men do not act justly (DK 85.B.8).

remain themselves unexamined, accepted as part of a divinely dispensed polis order in which man knows himself to be at home. While the citizen continues to know, like Plato's Laches, his place in the order of this pre-enlightenment Aeschylean Athens, he remains bound by a customary external αἰδώς centred on honour. As such he is not yet truly free as a self-determining moral agent in possession of his own end as the good, a rational understanding of virtue as a good of the soul and an end in itself apart from any desirable consequences that may be found to accompany it. As a result, Plato can readily conceive how, under the remorseless probing of its tenets in the sophistic enlightenment, the older customary morality lost its hold on society. The world of Homeric gods and heroes, brought down to earth, the foundation of its moral standing called into question and undermined, comes to be seen as increasingly more irrelevant when weighed against the pragmatic necessities of *Realpolitik*. Pappas observes aptly that when "society grows aware that its prescriptions are artificial, its moral rhetoric communicates a cynical attitude towards virtuous behavior."[69]

What has been encapsulated within the argument to this point is revealed as a reflection upon the historical course of 5th century Athens, a movement in which the older traditions which sustained the polis of Aeschylus, have come to be replaced, in the spirit of inquiry and growing sense of individuality of the enlightenment, by the στάσις of a community divided against itself and pervaded by the ever present threat of tyranny. Reflected in the images of justice successively brought before us in the opening pages of the *Republic*, is the disunity and imbalance that Plato sees to mark the end-stage of this movement: a wisdom that is blind overwhelmed by a spirit unfettered, in a society where unbridled appetite is ultimately king. This is the Athens of Socrates and Thrasymachus on the day of the feast of Bendis and it is from within this milieu we are invited to undertake the journey which will lead us to Callipolis, to the unity order and ὁμόνοια of the polis of Plato. Acutely conscious of the freedom and power the individual possesses to order himself to his own ends, neither Socrates nor Thrasymachus can remain content to live in the polis that has continued to sustain Cephalus. No longer is it possible for either of them to make a beginning from the will of Zeus exerting through the mediation of polis institutions a customary morality to which the individual can unquestioningly relate.

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[69] Pappas (1995:55).

7

Harmony & Limit

Revisiting the Aeschylean Ideal in Plato's *Republic* 368c-427d

σιδηρόφρων γὰρ θυμὸς ἀνδρείᾳ φλέγων | ἔπνει, λεόντων ὡς Ἄρη δεδορκότων.

A. *Theb.* 52-3

A beginning to any investigation of political κοινωνία must now be made from the standpoint of the rationally self-conscious individual, as the sophist has been quick to recognize. This is the understanding that Socrates and Thrasymachus seek to impart, each in his own way, to those that flock to hear them as they battle for the souls of young men like Polemarchus, caught between past and present in the flux of a fast changing world.[1] It could be said indeed that the culminating achievement of the Socratic method is to drive human thinking inexorably towards the point of radical sceptical despair with which Socrates ends *Republic* Book 1 (ὥστε μοι νυνὶ γέγονεν ἐκ τοῦ διαλόγου μηδὲν εἰδέναι, 354b9-c1), drawing with him the whole sophistic movement. It is only when this incompleteness, the endless motion that characterizes the world of sensory experience as derivative, is consciously acknowledged as such that the soul turns away from the flickering images of the material world to seek in the intelligible what is primary and gives it form and meaning. The search for a universal in the externality of nature has exposed the inadequacy of experience to the demand for definition. The failure of particular ideas about justice, such as telling the truth or paying one's debts, to conform to

[1] The question of the relation in the dialogues between the philosophy of the historic Socrates and that of Plato himself will never be wholly resolved to everyone's satisfaction. It is generally accepted, however, that the early aporetic dialogues portray the historical Socrates' search for ethical definition and his equation of virtue with knowledge, whereas the Ideal Theory and the division of the soul into rational and irrational parts with their own excellences, doctrines central to the *Republic*, can be attributed to Plato. See Cooper (1999:118). Aristotle, a member of Plato's Academy for 20 years, is a singularly important witness to this effect. See, for example, Arist. *Metaph.* 987b1-9; 1078b17-32. *EN* 1096a11-13; 1116b3-5; 1144b17-21, 28-30; 1145b22-7; 1147b14-17; *EE* 1216b3-8; *MM* 1182a15-27. For further consideration of the issue see Guthrie (v.3 1969:349-59), Ross (1924:xxxiii-xlviii), Irwin (1995:242-3).

their ideal, can only be resolved, Plato realizes, when the opposition of particular and universal good is held within a unity comprehensive of both.

It is to the point at which the individual, recognizing that he no longer belongs within the older order of Zeus, liberates himself from what is now seen to be an external and unexamined morality, that Plato returns here in thought. For it is at this critical juncture that the path which leads ultimately both to the self-confident human assertiveness of a Protagoras or a Thrasymachus, and also to the as yet untrodden way of return to a new objective order grounded in the Good, begins to diverge in opposing directions. Truth, the philosopher and the sophist together recognize to be a truth for consciousness. For the sophist, however, this truth resides in the freedom it offers to overcome the constraints of external necessity, to shape the appearance of the sensible world to best serve the particular interest at hand, whether this is seen in terms of community or individual. By contrast, the philosopher recognizes the truth that lies implicit in the older morality, an objective rational necessity that unifies and grounds human freedom and which must be recovered for thought. Thus it is that Socrates who knows that he does not know is deemed by the Delphic oracle the wisest man in Hellas. Integral to the argument of the *Republic* and the course to the Good that Plato will chart is Socrates' understanding that justice, as the ordering principle of political κοινωνία, is to be understood neither as simply given externally, divinely revealed in law and custom, as it was for Aeschylus and the older order, nor yet to be equated with the relativity of opinion and appearance whereby the sophist espouses the useful and advantageous: the world of Euripides and Thucydides.

The polis, the sophist claims, has no essential nature capable of imparting a determinate meaningful structure to the composite whole, one which identifies it as the ideal of its kind. Conceived as a 'whole', he maintains, the polis is nothing more than an instantiation of the balance of powers and desires that pertain at any time in a given community, so that it is posterior to the changing empirical realities that are its 'parts'.[2] This is the sense that the accounts of Thrasymachus and Glaucon have conveyed. What Plato seeks to show in response is that, beyond the relative measure which each man may

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[2] Socrates' discussion in *Phaedo* (92a-95a) with the neo-Pythagorean Simmias on the nature of soul as 'having' as opposed to 'being' a harmony is relevant.

determine subjectively as the good for himself or his community as a 'whole', there is a due measure, a causal principle that relates the particulars of sensory experience to an objective universal all-encompassing rational good. The truth that lies hidden to Antigone and Creon, as they attach themselves with a single-minded inflexibility to the polar opposed goods that they espouse, is that this division is only overcome in a conception of the good which can contain both the natural and the rational, the particular and common good, in a single view. The underlying assumption from the outset in the *Republic* is that it is this good that is sought. Justice is desired because it is a good, so that the search for justice must be part of a larger understanding of the nature of the good and the relation of justice to this end. In beginning his own investigation into the nature of the best human life, Aristotle too will argue that this must be the beginning point for ethical inquiry, and he acknowledges that Plato is to be commended for his recognition that it is the good at which everything aims.[3] If there is to be a stable unchanging conception of the good in praxis it must be shown both that the polis has an essential nature and that it is in accord with this as their collective end that humans individually achieve the true good of their own nature and not in the single-minded pursuit of diverse particular interests.

Hence, what Socrates must establish, in response to all those who would maintain that individual interest is irreconcilable with the collective interest of the polis, is that an essential relationship exists between the *idea* of justice exerting itself causally as the common good of the polis as a 'whole' prior to and comprehensive of its 'parts', and justice conceived as the good of each individual 'part' within that whole.[4] Accordingly, it

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[3] A premise implicitly acknowledged by Plato in the classification of goods which men desire (*R.* 357b-d) and explicitly articulated by Aristotle (*EN* 1094a1-3).

[4] The polis is not supernumerary to the meaningful inquiry into the nature of justice. It is characteristic of Hellenic Greece that man defines himself in relation to the social order of the polis so that even towards the end of the 4th century, with the age of Hellenistic empires looming, Aristotle will still feel confident in asserting that the man without a polis is either a beast or a god; the polis is the natural human community, the locus of justice. The bonds of citizenship that bound the men of the older order to their native soil, their political κοινωνία, were inviolable. Socrates will not leave Athens to live elsewhere even when it unjustly rejects and condemns him; Theaetetus must return to Athens to die rather than remain in Megara to be treated for his wounds; Aeschylus, sees all his achievements as a dramatist pale beside the fact that he fought at Marathon. It is into this milieu, where the individual sees himself as actualizing his nature in relation to the service of his polis, that the sophist has inserted himself. A self-appointed educator of the citizenry in the political arts, the sophist too has his being through the existence of the polis which, while purporting to serve, he first attempts to influence and later dominate with a self-serving rhetoric. The account Thrasymachus has proffered has brought out the radical consequences of the later sophistic

will be necessary to show that justice is grounded in human nature and that desires and appetites are brought under a rational limit in accord with the natural alignment of the human soul. That justice has an intrinsic nature of its own which is to be found within the human soul as its determining excellence is uncompromisingly stated by Socrates and agreed as the premise which the argument in the Republic will examine and develop (353e7-8).[5] It is this understanding of justice (and injustice) as powers of the psyche that demarcates the all-important transition from an external to an internal basis for morality, from the outer life of honour measured in accord with a customary αἰδώς to the inner life of virtue, from *appearing* to be just to *being* just. In the new polis to be constructed in thought by Socrates in the *Republic*, the constitution of the soul will be seen to be made actual in the activity of the just political κοινωνία. With this in mind, the investigation into the nature of justice considers first the nature of the polis itself as that 'ethical substance' in which the *idea* of justice in the human community, which in Socrates' conception is to be understood as the individual 'writ large', is actualized. By observing a polis coming to birth in speech (γιγνομένην πόλιν ...λόγῳ) Socrates suggests, justice and injustice will be observed as they emerge within it (369a5-7).[6]

7.1 The natural origins of the political community (368c-376c)

The myth of *Protagoras* (Pl. *Prt.* 320c8-322d5) provides a subtle exploration of the common point of departure in the older morality that the sophist and philosopher share, offering insights which anticipate and inform the consideration of the origin and nature of human association in the *Republic.* Prometheus has stolen the τέχναι from the gods and given them to men, but only as a plurality of individual ends abstracted from that

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endeavour, by means of which the individual is ultimately able to despotically impose his own will to power to the extent of completely negating the competing wills of his fellows.

[5] It is to Socrates, whose whole life has been addressed to the investigation of this very question (367d8-e1), that the assembled group turns naturally in an inquiry into what justice and injustice are (τί ...ἔστιν) and what power each exerts in itself (καθ' αὑτό) through its presence in the soul (358b4-6; 366e5-6).

[6] Underlying the movement which begins in *Republic* 2 are the 'second best method' of the *Phaedo*, the Forms, and the doctrine of Recollection described in the *Meno*. Having laid down the basic hypothesis of his theory of justice as a starting point, Socrates will proceed to examine how and why it is best that this be so (cf. Pl. *Phd.* 97b8-100a8). From the most external image, what is most knowable to us, he will move dialectically to bring knowing and being into ever closer relation in a move up the Line towards a unity in the Good as ἀρχή.

overarching good which draws them into relation and is their unifying principle.[7] The various individual τέχναι that humans possess, while they enable men to form communities for mutual co-operation and defence against wild nature, are not themselves sufficient to sustain these communities in their being. Hence, Zeus sent Hermes to bring to men δίκη and αἰδώς so that there might be order (κόσμος) and unifying bonds of friendship (δεσμοὶ φιλίας συναγωγοί) in cities (*Pr.* 322a8-c3). The uncompromising conclusion Protagoras draws is that, without this political virtue, the human community is doomed to an ongoing cycle of unification and division. Continually torn apart by strife only to come together again in a friendship born of necessity, human community cannot persist and without community the race cannot thrive.[8] Contained within the sophist's account, working its way out from beneath the surface of what Protagoras himself terms a 'pleasing μῦθος', is a λόγος of virtue, a rational ordering of distinctions which points beyond the relative measure the sophist claims for his own τέχνη to an underlying and sustaining objective order. What is needed to unify and stabilize the polis in 'unifying bonds of φιλία' is the establishment of a prior principle in which all men share. It is not man who connects the virtues, as their measure, to form the just political κοινωνία, Plato will argue, but virtue which out of its own nature admits these distinctions. This is the truth that, unrecognized by Protagoras, Plato sees to lie implicit in the older order of Zeus, and in accord with which he will develop the argument in the *Republic*.

7.1.1 Human community arises in necessity but is differentiated by reason (369b-372d)

The basis of human community, the principle upon which Socrates will build his argument and his new polis, resides in the determination that man as individual is lacking in self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια, 369b6). Thus it is argued that man first comes together in association with his fellows propelled by an underlying natural necessity for survival. For Aristotle, the beginning to this movement lies in the formation of the individual

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[7] Bereft of virtue as a ruling principle, the τέχναι are seen in the *Protagoras*, as in the *Republic*, to be indeterminate powers governing contrariety, instruments of good or ill. Cf. *R.* 333e3-334a5; 360e6-361b5. On the myth of *Protagoras* see also Roochnik (1996:218-21) who interprets it from Protagoras' perspective.

[8] Socrates has made essentially the same point against Thrasymachus (352b-d), as noted earlier. Cut off from their divine source, the δίκη and αἰδώς that were the gift of Zeus, the citizens of the radical democracy of the late 5th century have been overwhelmed by the enlightenment, and human society torn apart by στάσις has returned to nature.

household as that association of humans which first brings nature under the rule of reason. The Platonic Socrates too will begin from a relation of rational freedom to natural necessity which allows man to bridge their divide.[9] However, by contrast with Aristotle, and for reasons that will be integral to his own account, Socrates places at the roots of society, not the household, but rather a consideration of each human individual as the bearer of a specific rational capacity, a 'portion of the divine' that determines his particular contribution to the formation of human community. The first association thus emerges initially, for Socrates, with the formation of an essential minimal grouping of four or five skilled individuals who together are able to satisfy the basic human needs of food, shelter, and clothing.[10] It is noteworthy that for Plato it is their material need (χρεία) that draws men together and not the social bond of φιλία which Aristotle will see as primary to human association. Crucial to the integrity of this argument is the fact that every individual brings to the human association only his own particular aptitude, an activity for which he is by nature best suited and to which, it is argued, he must single-mindedly devote himself (370a7-c5).[11] Through this means, Plato establishes a primary essential connection bridging the divide between the sensible and intelligible. The rational is brought into relation with natural necessity, knowing with being, in a fixed and determinate pattern; corresponding to a defined set of naturally arising needs are a corresponding set of inborn specific technical aptitudes. It is the distribution of these aptitudes that shapes the structure of the rational community which at this lowest level

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[9] The polis will be found to arise naturally for Plato, as for Aristotle. However, Plato will argue that there is a divinely predetermined differential distribution of rational capacity which shapes and limits the nature of each individual.

[10] Each of the participants in this ἀναγκαιοτάτη πόλις, farmer, builder, weaver, shoemaker, uses his particular skill to provide for the good of the whole and in return has his own needs satisfied (369c9-370a4).

[11] The term 'principle of specialization' is coined by Annas (1981:73) and will be used here. It is widely observed that, in response to Glaucon's account of a purely conventional basis for human society, Socrates stresses that it is an innate natural necessity which first brings about human association (369b5-7; 370a7-c5). Friedländer (vol. 3 1969:80) notes that "'nature' and the verbal expressions referring to original growth (κατὰ φύσιν, φύεσθαι) are repeated constantly, referring to need (χρεία, δεῖσθαι, προσδεῖσθαι, ἐνδεής) and necessity (δεῖ)." See also House (2002:3.9). What from the outset distinguishes the human community from the purely natural instinctual associations of the beasts, however, is man's possession of a τέχνη, a rational capacity which establishes his affinity with the divine and allows him to exert a power over circumstance. See further Nussbaum (1986:95), White (1979:85), Pappas (1995:61-2). For a contrary view, which argues that Plato views the polis as "a kind of human contrivance-the practical solution for a problem caused by certain features of our human nature," see Lee (1989:122-6).

takes form through the association of particular determinations of νοῦς as ποιητικός.[12]

Through the activity of the individual δημιουργοί, an activity of rational soul, the externality and particularity of the finite world is in this way first seen to be ordered and stabilized in a composite whole which is a simulated unity in multiplicity. All of the various τέχναι can be seen to be bound to one another in a necessary and determinate interrelationship as parts of a whole in which each individually, in conformation with the principle of specialization, is 'a having and doing of one's own' (αὐτὸν δι' αὑτὸν τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν, 370a4).[13] Reaching down into the natural world in a rational causal relationship, the τέχναι reveal themselves as interdependent, interlocking portions of knowledge, each completely discrete yet together capable of bringing a natural order and limit to humanity, arranging things as it is inherently best for them to be.[14] However, what holds together the polis of the χειροτέχναι as a 'whole' at this stage is not yet recognizable as a prior unifying principle in accord with which they must be rationally understood to have been ordered as best but rather, as Protagoras might argue, the dictates of an external natural necessity arising from basic human needs passively determined, *a posteriori*.[15]

In what Glaucon will dismiss as a 'city of pigs' for its lack of anything but the barest necessities (372d4), but Socrates will liken to a healthy individual, a 'true polis' (ἀληθινὴ πόλις, 372e6), there has come into view a first image of what might be conceived as a natural 'corporate justice', exhibited in the ordered relationship of naturally determined

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[12] Once the principle of specialization has been established, the requirement to expand the initial small group of primary producers is readily perceived and accepted. In this way, the many different specialized craftsmen arise to fill each available niche and the community expands to include merchants and traders of all sorts until achieves its natural completion (370c7-371e10).

[13] Janaway (1995:84) notes "three complementary thoughts" behind the principle of specialization: Firstly, that citizens do not live their lives "in parallel" since mutual interdependence more readily satisfies basic needs (369e2-370a6); secondly, each individual is born with a specific aptitude for a particular task (470a7-b2); and thirdly, a τέχνη is by its very nature exercised best by someone who has specialized in its mastery alone (370b4-6). See also Friedländer (vol. 3 1969:81), Annas (1981:75). By contrast, Cross & Woozley (1964:80) see proposed here only a form of 'social contract'.

[14] The τέχναι, as bodies of knowledge, are here seen as the individual 'Forms' that each δημιουργός must follow: much as the souls in the *Phaedrus* follow a particular god, seeking in becoming most like their god to gaze upon the plain of truth (Pl. *Phdr.* 248a1-c2).

[15] It is widely agreed by scholars that it is the position of Protagoras himself that Plato can be considered to be "substantially reproducing" in the myth of *Protagoras* (Guthrie v. 3 1969:64). Guthrie makes the point that, for Protagoras, Zeus' gifts stand in place of "the work of time, bitter experience, and necessity."

parts to form a 'whole' whose limits are externally determined by essential needs.[16] In this simple πρώτη πόλις order there is an immediate identity of particular and universal in the satisfaction of natural necessity. The persistent thought remains, nevertheless, that difficulties must be encountered if justice is to be defined simply in terms of what are in truth only external indications of its presence, relations between individuals, which can be readily be simulated and subject to manipulation by the clever sophist. This is indeed is what has emerged as inherently deficient in the traditional aristocratic moral code espousing the 'life of honour', a deficiency Euripides and Socrates well expose. What Plato and following him Aristotle seek to show is that virtue, as an activity of soul, has its completion in the perfection of the agent himself, so that unlike honour, virtue is not something externally bestowed and hence vested in appearance. Later, however, Socrates, his ideal city founded, will look back upon this first polis and recognize that justice as its ordering principle has in fact been implicitly present from the start in the premise that everyone must pursue that single τέχνη for which nature has fitted him best (433a1-e1).

7.1.2 Assertion of human freedom: man desires both to live & to live well (372e-376c)

The first association, the ἀναγκαιοτάτη πόλις, displays appetite bounded and contained by an internal limit realized in the satisfaction of essential survival needs. However, this simple healthy community is an unmediated organic unity without a λόγος of true virtue. As such its equilibrium is ever vulnerable to disruption as a result of changes in the balance of forces acting upon it whether from within or without.[17] Once man attains to a

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[16] Harmony, order, and limit characterize this first polis, which can be envisaged as a simple 'geometrical' community established on Pythagorean principles by a combination of basic elements of quantity and quality. In the dialogue *Gorgias*, Socrates stresses the significance of κόσμος, τάξις and geometrical proportion (Pl. *Grg.* 507e6-508a7). The whole universe, Socrates argues, is called κόσμος because everything in it, heavens, earth, gods, and men is bound together in a common fellowship by both friendship and order and moderation and justice (*Grg.* 506d5-8). Every δημιουργός in the performance of his τέχνη disposes each element in a fixed order, fitting and harmonizing the parts until the whole is formed into something ordered and regulated (*Grg.* 503e5-504a1).

[17] Friedländer (vol. 3 1969:83) makes the point well. "The healthy community contains the prototype of the principle of justice, but it is without *logos* and, hence, without virtue (*arete*) in the sense of perfect being. So it is only 'natural' that the primitive impulse of physical life, 'desire' –which, ultimately, is the source of injustice-gradually prevails in this community that is insecure in its foundations. This is the same process which, viewed from the level of the true state, will lead to the defective types of government." See also Adam (v. 1 1963:100). The pattern of progressive degeneration of the polis dominated by its lowest part, τὸ χρηματιστικόν, from the oligarchical to the democratic to the tyrannical is described by Plato in *Republic* Books 8-9.

self-conscious power over the satisfaction of his bodily needs and the limit they impose naturally is superseded, then the τέχναι cease to be simply the necessary means to a common survival. Needs expand and diversify to become wants, and the luxurious (τρυφῶσα, 372e3) and inflamed (φλεγμαίνουσα, 372e8) polis looms into view. Conscious of his own capabilities, spurred on by θυμός, man relishes his freedom within nature and flings aside the chains of necessity that would perforce confine him. Fuelled by imagination and the capacity he has for foresight, he sees that his human desires are potentially limitless and his object thus becomes the active pursuit of what is most pleasant for himself and the concomitant avoidance of all that is painful.[18] The τέχναι, no longer the effective ordering principles of the κοινωνία, become instead the instruments of personal gain, exposing the appetitive life of the polis as fundamentally an ἄπειρον πλῆθος, devoid of inherent limit. The comfortable assurance of the unexamined world at the bottom of the Cave must be stirred, it is true, but surely not, as it now appears, shaken to complete self-destruction by desire run rampant. Desires have to be admitted to the polis, as being characteristically human. However, unless their inherently indeterminate dyadic nature can be brought under a limit that is truly effective, as that of the ἀναγκαιοτάτη πόλις is not, the uncompromising conclusion must be that there can be no possibility of establishing the existence of a unified stable and just political κοινωνία. The question becomes how, as the human community takes form naturally, there can be a progression from what is now effectively in the 'inflamed' and 'luxurious' polis no more than a mere 'heap' of independently exercised τέχναι to an understanding of an essential polis unity in which the 'parts' are contained by a unifying principle in a 'whole' which is prior to their difference.

Necessity and human freedom stand thus far juxtaposed as the limits between which human society is suspended and from within the bounds of which the new polis will be called forth. The natural human desire of the individual to see his good realized in the satisfaction of his own particular ends cannot be denied. Yet, that there is a need to establish a common motivating bond rooted in feeling which will draw the citizens together as a whole in support of a collective good, remains for Plato, as for Aeschylus

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[18] Pleasure will emerge in Plato, *Republic* (583a-587e) and most completely in *Philebus*, as an indefinite dyadic 'material' principle. Cf. Arist. *de An.* 414b5 where it is argued that the whole spectrum of sensory desires can be contained within a primary contrariety of pleasure and pain.

and his fellow poets, an inescapable demand if a stable human society is to be possible. It is this indeed that drives Socrates to propose the radical social reforms he later institutes for his polis ideal. Only when, as nearly as possible, all the citizens are bound together in a κοινωνία of pleasure and pain (ἡδονῆς τε καὶ λύπης κοινωνία συνδεῖ, 462b4), Socrates will insist, can the polis come together as one, avoiding the evils of στάσις. The source of this unifying bond of feeling must somehow be discerned even as the polis is in danger of being consumed by the insatiable greed of its own inhabitants. In the final analysis what emerges is that what all these disparate individuals have in common as they independently pursue their own desires is a vested interest in the integrity of the polis itself as prior to, and necessary for, the freedom to exert their powers.

As the 'inflamed' polis gives itself over to the gratification of its desires and waxes ever more prosperous, it will inevitably, Plato recognizes, come into conflict with other communities whose interests it threatens, so that it is the very survival of the polis that is again brought into question.[19] Hence, appetitive desire is found in its turn to be limited by threats to its very persistence, and a new external necessity now imposes itself. It is at this point that a change from a civic ethos of appetite to one of power can be anticipated to naturally transpire, as the δῆμος in their hour of need subject themselves to the authority of a champion, the 'βιαιότατος τῶν πολιτῶν' who inevitably will rise from among them and ultimately can be anticipated to seize absolute power for himself, as tyrant.[20] This is a juncture absolutely crucial to the argument that Socrates is developing, where the choice, as Plato sees, is between losing the polis altogether to the sophist or somehow saving it for philosophy. Hence, in the context of the development of the polis ideal, Socrates must now introduce his own polis champions, a warrior class, the φύλακες, who will be the 'saviours' of the 'inflamed' city.[21] It is through the φύλακες, as guardians, that the idea of 'governance' is first introduced into the developing polis,

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[19] Thus we have the situation of pleonexic communities competing with one another in the way Glaucon, in his earlier account of the nature and origin of human community, envisaged powerful individuals would.

[20] On the inevitable transformation of the protector of the people to tyrannical despot, cf. *R.* 565d1-2.

[21] The art of warfare is argued to be a τέχνη requiring its own special expertise. In line, therefore, with the already well-established precept that one man cannot successfully perform more than one τέχνη, those who possess the art of protecting the polis will be a separate class of citizens dedicated to this task alone (374b1-d6).

arising naturally out of the demonstrated need of the citizenry, who can be anticipated to unite as one in a common feeling of support for the guardians of their economic interests in which are resident the survival and flourishing of the polis. This places the guardians in a *de facto* position of power over the members of what can now be referred to as the commercial, or money-making class in the polis (τὸ χρηματιστικὸν γένος). It is therefore no small matter to determine what nature those who are specially suited to undertake the role of guardian must possess (374e4-11).

The well-born (εὐγενής) youth, in whom there resides the capacity to guard the polis, can be likened in nature, says Socrates, to a finely bred (γενναῖος) young dog (375a2-3).[22] Like the courageous animals he resembles, the guardian must be θυμοειδής, his invincible, indomitable spirit (θυμός) making his whole soul fearless and unconquerable (375a12-b2). Once again Socrates makes a beginning from within the natural; for, like ἐπιθυμία, θυμός is a basic irrational impulse man shares with other animal species. Thus, he notes that a natural disposition towards what to outward appearance is courageous behaviour is evinced in the θυμός displayed both by men and certain of the beasts, a common propensity that in the dialogue *Laches* led the old general, Laches, to assert that we all admit certain animals, such as a lion or a leopard, to be courageous.[23] There can be no going back for Socrates now, however, to a simple equation of a virtue such as courage with knowledge; the side of the soul as feeling cannot be excluded from a definition of virtue; for ἀνδρεία is now seen to be naturally rooted in the soul which is θυμοειδής.[24] Nevertheless, it remains the case that a natural high-spirited courage, which is devoid of rational understanding and limit, based not on λόγος but on πάθος is, as Nicias pointed out to Laches, inherently indistinguishable from rashness, boldness and foolish fearlessness. As such it cannot be identified with courage as a moral virtue (*La.*197a6-c1).

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[22] As such he will be sharp in his perception and swift in pursuit of what he has seen, as well as strong (ἰσχυρός) and brave (ἀνδρεῖος) in a fight (375a6-9). The simile is reminiscent of Homer, where, Redfield notes (1975:193), the dog occupies in the similes the ἀγροῦ ἐπ᾽ ἐσχατιήν, "the space between the wild and the tame. There he is man's ally in defense of his cattle and in his war with the dangerous beasts." The similarities to the role the guardian must play as the 'ally' of the polis are evident.

[23] Pl. *La.* 197a1-5.

[24] Socrates has previously defined courage as knowledge of what is and is not to be feared (Pl. *Prt.* 360d4-5). Nicias in the *Laches* offers a similar definition of courage in terms of knowledge (Pl. *La.* 194e11-195a1).

The naturally noble nature that Socrates ascribes to the guardians of the integrity of his new polis can readily be appreciated to possess all those admirable qualities which distinguished the traditional Homeric hero from his fellow men and won for him an ἄφθιτον κλέος. However, always an accompanying element in the make-up of the warrior hero is a disposition to ὕβρις and to a fierce animal savagery which places him at the farthest reaches of civilized society, a conception most magnificently embodied in the indomitable heroic spirit, the μεγαλήτωρ θυμός, of Achilles.[25] The greatest Homeric warrior of all, Achilles 'knows fierceness (ἄγρια) like a lion, who yielding to his great strength and headstrong spirit (ἀγήνωρ θυμός) goes among the flocks of men to devour them'.[26] Dominated by βία and θυμός, the heroic nature of the warrior guardians, like their Homeric counterparts, commands a space on the border of the civilized human community and wild nature. Hence, while the guardians define a limit to the polis community by containing the ever expanding network of desires, the ἄπειρον πλῆθος of the δημιουργοί, and provide a unifying focus for civic feeling in the protection they offer from external attacks, the ferocious high spirited ἀνδρεία they are to exhibit is itself as yet without a limiting principle of its own. The inherent instability of heroic ἀνδρεία, well attested in 5th century tragic drama by the destructive madness of Sophocles' Ajax and the Euripidean Heracles, clearly indicates that, although the fierce courage the guardians must display can be considered a necessary condition for polis survival, it is not of itself sufficient to sustain the community in its being. The recounting in myth of the award of the armour of the dead Achilles not to Ajax, the hero of βία, but to Odysseus, the hero of νοῦς, is emblematic of a transition that must take place also in Socrates' developing polis if a traditional tribal community upheld by the strength and courage of the hero is to give way to the world of polis order and justice in which θυμός has allied itself unreservedly to the hegemony of reason and law.[27]

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[25] The significance in the *Iliad* of the ἀγροῦ ἐπ' ἐσχατιήν (cf. Hom. *Od.* 4.517; 5.489) is argued by Redfield (1975:189-96). "This land beyond the limit of the sown is a no-man's-land between nature and culture; men share it with the wild beasts who live there: lions, wolves, jackals, wild boar, and deer...Yet this environment dominates the similes. This is because the *agrou ep' eschatiên* is an image of the battlefield" (190).

[26] Apollo, speaking to his fellow immortals, describes Achilles in this way in the *Iliad* (24.42-3). Earlier, Ajax has also argued similarly (αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς | ἄγριον ἐν στήθεσσι θέτο μεγαλήτορα θύμον, *Il.* 9.628-9).

[27] In πολύμητις Odysseus are to be discerned qualities that allow him to transcend the bounds of the traditional heroic role and move into this new realm. In the epic journey he undergoes is to be found a

The reasoning and feeling sides of the soul must both be actively present in the life of the new community, but not tragically opposed to one another as incommensurable solitudes: θυμός must be brought into a properly ordered relation with νοῦς so that both in the soul and in the city justice and friendship prevail. Thus it becomes a major concern for Socrates and a particular focus of his investigation to consider how the guardians, who must be heroic, fierce (ἄγριος) and implacable (χαλεπός) in their dealings with the enemies of the polis, can, while possessing such a nature, be gentle (πρᾷος) in dealings with their fellows, and with the rest of the citizenry (375b9-c2). Although war may be necessary to protect the integrity of the community from those who assail it from without, the aggressive qualities in which the guardians are to excel are not those that can successfully integrate them in a peaceful relationship with their fellow citizens.[28] Indeed, Socrates points out, quite the opposite is the case; for unless they combine a gentleness to their own people with their fierceness to the enemy, a πρᾷον καὶ μεγαλόθυμον ἦθος, the guardians will be the first to turn their strengths against their polis and destroy it (375c2-7).[29] What Aeschylus has portrayed in μῦθος for his 'Dread Goddesses' in *Eumenides*, Socrates must seek to give an account of in λόγος in his new polis order.

The problem has devolved itself into the question of whether and how contraries such as gentleness and fierceness can be said to coexist within a single nature. Like the 'Dread Goddesses' of Aeschylus, sustained by their relationship to the reason incorporated in the collective polis good, the guardians must maintain their potential to be 'Erinyeic' or 'Eumenidean' as the occasion demands. To understand how Socrates is to accomplish this, however, one must look deeper now into the recesses of the soul of Orestes himself

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parallel to the arduous νόστος of the soul that the guardians must undertake in the search for justice. The ἠθοποιία of Odysseus, his decade-long education in political virtue, finds him on return to Ithaca a very different individual from the one who so eagerly sought the Cyclopean adventure. At the beginning of his epic νόστος, Odysseus is confident, even hubristic, in seeking out challenges. Under the divine guidance of Athena, however, Odysseus learns to harness his heroic βία to μῆτις, so that from Odysseus the hubristic city sacker there emerges the wise and enduring polis hero, tempered in both θυμός and νόος, who earns from Socrates a rare commendation in the *Republic* (390d1-5) for his moral strength in word and deed.

[28] Cf. Plato's Protagoras on the formation of the political κοινωνία (*Prt.* 322b3-8). The art of war is necessary for the survival of man but only achieves this end as a part of an architectonic political art (πολιτικὴ τέχνη).

[29] This is a seemingly impossible prerequisite, since a gentle nature surely is the polar opposite of one that is θυμοειδής (375c6-13). The harmonizing of the extremes of character represented by τὸ πρᾷον and τὸ θυμοειδές will be a primary aim of education both in the *Republic* (*R.* 410c-412a; 503c) and the *Statesman* (*Plt.* 306b-311c). See Adam (vol.1 1963:107).

where the division was earlier seen ultimately to be focussed. The dyadic potency the guardians are to exhibit has to be seen, not only as it is imaged in their response as reactive agents of polis justice, but as it is in itself, active in the individual human soul in the natural impulses displayed from birth towards the polar contrarieties of τὸ ἄγριον and τὸ πρᾷον. Once more it is to the natural and to 'man's best friend', his ally ἀγροῦ ἐπ' ἐσχατιήν, that Socrates himself turns in search of an answer. The existence of a natural discriminating capacity which exerts a power over such contraries can be recognized in the well-bred dog to whom the guardian was previously likened. As a trained guard dog, he welcomes in a friendly manner those with whom he is acquainted (συνήθης) but is hostile to what is unknown (375d3-e7).[30] The proper development of this inherent natural affinity with what is known, found to be present in both animals and man, will be essential if the future guardian of the polis, in addition to being θυμοειδής is to be at the same time φιλόσοφος τὴν φύσιν: of a wisdom-loving nature (375e8-10).[31]

That these inherent qualities, which can be conceived as an inborn 'natural' disposition to virtue, cannot be left to develop on their own but must be carefully husbanded is abundantly clear. This is not least of the lessons that the history and literature of the 5th century bequeathed to 4th century philosophy in its attempts to respond to the breakdown of a customary morality. Indeed, discerning how a man of such propensity is to be appropriately nurtured and educated is critical to the quest for an understanding of how justice and injustice come to develop in the polis (376c7-d2). A failure to effectively address the challenge that human θυμός presents to the just political order will doom Socrates' incipient polis to an inevitable deterioration into anarchy and tyranny through the infighting of the 'βιαιότατοι τῶν πολιτῶν' just as surely as history has witnessed to be the case for the Aeschylean ideal of *Eumenides*. As Socrates will later point out, it would seem with Alcibiades held clearly in mind, it is not from the actions of those of a weak and insignificant nature, the φαῦλοι, that the greatest wickedness springs, but from the most nobly endowed (εὐφυεστάτη) soul whose nature has been irretrievably corrupted by

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[30] The general conception is that like knows and has an affinity for what it is like (cf. Pl. *Phaedo* 79d-80b). See further Nettleship (1901:74-5).

[31] The type of man who will best protect the integrity of the polis, the καλὸς κἀγαθὸς ...φύλαξ πόλεως, is one who can combine physical prowess, quickness and strength, with a soul that is at once φιλόσοφος and θυμοειδής, both attuned to wisdom and high-spirited (376c4-5).

a bad upbringing (491e1-6).[32]

7.2 Establishing justice in the polis requires habituation in virtue (376c-412b)

The question of how virtue (ἀρετή) comes to be present in men: whether it can be taught, or is acquired through practice, or whether neither of these is the case but virtue is possessed by nature, or in some other way, was raised by Plato in *Meno* (70a1-4) and is re-engaged in earnest now in the consideration of the nature of the guardians. As the return to the principle unfolds in the *Republic*, virtue will be found to be present in the soul in all of the ways that Socrates has already identified in *Meno*. There, however, this issue was only partially and negatively addressed and the dialogue closed inconclusively with Socrates suggesting that virtue appears to be present in whoever possesses it, neither by nature nor by being taught, but through a θεῖα μοῖρα, a divine dispensation (*Men.* 100b2-4). At its most external this is evidenced in φύσις, a natural disposition to virtuous activity which is the necessary beginning point from which the soul can move through Recollection to a self-conscious actualization of the Form in its relation to the divine principle, the Good itself. The stages in this movement, the forming in virtue of an inborn natural propensity, will be gradually disclosed in the education of the young guardians. Thus, the beginning will be with a habituation in virtue through the presentation of images of virtue to the young which, as they grow to manhood, will become rationally grounded as right opinion through steadfast adherence to the rule of law. Finally, faced with the inescapably contradictory nature of the world of becoming, the inevitable exceptions that occur to every rule, the souls of those most able will come to turn themselves around from darkness to light, to contemplate not the inadequate images of virtue which sensible experience proffers, but the reality of the Forms and the Good itself. The whole purpose of education, Socrates will conclude, as indeed he has intimated in the *Meno*, is not to put into the soul that knowledge it already contains but to turn it around to look to where it should to find it within itself, divinely inspired (518b6-d7).

If they are to perform their task of preserving and protecting the polis and thus

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[32] This is the reason for the importance attached to the guardian classes in Socrates account and the comparative lack of attention devoted to the more numerous economic class

establishing a basis for a just and lasting political κοινωνία, it is imperative, Socrates recognizes, that its potential guardians be nurtured and educated from earliest childhood in an environment properly conducive to unifying and harmonizing in virtue the extremes of τὸ φιλόσοφον and τὸ θυμοειδές which demarcate their nature.[33] Hence the natural disposition (φύσις) of the young child will be carefully reinforced and stabilized so that he is habituated to act in accord with the rational good of the polis as a whole, rather than as his own interests and feelings dictate.[34] Euripides' Phaedra speaks tellingly to the issue at hand, reflecting as she says she has done on many occasions on the causes of moral weakness in humans, on why even when we clearly apprehend the good we cannot bring it to fruition by acting on our convictions (E. *Hipp.* 380-381).[35]

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance that Plato, and later Aristotle, accord to the establishment of a prior stable ethical disposition in the young. The formation of a ἕξις in the soul is seen to be the inescapably necessary foundation to the possibility of the just and stable political κοινωνία. In recognizing this they draw on the long-established and accepted understanding of Greek education as primarily a formation in good citizenship, one 'in which all citizens must necessarily participate, if the polis is to exist at all' (Pl. *Prt.* 324d8-e1).[36] Socrates indeed will find no quarrel with the overall aims of this traditional education in μουσική and γυμναστική as productive of the good citizen, healthy in mind and body, inculcated with right habits and a moderate disposition (376e2-4). What he will question, however, in light of the breakdown of morality under the old order, is whether either the intellectual content of the traditional curriculum or the manner

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[33] Gadamer (1980:56) remarks that it is the attainment of "this unification which keeps the human being from becoming either a tame herd animal (a slave) or a rapacious wolf (a tyrant)." The relationship to be established is elaborated in detail at 410b10-412a7. Cf. also Pl. *Plt.* 306a8-310a5.

[34] Writing in the late 19th century, Nettleship (1901:77) could conclude uncontroversially, in accord with Plato (and Aristotle), that "nature (φύσις) and nurture (τροφή) are the two things that go to make up human character." In the 20th century, however, the respective impact of nature and nurture, genes and environment, as relative determinants of behaviour came to be a hotly contested and divisive issue spawning ideological extremes of the worst kind. More recently, the older picture of a balanced relationship between nature and nurture has re-emerged. Thus de Waal (1999:97), reviewing the debate, concludes that "we will be gaining a much more profound understanding of human behavior by silently carrying the old nature/nurture debate to its grave" (99).

[35] τὰ χρήστ᾽ ἐπιστάμεσθα καὶ γιγνώσκομεν, | οὐκ ἐκπονοῦμεν.

[36] The λόγος that Protagoras offers to accompany his pleasing μῦθος on civic virtue provides a detailed and informative account of the traditional education of the young (*Prt.* 324d6-326e1). It is this understanding of education that Socrates takes as his beginning point in the *Republic*.

in which this content is conveyed is properly conducive to achieving its intended goal. In the institution of a reformed education in μουσική and γυμναστική, one which will be truly productive of its intended end for man, both as individual and as citizen, there lies the beginning of the upward path to the restoring of the polis to the ideal of a κοινοφιλὴς κοινωνία πολιτῶν πολιτείας which Aeschylus envisages.

7.2.1 The educational role of the poets must be critically reappraised (376e-398b)

As the acknowledged moral educators of the polis, the poets have been accorded, for good or ill, an enormous public responsibility over the souls of the citizenry. It is for this reason that Plato believes he must be so rigorous in calling them to task. The poets, Plato observes on looking about him, have demonstrably failed in their efforts, as is evidenced by the moral decay which threatens the polis even to the extent of its very existence. The source of this failure, Socrates argues in the *Republic*, resides both in the content of the poetic μῦθοι as the source of exemplars for the young, and also, tellingly, in the very nature of the poetic art of mimesis.[37] The sensory images in words and pictures which are presented to tender and impressionable young minds are of particular importance in shaping their souls in the beliefs they are expected to hold in maturity (377a12-c5).[38] Thus the underlying aim of the early education in μουσική, which focuses not on reason but on the developing imagination, should be to engender in the soul an 'instinctual' love of what is beautiful (403c6-7). The beautiful soul, Socrates maintains, can only be formed through consistent exposure to representations of virtuous character. For the young soul is unable to judge between what is allegorical (ὑπόνοια) and what is not, and beliefs acquired while young are not readily to be disturbed (378d7-e3).[39] It is for their inability to recognize what must be constitutive to the education of the young and their consequent failure to establish a determinate limiting structure within which to compose their μῦθοι, that the poets will be required to relinquish their authority as educators of the

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[37] The critique of the role of poetry in the education of the young (376e2-398b9) begins at the end of Book 2 and occupies the greater part of Book 3. In the first part (376e2-392c6), Socrates discusses the ethical content of poetry. This is followed (392c6-398b9) by a critique of the mimetic nature of poetry

[38] Concern for the harmful effect of traditional poetry on young impressionable souls is reiterated many times in Socrates' account in Books 2-3. Cf. 377a4, 378a3, 378d6-7, 388d2, 389d7, 395d1, 401c6, 402a2.

[39] Socrates maintains in *Apology* that the young are harmed by association with the wicked and made better by associating with the good (*Apol.* 25c5-9). The education proposed for the guardians, Gadamer (1980:58) argues, is intended "as a counterweight to the centrifugal pull of those forces of the sophistic enlightenment being exerted upon the state."

polis. Their mantle must be passed to the founders of the new city, to the philosophers who know the τύποι, the patterns to be employed in producing μῦθοι of the proper kind.[40] Janaway expresses it succinctly: "The heroes ought to function as true paradigms of human behaviour, and the gods as a universal supernatural expression of general truths about the world and the place of human beings within it."[41]

Pre-eminent among those stories told to the young and in need of reform are ones that concern the nature of the gods themselves, the traditional repository of principles and exemplars which form and guide human action. Myths must not convey through their content what is contrary to the true nature of the divine but must be a means of faithfully representing it as it really is.[42] It is a necessary condition of the well-ordered (εὐνομήσεσθαι) polis that the divine be recognized as truly (τῷ ὄντι) just and good (δίκαιά τε καὶ ἀγαθὰ), Socrates submits (380b1-c5).[43] Good and unchangeable by nature, the gods are incapable of deceiving us, as the poets represent them. The origin of such perceptions is to be sought not in the nature of the gods themselves but in man's distorted vision, in the presence in the human soul of ignorance concerning the true reality. It is this ignorance in the soul that is the 'true lie', a state that is hated by both gods and men. Only when children are exposed to stories which reinforce a correct understanding of the divine will they grow up, not only to honour the gods as they should, but also, Socrates stresses, engendering those bonds of φιλία which will bind them together with their fellow-citizens in κοινωνία. The 'purification' of μῦθος is the

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[40] As the objects of poetic imagination are brought forth in their turn by Socrates for criticism and refinement, it is evident that a structure is emerging for the passive formation of the imagination, one that will later be susceptible to rational articulation in terms of the Good as the unchanging first principle and the virtues as the determinate forms of the Good in human action. See Nettleship (1901:81-2) who makes this point well.

[41] Janaway (1995:90). See also Moravcsik (1986:40-1). It is not yet clear that poets are to be banned completely from the new city. Cf. 379a1-4, 381d1-e1, 383c1-3 where Socrates indicates how the poets are to conform to his strictures. Aristotle and Plato agree that poetry should express the universal. However, whereas for Aristotle this is subsumed to the tragic understanding of humans 'as they are', for Plato it must be as they ideally 'ought to be'.

[42] Hesiod and Homer, twin pillars of the traditional morality, are specifically condemned for their portrayal of strife and dissent in the divine pantheon (378b8-d3). Plato's concern, Lear (1992:214) argues, is that "poetic enslavement reaches inside the psyche and reorganizes it so that we remain unconscious of our slavery."

[43] As in himself good, the god must be the cause of good things only and so cannot be the cause of evil, its contrary (379b1-16). See Bloom (1968:352) and Friedländer (vol.3 1969:85-6) who comment on the significance of what is implied here in relation to the central doctrines of the *Republic*.

necessary prerequisite for provision of the proper ambience in which the characters of the young can be formed in accord with the great traditional values: showing piety to the gods, honouring parents and holding of no small account friendship with one another (386a2-4).[44]

The *sine qua non* of political κοινωνία, for Socrates, is the prior presence of justice as the prerequisite for ὁμόνοια and φιλία (351d5-6). He must yet show, however, how justice entails civic friendship in a manner sufficient to withstand the innate countervailing forces of instinct, how natural feeling is ordered to reason as the common good in his polis. The conclusion of the *Oresteia*, which saw the justice of Zeus made active not only in the minds but in the hearts of men through the embracing of a civic cult, is not lost on Plato. In Euripides' Bacchants, on-stage and off, we can see this κοινωνία of feeling in its most elemental form as a natural necessity in which φύσις and νόμος are immediately one. The beauty and joy, the blessedness that the Bacchants extol in the single-minded devotion of their nature god, Dionysus, must somehow be transformed into a likeminded devotion to the ordering principle of the polis as the unchanging rational good. Hence not only the ethical content but also the anticipated affective import of traditional poetry, the feelings of pleasure and pain it arouses, has to be considered of inestimable importance if the emotional side of the soul, and in particular the powerful heroic θυμός of the warrior guardians, is to be properly nurtured in harmony and fellowship so that ὁμόνοια and not στάσις will come to prevail. Later, when he goes on to discuss the timocratic polis, Socrates will argue that what most clearly characterizes a polis in which τὸ θυμοειδές rules is φιλονικία and φιλοτιμία, the love of victory and honour (548c5-7). That inborn desire that drives men naturally to strive to excess to outdo one another in the pursuit of glory for self and family must somehow be modulated, harnessed in the service of the good of the whole, as a greater good.[45] Hence, it is argued, the representation of any excessive emotion or appetitive

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[44] Plato distinguishes from the ignorance which is the 'true lie' what he speaks of as the 'verbal lie', the conveyance of what is recognized to be false, which must be admitted to have its therapeutic uses in the changing world of human affairs. Into this class can be placed also those useful fictions, such as the μῦθοι that mothers will tell to children, through which we represent as nearly as possible to the truth the stories of the past. However, none of these circumstances which pertain to the human world of becoming can be said to apply to the unchanging world of the divine, the world of being and truth, which is completely devoid of all ignorance, and thus all falsity (381c3-382e6). In the *Sophist*, Plato argues that ignorance occurs when the soul aiming at truth misses its mark as a result of a lack of lack of proportion within it (*Sph.* 228c1-d2).

[45] On θυμός understood in terms of "ideal self-image" see Cairns (1993:384) and the references there cited.

desire in a god or god-like man must be particularly eschewed as inappropriate to the engendering of the brave and temperate nature which is required in the future guardians (386a6-391e2).[46] Hearing of such behaviour in those who are held in high esteem by men, everyone would find in this an excuse for his own evil actions (391e3-5). Hence, *all* stories told to the young potential guardians must be carefully scrutinized to ensure that they are conducive solely to the promotion of the properly virtuous nature (392a13-c8).

Of even greater concern, however, than the representation of unseemly behaviour through narration alone, is an accompanying enactment in voice or form, such as is found in drama or rhapsodic recitals, which is seen to greatly exacerbate the impact of inappropriate content on the formation of character.[47] The manner in which stories are presented to the young by the poets, and in particular the powerful emotional impact of tragic mimesis, more than anything else, will force Socrates in the end to regretfully conclude that there can be no place for mimetic poetry in the polis ideal.[48] Tragic mimesis represents in the purest form the emotive mimetic element that must be eliminated from the true, Socratic, city in which ἁπλότης and ὁμόνοια are to reign

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See further Hobbs (2000:30-1). Redfield (1975) notes that in Homer θυμός is the seat of the affective life-of passions, wishes, hopes, and inclinations" (173). It is seen as "the consciousness which the organism has of itself in the world" (176) and "always involves intention or inclination and thus the active power of the organism to affect its environment" (177).

[46] The guardian must be brought to exhibit the proper mean between extremes of excess and defect in courage. Significantly a number of citations Plato includes to illustrate his points are taken from the *Iliad*, directly or indirectly concerning Achilles, the traditional Greek hero *par excellence*. Burnyeat (1999:260) suggests, reasonably, that Plato makes the *Iliad* his "main target ...in part because he is discussing the education of the warrior class." Achilles' displays of 'courage', unstabilized by moderation and lacking a proper relation to the end as a good, are irrational in Socrates' view and not the kind of ideal to be placed before the guardians of his city. See also Ferrari (1989:111).

[47] For good discussions of Plato's consideration of μουσική in *Republic* Book 3 see Janaway (1995:94-105) and Ferrari (1989:108-119). The question of whether the Platonic dialogues are themselves mimetic is often raised. Burnyeat (1999:269-70) points out the Platonic dialogues "would meet 393c's criterion for mimesis only when read aloud in a way that made the individual speakers sound differently. ...This implies that the plain text, unperformed would not be mimetic." Although Aristotle's inclusion of the Socratic dialogue in his classification of mimesis (*Po.* 1447b11) has lent support to the view that the dialogues are mimetic, it has to be stressed that (as was discussed in Chapter 2) Aristotle's conception of mimesis is very different, indeed quite contrary, to that of Plato.

[48] Socrates' major assault on dramatic poetry as mimesis will await the full unfolding of the psychological and metaphysical argument which is the basis of his own city. Views expressed on the art of poetry by Plato in his dialogues, including in particular those to be found in *Republic* Book 10, were considered earlier in Chapter 2.

supreme and unchallenged. It is central to Socrates' criticism of the poets as educators that their art is mimetic. Any dramatic mimesis of another person, whether in words or through music, is of considerable ethical consequence since, in representing another, one enters in a sense into the character of that person. "Thus poetry is to have its wings clipped not only for the ethical content it happens to have but - far more radical and unavoidable a challenge - for the ethical effect of the imitativeness which is its very nature."[49] The representation of morally reprehensible character, however, is not the full extent of Socrates' concern in the *Republic*. He has already established as a cornerstone of his account that, in accord with the 'principle of specialization', each individual should confine himself to the single occupation that he does best. Hence, even aside from the problem of moral character, Socrates argues that one cannot exhibit the concern required for one's proper occupation and also engage at the same time in mimesis of other types of pursuits, or indeed anything which is not concerned with achieving one's own end.[50] Anything that detracts from the single-minded devotion of the individual to the accomplishment of that specific τέχνη that he does best, which for the guardians of the *Republic* entails a strict attention to maintaining the freedom (ἐλευθερία) of the polis (395c1), is necessarily to be conceived as detrimental to the good of the polis as a whole.[51]

7.2.2 Education aims at establishing harmony & limit in the soul (401a-412b)

What has been effected unawares by the strictures on poetry essential to the proper formation of the soul of the young guardians, has been a purgation of the luxurious 'inflamed' polis of its excesses (399e5-6). The guardian class, formed in response to a

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[49] Ferrari (1989:110). Thus Socrates argues that by enjoying the mimesis of shameful acts the guardians may come to enjoy the reality (395c5-d3). The blanket censorship Socrates imposes nevertheless draws an accusation of "paternalism" from Annas (1981:85). In response this charge see the discussions of Janaway (1995:87-8), Ferrari (1989:114) and Lear (1992:184-215).

[50] The nature of the poetic art itself, apart from its consequences, militates against it being included in the new polis since, with the exception of that poetry which is a mimesis of the good man, its mimetic principle is not in fact single but multiform (397d6-e2).

[51] If the guardians are to be permitted to engage in any mimesis at all it must be restricted solely to the representation of the words and actions of a good man (396b11-c1). This is not to say that the Guardians will be completely unaware of all that is unseemly in life. It will be necessary for them to have knowledge in the abstract of reprehensible activity (396a4-6). The contrast is emphatically that between simplicity and diversity, ἁπλότης and ποικίλος; the former is to be established in the soul, the latter disbarred. See Janaway (1995:101).

necessity arising out of the expanding desires of the polis, hence requires for its own successful nurture in the role of protector an environment which restricts and contains the very excesses that gave rise to the τρυφῶσα πόλις in the first place. If the just polis is to be possible at all, the manifold diversity of the external world must first be brought under the limit of the well-ordered soul: human freedom, under the sway of the demands of θυμός, must be brought into an ordered relation with an unchanging objective rational necessity.[52] It is now possible to revisit, in light of what has been learned, the original aim to educate the soul of the young guardian to be the καλὸς κἀγαθὸς ...φύλαξ πόλεως (376c5), at once φιλόσοφος and θυμοειδής (376c4-5). Within the soul these two impulses are naturally present but only as undetermined potencies which must be developed in tandem with one another.[53] Pursued independently these powers lead to extremes that are incompatible with effective leadership of the political κοινωνία, and hence with the role that the guardians are to play in maintaining the integrity of the polis. Only when a proper harmony between the impulses to τὸ φιλόσοφον and τὸ θυμοειδές is achieved, will the soul of the guardian be both moderate (σώφρων) and brave (410e10), at once gentle towards the citizens he has under his care and fierce in warding off the enemies of the polis.[54]

What is to be especially avoided, it is consistently made clear, whether implicitly or explicitly, is ποικιλία, all that embellishment and diversity that is symptomatic of a lack of moderation. Simplicity, ἁπλότης, stands opposed to ποικιλία, as good to evil, the one to the many. This is the primary contrariety within which the movement of the *Republic* takes place. Diversity is inextricably bound, for Plato, to the irrational and to the pleasure

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[52] The search for justice, which motivates the ongoing discussion, can take place only through an understanding of soul as it comes to light in the context of the unfolding polis order. There is in the *Republic*, Nettleship (1901:131) observes, "a representation of the gradual development of the soul in society."

[53] Through the τέχναι of μουσική and γυμναστική, the contrary impulses of τὸ φιλόσοφον and τὸ θυμοειδές are brought into relation with one another to produce a harmony in the soul in its relation to body (411e4-412a2). Cf. Pl. *Phd.* 92a-94a; *Ti.* 88bc where Plato stresses the need for due proportion between body and soul.

[54] On the one hand, while it is the spirited element in the soul that provides that fierceness which rightly nurtured becomes courageous, those who devote themselves exclusively to the practice of γυμναστική overstrain this element, becoming hard and harsh (410d6-9). It is the development of the wisdom loving nature through μουσική that mediates this harshness producing gentleness and order. Again, however, if relaxed too far through concentrating on μουσική to the exclusion of γυμναστική, an unsatisfactory extreme will emerge as this φιλόσοφος nature will become softer than is good for it (410e1-3).

principle as the indefinite dyadic.[55] Indulgence in pleasure is incompatible with moderation (σωφροσύνη) and conducive to violence (ὕβρις) and licentiousness (ἀκολασία); there can be no commonality (κοινωνία), Socrates insists, between virtue and excessive pleasure (402e2-403b2). Only attention to a proper education from earliest youth can turn the soul away from the indeterminate many, from the external ποικιλία, directing and moderating desire so that the soul comes from the very beginning into relation with its end as form, harmony and limit: the inner unchanging beauty that is the true nature of soul as ἁπλότης.[56] It is thus, Socrates maintains, that the one who through μουσική comes to have a beautiful character in his soul and a body matching in form is the most splendid spectacle (θέαμα) to behold (θεᾶσθαι), and hence is most loveable (402d1-6). For to love rightly (ὀρθὸς ἔρως) is to love moderately and harmoniously one who is orderly and beautiful (403a7-8).[57] A powerful motive force innate within the human soul, ἔρως can be expressed in broad terms as the desire to overcome a felt lack of satisfaction through possessing the perceived object of desire. Not simply a hunger for unlimited pleasure, ἔρως knows limit in that mediation between πενία and πόρος which holds Socrates in his relation to the Good as the proper object of desire. Unless this, the true nature of ἔρως, is discerned however, Plato sees that the soul will dissipate itself in endlessly searching without form or limit and at the mercy of its desires, indiscriminately seeking gratification in sensory delights by endlessly scratching an itch. By contrast, beauty and harmony will characterize the soul that is nurtured in virtue and the discussion on μουσική ends as it should, Socrates concludes, in the love of the beautiful (τὰ τοῦ καλοῦ ἐρωτικά, 403c6-7).

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[55] Tragic poetry is thus condemned (605c6-606b8).

[56] Beauty and truth thus enter the soul and find there their home so that unity and stability come to be resident within. Then when the youth comes to comprehend for himself the reason that underlies his actions he will welcome it recognizing its affinity (οἰκειότης) with himself (402a3-a4). In order to recognize in the fluctuating representations of the sensible world, the good, as moderation, courage, and all the other virtues and also their contraries, the young guardian must first himself *be* good as a result of habituation in virtue (402b9-c8). Thus, Socrates says, we will not recognize the images of letters before we come to know the letters themselves as these are part of the same τέχνη (402b5-7).

[57] On the σώφρων ἔρως and the birth and nurturing of the soul in beauty see the speech of Diotima (Pl. *Symp.* 209b-212a). Friedländer (vol.3 1969:90) comments that this section of the *Republic* "culminates in a portrayal of love that is circumscribed by moral demands and legal rules but is ultimately determined by the fact that (as in the *Symposium*) 'beauty is the object of love'."

7.3 The organization of the guardian community (412b-427c)

In the gradual and ordered construction of the polis in thought, the qualitative diversity and indeterminacy, the difference which characterizes the commercial class as ποικίλον and an ἄπειρον πλῆθος, has been contained and brought under an external ordering limit by the common τέχνη of the warrior class. This overlaid 'unity', which takes the form of a quantitative aggregate of similar individuals on a plane of equality, sees each guardian as a 'one' on a par with every other 'one' in his class. As such, the unifying force of the polis is in reality itself a collection of sub-units, all of which have the potential to break away and form a new unity under their own organization. It is therefore itself still potentially the source of an ἄπειρον πλῆθος.[58] Thus, although an external form of unity has been achieved with the introduction of the guardian class to bring limit and moderation to the appetitive desires of the commercial class, the polis harmony is still inherently unstable, subject to the very real threat of disruption and στάσις. A requirement remains, Plato can see, to establish within the political community, as it has so far been formed, a single ruling principle which is internal and integral to it, a πολιτεία in accord with which the polis can be said truly to have an essential unity as a rationally ordered and just κοινωνία πολιτῶν. There arises naturally, therefore, in the unfolding argument, the question of who is to rule the new polis and who is to be ruled (οἵτινες ἄρξουσί τε καὶ ἄρξονται, 412b9). For if it is to survive the polis must have someone set in command over it.[59]

7.3.1 Differentiating ruler from ruled: establishing a unifying authority (412b-414b)

The ones best able to rule and watch over the good of the polis are identified to be those elders of the guardian class who have distinguished themselves among their fellows not only by their practical intelligence (φρόνιμος) and ability but also by the consistent

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[58] The logic at work in the structure of the economic and the guardian class at this point can perhaps be usefully compared with the argument at Pl. *Prm.* 142e-144a. There Plato argues that multiplicity can be generated both by (a) successive internal dichotomous divisions of a 'whole' to create a potentially infinite number of indeterminate dyads and by (b) successive replication of the 'whole' to produce externally an endless number of 'wholes'. To (a) may be compared the diversity and excess of the τρυφῶσα πόλις and to (b) the potential for 'replication' and στάσις that is there within the newly formed guardian class.

[59] Aristotle will make the point specifically: πᾶσα πολιτικὴ κοινωνία συνέστηκεν ἐξ ἀρχόντων καὶ ἀρχομένων (*Pol.* 1332b12-13). The education of the guardians to this point has been a preparation of the soul to obey authority. See Nettleship (1901:132). The nature of justice, what it is in itself, as the ultimate ground and determinant of the essential nature of the polis ideal has, however, yet to come into view.

regard they show for the good of the polis (412c2-13). One cares the most for what one really loves (μάλιστα φιλοῖ), Socrates argues, and when what is beneficial for that object of care is considered to coincide with what is beneficial for oneself, and both flourish alike, this love is at its greatest (412d2-7).[60] Reason and feeling must pursue in concert a common undivided end as the good of the whole, what Aeschylus in *Eumenides* has been seen to invoke as a κοινοφιλὴς διάνοια. A prime consideration, therefore, in selecting the leaders of the polis is to be the identification of those who steadfastly throughout their life see the collective good for the polis as inseparable from their own good as individual (412d9-e3).[61] With the identification of these the παντελεῖς φύλακες there emerges a class in whom is vested the task of ensuring the unity and integrity of the political κοινωνία as a whole in face of the qualitative and quantitative divisiveness which continues to threaten its stability. The simplicity and harmony which resonates in the individual souls of these ἄριστοι φυλάκων will be reflected 'writ large' in the ethical life of the polis; the two will be bound together as one in an identity of collective and individual good.

That the account of the selection and establishment of rulers and guardians, as he has so far described it, is only a very general one, painting in, as it were, the main features of the landscape, Socrates is very well aware (412b2-3). What is important at this stage, however, in formulating a response to the intellectual challenge of the sophist, is that the polis has been found to come into being out of nature itself and to take shape in accord with a rational account.[62] The new polis has been accorded a clear mandate to provide for its citizens a uniform, consistent ethical foundation for the πολιτεία in keeping with a long held ideal. However, if the polis is to be firmly established as a 'whole' which can fully contain its 'parts', the ideals it propounds must be taken up not only into the minds and hearts of its leaders but embraced and accepted too by those whom they rule. All the

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[60] Ultimately what is most loved must be the true reality of the Good. What is most beneficial to actualizing this object of care is the life lived within the bounds of the institutions of the true polis.

[61] Only individuals such as this, impervious to the siren calls of pleasure and pain which would distract them from their purpose, are most truly and completely to be called rulers (παντελεῖς φύλακες, 414b2). The other guardians, those who do not meet this standard, will be known as auxiliaries (ἐπίκουροι, 414b5), assistants to the rulers in their task.

[62] A logic which will later be fully articulated by Socrates in the detailed account of the education of the philosopher rulers.

citizens must somehow from the beginning have hold of the end which grounds and sanctions the political association. Bathed in the light of that divine Good towards which the Platonic Socrates sees the human community is ultimately moved as a coming into being in Beauty and Truth, they will identify with and desire as their own the common good of the polis. What is needed, Socrates determines, is a divine inspiration, a μῦθος that can be taken up into the hearts of all men, one which will represent as closely to the truth as possible the λόγος upon which the polis is founded. For if it is ever possible to make people believe in this mythical account of the origins of the polis, he reasons, then they will be more likely to care both for the polis and for one another (415d3-5).[63]

7.3.2 Ordering feeling to reason: establishing unifying bonds of friendship (414b-427d)

It is by means of a foundation myth, here termed a γενναῖον ψεῦδος (414b9-c1), that the citizens will be convinced to identify themselves in a common bond of feeling with the form in which the polis naturally differentiates itself in accord with divine reason.[64] In this way it is deemed that the citizenry, while lacking an articulated rational insight into the true nature of the polis, can be brought to identify in a powerful unmediated way with the new polis order and its good as their innate defining heritage.[65] Thus, the myth will represent the nurturing, education, and diversification of the original citizens as taking place within the earth, a common mother from which all are born. Hence, they will come to see themselves as united by a common bond of feeling engendered in the immediacy of the blood-tie that binds them together as brothers in support of the polis as their earth mother (414b8-e6). However, whereas all in the polis are brothers and as such are a

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[63] Knowing the end as a good is not seen by the Platonic Socrates to be sufficient as a motivation to do the good, one must first desire it as one's own good; the myth will arouse the feeling side of the soul and orient it towards a hidden rational truth. The therapeutic value of verbal fictions, including myth, has earlier been argued for by Socrates (382c10-d3). Nevertheless, he introduces his 'noble falsity' here only with great reticence. Verbal falsity is not to be used lightly. Indeed, it is not allowable for anyone except the rulers to employ this practice and even then only in certain specific circumstances for the good of the polis (389b7-9).

[64] Even perhaps the rulers themselves are considered at this initial stage to be induced by the founders to accept this 'noble falsity' (414b8-c2). Plato's employment of a so-called 'noble lie' has given rise to considerable scholarly controversy. The positions of the major contributors to this debate have been usefully summarized recently by Dombrowski (1997:565-578). On the dangers of simply equating the Greek ψεῦδος with the English word 'lie', see Cornford (1941:68).

[65] Socrates believes he has sufficiently shown how the polis develops out of nature. The order to be established is not therefore simply the result of the imposition of a external and arbitrary human convention hidden in myth.

unity, the god who formed them has at the same time so differentiated them from one another in their rational nature as to be capable of forming the just political community as a divinely ordered and self-sufficient whole of parts: infusing gold into the nature of who are capable of being rulers, silver into the ἐπίκουροι, and iron and bronze into the farmers and the other δημιουργοί (415a2-7). Yet the polis is not to be thought of as thus arising simply out of an original necessity. The difference seen to emerge in the natural is not wholly naturally determined, as is revealed in the exceptions that occur. Nor, furthermore, does its innate propensity itself unfold of necessity.[66] Ultimately, natural inheritance based on family and blood ties is subordinate to the order of the rational: to both the will of the god who as δημιουργός implants the mixture that is there in the soul of the individual as rational potential, and to the exercise of human freedom that is required in man's own development of these god-given inherent capabilities. Human freedom can be seen active not only in the formulating of the educational programme by which each individual must be carefully nurtured and developed to perform the role that is properly his but also in the selection that must take place to accord him that opportunity and in the response of the individual to that education.[67]

In the final analysis the unity of the polis as a composite 'whole of parts' is seen here by Plato to be pursuant upon an ideal in which each and every citizen who constitutes it is himself a unity through performing the one task that is naturally his own so that he remains one person and not many (423d4-5).[68] It is in this way, Socrates argues, that the whole polis will itself be a unity and not a plurality (μία ...μὴ πολλαί, 423d6). Hence,

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[66] Socrates is quick to make clear, that natural inheritance is not the sole predetermining factor in deciding to which class a child belongs (415a7-b3). Hence the primary and most important command the god imposes on the rulers is to make every effort to ensure that nothing is more carefully attended to than the mixture in the souls of the offspring (415b3-6). On this the very survival of the polis depends for there is an oracle which says that should the polis ever have an iron or bronze guardian it will come to ruin (415c5-6).

[67] Aristotle, although differing with Plato on the specifics, will be seen to agree that the polis has a telos to which it is naturally determined but which does not unfold of necessity, leaving room for human freedom and the political art.

[68] The internal structural balances that constitute the ordering of the polis must be rigorously maintained. In particular, it is necessary to ensure that every individual, regardless of the class into which he is born, is admitted to that class for which his true nature and capability has befitted him (423c6-d2; cf. 352d8-353d12). Barker (1918:182) rightly stresses that this argument is "the very hinge of the *Republic* and the fundamental basis of its theory of justice." The conception that man has his own distinctive work in the proper performance of which his happiness consists and this is to be found in the virtuous activity of the soul in accord with the life of reason will be a fundamental premise of Aristotle's *Ethics* (*EN* 1098a7-18).

the key to the successful founding and preserving of the new polis, Socrates is quite clear, lies in the full implementation of its educational programme to which the guardians must be uncompromisingly committed. The contrast, as Socrates presents it, between the healthy polis he is to establish and one made moribund by disease is a stark one. If men are educated well the polis will be healthy taking shape in accord with the end to which it is naturally ordered and there will be no need to posit further legislation to control the conduct of citizens as moral agents.[69] In fact, it is argued, good conduct cannot be simply legislated into existence; being good is a prerequisite for doing good, and this requires the prior establishment of a ἕξις in the soul, a habituation from childhood in good actions.[70]

Arising out of a natural necessity, and shaped by the rule of reason in accord with what is deemed to be best, the political κοινωνία has differentiated itself in the form of three mutually interdependent classes.[71] Shorn of its enlightenment excesses, its ethical foundations purified, its traditional authority restored, the new polis revives an ideal that can site itself readily within that older tradition of piety which Cephalus and Laches typify. There is a real sense in which the polis of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* with its foundation myth for an ideal Athens has been brought to birth once again from the midst of the excesses of a disordered cosmos, restored and substantiated now by the critical light of reason. The harmony and limit, the ὁμόνοια, that characterizes the Aeschylean polis ideal as a κοινοφιλὴς διάνοια has been accorded a λόγος which is seen to arise naturally out of the internal distinctions of soul as it is ordered to an objective ethical order. As the

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[69] The deportment of citizens both in their private and public interactions with one another, it is envisaged, will reflect their upbringing and the occasion for lawsuits will simply not arise (425b7-e2). Plato distinguishes here between legislation that effects the ethical order, primarily the educational programme, and such regulations as may be needed to facilitate, for example, market transactions, which good men will easily be able to determine for themselves (425d7-e2). Aristotle will be much less sanguine, attacking this claim specifically in the *Ethics*. If there are no fixed terms for a transaction, he argues, inevitably given human nature disputes will arise (*EN* 1162b21-36). This point will be central to Aristotle's criticism of Plato's conception in the *Republic* of justice as self- as opposed to other- regarding.

[70] Just as sick people who through a lack of self-control (ἀκολασία, 425e9) will not give up their deleterious way of living but prefer to constantly medicate themselves, the citizens of the diseased polis will achieve nothing from their endless attempts to legislate a cure, other than their ills become more diverse (ποικιλώτερα), Socrates asserts (425e8-426a3). Hence, they continue passing and amending laws, always thinking that they will find some limit (πέρας), a way to end through their legislation unjust practices, completely oblivious to the realization that what in fact they are doing is merely akin to cutting off the heads of a hydra (426d1-e8).

[71] The ἐπιθυμητικόν, θυμοειδές and λογιστικόν elements in the individual soul, from which there emerge naturally the divisions of the polis, the χρηματιστικόν, ἐπικουρητικόν and βουλευτικόν.

polis has come into being for thought, it has become clear that the unified and stable city, freed from στάσις, requires the proper attuning within each individual soul of an innate dyadic potency evinced as contrary impulses towards τὸ φιλόσοφον and τὸ θυμοειδές, impulses towards wisdom and power which must come together as friends. At the same time, the proper ordering of soul itself requires the nurturing ambience and ethical habituation that only the properly ordered polis can provide. Soul is in this way seen to fulfil its nature within the objective order of the institutions of the polis.

The polis might indeed be said now to be founded, Socrates declares (427c6-d1). Yet, even as it forms a basis upon which the search for justice can move forward, there is a tentativeness to this conclusion. For a brief moment, however, Socrates is content to allow the polis to rest here, praxis grounded in πίστις, as the unexamined externality of customary νόμοι, inculcated by the 'best of the citizens', the ruler guardian class, through the reformed educational programme. The demands of the intellectual enlightenment, however, are not thus to be so easily gainsaid. If the new polis is to survive, the requirement for a rational articulation of a universal unifying principle, a due measure which can fully comprehend the parts in their relation to, and difference from, each other must eventually be addressed. Also to be recalled, if the restored polis is to persist and not fall once again into division, is the demonstrated strength of those universal innate natural ties of feeling that bind blood kin. Sophocles' *Antigone* has exposed only too clearly the challenge that the appearance in the sensible of diametrically opposed goods of family and polis poses to the maintenance of the integrity of the political κοινωνία.

8

Theory & Praxis

Confronting the Sophoclean Challenge in Plato's *Republic* 427c-502c

> λέγειν τε ἠναγκάσθην, ἐπαινῶν τὴν ὀρθὴν φιλοσοφίαν, ὡς ἐκ ταύτης ἔστιν τά τε πολιτικὰ δίκαια καὶ τὰ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν πάντα κατιδεῖν.
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> Pl. *Ep.* 326a5-7.

Reconstituted for thought, the inflamed and luxurious polis of the late 5th century has been returned on a new understanding to the world of the *Eumenides*, to the κοινοφιλὴς διάνοια an older Athenian ideal. If it has been founded rightly, Socrates argues, this polis will be completely good (τελέως ἀγαθήν, 427e7), expressing itself in virtuous activity by exhibiting wisdom, courage, moderation and justice in the life of praxis. Nevertheless, reliant as it is still upon ὀρθὴ δόξα, in the form of an external customarily given morality, the new polis cannot as yet be said to give a full rational account of the principles which sustain it.[1] It is at this point, Plato recognizes, that there is encountered a critical juncture at which the path of the soul as a knower may be seen to part and the good is first witnessed to fall into division and opposition. Unable to find itself unequivocally at home now in the dictates of custom, thought must in time either once again work its way inevitably downwards from this 'Sophoclean' point through the sophistic to the deconstructed world of the *Bacchae* and the endless difference of non-being or it must be turned around to reach upwards to the all embracing objective Good, to Truth and Reality and the standpoint of ἡ ὀρθὴ φιλοσοφία.

The polis has arisen out of nature but is shaped by cultural beliefs. Is cultural relativity

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[1] What has not yet emerged is an articulation of the universal principles upon which the polis virtues are founded: the world of the Forms. Indeed, with its strong foundation in education, its adherence to a customary virtue, and its aesthetic and cultural relation to the divine, this is still a polis in which a sophist of the old school, like Protagoras, could find himself very much at home. Some hint, however, that this is not to be the final answer may be detected in a certain ambivalence Socrates himself expresses towards the outcome of the argument so far (429a5-6).

therefore, as Protagoras would argue, to be accepted as an end in itself? Or is there, Plato asks, a telos implicit in nature which is actualized as a universal rational causal principle shaping human society, in Aristotle's terminology that ἕτερόν τι which gives the composite whole its essential unity?[2] With this question in mind, it is necessary to look inside the polis that has just been established in accord with nature (κατὰ φύσιν οἰκεσθεῖσα πόλις, 428e9) and ascertain how it contains the good; which is to ask what form virtue, and justice in particular, takes within it. From this examination will emerge an understanding of the relation between the good city and the good soul, justice 'writ large' and justice 'writ small'. Set side by side, rubbed together, like firesticks, these two images of justice in the sensible will together illuminate the path to an all encompassing Good which can contain both individual and polis in an essential relationship, overcoming the collisions of collective and individual good that mark the dividedness of the sensible world of praxis.[3] Beyond the justice of Zeus, in which man is held in a relation of piety and μῦθος, will come into view at the last the justice of the Good and a λόγος of the natural world of sensible change. Knowing the good through the rational order of the just πολιτεία and habituated to it in a unifying κοινωνία of feeling, the citizens will do the good in their private and public life, "the inner laws of the nature of soul" in concordance with "the outer laws of the nature of the true state."[4]

8.1 Connecting outer & inner: justice is a principle of the soul (427c-445b)

The well-founded and completely good polis has been discovered to develop naturally out of the luxurious city as a living differentiated organic whole with the three classes its distinguishing parts. Like any such composite body, the functioning of the whole is

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[2] τί αἴτιον τοῦ ἓν εἶναι (*Metaph* 1045a8).

[3] If, on comparison, justice appears to be in any way different in the soul than in the city, Socrates argues, then he must return to reexamine the concept of polis justice first arrived at in the light of these new findings (434e1-435b2). Socrates' claim that justice will be similar in form in both the polis and the individual (435b1-2) has come under fire from critics. Williams (1999:256-7, originally 1973) and Annas (1981:148-9) have been prominent in attacking the logic of the argument. Lear (1992) responds appropriately that "there is neither regress nor absurdity in Plato's argument, for there is no reason to think that he has thus far given us the common *logos*" (196) that can be said to ground the relation between polis and psyche. See also Evrigenis (2002:604).

[4] House 2002a:3.9. Barker (1918:181) argues similarly that in order "to expose the errors of [Thrasymachus']...extreme individualism" Plato must be able to "show that the self is no isolated unit but part of an order with a station in that order."

dependent upon the proper disposition of the individual 'organs', which when operating in concert ensure a healthy existence. Impulses to τὸ φιλόσοφον and τὸ θυμοειδές, present as natural capacities in the human soul, are found when properly nurtured and educated to give rise to the polis virtues of practical wisdom (σοφία) and courage (ἀνδρεία), virtues distinctive of the ruling and warrior guardian class respectively. Underlying and grounding the development of these virtues, however, is the κόσμος (430e6) and ἁρμονία (430e4, 431e8) which must be instilled in every citizen from birth and exhibits itself in the virtue of σωφροσύνη, identifiable as the self mastery the soul exercises over sensible pleasures and desires in order to establish this inner harmony and order.[5] Integral to this conception of σωφροσύνη is that, unlike wisdom or courage, it is not seen 'writ large' in the polis as the distinguishing feature that demarcates a particular class but rather as a relationship, a harmony, between the classes themselves. Extending throughout the whole city, σωφροσύνη affects all aspects of life so that the whole polis is σώφρων only when all three of its constitutive parts are σώφρων.[6] As the pieces fall one by one into place, justice, which has seemed to be so elusive, suddenly reveals itself to have been present from the very start, tumbling around underfoot, as Socrates puts it (432a4-433d5).[7] Concomitant with the first founding of the polis, and constantly reiterated since, has been the demand that the individual partake in the communal life of the city through performing only that one particular activity that best befits his nature. It is in this τὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν (433b4) that polis justice is now seen to be located. Whereas all four polis virtues make the city good through their presence, it is especially made good by the presence of justice as each citizen, himself a unity (τὸ αὑτοῦ ἕκαστος εἷς ὤν, 433d4), performs his own particular activity and does not encroach upon the work of others. For it is only when each political class as a whole tends to its own affairs through performing

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[5] This is Plato's response to Euripides' Phaedra (E. *Hipp*.373-383). It is the mastery of pleasures and desires that leads to the characterization of σωφροσύνη as self-control (τὸ κρείττω ἑαυτοῦ) the rule of the better over the worse (430e6-7). Cf. Pl. *Grg.* 491c6-e1. When what is better by nature is in power (ἐγκρατὲς) over what is by nature worse a man is said to be master of himself (431a3-6)existent . This, as earlier remarked, is the essential link that Plato makes between the structure of a virtue and a τέχνη. Parry (2003:25) notes the parallel.

[6] The resultant concord, (ὁμόνοια, 432a7) is what is most rightly called σωφροσύνη, Socrates argues. It expresses itself in the mutual agreement between the naturally better and the naturally worse over who should rule and who should be ruled both in the polis and in each individual (432a6-9). See Adam (vol. 1 1963:236).

[7] It is indicated, however, as was the case for the other virtues, that it is not the virtue itself but its image in the polis that is present at this stage.

only its own proper task that the polis itself is said to be just (434c7-10).[8] Justice indeed emerges as the necessary precondition without which the other polis virtues fail to be realized at all; it is the rational organizing principle of the political κοινωνία (433b7-c2).[9]

Nevertheless, while agreeing with Protagoras (*Prt.* 323a) that all citizens must have a share of δικαιοσύνη and σωφροσύνη as an essential prerequisite of political κοινωνία, Socrates argues that the expression of these virtues is not, as Protagoras submits, through an equal voice in political decision-making. This must remain the sole responsibility of the *sanior pars*, the ruler guardians as practitioners of the architectonic political art. It is the 'having and doing of one's own' and the agreement by each class to rule and be ruled in accord with this the divinely ordained natural order of things that delineates the polis as a just and harmonious 'whole of parts', parts which are themselves just and harmonious.[10] On its own each class, as a part, is to be seen as incomplete, lacking in αὐτάρκεια. Ordered together naturally in the political κοινωνία, however, the diverse images of justice displayed in the defined activities of productive, warrior and ruling class achieve a form of completeness, a unity in diversity in which is to be found the basis of the freedom and happiness constitutive to the just polity as a whole.[11]

The structure that establishes the polis as good and just can be said now to be in place. There is as yet, however, no adequate account of what it is that holds these parts together;

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[8] By contrast, injustice arises when the boundaries which divide the three classes from one another are breached (434b9-c2). What Plato has in mind is that πολυπραγμοσύνη which he sees to result in the usurpation of proper political order through πλοῦτος, πλῆθος, and ἰσχύς and to lead to the debased forms of polity.

[9] Cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1253a37-8.

[10] For useful comment on the distinction Plato makes between the virtues of δικαιοσύνη and σωφροσύνη in *Republic* 4, one which has been thought by some commentators to be less than adequate, see Rowe (1979:336), Lee (1989:133-6), Friedländer (vol. 3 1969:101). Whereas justice is logically prior, it can be argued that temporally, for virtue to be present at all, the soul must first become σώφρων through the inculcation of harmony and order. So that in this way the virtue of σωφροσύνη can be said, as in the *Gorgias,* to be prior. It is only in the σώφρων individual that the impulses to courage and wisdom can be actualized as civic virtues and the predeterminately ordered polis justice can emerge as what is logically prior.

[11] Socrates makes quite clear that the flourishing of the polis as a whole and the justice to be found within it must be prior to a consideration of the happiness of the parts it contains (420b2-c3). Lee (1989:120-1) observes that it is often overlooked that constitutive of the polis from the very start (369c1-7) has been, not only the employment of the 'principle of specialization', but also a "reciprocal interrelatedness of these diverse functions" (121) which draws the community into a whole as the common good. Cf. Pericles' remarks at Th. 2.60.2-4.

for there is no rationally articulated λόγος of how the polis is itself one. It remains to be determined how the polis can be said to *have* a harmony and not simply *be* a harmony of its parts, as Protagoras would argue it is, or why indeed the parts should relate to one another at all, as Thrasymachus has challenged Socrates to show. If he is to successfully counter not only the pragmatic spirit of radical individualism that Thrasymachus embodies but also the very real problem of the divided ethical good that Sophocles explores, Plato must demonstrate both that there is indeed a concordance between the individual and the common good, the good man and the good citizen, and also that soul and city are in their turn encompassed by a unifying causal principle which gives them their integrity as composite 'wholes of parts'.

In pursuit of an understanding of the relationship that persists between individual and polis, Socrates will look not only inside the city but inside the soul. The internal divisions and the distribution of the virtues that are found to constitute the completely good polis are all, he discovers, to be found present in the individual soul, and indeed to find their origins therein. Thus, σοφία and ἀνδρεία have been shown to originate in natural impulses resident within the individual and σωφροσύνη and δικαιοσύνη come into being as polis virtues only through the induction of a habit of harmony and order in the soul, a ἕξις, whereby every citizen is attuned to acting justly in accord with his inherent rational capacity and not seeking to acquire more than his due.[12] The underlying premise that has grounded the investigation from its very inception remains the foundation for the argument. Justice is nothing other than this power, a δύναμις for the having and doing of one's own, which has been observed to be present from the first founding of the polis, externally imaged in the τέχναι of the δημιουργόι where each

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[12] It is the formation of a ἕξις as a fixed disposition in the soul that marks the distinction of virtue from the mere possession of a τέχνη. Cf. Arist. *EN* 1129a11-16. From a consideration of the agent as active in perfecting an object external to himself, the move is to an internalized conception of action in which the agent becomes an object for himself through the rule of what is higher over what is lower in his soul. For Plato, through his understanding of the tri-partite soul, these are to be seen as the external and internal expressions of a single virtuous activity, as wisdom perfecting its proper object. It is in the formation of his nature in virtue through the inculcation of a ἕξις, so that he has and does what is his own, that the individual achieves not only the good of his own soul but the common good of the whole, the external expression of virtue in the polis in the definitive and ordered activities of the τέχναι of ruling, guarding and producing. Irwin (1977:73-7, 1995:68-77), who admits only an instrumental character to τέχνη, has been influential in promoting the contrary view that in the *Republic* Plato completely rejects the earlier Socratic analogy between τέχνη and virtue. Irwin's position is criticized by Wallach (1997:389) and Parry (1996:126-7).

occupies himself exclusively in performing the task for which he is fitted by nature with the knowledge (443b4-c7). In the soul, as in the polis, it is only when each element individually has and does what inherently belongs to it and each in concert maintains a harmonious relationship one with the other, in agreement as to who should rule and be ruled, that justice and moderation are said to be predicated of the whole.[13] The just man, it is therefore concluded, concerns himself only with the ordering of his true inner self so that each element within his soul performs its own proper task (443c9-d3).

The virtuous activity of the polis is now revealed as the outward expression of this inner principle, the tri-partite soul; so that, in fact, Socrates concludes, justice is not to be sought in external relations, the vulgar unrefined notions of justice held by the many, but internally within the soul of the individual.[14] With the development of the conception of the tri-partite soul, Stalley observes, Socrates is able to draw the connections between outer and inner, city and soul, displaying in response to Thrasymachus' challenge "the inner freedom of the just individual in political terms. The soul is a city in which the lawful authorities (the reason) are liable to be overthrown and enslaved by their subjects."[15] It is only when he achieves what is in truth the proper disposition of his affairs, harmonizing and binding together the diverse elements of his soul so that in every way he becomes a unity from a plurality, that a man becomes the master of himself. In this way he is said to be both well-ordered and a friend to himself (443d3-e1).[16] It is with

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[13] Hence, the reasoning element (τὸ λογιστικόν) should rule, acting with wisdom and foresight on behalf of the soul as a whole, and the spirited (τὸ θυμοειδές) should ally itself to the rational, obedient to its rule. The wisdom (σοφός, 441e4) that Socrates describes here is as yet based only in right opinion, but it anticipates the true wisdom that will be found later to be the province of the philosopher. Together, the λογιστικόν and the θυμοειδές will govern the appetitive (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν) ensuring that in its insatiable quest for gain it does not overcome them, oversetting their rule and enslaving them (441d5-442b3).

[14] Adam's note (vol. 1 1963:262) is pertinent. See also Joseph (1935:82). However, the understanding of this relationship between city and soul has been the subject of controversy amongst recent commentators. Wilson (1976) provides a lucid and informative interpretation which evaluates many of the controversial points which have been raised by others, amongst whom Bernard Williams (1999; original 1973) and Julia Annas (1981) have been particularly influential in claiming to have uncovered logical inconsistencies "powerfully at work under the surface" (Williams (1999:257). The implications of the 'principle of specialization', carefully developed by Socrates, are discounted by Williams, for whom Socrates' contention that "a city is δίκαιος if and only if its men are [δίκαιος]" is incoherent. Evrigenis (2002:591), Vlastos (1971b:92-5), Lear (1992:205-6) are others, besides Wilson, who provide pertinent criticism of Williams' objections.

[15] Stalley (1998:146).

[16] Justice, Socrates insists here, is primarily self-regarding in that it is a state internal to soul generating φιλαυτία. When this condition is established throughout the polis the polis will be just, obviating the need

a view to maintaining this inner justice and friendship that a man conducts all his actions in the external life of the polis; thus outer actions are just and harmonious only insofar as they preserve and bring about an inner order of the soul, a kind of image of this inner justice (εἴδωλόν τι τῆς δικαιοσύνης, 443c4-5).[17] Nevertheless, man is not thus self-sufficient in his attainment of virtue. It is the κοινωνία of the polis, imposing order, limit and form from without, that reinforces and stabilizes justice and friendship in the individual, preserving and helping to bring about through its educational norms and through the direction of the rulers that inner harmony of the soul which Socrates has noted to be the truer conception of justice. Hence, although the truth lies in the inner nature of man, it does not reach its fulfilment, even for the philosopher king, outside of the life of the polis.

The search for justice has moved progressively inwards, from the three classes in the polis, to the civic virtues, to the virtues of the soul. It is possible to say now that the just man and the just polis and the justice that is in them have been found (444a4-6).[18] Yet

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for specific legislation. Aristotle, although he will take issue with the conception of friendship introduced in the *Republic*, will argue along similar lines the importance of friendship to civic concord (*EN* 1155a24-5). For Plato, both justice and friendship as the good of oneself are thereby the good of another. For Aristotle it might be said that the reverse is the case, that it is in acting justly and in friendship towards others that the good man perfects his own nature in virtue and is hence a friend to himself most of all (*EN* 1168b9-10). However, the man who is in the proper sense φίλαυτος is for Aristotle, as for Plato, the one who obeys, as his truest self, the rational and ruling principle in his own nature, which is νοῦς (*EN* 1168b25-1169a18).

[17] It is important to note that in moving from an external to an internal account of justice, Plato does not give up the 'principle of specialization' but rather recalls it to its true nature and origin in divine dispensation.

[18] The problem of how virtuous action based on right opinion, as opposed to a true knowledge, is to be understood in the *Republic* has been the subject of considerable discussion and confusion in the scholarly literature. Since knowledge is required for true virtue, it is argued that most if not all individuals in the ideal city are incapable of virtue (Irwin 1999:135-7, 1995:236; Cooper 1977:153). Strictly speaking this is true. Clearly, as these commentators argue, right opinion does not have the insight and stability that knowledge of what virtue is in its essence affords. But neither is right opinion to be equated with that purely natural instinctive activity shown, for example, by animals and slaves (430b6-c1) which is based on ignorance. The source of the difficulties can be seen to be resident in Plato's ontology of the Good which understands the sensible as a vanishing reality, rather than, as Aristotle does, as a succession of stable concretions which allows for a 'swarm' of virtues. Right opinion is not *being*, but neither is it *non-being*. It belongs, for Plato, to the world of *becoming*, that which both *is* and *is not*, to an ethical order which can be seen to be stratified in accord with the extent to which both cities and their individual inhabitants are able to successfully emulate the ideal model, the true being which is the Form of the virtue itself (472b7-d2). Vlastos (1981a:425-6) and Hall (1959:151) are among those who conclude with Stalley (1998:151) that whereas only the philosopher is "genuinely virtuous ...others may no doubt have a secondary virtue, based on true belief about what is good."

even as the investigation appears to draw to a successful conclusion at this point, there remain unresolved what Socrates will term the greatest difficulties of all, those resident in the ineluctable fact that soul, while it pursues its end in the intelligible, is held fast by body in the sensible world. With the reform of the 'inflamed' polis has come the development of the ethical life, the differentiation of the virtues first in the polis and then in the soul. The city of the guardians has as yet, however, found no basis for its practical wisdom beyond the ὀρθὴ δόξα that has grounded the education of its rulers who possess the knowledge of *how* it should be without insight into *why* it is best that it be that way. What must be determined is how a harmony of diverse images of justice can be understood to be held within a common unifying form.[19] The universality and centrality of the conception of τὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν in its several expressions is linked inextricably to the rule of reason in soul and in polis. Hence, Socrates submits, to overcome the division of the sensible, to bridge the tragic divide, the completely good and just πολιτεία must be grounded not in πίστις but in ἐπιστήμη.[20]

There is another kind of polis and another order of soul which is prior to that which has so far emerged; one in which rational freedom can be actualized through insight into the causes themselves, the knowledge of that reality in accord with which soul and city attain to a true principle of justice as a μία ἐκ πολλῶν.[21] It is only in this philosophic polis and soul that the rulers know the ground of the wisdom with which they pursue their τέχνη as a universal objective measure, a principle beyond the sensible world of motion: the forms as they exist in their relation to the unchanging reality of the Good. Reason, the ruling element of soul, finds its objects not only in the activity of praxis, the limited justice embodied in the τέχναι of the craftsman and the warrior guardian, but most completely in knowing these activities as imaging and participating in justice in itself, as a

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[19] What the nature of justice is in and through itself, a problem already recognized to be still in need of address for the polis, re-emerges with an increased urgency now in the question of how the soul of the individual just man can be at once both one and many.

[20] Wisdom is that knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) which oversees (ἐπιστατέω) the just action, preserving the harmony of the soul. Directly opposed to it, the unjust act is overseen by the ignorance of opinion (δόξα) which brings about the destruction of this order (443e6-444a2). Earlier the ruler guardian was introduced as the ἐπιστάτης necessary to the preservation of the community (412a10). Now the true ἐπιστάτης is found to be ἐπιστήμη.

[21] Cooper (1999:142) notes: "Thus we are led directly up to the central metaphysical theories of the *Republic*."

determinate form of the Good.[22] Before the polis can take form as a truly rational κοινωνία, however, it is first necessary to address the very real impediments that are seen to still stand in the way. Even to those who have been well habituated in virtue and exercise practical wisdom in making choices, the good can appear in the sensible as intractably divided and opposed. At the root of this problem, Plato identifies those innate natural demands of human feeling that bind man to the particularity of ties of blood and kin. Caught in the division of reason and nature between conflicting demands of the common good of the polis and the particular good of individual and family, man is intrinsically 'many' and not 'one'. Before reason can establish a full sovereignty over the political κοινωνία, therefore, it must first bring into an ordered and unified relation with itself the universal principle of natural necessity which governs sensible division. What is required, Plato determines, is to break down all those internal divisions that demarcate individuals in community in order to come to a collective consciousness, a natural κοινωνία in empathy with and attuned to the rational order of the πολιτεία and its rule.[23] Only when this has been effected will the polis, like the soul which it images, come to be as truly just, a friend to itself and μία ἐκ πολλῶν.

8.2 A common rationality is the unifying principle of political κοινωνία (451c-457b)

Before turning to a consideration of the problem of eliminating natural difference from the political κοινωνία, a word should be said about the economic, producing, class which drops from sight as the polis order is further developed and refined. It is in this the lowest stratum of the political order that there is vested the qualitative and quantitative diversity which is essential to the natural survival of the polis. However, it can perhaps

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[22] The rational element is at once a part of soul in that it must realize itself in relation to the other elements of soul; and yet at the same time it is the whole as what underlies. As thinking subject, it thinks the whole and the parts in relation to the whole. Soul as thinking is not simply contemplative and theoretical; rational and irrational elements in the human soul are not incommensurably opposed but held in relation to one another as ruling and ruled. Human wisdom is active practically as the λόγος that informs and shapes the activities of the lower elements of the soul, ordering and directing the innate natural impulses so that in response the virtues of justice, moderation and courage emerge out of the irrational as the dividedness of the sensible is drawn towards unity. See Joseph (1935:71-2).

[23] The Athenian δῆμος under the sway of the demagogues, illustrated in Thucydides account of the Mytilenian debate and by the natural κοινωνία of the *Bacchae* under the thrall of Dionysus, offer examples of the latent power that is resident in the immediacy of common bonds of feeling, a potential that Plato must effectively harness in the service of the Good.

be fairly stated that for Plato the development of the argument as it impacts upon this class has already reached a completion. What is characteristic of the productive class, like the appetitive soul which it images, is the requirement that it be ruled and obey. In this sense it can be said to participate in the freedom of the rational order of the κοινωνία only passively, through being habituated to be moderate and ordered, in conformity with the universal principle of justice as 'having and doing one's own'.[24] Insofar as appetitive desire is forever likely by its nature to attempt to exceed these bounds, the activity of the producing class is regulated by the imposition of external limits upon it by the warrior guardians.[25] By contrast, the ruling classes are actively involved as agents in the formation and persistence of the polis and imposing the rule of reason upon themselves. Thus any deviation from what is demonstrated to be their ideal nature is to be considered highly significant in terms of its consequences. In mediating the opposition between reason and appetite, limit and unlimit, the activity of the θυμοειδές, as that element of the irrational that can be both habituated and educated to listen to reason, has to be acknowledged as pivotal. Reason cannot control appetite and impose limit and order without the assistance of θυμός, while, if allied to base appetite, θυμός is a powerful force for individual aggrandizement at the expense of the common good.[26] Thus if the soul is to journey along the difficult path that will lead upwards through the mediation of the polis to the ground of justice in the rational good it is of paramount importance to first assure that the θυμοειδές element in the polis, the warrior guardian class, is freed from any potential source of στάσις that could divide one against the other. As the θυμός 'writ large', it has already been noted that the warrior guardians, although being many in

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[24] There is a kind of stability at this level in that each craftsman possesses a specific portion of knowledge, his τέχνη, through which he exercises a rational freedom in perfecting the justice of his own soul *qua* craftsman. Of the kind of virtue that is to be attained for the individual even at the lowest level, that of the craftsman, Cephalus has provided an example. See Hall (1959:157) who argues that every citizen must exhibit "reasoned understanding" grounded in reflection on the right beliefs in which he has been educated.

[25] There is a question whether any of the changes to the traditional οἶκος which Plato establishes for the universal guardian class extend to the productive class. The producers are characterized by their diversity of function and their appetitive nature and clearly do not hold all goods in common (417a2-7), despite Aristotle's reservations. (*Pol.* 1264a15). However, the fact that women do have the same range of rational natures as men does suggest that Plato leaves the matter incompletely resolved at the level of household management, as Aristotle argues (*Pol.* 1264a40-b3). On the commonality of wives and children, Plato specifically limits his remarks to the guardian class (461e5-6). In the *Laws* (846d-847b) Plato will exclude citizens from partaking of the activities of this economic class.

[26] In the ethical environment of the polis, θυμός can be considered as moral will in the sense that it endures, retaining in the face of every temptation a judgement of what is properly to be feared.

number, must act as one; the good of the polis as a whole is to be the sole concern of the members of this class. As a class of many identical 'ones', purged of internal difference, they will be instrumental in effecting the unity, and thus the ὁμόνοια and φιλαυτία, which must be the mark of the just polis as it is of the just soul.

With the power that the activity of θυμός exerts for good or ill kept firmly in mind, it is most important, Socrates argues, that the environment within which the guardians are to live and work is shaped to minimize *all* those factors which might divert them from their proper task, the care of the polis and of each other. As far as is humanly possible, therefore, all individuality and difference, everything that might represent to them a substantial individual good, and hence a potential source of conflict with their fellows, is to be negated in the guardian κοινωνία in order that they form a single unifying force. Living communally, apart from the other citizens, they will possess no property in private, whether land, houses, or money, all of which are readily recognized to be potent sources of dissension and στάσις.[27] Mindful of the θυμοειδές in their nature, that quality that particularly suits them to be guardians of the polis, Socrates is very careful to ensure that it not be inappropriately unleashed, causing the guardians to turn from allies of the citizens to hostile tyrants, fierce Erinyeic agents of στάσις who will bring themselves and the polis to the brink of ruin (417b1-6). Divested of the individuality attendant upon assertion of private property rights in relation to external things, the guardian community will share an inner identity in their common relationship to the material world. This however is just a beginning, a partial account of what is required if the true nature of soul is to be separated out from the accretions which mark its sensible embodiment.

If the guardian community is itself to persist, and it is clear that Plato conceives the inborn ability which distinguishes the classes to be largely hereditary, it must of necessity reproduce itself. This brings to the fore for the first time the question of the role to be played in Socrates' polis by women and the family, and the set of private and particular

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[27] They will set up camp where they can best exercise control over those inside the polis and at the same time protect the polis from its enemies (415d8-e3). Like the Homeric hero, and the trained dog on whom they are modelled, the guardians occupy as protectors a position on the borders of the civilized and the wild, ἀγροῦ ἐπ' ἐσχατιήν. Although not physically present in the everyday life of the commercial city, the guardians will nevertheless be a dominating presence, reminiscent in a way of the Dread Goddesses at the end of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, except that in this age of scepticism the agents of polis justice wield not a spiritual but a, not to be empirically denied, physical clout.

interests that ensue both from the natural differences which distinguish male and female and from the blood relationships which link and divide human kinship groups.[28] The logic of the development of the political κοινωνία, resting as it does on the fundamental principle of εἷς ἓν κατὰ φύσιν, if it is to hold universally, creates the primary demand that the human nature of women as well as that of men must be incorporated into the established system of classes. On this understanding, Socrates argues that it is necessary to establish that women are to function as guardians alongside men, receiving the same education and upbringing, and doing everything in common with their male counterparts (451d4-452a5).[29] It is not sufficient, however, to simply postulate this as necessary for there to be logical consistency. If the argument is to advance on a firm footing, the full wave of objections that can be brought against the proposal must be anticipated and successfully addressed. Only by proceeding in this manner will the underlying λόγος that sustains the dialectical movement of thought be revealed. It must thus be shown that this proposal is not against nature, as is generally supposed, and that it is indeed both feasible and beneficial for the political κοινωνία that things are ordered in this way.

8.2.1 Reason & not custom determines what is appropriate (452a-452e)

The most obvious and superficial objection that can be expected to be raised is that many of the activities in which the female guardians would participate, being contrary to customary practice, would be considered ridiculous (452a7-8). This is something that can be quickly dealt with by showing that such considerations are simply related to the observation that what is in practice considered acceptable is what people have been

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[28] Certain similarities between the proposals for a communistic society in *Republic* 5 and those of Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* have long been remarked. For useful discussions on this see Adam (v1. 1963. 345-55) and Halliwell (1993:224-5). The Straussian school of interpretation, exemplified in Bloom (1968), suggests a kind of comic ἀγών between Socrates and Aristophanes is being played out. Socrates' ideal city, Bloom maintains, is in fact "the greatest critique of political idealism ever written" (410). Others writing in this vein include Sallis (1996:377-80) and Benardete (1989:112-3). For insightful critiques of the Straussian stance on the *Republic* see Robertson (1999), Burnyeat (1985). Nettleship (1901:171) and Friedländer (1969:103) are among those who argue the serious intent of Plato's proposal.

[29] It is commonly suggested that Plato's proposals for women mark him as a feminist. See, for example, the extensive surveys by Bluestone (1987) and Tuana (1994). Annas (1999a:265) argues strongly against linking Plato's arguments in *Republic* 5 to any modern conceptions of women's liberation. Halliwell (1993:15) points out that if the argument seems to "have some resemblance to feminism ...that is not because it *is* a feminist position" but that "some of its considerations, and even some of its results, are *compatible* with feminism." Further discussion on the role of women in the *Republic* can be found in Lucas (1990), Canterella (1987), Lesser (1979), Fortenbaugh (1975), Pierce (1973), Wender (1973).

accustomed to expect and that this is subject to change and not fixed in nature.[30] There is a λόγος, it is argued, which determines how any activity should best be performed, one which is prior to the physical characteristics that distinguish, in this case, the gender of those who are performing it.[31] The point is that it is not how something appears in the immediacy and externality of sensory appearance that is to be the arbiter of its merit, but whether it has been brought under the scrutiny of reason and shown to be best done that way. It is reason, and not superficial bodily characteristics and a response based in custom, that is to be employed in determining the activities in which humans participate. In fact, the only thing that is really worthy of ridicule, as far as Socrates is concerned, is ignorance and evil, since it is foolish to set up any other standard for beauty than that of the good (452d6-e2).

8.2.2 Male & female share a common rational identity (452e-457b)

There is, however, a more fundamental objection that can be raised to the proposal for a κοινωνία of male and female guardians. Beyond the merely external physical secondary sexual characteristics that distinguish male and female lies a separation in reproductive function which argues forcibly to their uniquely distinct natures. Since the principle upon which the polis was founded, we are once more reminded (435b5), provides that each is to do only the one task for which their nature has fitted them, it would appear to be an obvious contradiction to propose that males and females should do the same things when they are by nature different (453c3-5). It is at this juncture that it becomes evident that the argument must turn away once and for all from a consideration of sensible appearance as that which is in any way primary and look to reason alone as the cause of what is best.[32] The difficulty that has now surfaced stems from the fact that when the principle

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[30] If, for example, some claim it is ugly, ridiculous or inappropriate for women to exercise naked they can be reminded that not so long ago Greeks would have had said exactly the same about men seen exercising naked. However, after the introduction of the practice by the Cretans and Spartans it was recognized that this was in fact the best way to perform exercise (452c4-d6). See further Halliwell (1993:139).

[31] An analogy is drawn between the physical differences of the sexes and those of young and old bodies. The wrinkled bodies of elderly males as they exercise are not pleasant to look at either but this does not make them an object of ridicule, as it should if external and superficial considerations are taken as primary (452a10-b3).

[32] It is at this point also that the transition must take place from eristic dispute (τῆς ἀντιλογικῆς τέχνη), the simple juxtaposition of opposed terms in contradiction, to philosophic discourse which involves the analysis of meaning, an understanding of the determinate rational content of which these words are the signifiers (454a4-9).

that requires different natures to pursue different activities was instituted there was no consideration given to what form (τί εἶδος) this sameness and difference of nature was to take and in what manner it was to be determined as the same or different (454b4-9).

What is to be resolved is the question of what constitutes the true essence of human nature.[33] It is not every sort of sameness and difference which is to be considered but sameness and difference with respect to particular pursuits (454c7-d1); that is to say activity in accord with the τέχνη for which the particular god-given rational nature has fitted each individual in accord with the fundamental principle of εἷς ἓν κατὰ φύσιν. The true distinction between natures is to be found within the soul, in the rational identity which underlies and contains the spectrum of accidental contrariety which accompanies its physical embodiment. Male and female, it is to be concluded, share a common rational identity as human and the same range of divinely distributed rational capacities. Where they are found to differ with respect to their possession of a particular τέχνη then male and female must unequivocally be assigned accordingly. By contrast, physical difference with respect to reproductive function offers of itself no proof of incapacity to partake in the activity of a guardian (454d7-e4).[34] All physical distinctions, whether qualitative, quantitative, ephemeral, or essential, are secondary in consideration to the reason which must inform human action and arrange it so that it is best. Since, in accord with the founding principle which draws only upon rational distinctions, the same pursuits are to be assigned to the same natures, and women are found upon examination to have the same range of natures as men, it is not against nature (παρὰ φύσιν) that women be educated in the same way as men and share in the duties of guardianship. Indeed, Socrates is prepared to argue that it is in fact customary practice to the contrary of this that seems in truth to be against nature (456b1-c2).

What has been affirmed is the common rational identity that underlies and negates the

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[33] If it is indeed expressed in a fixed physical form such as maleness or femaleness then it is reasonable to inquire whether, for example, long-haired men and bald men also have distinct natures so that if bald men are allowed to be cobblers long-haired men cannot be and *vice versa* (454c1-5). The obvious ridiculousness of such a suggestion brings out the point that has been up to now neglected and has led to the confusion.

[34] The measure of the natural ability that any individual has for a particular activity, Socrates submits, is reflected in the facility with which they are able to learn a particular task; and this is to ask how well the body serves the mind (455b4-c2). Doubtless males can be said to be superior to females in almost any occupation yet no pursuit pertaining to polis management can be said to be exclusively the province of female *qua* female or male *qua* male (455c4-456a1).

distinction of gender in humans. The κοινωνία of male and female guardians is found to be possible, indeed to be demanded κατὰ φύσιν, based on the common rational human nature that they share.[35] With the elimination of considerations of gender difference, the rational activity of soul emerges as a universal, self-relating, common human identity which is both prior to and comprehensive of those distinctions belonging by their nature to body. It is *qua* rational that human society is moral, that the κοινωνία in which humans associate is a polis and not a hive. This in itself however leads, Socrates foresees, to the necessary corollary that a second and much larger wave now bearing down on the discussion must be breasted (457c4-5). The logic which drives the argument requires that the rational principle of polis unity must now come face to face with the most fundamental of natural drives, the instinctual ἔρως that propels humans, as other animals, to bond together in discrete units for the procreation and rearing of their offspring. If the polis is to overcome the powerful propensity for division of collective and particular good that this portends and achieve an effective unity in its ruling class of guardians, its θυμοειδές guardian element must feel and act as one in support of the rational leadership which directs it, foregoing still further the interests of self and family which bring the τιμή for which it naturally strives.

8.3 The rational κοινωνία is a unity freed of natural difference (457c-464b)

The traditional family with its natural bonds of blood and feeling is viewed by Plato in the *Republic* as an inherently divisive institution, a wellspring of compelling particular and competing interests which militate against the undivided loyalty to the polis and to the common good of the κοινωνία that is the required true end for every guardian. Thus it becomes necessary to argue that the primacy of the rational as a common self-identity willing the collective good is fully asserted only when the multiplicity and difference of individual families has been dissipated and all women and children are held in common. There can be, in the unfolding logic of κοινωνία, no individual guardian family units living apart in private as discrete entities. Further than that, the emotional ties that

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[35] That this arrangement is at the same time what is most beneficial is established by noting that there can be nothing better for the polis than that its citizens are the best possible. This it is agreed is to be achieved through their education. Hence those females having a guardian nature should maximize their own innate capabilities through receiving the same kind of education as their male counterparts (456c11-d1).

naturally bind individuals to blood kin, even in the absence of the family unit as a physical concretion, must be severed; children are to be raised so that no parents will know which offspring are theirs and no child will know the identity of his birthparents (457c10-d3).[36] The radical nature of these proposals, which keep the gaze of the soul very firmly fixed in a direct identification with a universal sustaining common rational good and away from the siren call of individual interest, is not to be underestimated. Even allowing, as Socrates anticipates, that the beneficial nature of such a proposal can be demonstrated, the question of the possibility of establishing such a community in practice must remain very much in doubt and, as he freely admits, provoke the greatest of controversy (457d6-9).

8.3.1 Reason structures natural necessity in accord with what is best (458b-461e)

A formidable challenge to the κοινωνία of reason that is sought in the *Republic* is confronted in the innate natural sexual drive which in the ordinary course of events is seen to draw nature into relation with reason in the ethical κοινωνία of the family. The powerful immediacy of the sexual urge is a necessity which derives not from the rational principle of cosmic order towards which the polis is being shaped in thought but from a counter-force, a separate and opposed natural principle of division which is itself an erotic necessity (οὐ γεωμετρικαῖς γε ...ἀλλ' ἐρωτικαῖς ἀνάγκαις, 458d5).[37] This irrational indiscriminate erotic drive is something which will not be denied and, as Glaucon notes, it is this and not the power of reason that is likely to hold sway in directing the actions of the majority of people (458d5-7).[38] Hence, even while they are

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[36] πάντων πάσας εἶναι κοινάς, ἰδίᾳ δὲ μηδενὶ μηδεμίαν συνοικεῖν (457c10-d1). Prominently placed in their respective clauses common and particular stand juxtaposed to one another as the conflicting spheres of πόλις and οἶκος, an opposition which the *Republic* seeks to overcome.

[37] The γεωμετρικὴ ἀνάγκη is distinguished by order, ratio and proportion. Cf. Pl. *Grg.* 507e6-508a8; *Lg.* 756e9-758a2. The remarks in the *Laws* on the election of council members can be compared with what Socrates proposes in the *Republic* for the selection of individuals for marriage unions. The aim must be to grant to each the 'equality' that is merited taking into account their real nature; for this is what properly constitutes justice (*Lg.* 757c1-d1). This conception of a distributive justice will later be incorporated by Aristotle into his own account (*EN* 1130b30-1132a24). Aristotle too speaks of justice, τὸ δίκαιον, as τὸ ἴσον in terms of the sort of proportionate distribution that mathematicians call geometrical (*EN* 1131b12-13).

[38] The rulers obviously cannot countenance indiscriminate promiscuity which would not only be impious but contrary to the dictates of order and justice that are being propounded (458d8-e2). Nor of course can sexual activity be outlawed altogether for the guardian class if the polis is to renew itself in its purified form and continue to produce sufficient members of the governing silver and gold classes.

not to be contained within the limits of the traditional family, marriage unions for members of the guardian class are to remain an integral part of the new polis.[39] The powers of the gods of the netherworld, those guaranteed by Athena in perpetuity to the Erinyes, cannot be completely set aside. The form in which they are to be expressed, however, must accord with what is rationally determined to be most beneficial to the polis, which means that what is to be considered as holy (ὅσιος) and sacred (ἱερός) must remain consequent upon what is known to be just or right (458e1-e4). Thus the right inherent in the 'family principle' Antigone espouses is not to be denied but understood here by the rulers in terms of its larger significance as a universal principle of φύσις which is implicitly rational, its difference negated and contained within the just order of the polis ideal and its νόμοι, something that Creon in *Antigone* significantly failed to realize.

As he develops his argument at this point in the *Republic*, the bleakness of Plato's vision of the capacity of human nature, as it is expressed in all but the tiniest minority of individuals, is hardly to be perceived as any less than he has portrayed for Thrasymachus, and that the writings of Euripides and Thucydides so clearly display: 'those who can do, those who cannot must suffer'. Euripides, according to Sophocles, shows us humans as they really are, while he, Sophocles, portrays them as they ought to be.[40] Plato too sees humans as they 'really are' and unlike Sophocles, or indeed Aristotle, he evinces in the *Republic* little expectation that they can be brought to any meaningful extent to understand the divided nature of the human condition in a way that will allow them to rationally actualize for themselves the good of their own nature *qua* human and thus attain to a true measure of freedom. It is a reflection of just how little expectation Plato has that the great majority of his fellows can attain to a self-actualized rational understanding of human freedom in terms of the common good that he will persist in confining the overwhelming majority of citizens in the ideal polis to the level of πίστις. "What Plato fears more than anything in *Republic* is the danger of sophistry," House suggests. For Plato, while rational insight is required as "the only possible saviour of the

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[39] These unions are to be made as sacred as possible (γάμους ...ἱερούς, 458e3). See Adam (v. 1 1963:296. On sacred marriage see further Burkert (1985:108-9) and the references cited therein.

[40] Σοφοκλῆς ἔφη αὐτὸς μὲν οἵους δεῖ ποιεῖν, Εὐριπίδην δὲ οἷοι εἰσίν (Arist. *Po.* 1460b33-4).

city," it is equally by "the capacity that it represents" that cities are destroyed.[41] The only viable alternative to continuing to live in rank ignorance at the bottom of the cave is that the whole 'herd' of men must be taken in hand by one who knows the true good, a master δημιουργός who will passively shape men in the image of freedom so that one day, perhaps, the true spirit of rational freedom may take root within the polis and bear fruit.

To this point in the *Republic*, hope has already been abandoned that the majority of the citizenry, those of the productive class, can or will ever be considered as anything more than a herd (ἀγέλη, 451c8) or flock (ποίμνιον, 451d9), a group to be passively led, their ethical horizons bounded by a limit externally imposed upon them by the ruling guardian classes. Now, as Socrates comes to discuss the sexual unions of the guardians, the difficulties to be anticipated in implementing the most rationally beneficial arrangement for marriage unions will cause him to argue that the warrior guardians themselves, those from whom the very best of citizens will emerge in due course, are also to be managed as a herd for eugenic purposes. The problem arises from the fact that, whereas all warrior guardians are purportedly equal in that they have the same kind of rational nature and perform as a unity the same τέχνη, they remain nevertheless undeniably bound to their human material particularity, and thus are inevitably subject to those individual differences Plato tries so hard to negate. As a result, it is accepted that some guardians will in fact turn out in practice to be rather more equal than others in their aptitude for the allotted task. Hence, in accord with what are known to be good animal breeding practices, it is most beneficial for the polis, that the very best males and females are mated with one another and the progeny derived from these couplings raised, whereas for the inferior members the reverse is to be the case.[42] However, the slight to individual honour and self-esteem that would inevitably result from the knowledge of being judged inferior has to be anticipated as an undoubted source of friction amongst the warrior guardians for whom, it is never to be forgotten, the θυμοειδές predominates. If the spirit

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[41] House (2002:3.16).

[42] It is evident that rational necessity demands a properly proportionate assignment of marriage unions so that the aim of breeding a herd (ποίμνιον, 459e1) of guardians of the highest quality can be effectively implemented. The eugenic principle being invoked is that by selectively breeding from the very best silver and gold individuals, and culling the rest from the herd altogether, the overall quality of the classes will be gradually improved until perhaps one could anticipate a 'golden race' of rulers will evolve. On the significance of animal analogies and breeding practices in the *Republic* see further Halliwell (1993:16-18).

of this herd (ἀγέλη, 459e3) of guardians is to be kept as far as possible free from dissension (μάλιστα ἀστασίαστος, 459e3), knowledge of what constitutes the basis of marriage arrangements must be confined to the rulers alone and the warrior guardians kept, by means of falsehood and deception (τῷ ψεύδει καὶ τῇ ἀπάτῃ, 459c8), completely unaware of the true nature of their allotted unions (459e1-3). The sole measure of worth of any individual is their potential to contribute positively to the rational κοινωνία; *qua* sensible individual they are nothing.

A veritable pharmacopoeia of myth and ritual will be employed to ensure that there is invoked in the guardian θυμός an unequivocal emotional acceptance of what the rulers rationally ordain for them. Inculcated through the use of many mind-moulding 'drugs', the marriage rituals, like the myth of the metals, must come to be accepted as an integral part of the polis cult, the piety thus invoked imaging the reality the rulers know (459c2-3).[43] Verbal deceptions which are noble falsehoods take the place of the older mythic order of the poets, presenting in a carefully controlled environment an image of the truth that is most amenable to the feeling soul.[44] Only through such endeavours, it is envisaged, will the contentious spirit of the polis, the unquenchable human thirst for τιμή crystallized in the warrior guardian class, be moulded to engender, in place of strife and divisiveness, a unifying κοινωνία of feeling expressing itself in a reverence for the polis and its law.[45] It is through the strength of this common emotional bond of feeling, an unmediated relation to the common good actualized in polis cult, that Plato hopes to effectively harness the power of the θυμοειδές, defusing its ever present threat to burst the bounds that contain it and bring about the destruction of the political κοινωνία by placing individual interest ahead of the good of the whole.

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[43] Socrates in the *Republic* goes into some detail on the organization of reproductive practices, in particular the optimum age for reproduction and the obvious practical problem of avoiding incestuous alliances. Adam's note on *R.* 461e (v. 1 1963:303-4) draws out some of the implications of the text.

[44] Socrates has earlier argued (382a1-d3) that the true lie in the soul is ignorance whereas the verbal lie, by contrast, has the therapeutic power of a drug in healing the soul. In the case of polis ritual it is used to make the fiction as like the truth as is possible. See further Reeve (1988:208-13), Bloom (1968:367). Halliwell (1993:160-1) however sees "political manipulation" and not "higher ideals" at work.

[45] Like Athena (A. *Eu.* 826-828), Socrates backs persuasion by the threat of sanctions upon those who do not conform to his strictures (461a-c).

8.3.2 Justice: the greatest good for the polis is its unity (461e-462d)

The movement as it unfolds is from the natural to the rational, from diversity to unity; it is indeed ἓν ἐκ πολλῶν that is the great battle cry of the *Republic*.[46] Resident within the natural world, man as individual exhibits like other animals an organic unity, his various specialized organs acting in concert in support of the functioning of the unified whole (462c10-d5). On a larger scale, communities of organisms, including ants, bees and men can be observed in which individuals perform a particular role for the good of the whole community as itself also a structured organic unity.[47] The question arises therefore, whether humans, as social animals, are simply a product of the sensible, arising naturally, so that man, both as individual and in community is a proper object of biological science, or whether there is a higher causal principle in accord with which the human community is structured and which maintains it in its being.[48] For Plato, it is axiomatic that the sensible, as endlessly in motion, cannot be accorded the independence that would be the result of allowing that the polis and its institutions arise out of it purely as a natural organic unity.[49] However, while what properly constitutes man's nature is on this understanding his rationality, it is not to be divorced altogether from his animality; man is in the *Republic* clearly conceived as both rational and animal. The natural world of becoming is hence to be seen neither as the totality of man's nature nor as in the understanding of the *Phaedo* alien to man's nature, but rather as participating in the Good

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[46] It is on this movement, which is grounded in a primary contrariety of the One and the Many as principles of reality, that Aristotle will focus his critique of Plato's ideal polity.

[47] Hence a hive of bees, as a 'whole of parts', can be said to have a nature independent of that of the workers, drones, and queen which are its constituent elements, a nature completed only in the context of the activity of the hive.

[48] Herbert Spencer, the 19th century founder of 'social Darwinism', promulgated what is known as the organic view of society as a 'super-organism'. Joseph (1935:83) remarks that "Spencer ...fancied that he was doing in a more scientific manner what Plato had very imperfectly attempted." Popper (1945) famously castigated the *Republic* as a dangerous totalitarian text on these grounds. More recently, Cross and Woozley (1964:76-7, 132, 135) have taken up the cudgels, claiming that "the passage from 462a-466d deserves the closest attention since here we have the language of organic theories of the state" (135). A more insightful and balanced view stems from Barker (1918:271) who points out that "[a]n organic theory based entirely on biology does not recognize the ethical aspect of the State as a society consciously self-directed towards a conception of the Good." For further interpretations see Annas (1971:178-81), Neu (1971:243-4), Vlastos (1977:14), Halliwell (1993:172-3), and Provencal (1997:73-7). For an examination of 20th century political interpretations of Plato see Lane 2001:97-134.

[49] Foster (1935:2-6) makes the important and often overlooked point that various forms of association found in nature are not mutually exclusive but may be superimposed.

as a γένεσις εἰς οὐσίαν.[50]

While there can be no greater evil for a polis, Socrates submits, than whatever tears it apart so that it becomes many instead of one, conversely no greater good is to be found than what binds it together and makes it one (462a9-b2).[51] The individual, he has argued, must harmonize and bind together the different elements in his soul so that in every way he becomes a unity from a plurality (443d5-e1). This he achieves by performing the one task that is naturally his own so that he remains one person and not many (423d2-5). It is only in this way, beginning from the individual psyche as a unity, that Plato believes it will be possible for the whole polis to be itself a unity and not a plurality (μία ...μὴ πολλαί, 423d6). Thus, the greater the harmony and unity in the individual soul the better the citizen; the greater the harmony and unity in the citizenry as a whole, but most especially in the ruling guardian class, the greater the harmony and unity there will be reflected in the life of the polis. Once it is acknowledged that the very basis of polis unity is to be sought in the nature of soul, the focus is *eo ipso* turned away from the multiplicity of natural differences which distinguish sensible individuals and are considered to determine them in their relation to family and society. All natural associations for the individuals of the guardian class, it has been argued, must be strictly ordered and defined in terms of the common good of the polis, with which they are to be directly identified. Thus, the individual family as a natural nexus of loyalty and feeling, and by the same token a powerful potential source of στάσις in the polis, must itself also become 'one from many', not so much eliminated at the guardian level as subsumed into the greater good of the κοινωνία of the polis as a whole.[52]

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[50] Cf. The metaphor of the Sun (508b12-509b10).

[51] Nettleship (1901:176) remarks that in the ensuing "argument (461 E to 466 D) ...Plato ...sets forth in the most striking way his whole conception of the relation of the citizen to the state." The picture that appears is that of a city in which the soul can see itself reflected. It is in just that kind of polis, Socrates maintains, that there is to be found a unity which resembles most closely that of a single individual human being.

[52] There would seem no reason to extend these strictures on the family to the productive class where the individual plies his trade *qua* individual. The guardians, by contrast, are to be a collective in the fullest sense possible. The *Timaeus*, long considered one of Plato's later works, begins with a summary account of an ideal polis (*Tim.* 17b1-19a9) founded on the same principle of specialization (*Tim.* 17c10-11) and organized in the same way as in the *Republic*, including the holding of wives and children in common (*Tim.* 18c7-8).

8.3.3 Friendship: the good is undivided when all is shared in common (462c-464b)

The limited, arbitrary and competing interests of individual natural family units are dissipated in the guardian class as, through the recognition of the primacy of the common kinship that binds human individuals together, the natural limits of family feeling are extended to coincide with the rational limits of political community.[53] It is in this common rational end, Plato believes, that the true good of the family and the feelings for which it is the focus are to be found. Nevertheless, whereas the polis has from the very beginning been seen to arise out of nature in accord with a rational determining principle, it is not on that account to be thought of as a solely rational κοινωνία. What preserves the rational unity of the polis by binding its citizens together is the common bond of pleasure and pain that is shared when as nearly as possible all the citizens rejoice and grieve at the same things (462b4-6). Conversely, it is when these same feelings are expressed privately, some rejoicing and others grieving at the same events, as when the words 'mine' and 'not mine' (τό τε ἐμὸν καὶ τὸ οὐκ ἐμόν) are not spoken by all in unison, that the unity of the κοινωνία is destroyed (462b8-c5). Hence, the best ordered polis, considered as a κοινωνία πολιτῶν in which friends hold all in common (κοινὰ τὰ φίλων, 449c5) must be considered to be the one in which the greatest number say 'mine' and 'not mine' about the same things in the same way (462c7-8).[54] The polis is therefore to exhibit a natural collective consciousness of its own good resident in the leadership of the reasoning element which ensures its ὁμόνοια. Brought to mind is the conception of the citizens as a κοινοφιλὴς διάνοια under the leadership of Athena and the council of the Areopagus in *Eumenides*. However, also, in a contrasting and antithetical image, there is a reminder of the dangers that lie hidden in conditioning the citizenry to follow blindly,

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[53] Doull (1982:127) argues that Plato was right in realizing "that the Hellenic family, which had its independent relation to the gods and could expect an unqualified attachment from its members, was the final impediment to the formation of a political community which should know and be obedient to the good and a just ordering of human interests to it."

[54] When any part of a man suffers an injury, feelings of pain extend through the body to the soul, as a sort of movement (κίνησίς τις) in the soul, as he will later express it. See 583e9-10, 584c4-5. What is to be made clear is that it is the man who, as the self-conscious subject of the pain inflicted, perceives this hurt. Halliwell (1993:173) rightly notes that this passage can be seen "as partially anticipating the Aristotelian doctrine of a 'common sense'." Cf. Pl. *Phlb.* 34a3-5. Similarly, the best governed (πολιτεύομαι) polis is that which resembles most closely such an individual. When any one of its citizens suffers either good or ill this polis will say that the one affected is a part of itself and will rejoice or grieve together as a whole (462d6-e2).

as a Bacchant κοινωνία, wherever the leadership of a demagogue directs them.[55]

As the community of the citizenry, shaped by reason, approaches the unity of the individual soul, it too Plato believes will become φίλαυτος, a friend to itself.[56] The guardians, in their common bond of feeling, will identify with one another, sharing to the highest degree each other's pleasures and pains as members of a single family. As a result, when any one of them does well or badly they will all speak in common the words 'mine' is doing well or 'mine' is doing badly (463e-464a6). This it has been agreed is the greatest good for the polis, one that has been shown to originate in the institution of the κοινωνία of women and children among the warrior guardians (464b1-6). With the postulating of a direct correspondence between the effects of pleasure and pain on a single human body and the response of the body politic as a whole, Socrates has drawn within the sphere of reason and limit the whole spectrum of appetitive desires as they are held in their primary dyadic opposition of pleasure and pain. By this means, he seeks to form a union between reason and feeling in which the endless particularity of external sensible difference, negated in a natural κοινωνία of feeling in the warrior guardians, is moulded by the lawgivers to conform to the dictates of a unified rational political κοινωνία; a single ethical substance is to be formed as a κοινωνία πολιτῶν πολιτείας in which particular and common good, justice in the individual, the family, and the polis, are acknowledged to be the same.

8.4 Elimination of strife requires the proper predisposition of θυμός (464b-471b)

The polis has taken form as the appearance of soul in the community. What sustains it in its unity and gives it its proper organization as a polity is seen to be the mutually beneficial reciprocal relationship that pertains between the ruling guardians and the productive class they rule. In other cities, Socrates maintains, this kind of relationship between rulers and ruled is not found, but rather one which is based on compulsion and

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[55] Socrates will recognize later in his account the very real dangers inherent in attempting to bring the polis to philosophy. See below 8.6.

[56] Socrates has earlier argued the unifying of the soul by the self-conscious subject concerned with his inner nature as his true self (443c10-d1). As such, a man is concerned with harmonizing the three parts of his soul, binding them into a unity so that he is a friend to himself (443d3-e4). The soul of the demagogue, or sophist, he has argued against Thrasymachus, divorced from a true understanding of justice, is inevitably beset by strife.

not freely embraced, and so is akin to that of master and slave (463a10-b5). That it is upon the proper disposition of θυμός that the success or failure of this polis ideal rides is very clear. Only when allied unequivocally to the rule of right reason will the naturally ambitious and competitive element of spirit serve the common good, and the heart of the polis thus beat as one. It is the very essence of this powerful drive, however, that it seeks and obtains satisfaction in the form of external honour. Just as the body must satisfy certain essential physical needs to assure its very survival, τιμή and κλέος provide essential nourishment for the maintenance of the φιλοτιμία which characterizes the heroic spirit. Everything that has been said about the warrior guardians to this point has been with the intent of making them truly guardians of the polis and preventing them from breaking it apart, by not saying 'mine' and 'not mine' in unison to the same thing, and so introducing a divided good in the form of private pleasures and pains (464c6-d3). Possessing now nothing for themselves except their body, the guardians will be free, it is argued, of the στάσις which originates in the personal possession of money, children, and families (464d8-e2). Yet, given that their naturally aggressive nature is necessary to the protection of the polis it is important that it not be completely suppressed. The guardian has to retain an essential dyadic capacity to both gentleness and fierceness. However, if this 'fierceness' is not to break out indiscriminately, overstepping the limits that a careful education and the removal of occasion has accustomed it, certain means of relieving the pressure points and providing an outlet for θυμός must be incorporated into guardian life.

What the guardian still has left for himself is his personal sense of honour, the pride he takes in his own prowess in the common cause.[57] Hence Socrates allows that tensions will arise between individual guardians which may be relieved by physical contests. However, whereas fighting between guardians can be countenanced and even lauded, it cannot contravene those traditional moral values long accepted to be the basis of society.[58] Individual families have been abolished for the guardians as a potent source of

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[57] The κοινωνία of guardians is now known to be constituted of males and females. The male pronoun will continue to be employed for convenience to include both genders.

[58] 'Honour the gods' and 'honour parents' are the foundation of Greek popular morality, the guarantor of "the continuity of the group, which is defined by its rules of conduct" (Burkert (1985:249). Thus fights are limited to those between age-mates. Such encounters are in fact to be counted as noble and just (καλὸν καὶ δίκαιον), honing the combative skills of the protagonist while serving at the same time the purpose of defusing any more serious strife (464e4-465a3).

divided loyalties but the structure of the family itself and its bonds of αἰδώς and φιλία are to be retained as crucial to the furtherance of κοινωνία. As elsewhere in his consideration of the guardians as a class in which θυμός is dominant, Plato's primary concern is with the prevention of strife. Hence, he requires the inculcation by whatever means are available (myth, ritual, deception, and now natural instinctual affinities) of binding ties which will result in a κοινωνία of feeling. The relationships which characterize individual family members as parent, child, or sibling are as a result not to be thought of as simply nominal in the guardian family but must be accompanied in practice by appropriate action. While the natural ties of blood that formerly delineated individual family units have been transcended, the instinctual bonds of feeling which they evoke are expanded to embrace the whole guardian group as a single familial entity.[59] Hence, a man who does not show the respect, care and obedience to his parents that the law requires will fare well by neither gods nor men since his actions are neither holy nor just (463c8-d5). The twin guardians of fear and respect, the powers the 'Dread Goddesses' wield at Athena's behest, will set the limits also for their human embodiment, the αἰδώς which commands respect for parents and the δέος which comes from the knowledge that the sons, brothers, and fathers of the victim will come to his aid (465a5-b3). With these laws in effect, Socrates pronounces, people will live at peace with one another.[60] If there is no strife (στασιάζω) among the guardians, there will no fear that the rest of the polis will initiate dissension either against them or among themselves (465b5-10). It is at this point, Socrates concludes, that the argument has moved from seeing happiness as power in the service of individual πλεονεξία, implied in the earlier claim that the guardians would not be happy with the life Socrates prescribes for them (419a1-5), to the idea of happiness as power in the service of the rational good of the political κοινωνία.

In turning the eye of the soul away from the ποικιλία of the sensible flux to the common

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[59] What Plato sees as essential in this regard is not the relationships themselves but the φιλία that is generated by mutually beneficial reciprocal ties. See Reeve (1988:207). Cf. Halliwell (1993:20) who finds the abstraction of kinship relations from the family paradoxical. Aristotle famously dismisses these ties as 'watery φιλία' (*Pol.* 1262b15).

[60] Where fighting between individuals is just and noble there is no cause for taking sides and forming factions. Where a fight is shameful and unlawful no one will want to side with the aggressor, so no faction will form.

rational good of the political κοινωνία, the guardians are argued to achieve a truer freedom and happiness than the productive class.[61] Nevertheless, although the warrior guardians pursue a rational objective end, it cannot be said that they do so either necessarily or completely unequivocally. As Socrates strips the guardians naked, both literally and metaphorically, he bares for all to see what is residual and ineluctable to their psyche. With no material possessions of its own and no personal household with which to identify its emotional interests, the θυμός-dominated nature of the warrior guardian is exposed in its essence as a sense of self-worth concentrated in a conception of personal repute.[62] Lacking a complete possession of the end as rational, the warrior guardian θυμοειδές seeks a tangible recognition for its efforts, rewards attendant traditionally upon a life of honour. The self-esteem of the warrior guardians hence requires not only that they actually *be* good, acting justly in accord with their own nature and education to their particular task, but also that they *be seen* and acknowledged to be so by their 'heroic' community.[63]

It is in warfare, therefore, that the spirit of the guardians, their heroic θυμός, will be afforded its most effective outlet.[64] Hence, guardians who rise to the challenge and

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[61]Thus, freed from all the mundane day-to-day cares and vicissitudes that attend upon a life immersed in the contingency of the sensible, the guardians, Socrates declares, will live a life more blessed and happy than that of Olympic victors. Their own victory will be more noble in that it is the assurance of the very preservation in existence of the whole polis (465b12-d8). See Halliwell (1993:180).

[62] Hobbs (2000:30) makes the point well, claiming "that the essence of the human *thumos* is the need to believe that one counts for something, and that central to this need will be a tendency to form an ideal image of oneself in accordance with one's conception of the fine and noble. This ideal of oneself also needs to be confirmed by social recognition." The transition from the outer life of honour (the traditional heroic ethos) to the inner life of virtue is incomplete at the level of the warrior guardians. They have not reached a stage where they can forego the pleasure of a public 'triumph'. Whereas they are not to be compared with the hero Odysseus as we see him in his vaunting hubristic boast of his victory over Polyphemus (Hom. *Od.* 9.475-9), neither has their education brought them in their own νόστος to the point that they can readily exhibit the forbearance that Odysseus is later able to show following the slaying of the suitors (Hom. *Od.* 22.411-12).

[63] Aristotle (*EN* 1095b22-30) distinguishes the life of honour, which he says seems dependent more on those honouring than the one being honoured, and the life of virtue. People in all likelihood, he concludes, seek honour to convince themselves of their own goodness. Socrates acknowledges the necessity to accommodate this demand; those who distinguish themselves must receive a proper γέρας (460b1-2). The tensions that Odysseus finds bubbling below the peaceful surface of the ideal city of Scheria can be recalled (*Od.* 6.273-85; 7.12; 8.159-411). The combination of wisdom and power that Odysseus exhibits there, Plato will find essential to his rulers as they recognize and control ongoing threats to the persistence of the polis from human θυμός

[64] Cf. Athena's charge to the Erinyes to turn her citizens' fury outwards rather than inwards upon themselves (A. *Eu.* 858-866). See further Sommerstein's commentary on *Eu.* 865 (1989:253).

triumph on the battlefield, thus earning the esteem of their comrades, will be given an ἀριστεῖα as a tangible public recognition of their success (468b2-c4). While on the surface introduction of special honours for individuals might seem inconsistent with the tenor of the whole discussion on the guardian κοινωνία, it can be seen on reflection to be further indicative of Plato's overriding concern with unity. The warrior guardians, unable to fully actualize themselves in relation to the unity which is the end in the philosophic life of reason, find their own unity in the immediacy of a common bond of feeling. So that for them the unity of the polis comes to be personified in its heroes, those with whom the citizens as a whole can identify as the focal point of polis integrity in practice and as the embodiment of a proper exertion of θυμός in reinforcement of the polis ethic (468e1-2).[65] It is as such an exemplar that the successful warriors' exploits are to be celebrated both by the establishment of specific rites and the institution of a hero cult, providing that ἄφθιτον κλέος which transcends the division of life and death and is the reward that the heroic θυμός naturally seeks for its virtue.[66]

It is the sustained recognition in the *Republic* that the successful human community is to be founded not solely in reason, but through rational principles exercised in meaningful consort with a natural unmediated κοινωνία of feeling, an emotional impetus that drives citizens in a concerted movement towards the end as a desired good, that allows us to see that what is being discussed is not an utopian ideal existing separate and apart but something that is meaningful in truly human terms, innate to the full expression of the human psyche. It is through participation in collective cult that the feeling side of the soul is seen to be drawn most immediately into relation with the rational order of the polis. Hence, the practices of traditional religion will remain essential to the promotion and maintenance of group solidarity and ὁμόνοια in the encompassing rational κοινωνία. Justice itself is imaged in the expression of polis piety as indeed it was earlier seen to be

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[65] Commensurate with this recognition of the life of honour as the outward expression of the political good, the bravery exhibited by a living warrior guardian will be rewarded with the kind of public acclaim that Homer's heroes are said to have been accorded by their community. The relation of the Homeric hero to the community that supports him is expressed clearly in Sarpedon's speech to Glaucos (Hom. *Il.* 12.310-28).

[66] Whilst the living hero is honoured and presented as a role model, the dead hero, removed forever from the world of change and corruptibility, can be seen as the pure spirit of polis unity to be honoured in polis cult as an ἁγνὸς δαίμων, guarding mortal men and staving off evil from them (469a1-2). Cf. Hes. *Op.* 122-3. See also Burkert (1985:205).

at the end of the *Oresteia*.[67] Both reason and feeling must be active as principles of political κοινωνία, coming together concretely in actual cities to reveal in the choice of the desired end a successive path between disorder and order, diversity and unity. The common lesson emerging from the three tragic dramas investigated, one that becomes increasingly urgent during the course of the 5th century, is that, actualized unilaterally, these principles are antithetic to the realization of the political ideal. In *Bacchae*, Euripides revealed in all its devastation the effects of their collision at its most abstract and opposed in the clash between Pentheus and the Bacchic κοινωνία. Zeus it is, Hegel observes, who is seen in tragic drama as "the necessity of the relation of the two to one another."[68] It is towards this same consideration that the argument of the *Republic* has steadily moved. What has been found tragically torn asunder as irreducible elements of society, Plato carefully attempts to bring into fruitful relation once more. Thus, employing his own considerable psychological insights, he reconstructs the polis in discourse as a natural κοινωνία of feeling ordered to an objective rational principle to form a harmonious whole. At the same time, he has provided in his account of the warrior guardians a λόγος not only of how the principles are to be related but of the nature of the disjunctures through which στάσις is reintroduced. Freed from its attachment to partial goods, the soul has reached the point where it can now turn its gaze inward and upward towards a higher divine and universal principle which has to this point come into view only negatively: that which is in itself unconditionally good.[69]

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[67] Burkert (1985:255-6) stresses the importance of religion in shaping the polis community. While Plato's polis is a rational κοινωνία whose deities will ultimately be revealed stripped of their anthropomorphism, the majority do not know them as such and must be provided with 'true images' in traditional religious form.

[68] Paolucci (1962:296). Hegel is here commenting upon the opposition of Apollo and the Erinyes in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. His consideration of the opposition of Creon and Antigone in Sophocles' *Antigone* argues similarly.

[69] See Doull 1982:121. What also comes to the fore at this point is the recognition that the principles that have been found to be constitutive of the just polis, must be acknowledged to be universally applicable wherever men are associated in a rationally ordered community. All Greeks are seen to share a common inner identity in which reason and freedom seek to prevail over the forces of irrational necessity; one which unites them and demarcates them from the barbarians who are alien and outsiders (470c1-3). Barbarians are here deemed to be dominated by natural appetitive and θυμός driven urges and as a result lack the capacity to form a rational political κοινωνία (cf. 443e3-436a3). For further considerations see Kochin (2002:70-2), Craig (1994:13). In the *Statesman* (*Plt.* 262c-d) the Eleatic Stranger will criticize a primary division of the human γένος into Greeks and barbarians on logical grounds.

8.5 If the just polis is to come to be, the philosopher must rule (471c-489c)

Finally towering over the argument is the most difficult to surmount of the waves of objections Socrates must face, the question of whether and how the polis ideal which has been so carefully constructed in discourse can ever be instantiated in practice (472a3-7). Indeed, he is hesitant to subject to examination such a παράδοξος λόγος as will be needed. Their present position has been arrived at, Socrates reminds his hearers, in the course of seeking the nature of justice and injustice. To enquire what justice *is*, however, is not the same as to examine the *appearance* of justice in the just man. The just man is not identical with justice itself, but is the one who participates (μετέχω) most completely in it. The world of motion and change (τὰ γιγνόμενα), it has to be recognized, is always inadequate to the reality of what *is* (τὰ ὄντα).[70] It has been in fact to provide a model, a παράδειγμα against which the goodness and happiness of human lives can be measured, that the search for the nature of justice has been undertaken, and not to establish that the just man actually exists (472b3-c2).[71] Such is the case with respect to the polis also. Thus, it has not been to prove that the polis they have constructed could be founded in practice, but to a produce a model of the good polis in discourse (παράδειγμα ...λόγῳ ἀγαθῆς πόλεως) that the discussion has aimed (472d9-e4).[72] Hence, what must be inquired is how the polis can be constituted so as to most closely approximate that ideal which has been described. To the extent that it can meet this demand, its existence in practice will be deemed possible (473a1-b1).

Confined to the fluctuating world of experience and opinion, without access to the knowledge of unchanging eternal truths, human association inevitably falls short of the best it can be. However, if existing cities are examined to determine what prevents them from being governed in the very best possible way, there is one essential change that can be identified which, if it were to be implemented, would bring about the kind of polis that

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[70] See Nettleship (1901:184). Cf. *R.* 485b1-3.

[71] It is, Socrates says, as if a painter, having produced a παράδειγμα complete in detail of the most beautiful man, should be considered less an artist because he could not show that it is possible for such a man to exist (472c4-d7). Cf. 484c6-d3, 500e1-501c2 where Socrates describes the philosopher rulers as painters employing the divine model to delineate the polis.

[72] It should not be expected that what is described for the ideal polis in theory (τῷ λόγῳ) can be exactly replicated in practice (τῷ ἔργῳ), since praxis has less of a hold on truth than an account in speech (473a1-3).

is being sought (473b4-c4). Even at the risk of being totally engulfed by ridicule and contempt it must be said that there will be no respite from evil for cities, or for humankind, unless philosophers come to rule in the cities or those now ruling come to a sufficient understanding of philosophy; which is to say until praxis and theory (δύναμίς τε πολιτικὴ καὶ φιλοσοφία, 473d3) are brought into relation with one another (473c11-d6). Unless this state of affairs can be effected, the polity which has recently been constituted in theory will never see the light of day. That what he proposes will be considered to be πολὺ παρὰ δόξαν and that he himself shrinks from the challenge it presents, Socrates ruefully admits. For it is, as he says, difficult to envisage that there can be no other way to happiness, whether in private or in public life, than that which is resident in the contention that theory and praxis must be friends (473e1-5).[73]

8.5.1 The philosopher is revealed as the lover of Truth & Reality (474c-480a)

What Plato consistently maintains is that it is the ideal, the truth towards which thought reaches, that is really real (ὄντως ὄν, 585d8) and not the external world of experience from which it must be distinguished. It is the philosopher, as the lover of truth, the seeker after knowledge, who holds the key to the door which opens upon truth and reality. Able to reach beyond the spectacle of the sensible, the philosopher comes to a knowledge of its ground in the εἴδη, the unchanging Forms, each itself one (αὐτὸ μὲν ἓν ἕκαστον) but appearing everywhere in the sensible world to be many (πολλὰ φαίνεσθαι ἕκαστον) through association with actions and bodies and with one another (475b8-467a7). It is on these illusory images that the gaze of the many, intent on sensory gratification, is focussed, a dream-like world in which the likeness is mistaken for the reality. Few indeed are those who can transcend the siren call of the sensible, the love of beautiful things in all their manifest appearances, and ascend in thought to reach and gaze upon Beauty in itself (476a9-b11).[74] Such a one, however, is the philosopher, the lover of the spectacle of truth (τοὺς τῆς ἀληθείας ...φιλοθεάμονας, 475e4). Knowledge must be of something that *is*, Socrates points out, for how could that which *is not* be known

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[73] οὔτε ἰδίᾳ οὔτε δημοσίᾳ (473e5). Happiness is being linked implicitly at this point to justice. See Halliwell (1993:200) who notes that "the mutual entailment of justice and happiness will not be finally asserted until 9.580-92b, 10.612 ff."

[74] The theory of the Forms is to be taken as familiar to Socrates' hearers (476a8). The movement to the Forms is described in terms reminiscent of the *Symposium* and the 'birth in beauty' revealed to Socrates by Diotoma (Pl. *Smp.* 208e2-212a7).

(477a1)?[75] It can be taken as certain, therefore, that what is completely real is most fully knowable (τὸ μὲν παντελῶς ὂν παντελῶς γνωστόν) and that that which in no way *is* (μὴ ὂν) is altogether unknowable (477a1-4).

Being and non-being stand opposed in a logic of same and other, a unifying formal principle of self-identity ranged against a material principle which is its negation, the indeterminacy of all that it is not.[76] From these opposed and contrary formal and material principles, everything in the natural world can be conceived to be constituted as a composite of form and matter, being and not-being, endlessly in process imperfectly imaging its ideal. It is between these poles of knowledge and ignorance that there lies the fluctuating realm of language and opinion which is the sphere of human community.[77] Those who deny there is any objective reality, and the sophist can be understood here to be prominent among them, reject the existence of anything that is self-identical such as Beauty or Justice itself, and seek to grasp the world as sensible appearance.[78] By contrast, the philosopher, as a lover of knowledge, recognizes that the activity of thought is prior to what is given in sensible appearance and hence turns his soul away from these fluctuating ephemera to reflect upon what is real, that which in each case truly *is* (480a11-12). Where others, the great majority, immerse themselves in the sensible ποικιλία, the philosopher seeks to bring this diversity in relation to a prior intelligible unity. The objects of δόξα, he sees, not as nothing, but as endlessly inadequate to the ideal to which they are naturally ordered, images of the true realities, the Forms, found encrusted with contingency. So that appearance masquerading as reality spawns ethical

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[75] πῶς γὰρ ἂν μὴ ὄν γέ τι γνωσθείη; cf. Parmenides Fr. 2.7 DK: οὔτε γὰρ ἂν γνοίης τό μὴ ἐόν.

[76] The indeterminate material principle of non-being as ἕτερον can be contrasted with Aristotle's conception of matter as determinate non-being, δύναμις πρός τι; so that matter is for Aristotle potentially its Form and not simply contrary and opposed.

[77] The object of δόξα in some way both is and is not (ἅμα ὄν τε καὶ μὴ ὄν, 478d5-6). It is more obscure than knowledge yet clearer than ignorance (478c3-d9).

[78] Fastening their gaze upon this wandering intermediate, they can be said to opine everything but to know nothing about that which they opine (479d7-e5). Cf. Pl. *Tht.* 167c4-5 where Protagoras is argued to maintain that whatever *seems* to be just and fine (δίκαια καὶ καλά) for each polis *is* so for each. Also Pl. *Smp.* 210e6-211a5 where Diotima compares the nature of Beauty itself to the relativity of its sensible appearances. All the beautiful things that those who fix their gaze on sensible appearances experience can also be perceived as ugly, the just as unjust and the pious as impious. So that the many customary and conventional views (νόμιμα) held by the majority of people on beauty and other things simply roll around between that which has no being at all and that which is truly real (478e7-479d5). On 'the argument from opposites' see Allen (1971:172-3).

dilemma and tragic conflict, goods divided and opposed to one another disrupting the life of individual and community alike.

8.5.2 The philosopher ruler brings together theory & praxis (484a-489c)

Only with the philosopher as ruler, Socrates maintains, can the ideal of the polity which has been developed for thought be brought to fruition in the sensible as a composite 'whole' which is a true unity, one from which στάσις is absent.[79] Grounded in the ideal as what is really real, the polis, its laws no longer based on right opinion (ὀρθὴ δόξα) but on knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), will achieve a real stability, the harmony constitutive of the just city and soul finally seen now in its dependence on a higher sustaining causal principle, which is Justice itself.[80] Poised between the natural and the divine, the polis mediates through its ethical life the relation of particular and universal. So that the good of individual and family and the common good of the community, no longer appearing as divided and opposed, are seen in their identity in their ultimate dependence on the Idea of the Good itself.[81] If the polis community is the 'receptacle' within which the world of appearance is approximated most closely to the divine, it is the philosopher who, as δημιουργός, incarnates the just πολιτεία, bringing to life in the sensible world the polis ideal as a κοινωνία πολιτῶν πολιτείας.[82] However, with the widely held opinion that as

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[79] 473a1-b1 has made it clear that the ideal of the polis as it is articulated in theory is only incompletely realizable in the world of process. That which comes nearest to this ideal, held within its encompassing parameters, is what is sought (473a7-b1).

[80] Later (522a4-5), as Socrates begins to discuss the advanced education required for the philosopher rulers, Glaucon will refer to the earlier education described for the guardians as providing a certain harmony and establishing appropriate habits (ἔθη) but not knowledge (ἐπιστήμη).

[81] Standing apart (ἄλλο, 508e5), beyond the division of being and truth that marks the sensible world of becoming, the Idea of the Good is the cause of knowledge and truth (αἰτίαν δ' ἐπιστήμης οὖσαν καὶ ἀληθείας, 508e3-4). The Good Plato understands to be a true principle, both other than and comprehensive of its product - the sensible world of becoming. Aristotle will argue, however, that Plato can only speak about his principle in poetic metaphors (μεταφορὰς λέγειν ποιητικάς, *Metaph.* 1079b26), unable to show how the Good Itself can be an effective cause of the good in anything other than it (*EN* 1096b20-6). For further considerations of the Idea of the Good see, in particular, Gadamer (1986:84-90), Santas (1983), White (1979:178-81) with the references there cited. See also Joseph 1948, Nettleship (1901:212-37.

[82] Awakening within his soul a clear model (ἐναργὲς ...παράδειγμα, 484c7-8) of the true reality, the philosopher ruler draws together theory and praxis to bring into being in the polis laws and practices concerning the beautiful, the just and the good which image the ideal in his soul (484b8-d3). Eschewing the objects of δόξα, he strives naturally towards what *is* (τὸ ὄν), generating understanding and truth (νοῦν καὶ ἀλήθειαν) through consorting with true reality (μιγεὶς τῷ ὄντι ὄντως) with that part of his soul to which it belongs naturally to attain to it because of its kinship with it (490a8-b7). Cf. Pl. *Smp.* 210a-212a; *Phdr.* 246e-247d. Only when he knows does man truly live (γνοίη τε καὶ ἀληθῶς ζώη, 490b6). An important proviso that Socrates also includes must not be forgotten however: the guardian rulers are not

matters presently stand philosophers are rightly spoken of as useless or base, Socrates cannot but agree.[83] Nevertheless, paradoxical as it would seem, he insists that it remains true to say that there will be no respite from evil for the polis until philosophers come to rule (487d6-e5). It is important therefore to come to an understanding of just what the barriers are that militate against the productive relationship of theory and praxis that makes possible the polis ideal, rescuing the human community from a pervading disorder and στάσις.[84]

Central to Socrates' ensuing argument is the contention that the polis, as it has been conceived, can never become a reality unless it is possible to overcome the divorce of theory from praxis everywhere to be observed, and bring together in a single logic true philosophical knowledge and the practical power to put it to effect. That Thrasymachus, while not contributing actively to the discussion, is nevertheless still present, still listening, is of inestimable importance to this endeavour. If such a polis is ever to come into being concretely, Socrates and Thrasymachus must be friends; only then will the polis itself be said to be φίλαυτος. In broader terms, philosophy, the study of what is ὄντως ὄν, must be shown to be capable of meeting and overcoming the all-pervasive challenge that sophistry and its shifting, contradictory world of appearance and opinion presents. Only then will it become clear how, out of itself, nature discloses its own incompleteness and dependence upon the rational Good. The philosopher must be able to go down (καταβατέον, 520c1) to the very bottom of the cave and turn the souls of the citizens he finds there away from the images, the glittering spectacles that transfix them, and towards the clear light of the sun so that they may be brought to participate in the life of justice and order which marks the true city.[85] However weak and flickering are its

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only lovers of the truth but also not inferior in experience (ἐμπειρία) to others (484d5-7). Cf. 409c4-d4, 493b5-c8, 520c1-d1. See Nettleship (1901:199).

[83] Observation reveals that in practice most of those who continue to pursue philosophy through their adult life become perverse, even thoroughly depraved, while those who seem to be the most able among them become useless to their cities as a result of their devotion to their pursuit (487b1-d5). Cf. Pl. *Grg.* 484c486; *Tht.* 173c-176a; *Phd.* 64-67b.

[84] Nettleship (1901:203) notes that Socrates considers "in order the uselessness of the few genuine philosophers, the corruption of most of those who are gifted with the philosophic nature, and the usurpation of the name of philosopher by charlatans."

[85] Burnyeat (1997:5-7) brings out the connection between the imagery of the opening lines of the *Republic* and that of 520c1-d1, suggesting that "the Peiraeus at night lit by torches becomes an image of the prison-dwelling in the cave, which in turn is an image (εἰκών, 517a8) of the sensible world as such" (6).

reflections, Plato contends, the light of reason with which the Good bathes the sensible will be found to penetrate nevertheless to its farthest reaches.[86] It is to these depths that the philosopher must descend as he attempts to bring the divided into relation with the undivided: content with logical form.

The uselessness of theory divorced from praxis, which is to say of even the good philosopher as things presently stand, Socrates illustrates with one of a series of powerful images with which he will drive his argument forward (488a7-489d5). The polis, he says, can be likened to a ship whose master, and it is the Athenian δῆμος that is here implied, although surpassing all others on the vessel in size and strength, is somewhat deaf and short-sighted, and similarly deficient in a knowledge of seamanship.[87] The sailors, for which we can understand the rhetors or demagogues, fight each other (στασιάζοντας πρὸς ἀλλήλους, 488b3) for control of the helm, each believing that he should pilot the ship, although knowing nothing of the art of navigation, claiming indeed that it cannot be taught and ready to cut to ribbons anyone who impugns them by saying otherwise.[88] It is the man who is clever at contriving to rule by persuading or constraining by force the will of his fellows in the δῆμος who is looked to as leader and considered to be knowledgeable in political matters, anyone else is censured as useless. There is no recognition of the fact that the true helmsman must have a τέχνη; that he must be attentive to such things as the season, the heavens, the stars, the winds and everything else which pertains to his craft.[89] On ships such as this the true pilot, the

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[86] The Good is the final cause of everything. Every soul (ἅπασα ψυχή), however tenuous its grasp, pursues the good and does everything for the sake of it (505d11-e4). See Stalley (1998:152). On the teleological nature of the Good, cf. Pl. *Phd.* 97b8-d5; *Phlb.* 20d1-10.

[87] Aristotle affirms that by ναύκληρον Plato is referring to the people (*Rh.* 1406b35).

[88] Socrates proffers a detailed and devastating critique of contemporary society at this point (488b8-c7), amplifying upon Plato's account in the *Seventh Letter*. Cf. Pl. *Ap.* c6-7 where Socrates speaks of his own experience on examination of these politicians (οἱ πολιτικοί) who, although they appeared wise to many and particularly to themselves, were not. Trying to demonstrate to them that, while they supposed themselves to know, in reality they knew nothing, he thereby, he says, incurred the hatred of many (*Ap.* 21c1-e2).

[89] The true pilot, for Plato, is not the one who happens to be at the helm, the one who appears to know but does not, but the one who is in possession of the appropriate knowledge and when called upon can put it into effect. Indeed, the only form of polity that can correctly be said to be such, he will reaffirm in the *Statesman*, is the one in which the rulers truly know and do not just appear to know how to govern (*Plt.* 293c5-7). Thrasymachus, in that he has recognized that he does need a τέχνη of ruling, is not irretrievably committed to the sophistic. He can potentially be converted by Socrates to philosophy.

philosopher, is dismissed by the sailors as an idle, useless, stargazer. There can be no mistaking for Socrates the resemblance of the sort of situation he has described to that prevailing in cities at the time. This being so, he admits, the apparent uselessness of the philosopher, the lack of esteem with which he is regarded in the polis, can hardly be seen as in any way surprising. However, what does have to be recognized is that it is not the philosopher at whose door the blame for this state of affairs is to be laid. Nor will it be possible to overcome the severe malady that has afflicted the polis, and prevented it from realizing its true good, until the citizens themselves recognize that they are sick and turn of their own accord to the philosopher as their true ruler, or navigator, to govern them and cure them of their disorder. Plato will later affirm (499d10-500a7) what he hints at here that, although somewhat dull-witted, the δῆμος is nevertheless inherently noble in nature so that once the prejudice which they hold against the love of learning has been removed the many will be receptive to philosophic rule, thus turning their souls towards the light.[90]

8.6 The sickness that is rife within the polis is sophistry (489c-497c)

The sickness that infects the polis and blights the natures of even the most noble of its offspring is identified to be sophistry, the equation of praxis with the will to power and pleasure rather than with the will to truth. The philosophic nature, which is in any case rare, is, by dint of those very qualities that properly nurtured make it the best, at the same time most readily susceptible to the corrupting influences which impress themselves upon it. Every seed in order to flourish, Socrates points out, must be grown to maturity in its proper environment and this is particularly true of those more vigorous by nature; for it is the most naturally well-endowed souls that when badly educated become exceptionally wicked. Hence, only if the philosophic nature receives the proper instruction will it grow to its full excellence; sown and grown in an adverse environment it will fail to thrive and wither away, in the absence of some divine intervention (491a8-492a5). The chief architects of the deformation and corruption of the soul of the noble youth, however, are

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[90] Aristophanes' *Knights*, produced in 424 B. C., portrays the Athenian δῆμος in a similar way in the person of Demos of the Pnyx, a fractious and disagreeable old man, stupid and hard of hearing, held totally in the thrall of the arch demagogue, Cleon, who bribes, flatters, cajoles and bullies his master. Yet, in the end, with Cleon outwitted by the comic hero, the δῆμος, freed from the self-aggrandisement and sophistic manipulations of the demagogues, is reformed to its true nature, regaining the lost ethical integrity of the glory days of Marathon.

not, as might be supposed, individual sophists teaching privately (σοφιστὰς ἰδιωτικούς, 492a7). Rather, it is the πολλοί, the people themselves, who are the greatest sophists of all (μεγίστους ...σοφιστάς), educating most effectively and moulding as they wish both old and young, men and women alike (492a8-c2).[91] The tyranny exercised by the majority through the incessant clamour of public opinion, in the assemblies, the law courts, the theatre, camps, and other public gatherings, is the single most powerful influence exerted on an impressionable young mind.[92] The picture Plato evokes calls to mind again the equation of νόμος with φύσις, witnessed in the behaviour of the Athenian assembly in the Mytilenean debate (Th. 3.36-50) and in the immediate, instinctual responses of Euripides' Bacchic κοινωνία. It is very clear now why Plato sees the necessary primary step in reforming the polis to be the radical overhaul of the educational milieu and the moral values imbued in the young. Sophistic relativism, which here means everything that is not founded upon a basis of knowledge, or right opinion, must be rooted out from the beginning at source.[93]

The image that is proffered in illustration no longer sees the κοινωνία πολιτῶν as simply passively subject to the will of its leaders, but as itself a great and powerful beast (θρέμματος μεγάλου καὶ ἰσχυροῦ) tended by keepers who must themselves adapt their counsels to conform to the satisfaction of its unmediated instinctual passions and desires. Here as before there are echoes of the Mytilinean debate, in particular now Cleon's exhortation to the Athenian assembly to be true to its own initial instinctual emotional response (Th. 3.37.3-5).[94] What these keepers teach, Socrates argues, is in fact nothing

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[91] Socrates' own efforts to turn the souls of his young interlocutors away from their preconceptions and towards philosophy were of course not appreciated by the δῆμος. Athens' charge against Socrates that he 'corrupted the youth' stemmed from his ongoing attempts to have them examine the rational basis of the ethical and social norms which they were being asked to adopt.

[92] No private education can withstand the force of this pressure and fail to be borne along wherever the tide of public opinion takes it. So that the youth will call the same things noble and base as do the many and act in whatever way the many do and be such as they are (492c2-8). Should the words of these παιδευταί ...σοφισταί fail to persuade, the will of the masses can be enforced by actions such as disenfranchisement, fines, and death (492d5-7).

[93] Socrates will later maintain that the first act of the philosopher as ruler will in fact be to take the polis and the characters of men and as if it were a writing tablet wipe it clean (501a2-7). Socrates' whole life was devoted to trying to bring about such a catharsis in the individuals with whom he interacted: to strip them of all those comfortable preconceptions that made them secure in their opinions so that at the end of their encounter with him they no longer had any idea of who they were. Cf. Pl. *Ap.* 21b1-23c2.

[94] Cf. also the maenad κοινωνία of *Bacchae*. Among the keepers of this beast-like political κοινωνία, Socrates includes not only those teachers generally spoken of as sophists but all those other 'sophists', those

different from what the many opine.[95] Thus, in their intent to cater to the perceived interests of the beast, they call what is necessary to their purpose just and beautiful, having no notion of how in reality the nature of the necessary (ἀναγκαῖον) and that of the good (ἀγαθόν) differ (493c4-6).[96] As for the masses themselves, the πλῆθος who presently dictate the way that the ethical life of the polis is perceived, they can neither tolerate nor conceive of the Beautiful itself (αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν) apart from the many beautiful things, nor indeed of anything as existing in itself apart from the many particular things in which it is found (493e2-494a2).

The picture that emerges of political realities is an unremittingly grim one, but it is one reflective of what has consistently emerged in this account and one which is for Plato only too familiar from his own experience. Hence the choice he sets out in the Republic for the political κοινωνία is unambiguous: either turn to philosophy and be saved or be destroyed by the corrosive inroads of an endemic all-pervasive sophistry. The possibility for a true polis order such as has been conceived, Socrates maintains, is always there naturally present in the human community in that individuals of an intrinsically noble nature will continue to arise.[97] However, remembering that it is the strength of the impulses to both φιλόσοφον and θυμοειδές in his soul that mark out such an individual, it can readily be envisaged how, without what has been adjudged the proper education and environment, these impulses will develop immoderately to excess. Nurtured in a soil as unsuitable as that which presently prevails, the expectation that anyone who is gifted with a philosophic nature could achieve their full potential, failing to succumb to the flattery and importuning of those who will flock around him seeking to use him for their own ends, is minimal. This is most especially the case when such a one, living in a great polis, is wealthy and of noble birth, tall, handsome, and a leader among his peers (494a11-c7).[98] There can be no possibility that such a youth, for all his great potential,

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such as poets, artists and politicians who present their wares before the crowd and must cater to its whims (493c10-d9).

[95] Learning all the beast's moods and habits, the sophist forms the information he has gleaned into a τέχνη which he dispenses as his so-called wisdom. What the beast enjoys he calls good and what angers it he terms bad (493a6-c3).

[96] Cf. *Tim.* 48a1-5 on the relation of necessity and the good in Plato.

[97] Cf. Pl. *Lg.* 951b4-7 where it is also maintained that there are always a few such divinely inspired individuals (ἄνθρωποι ...θεῖοι), naturally occurring in cities of every kind.

[98] Plato, it is generally supposed, has Alcibiades in mind in writing this passage. Socrates, whose friend

will ever come to the practice of philosophy. Indeed, the opposite is the case; for it has now become abundantly evident that it is from these individuals, the very best of natures destroyed and corrupted, and not from any of those lesser men incapable of achieving greatness either publicly or privately, that not only the greatest good but also the greatest of evil comes both to cities and individuals alike (494d9-495b6).

Into the void that opens up when philosophy, that best of pursuits (τὸ ἄριστον ἐπιτήδευμα), is left deserted by those for whom she should be most dear come others, the unworthy usurpers of her throne who bring down upon her only shame and reproaches (495b8-c6). It is because of this invasion of philosophy by the imperfect natures of these inferior men, the βαναυσίαι, that philosophy has unjustly acquired its reputation for depravity (495c8-e2).[99] Those very few of a true philosophic nature who manage to escape the tentacles of the beast, powerless to oppose alone in any useful way the savagery that is all around them, remain silent, content to go about their own affairs.[100] However, whereas the philosopher achieves in this way a good for himself, Socrates makes clear that this is not in fact the best good possible for him. Under a suitable polity, the true philosopher realizes more fully the truth of his own nature in saving both himself and his community (μετὰ τῶν ἰδίων τὰ κοινὰ σώσει, 497a5). The problem is that none of the polities that are presently to be found is worthy of the philosophic nature so that, like an exotic seed fallen among weeds, it fails to develop to its full capacity. However, if it were to find the best polity, just as it itself is the best, then it will be clear that the philosophic nature is τῷ ὄντι θεῖον, in fact truly divine (497b1-c4).[101]

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and pupil Alcibiades was, constantly tried to bring him to philosophy. See, for example, Pl. *Smp.* 215d ff. According to Xenophon (X. *Mem.* 1.2.12) Alcibiades was one of those Socrates was charged with corrupting. Here, Adam (vol. 2 1963:26) suggests, "Plato now turns the tables on the Athenian people. He says in effect 'It was you who corrupted Alcibiades: and you impeached Socrates for trying to save him."

[99] Cf. Pl. *Tht.* 172d4-173a6 where the rhetor is described in much these terms. Adam (vol. 2 1963:27) expresses well the poignancy of Plato's lament for the fate of philosophy. "Abandoned by her rightful lovers, Philosophy alone and desolate, is forced into a shameful alliance with base pretenders. The offspring of this unhallowed union is a bastard brood of sophisms."

[100] They will be content if they can live their life free from unjust and impious deeds and depart from it with a beautiful hope (496a11-e2). Among this small band of philosophers Socrates includes himself, kept by his divine sign from taking an active part in public life (496c3-5). Cf. Pl. *Ap.* 31d10.

[101] The reciprocity between the philosopher and his polis found in the best of cities is important to understanding the relation between soul and city in the *Republic*. The polis is understood here as temporally prior, giving birth to and nurturing the young philosopher king within the cradle of its laws allowing him to actualize his full potential. Cf. Socrates' defence of the Laws in *Crito* (Pl. *Cri.* 50a6-54d2).

8.7 For the just polis to come to be is difficult but not impossible (497a-502c)

The very possibility of the existence in praxis of the polis ideal has been made requisite upon the rule of philosophy. Exonerated of those slanders which have been brought against him by the masses and confirmed in his love of reality and truth, the philosopher is shown to be the source for human understanding of the good for both polis and individual. Most importantly, it has been allowed that there are even a few such individuals able somehow to survive undeformed, despite the hostile environment in which they are immersed. It is time now to bring the philosopher face-to-face with the polis ideal which has already been founded in thought, and ask whether this polis does indeed meet the criterion that it is the best of polities, that in accord with which the philosophic nature strives to fulfil itself. This is the ultimate test of that rubbing of the unified, harmonious and just individual who first emerged in Book 4 back against the political association which was seen to give rise to him. That the polis founded in Books 2-4, under the rule of an unchanging law, was indeed a good one, as was the man resembling it, Socrates will continue to affirm. However, it is not the very best possible one which is now revealed to be that polis in which the fully developed philosophic nature can find its true home in what is τῷ ὄντι θεῖον.

8.7.1 The true ruler must come to know the first principles of polity (497c-498c)

The best of the guardians, the ruling guardians in the polis constituted in Books 2-4, are habituated in ὀρθὴ δόξα, trained to respect and implement the law as it has been given to them by the lawgiver. However, of the essential nature of the principles upon which the polis is based, of why things are best that way, they have no true knowledge nor indeed the freedom to look beyond their allotted task of ruling in accord with the practices in which they have been habituated in order to seek it. In the foundation myth of *Eumenides*, Athena entered into the life of the polis to establish the order of Zeus to be enacted by 'the best of her citizens'. Now, however, Socrates has arrived at a position where he can argue that, to be both brought to life and subsequently preserved in the contingency of the sensible, the very best of polities will need not only an original lawgiver, a νομοθέτης as Socrates and Glaucon have been, it will require also the continuing living presence within it of someone who understands the rational principles upon which the polity is based (497c5-d2). A human Athena who knows the mind of Zeus, the philosopher king is to be the incarnation of divine law, actively ordering and

regulating the human κοινωνία on an ongoing basis. With this in mind, it is possible to see that the education of the guardians, as it has been so far described, is insufficient to the required task. Only the philosopher, the one who has gazed upon what is really real, the justice of the Good, can in the strictest sense be said to be the ruler of the polis (503b4-5).

The ideal for praxis, it can now be firmly reasserted, is dependent for its effective implementation on the rule of θεωρία in the polis, in the person of the philosopher king. For the πολιτεία will be perfectly ordered only if its guardian is one who has knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), as opposed to simply a true opinion. The question of just how this is to be accomplished, in what manner the polis can be involved in philosophy without being utterly destroyed, will require a whole new understanding, one quite contrary to that which the polis presently attaches to this pursuit (497d4-e7). The naturally noble philosophic nature can be seen to stand like a colossus astride the polis, a potency presaging both the possibility of the achievement of the full perfection of the πολιτεία in order and unity or its utter devastation through the discord and diversity that are the result of the unlimited exertion of its powers. It can be said that as such the philosophic nature takes up within itself the primary ethical dyadic of good and evil.[102] Socrates has amply warned of the real and preeminent dangers attached to the philosophic nature led astray. There are no half-way measures for such a nature; so that the line between the best of goods and the worst of evils is a fine one. The true philosophic art is to be acquired only with much difficulty during the course of a protracted period of study in the pursuit of which the soul is turned around, away from the world of becoming to contemplate reality as the Good (518c4-d7).[103]

8.7.2 A dialogue can be established between theory and praxis (498c-502b)

In the polis ideal that they are founding, Socrates argues, the philosopher must not be

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[102] Intelligence (νόησις) Plato considers as innate within soul, able to exerting itself actively for good or evil ends prior to any external constraints placed upon it. Men who are wicked have no less the capacity to see things sharply than men who are good. Education is not, as the sophists maintain, 'like putting sight into blind eyes' (518c4-519a6). Cf. Aristotle *EN* 1144a23-28.

[103] The Idea of the Good (ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα, 505a2), Socrates states, is the greatest of all objects of investigation. The stages in the extensive higher education the potential philosopher king must undergo, culminating in the study of dialectic, are described in Book 7 (521c1- 540c9).

permitted to do as he presently does and remain apart from the public life of the polis in private contemplation; rather he is to be seen as its culmination, the point of unification of city and soul in the attainment of the common good of all: a mediation between human and divine. In other cities, where the philosopher has survived in spite of, and not because of, the way of life that is endorsed by the πολιτεία, and here Plato/Socrates would include his own relation to Athens, he has justice on his side in refraining from participating in government of the polis (520a9-b4). In the true polis, however, the law (νόμος) has produced such men, not so that they be allowed to turn in any direction they wish, but in order that they may bind the city together. The philosopher must descend (καταβαίνειν) from the realm of the Good to that of the prisoners in the cave, sharing in their labours and honours, whether they be of little or greater moment (519c10-d7). Returning to the darkness below, the realm of ignorance that most men inhabit, the philosopher will know what each of the images (εἴδωλα) is and of what it is an image because he has seen the truth concerning what is beautiful, just and good (520c1-6). The prison that holds the majority of men, even in the best of polities, guided by right opinion stabilized in posited law, is ignorance. Stalley notes that Plato's "message is that ignorance and false belief constrain the mind much as chains constrain the body. We are genuinely free only when we see the truth, that is when we grasp for ourselves the form of the Good. But to achieve this we must first be released from the influence of the appetites, the 'leaden weights' which keep us in the 'world of becoming' (519a-b)."[104]

A major problem that emerges for commentators at this point, stems from the contention that by being compelled to turn their gaze away from the true good and return to the cave the philosopher rulers will be less than maximally happy. Given that happiness is equated with justice it is argued that they thereby become less just, which is to say they are made worse.[105] This understanding is rooted in the conception that the good of the individual can be understood in isolation, apart from that of the polis and the rational order of the Good itself.[106] In fact, Socrates says, the philosophers will agree to rule

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[104] Stalley (1998:147).

[105] For a recent review of the considerable critical comment engendered by the vexed question of justice and necessity in the descent of the philosopher from the life of theory to that of praxis see Brown (2000). See also White (1979:195-6) and the references there cited.

[106] See, for example Annas (1981:266-71), Bloom (1968:407-8).

because these will be just (δίκαια) commands given to just (δίκαιοις) men (520e1).[107] Stalley remarks rightly that "the philosopher is free, not because he has some faculty of free choice, but because his decisions are a response to a true vision of the good."[108] The ultimate rule in the polis is that of divine law establishing harmony throughout the human κοινωνία by means of persuasion and compulsion (πειθοῖ τε καὶ ἀνάγκῃ, 519e4).[109] It is the good of the polis as a 'whole' and not the happiness that can optimally be achieved by any one group of citizens, any 'part' doing well within it, that is primary. The polis remains an integral mediation of the rational order. The role of the philosopher ruler in perfecting his own soul, in accord with divine justice, is to bring thereby harmony to the whole polis, soul 'writ large' it might be said, so that the citizens share with one other as one the benefits each is able to bring to the κοινόν, the community as a whole.[110] The fleeting happiness attained by a single individual through philosophical contemplation is not of itself what preserves and improves the good human community through time. Socrates' earlier words at 424a4-b1 give a clear understanding of what is envisaged here. The good polis in which the philosopher has been educated will be increasingly perfected through the succeeding generations if, and only if, those who know the causes continue to be its guiding principle. The maximization through time of the happiness attainable to all classes is dependent on the cycle being unbroken; in this way the human association most effectively emulates in the realm of becoming the eternality of being. The philosopher, while he reaches with what is most divine in him, his intellectual soul, beyond the human

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[107] On this see Kraut (1999), Halliwell (1993:200), White (1979:195-6, Cooper (1977a). Stalley (1998) provides an insightful account of Plato's conception of freedom in the *Republic* which addresses the major criticisms brought against it.

[108] Stalley (1998:151). He points out that "significant connections" can be drawn between the conception of freedom found in Plato and recent accounts which acknowledge the difficulty of determining freedom in terms of freedom to act as one wants. This latter is of course what Aristotle (*Metaph.* 1075a18-23) will characterize as the freedom of a slave. See also Reeve (1988:231-4).

[109] The true ruler in the *Republic* is not the philosopher king *per se* but the law which is overarching, universal and divine. Later Socrates will affirm that the polis is ruled in accord with divine law, that which is θεῖος and φρόνιμος, and is best for everyone (590d3-4). This is the real nature of the necessity that Plato sees to constrain both rulers and ruled; so that, as Socrates says, all may be ὅμοιοι and φίλοι, governed by the same principle: the law (νόμος) as the ally of everyone in the polis (590d5-e2). Brown (2000:5-6) remarks Plato's consistent characterization of philosophic rule in terms of ἀνάγκη (500d4, 519e4, 520a8, 520e2, 521b7, 539e3, 540b5).

[110] Reeve (1988:202-3, 311) develops this point well, countering the objections of White (1979:22-4) and Cooper (1977a:156-7). He argues that Socrates is responding to Thrasymachus' position that "the polis is an exploitation machine run by the rulers in their own interest and against the interest of their subjects" (203).

community to the realm of the gods themselves, does not fully belong there, and having obtained nourishment must return to his appointed earthly task in the mutual reciprocity that constitutes polis life. It is to this higher good the philosopher must subtend the maximization of his own individual happiness bringing theory and praxis within a single compass (519e1-520a4).[111]

A path has opened up whereby Socrates and Thrasymachus, theory and praxis, can be said to be friends (ἐμὲ καὶ Θρασύμαχον ἄρτι φίλους γεγονότας) and thus partake in a meaningful dialogue (498c5-d1). What will spur them on is not the immediate practicability of their goal but the ever-present possibility that the ideal can be achieved, if not in this life then at some stage in the long course of time.[112] The principles that animate this ideal are, he believes, inherent to human society: omnipresent. The polis ideal is not simply an utopian dream and those who presently oppose it can be brought to change their opinions. Earlier the πλῆθος had been both castigated as a great beast incapable of comprehending anything as existing in itself apart from the many particulars (493a6-494a2) and also praised as inherently noble (488c4). What links these two very different conceptions is the natural capacity humans have for κοινωνία. At its most elemental this is seen in the instinctual responses to the pleasure pain dyadic which mark the actions of 'the great beast'. As rational, however, man has an innate natural propensity for virtue, a 'nobility' which when actualized by proper habituation and education can transform the κοινωνία so that the δῆμος responds in accord with right reason rather than the immediate dictates of feeling. The difficulty, in making the transition from an entrenched corrupt and debased form of society to this rational κοινωνία lies in bringing to bear at any one time and place, amid the fluctuating dynamic of the sensible world, the highly specific conditions that will allow these principles to be concretely realized as the good and just political κοινωνία.

Certainly no simple and painless conversion to the way of truth is envisaged for those who have been led astray by their irrational drives. Nevertheless, Socrates remains convinced that the many, whose suspicion of philosophy stems from their acquaintance

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[111] Already established as a binding principle of the political κοινωνία is the common bond of feeling that unites them as one, the φιλαυτία that is at once constitutive of each individual and the polis as a whole.

[112] Whether philosophers ever have or will rule the city, the πολιτεία they have been speaking of as the very finest *has been* in the past, *is now* somewhere, and *will be* in future whenever the Muse of philosophy is ruler in the polis (499d2-4).

with those quarrelsome pretenders to whom they are accustomed, if only they come to understand the true nature of the philosopher, will trust him when he says that the polis can never be happy unless painters who use the divine model sketch its contours (499d10-500e4). In the final analysis (592a5-b5), whether the city they have founded in discourse actually exists anywhere or ever will exist, it is omnipresent, Socrates suggests, as a παράδειγμα established in heaven.[113] As such, it is the end to which the man of sense (ὁ ...νοῦν ἔχων, 591c1) directs all his concerns. It is in looking to this model that he founds the city within himself. That it assumes no concrete form in the human political community makes no difference, it is the affairs of this polis alone and of no other that he will take part (592b4-5).[114] Here, Stalley observes "we are presented with a picture of how men would live if they were capable of organizing their lives with total rationality. In practice, no human community has this capacity, but that does not mean the *Republic* lacks any practical relevance. We can aspire to the sort of political harmony it exhibits even if we know we can never reach that level."[115]

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[113] In the *Laws*, Plato reiterates that the best polis is that in which all things are held in common to the greatest possible extent, whether this polis exists now or ever will exist. Such a polis, he concludes, is one that gods, or children of gods, may be expected to inhabit. As a παράδειγμα for the πολιτεία it is necessary to look no further but to strive to approach as close as possible to this ideal (Pl. *Lg.* 739c2-e3).

[114] Indeed the founding of the city in the soul is necessarily logically prior to any founding in practice.

[115] Stalley (1983:94). The life of virtue is the life of freedom and, Stalley (1998:157) notes, like virtue, freedom is "not an all-or-nothing matter. The more we willingly allow our lives to be governed by reason the more free we are." Cf. *Laws* (713e6-714a2). Adam (v.2 1963:38) remarks that Plato foretells at this point that the polis ideal achieves its "true fulfilment ...not in any single earthly commonwealth, but in its influence, direct and indirect, upon the moral, political, religious, and intellectual progress of mankind." Halliwell (1993:2) concludes that central to a reading of the *Republic*, as a Platonic dialogue, is the recognition that "as something which grows from the pursuit of arguments" it is not "the disclosure of preconceived or inevitable conclusions, but a provisional path of thought of the kind that might be *discovered* by the parties to an intense discussion."

9

On Unity, Justice & Friendship

Aristotle's Criticisms of Plato's *Republic*

Στάσεις γάρ που, ὦ Θρασύμαχε, ἥ γε ἀδικία καὶ μίση καὶ μάχας ἐν ἀλλήλοις παρέχει, ἡ δὲ δικαιοσύνη ὁμόνοιαν καὶ φιλίαν·

Pl. *R.* 351d4-6

In the course of the development in discourse of the polis ideal, Plato has been seen to take up very deliberately and directly the challenge that the thought of his late 5th century contemporaries poses, those who like Euripides, Thucydides and the sophists have exposed the political κοινωνία of their day as nothing more than a heap, an aggregate of disparate 'parts' competing with one another for the opportunity to be labelled, however transiently and insubstantially, as the 'whole'. Plato's response in the *Republic* to the manifold diversity and relativity that he sees to be the root cause of political division and strife is to develop, in line with his own metaphysics of the Good, a new consideration of the essential nature of political κοινωνία, one which from the vantage point of ὀρθὴ φιλοσοφία sees the end of the polis to be realized in the negation of natural difference through assimilation of the parts to the unity and identity of the whole. Thus, beginning from a primary contrariety of the endless difference of natural necessity and the unity of divine reason, Plato has drawn the two sides, the opposed principles of Good and Evil, the One and the Dyadic, into relation with one another. The polis, he has argued, arises naturally from within the sensible realm of difference, imaging externally the order present in the human psyche. Each individual soul, ordering itself in accord with what is prior in its nature, an inherent divinely distributed principle of justice resident in its rational element, forsakes the division and strife manifest in the assertion of natural difference, and images to the extent that it is able, the unity and simplicity of the principle which is its intelligible cause. When understood in this way, Plato argues, there can be no opposed goods of family and polis such as Sophocles portrays in *Antigone*; for the primary ground of their opposition, the separate existence of the institution of the family, has been negated. In the completely just polis, the human community knows its true

freedom and happiness to be resident in a rational collective ideal in which individual and polis are held as one in a unified 'whole' sustained by a higher causal principle: the Form of Justice itself as a determination of the Idea of the Good.

In this chapter, Aristotle's criticism of the solution that Plato proposes, the structure of the ideal political κοινωνία as it is construed in the *Republic*, will be examined from within the context of a recognition that Aristotle's considered ethico-political thought is thoroughly steeped in the arguments bequeathed to him by his teacher and friend of 20 years.[1] It is appropriate with this in mind to recall Aristotle's own words on the subject as he undertakes his investigations into the nature of the life of praxis or, as he himself will speak of it, τὰ ἀνθρώπεια φιλοσοφία, the philosophy of human affairs (*EN* 1181b15). All the Socratic discourses, Aristotle observes, are marked by a spirit of enquiry that is out of the ordinary in its subtlety and originality. However, he adds, it is hardly to be expected that they have accomplished everything altogether correctly (*Pol.* 1265a10-13). In the *Ethics*, Aristotle is more specific on what it means for him to criticize what he knows to be a central tenet of Plato's philosophy. While a critique of Plato's conception of the universal Idea of the Good is undertaken only reluctantly, with repugnance even (προσάντης), in that it involves criticism of friends, it is the truth that must be preserved and honoured first, especially by those who as philosophers are to be accounted lovers of wisdom (*EN* 1096a11-17).[2]

The obvious point of focus for those who would comment on Aristotle's response to the proposals that Socrates introduces in Book 5 of the *Republic* as intrinsic to the ordering of the very best kind of polis, is the first five chapters of Book 2 of the *Politics* where Aristotle mounts a series of very specific criticisms against the idea that in so far as it is possible everything, wives, children and property should be held in common.[3] Among

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[1] Guthrie (v.5 1981:21-2) notes that Aristotle's works "though sometimes fiercely critical of the Platonic theory of Forms, nevertheless reveal ...the extent to which the direction of his thoughts was determined by Plato and the Academy. Without begging any questions this must be the starting point of any enquiry into his own philosophical achievement." See also Evangeliou (1995-6:200) and Sinclair (1981:19) who conclude similarly. Sparshott (1982:483), presents a structural comparison of Aristotle's *Ethics* and Plato's *Republic*. Barker (1918:443-4) outlines the numerous parallels to be discerned between the argument of Aristotle's *Politics* and Plato's *Laws*.

[2] In the *Politics*, Aristotle is at pains to distance himself from any consideration that his criticisms are undertaken in a spirit of sophistry (*Pol.* 1260b33-6).

[3] Chapters 2-4 of *Politics* Book 2, which relate to the structure of the political κοινωνία Socrates develops

those relatively few who have commented on this section of the *Politics* reaction has been generally harsh.[4] Simpson summarizes the predominating tenor of scholarly critique when he says that for the majority of commentators these criticisms have seemed "to miss the point, beg the question, distort the sense or focus on the merely trivial."[5] Stalley, agreeing that the response that these chapters have elicited has been "mixed, though generally critical," notes that it "is the apparent absence of any serious attempt to discuss the *Republic* as a whole" that has most disturbed commentators.[6] It can be questioned, however, whether a detailed comprehensive critique of the *Republic* as a whole can be correctly considered to be within the bounds of the stated intent of the argument in the *Politics*.[7] It is instructive before examining the substance of Aristotle's criticism to recall the opening words of the *Politics*. There, Aristotle maintains that every polis is a form of κοινωνία and every κοινωνία is established for the sake of some good. It is, however, the polis and ἡ κοινωνία ἡ πολιτική which is the most authoritative of all these κοινωνίαι, the one that embraces all of the others and aims at the most authoritative of all goods in praxis (*Pol.* 1252a1-7). What Aristotle is investigating here, Stalley correctly discerns, is in fact "the notion of a political community."[8] Thus, when he considers in

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in the *Republic*, will be the specific focus in this section. Chapter 5 which is a more wide-ranging discussion of private property will, where relevant, be incorporated into the later discussion of Aristotle's own political thought.

[4] Saxonhouse (1982/3:209) comments that "[a]nalyses of Aristotle's *Politics* largely ignore Book II. Aristotle appears to be simply repeating the ideas and practices of others."

[5] Simpson (1991:99). Thus, for example, Annas (1981:188) condemns Aristotle's criticisms as "surprisingly crass and literal-minded." For Saunders (1981:103), Aristotle is here as often "puzzlingly unsympathetic and even obtuse" with a "rather perverse approach" as a critic of Plato. Mulgan (1977:29) speaks of "niggling criticism" and concludes that "[a]s usual when dealing with the ideas of his predecessors, Aristotle is not concerned to interpret them accurately and sympathetically but simply uses them as a starting point for developing his own arguments. Bornemann (1923:70-111, 113-58, 234-57), in an extensive study, concludes that these chapters are a "sophistische Spielerei" and that "Aristoteles habe den Platon völlig mißverstanden" (128). He questions whether indeed Aristotle ever read the *Republic* (150). See further, the references cited in Simpson (1991:99n1), Dobbs (1985:30n3). A short but important criticism by the Neoplatonic philosopher Proclus (ed. Kroll 1965:412-85) survives from late antiquity. Among those who have tendered a more even-handed reading of these particular chapters of the *Politics* are Mayhew (1997a), Stalley (1991), Simpson (1991) and Barker (1959:233-4).

[6] Stalley (1991:182).

[7] It has to be taken into account that, whereas Aristotle writes separate treatises on politics, ethics, psychology, poetry and metaphysics, Plato in the *Republic* encompasses all these areas within a single investigation. That Aristotle's criticism of the proposals for political κοινωνία the *Republic* is a sharply focused one is recognized by Mayhew (1997a:6) and to a lesser extent by Stalley (1999:144), (1991:184-6), and Saunders (1981:106).

[8] Stalley 1991:184).

Politics 2 the conceptions developed by others for the very best kind of political κοινωνία, Aristotle can be understood to have in mind the requirement that the proposed polis ideal should (a) aim at the greatest good of the political κοινωνία and (b) embody in its organization what is definitive to the kind of κοινωνία which best accomplishes this end.

Aristotle's considered response to Plato on the first of these concerns, the greatest good at which the polis should aim, has been tendered in the *Ethics* and its conclusions can be taken to underlie his objections in the *Politics*, in particular those arguments mounted in *Politics* 2.2 against Socrates' understanding of the kind of unity that is to be sought as the end and the greatest good for the polis.[9] In the *Politics* itself the primary focus is on the nature of the πολιτικὴ κοινωνία as a distinct kind of κοινωνία and it is with this in mind that Aristotle's criticism of the best polis of the *Republic* is to be understood.[10] A natural beginning point to an investigation of any κοινωνία is the determination of what it encompasses: an examination of the extent to which all those things which potentially might be shared are to be shared. Hence Aristotle asks first whether the citizens should be partners in (a) none (b) all or (c) some and not others of those things with which the polis is concerned in the attainment of its end. Option (a) must be discarded since ἡ ...πολιτεία κοινωνία τίς ἐστι and as such must share in something, most obviously a location (1260b40-1261a1). This leads Aristotle to the examination of the next option, whether everything that can possibly be shared should actually be shared, and hence to the consideration of the κοινωνία of children, women and possessions that Socrates proposes in the *Republic* as central to the attainment of the polis ideal. It is on the intent of Plato's argument that Aristotle focuses. Plato, as has been seen, clearly attributes division and στάσις and a concomitant lack of κοινωνία to the untoward assertion of θυμός which accompanies the possession of anything in private. To whatever extent he supposes that the element of the private is a practical necessity to be admitted within the economic class under the tight regulation of the rulers, the principle that 'as far as possible everything should be held in common' remains the ideal for κοινωνία.[11] If

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[9] See *R.* 423d4-6, 462a9-e3. Cf. Pl. *Lg.* 739c3-5.

[10] Most importantly, with respect to his criticism of Plato, the political κοινωνία must be understood in relation to those of the family and the individual.

[11] Cf. the ideal community of the *Laws* where the citizenry as a whole are to be 'landed gentry' forbidden involvement in trade which will be the responsibility of non-citizen resident aliens (*Lg.* 846d-847b). Plato

Aristotle can show, as he believes he can, that such an arrangement is not conducive to the best sort of πολιτικὴ κοινωνία then this option too must be discarded. From this point, he can move to consider the remaining option, that which he himself will maintain is the appropriate form of κοινωνία for the polis community, and to the determination of what is and is not to be shared and in what manner. This does not mean that Plato's many and broad-ranging insights on humans and their association in community are lost upon Aristotle, far from it. It does mean, however, that Aristotle will find Plato's understanding of the principles sustaining the political ideal to be inadequate to the task and therefore subject to being rethought.

For Aristotle, a metaphysical edifice is only as sound as the foundations upon which it is built, and in the guardian κοινωνία he identifies a point of critical weakness in Plato's account; one which when probed, he maintains, will cause the whole structure of the argument to collapse. It has been observed that Aristotle concentrates the force of his attack on a very specific passage in the *Republic* and on the central tenet that the greatest good for the polis, that around which the laws are to be framed, is what binds it together and makes it one; and that this unity is achieved when, as far as is possible the citizens come together as a ἓν ἐκ πολλῶν in a κοινωνία of feeling (*R.* 462a2-b6).[12] Aristotle will certainly agree that the polis, as a κοινωνία πολιτῶν πολιτείας, is to be characterized by both unity and common bonds of feeling. However, against Plato, he will want to maintain not only that the kind of unity at which the guardian κοινωνία, and the argument of the *Republic* as a whole, aims as its end is not the true good to be sought as the end of the political κοινωνία, but that even if it were the end to be aimed for, the communism of women, children and property that is proposed would not be the means conducive to achieving that end. As a result, it can be argued that what Aristotle is setting out to do in *Politics* Book 2, with his customary economy, is to attack the

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forcefully reiterates in the *Laws* his contention in the *Republic* that each individual (here both citizen and the non-citizen economic class) must have one occupation only. The occupation with which the citizen (πολίτης ἀνήρ) must wholly concern himself in the pursuit of virtue is τὸν κοινὸν τῆς πόλεως κόσμον (846d5-6).

[12] On this see, for example, Stalley (1991:184), Bornemann (1923:115, 123-7). Stalley (1991:186) regards as "puzzling" Aristotle's concentration in the *Republic* on a "discussion of political community ...to the exclusion of almost everything else." While he recognizes that this might be "the area in which Aristotle felt his disagreements with Plato to be strongest," he suggests that it could also be a reflection that the work is unfinished: "a set of notes."

metaphysical basis of the argument upon which the ideal polis is founded in the *Republic*, both in terms of the unifying rational order which is the justice of the πολιτεία of Callipolis and of the conception of the natural bonds of feeling which are to bind together the κοινωνία πολιτῶν within that order. At the same time, stepping back to look at the *Republic* as a whole, Aristotle's argument can be seen to be founded in his enduring criticism that Plato's principles are in fact elements; that he constructs everything from an incommensurable primary contrariety of Form and Matter understood as an opposition of Good and Evil and as of the One and an Indefinite Dyadic. In the *Republic*, this has been clearly evidenced in the overall movement, charted in the preceding chapters, from an external diversity inwards and upwards towards the unity and self-relation of the Idea of the Good, which is for Plato the objective cause of the sensible. Aristotle, in mounting his own response, will want to move the argument back again to that central 'Sophoclean' point of departure resident in the divided nature of man as a rational animal and the consequently opposed and conflicting appearance in the sensible world of the goods towards which he aims as his end.

9.1 The Idea of the Good: theory is irrelevant to praxis (*EN* 1096a11-1097a13)

Plato is wrong, Aristotle charges, to order the whole of ethical and political life to an Idea of the Good subsisting in itself as a separate external principle (ἄλλο τι καθ' αὑτὸ εἶναι), set apart from the many good things which people generally consider to contribute to the best life and seen to be the cause of the goodness that is found in them (*EN* 1095a26-8).[13] Plato's univocal conception of reality, Aristotle contends, makes goodness a substantial essence with a single determinate meaning, whereas in fact 'good' is spoken of in as many ways as is being; so that there is no single science of the Good as Plato supposes there to be (*EN* 1096a25-34).[14] Central to Aristotle's thought is a movement, away from the

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[13] See also Arist. *EE* 1217b3-16 where Plato's understanding of the Idea of the Good as causal principle is further expounded.

[14] Aristotle's contention is that, *pace* Plato, there is no universal Good, Unity or Being which cuts across all the categories of reality. On being and unity as predicate correlatives see Arist. *Metaph.* 1003b22-1004a2. There he argues that there are as many kinds of unity as there are of being. In a primary sense unity and being determine substance as separate and a this: what *is* and *is one*. Goods in the various categories are so-called in relation to substance (ἀλλ' ἆρά γε τῷ ἀφ' ἑνὸς εἶναι ἢ πρὸς ἓν ἅπαντα συντελεῖν, *EN* 1096b27-8). Whereas every substance can also be said to be good in as much as it is properly what it is to be that substance, it is with the human good as it is achieved in the ethical life of the community that the political science concerns itself.

univocal conception of being he sees Plato to espouse, to the logic of substance, οὐσία as what *is* and *is one*. It is substance Aristotle argues, that is to be recognized as the underlying subject of all predication, the 'unity' to which all other categories of reality are related πρὸς ἕν: being is ordered πρὸς ἕν to substance as existent and a this (τόδε).[15] Plato, in the *Republic*, has been seen to order the whole of society, however imperfectly this is realized, to a single rational ideal grounded in the Idea of the Good; so that the three classes of citizens, successively divested of qualitative and quantitative diversity, are "[e]mptied of themselves, ...conformed to the type of the one and invisible Idea which the state is to realise."[16] Aristotle agrees that the citizens of the polis share in a common justice that ideally will bind them together as one. However, he sees that this is not to be achieved through assimilation to a universal which, on his understanding, is an abstraction beyond its product and unable to be an effective principle of the natural world. The true end of the polis is to be found in the "concrete universal," the concretion of reason and feeling that brings together universal and particular, collective and individual good, in the ethical life of the spirit; its aim "not to make its members one, but to raise them to the fulness of their being, by encouraging the highest activities of a good life."[17]

Aristotle does not share Plato's belief that man can relate directly to the ultimate good. For Aristotle, the approach to the ἀρχή is mediated; corresponding to a hierarchy of goods are a hierarchy of ends which can be progressively acquired. Since he cannot know the end directly as the true good, man's life, Aristotle maintains, is marked by choices of possible goods; choices which, it is inherent to man's nature, bring with them the possibility of ethical dilemma and tragic conflict. Plato's Idea of the Good, as ἕν τι existing separately by itself is not something that can be pursued in action or possessed

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[15] Thus, Aristotle says, the good is spoken of in the category of substance as god and νοῦς whereas it is in the category of quality that the virtues are called good and so also in the other categories of being, quantity, relation, time, place and so on other things are called good. So that it is clear that οὐκ ἂν εἴη κοινόν τι καθόλου καὶ ἕν (*EN* 1096a25-28).

[16] Barker (1959:403). The substance of Aristotle's disagreement with Plato, Barker observes, is that he sees Plato to have "misconceived the relation of the universal to the particular: that he postulated a One 'outside' and annihilating the Many, whereas the truth is that the One is inside and 'predicable' of the Many, which retain their individuality while they are united through a common predicable."

[17] Barker (1959:404-5).

by man (*EN* 1096b33-4).[18] For 'it is difficult', Aristotle says, 'to know how the weaver or carpenter will be benefited with respect to the practice of his own τέχνη from knowing this Good itself (τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἀγαθόν) or how anyone will be a better general or physician from having gazed on the Idea of the Good.' It is not the universal 'health' but human health and in particular the health of the individual human being with which the physician concerns himself (*EN* 1097a8-13).[19] The physician, as an expert craftsman, is seen by Aristotle as a concretion of universal and particular in ποίησις, as is the φρόνιμος likewise in πρᾶξις. Any deviation from this mean towards either the more particular or the more universal and abstract results in a falling away from the human ideal.[20]

9.2 Justice: criticism of the conception of unity as the end (*Pol.* 1261a10-b15)

The focus of Aristotle's criticism of the *Republic*, as has already been noted, is on the Guardian κοινωνία; for it is in this discussion that the issues central to the conception of the political κοινωνία as a whole are most clearly enunciated for him. The problem, he contends, is that (a) Socrates has not evinced through his arguments that the object for which these arrangements have been enacted will indeed be the outcome of their implementation, (b) the end which Socrates states that the polis must have is impossible, that is to say that the polis is to the greatest extent possible a unity, and (c) the sense in which the polis could be said to be one is not discussed (1261a10-16).[21] In approaching

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[18] εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἔστιν ἕν τι τὸ κοινῇ κατηγορούμενον ἀγαθὸν ἢ χωριστὸν αὐτό τι καθ' αὑτό, δῆλον ὡς οὐκ ἂν εἴη πρακτὸν οὐδὲ κτητὸν ἀνθρώπῳ.

[19] Hence, he argues, it is not useful to have the Idea of the Good as a sort of παράδειγμα since it is an empty abstraction.

[20] Cf. Arist. *Metaph.* 981a1-b20 for Aristotle's understanding of the relation of universal and particular in the τέχναι. There he states that the master craftsman is better than the manual worker because he has knowledge of the causes of his particular τέχνη whereas the manual worker performs simply by habit.

[21] Exactly how Aristotle is presenting his criticisms in this passage is subject to some disagreement due to the terseness of his Greek. However, the objects of his criticism are not in doubt as he explicates them in the succeeding chapters. I have followed here the interpretations of this passage adopted most recently by Simpson (1991:100-103), Saunders (1995:107-8) and Mayhew (1997a) which seem to me to be the most logical accounts taking into consideration supporting textual evidence. For other readings, see Newman (v.2 1887:229), Bornemann (1923:94-5), Barker:1946:40. Provencal (2001:11) is ambiguous on the matter. While he states that "ch. 2 criticizes the premise that the unity of the family is good for the state" (Newman's reading), he actually argues the broader premise that Aristotle is here criticizing "the logic by which the state, family and individual are collapsed into a single unity," which is the Simpson et al. reading adopted here.

closer to the unity Socrates ascribes to it as its designated end, Aristotle argues, the polis will in fact become increasingly less a polis and resemble more a household and finally an individual human. Critics have often charged that Aristotle here unfairly links the concern Socrates expresses at *R.* 462a9-b6 for the unity engendered through the bonds of common feeling and the unity which is attained by being quantitatively one in number or function (1261a15-16).[22] In point of fact, it is quite clear that Aristotle himself stresses the importance of ὁμόνοια in the polis community, as indeed he does the requirement that the polis be marked by unity. It would therefore certainly be inconsistent for him simply to criticize Plato on these grounds *per se*.[23] What, however, he does challenge in both cases is the consequence of *univocally* adopting these parameters as determinants of the nature of the best polis, in that it can lead ultimately only to principles which are empty indeterminate abstractions of reason and feeling. Simpson is one commentator who comes some way towards this understanding when he argues that Aristotle is here objecting not to "oneness as such but to progressive oneness ...there must be some way of distinguishing and limiting this oneness to stop it going too far."[24] Aristotle will himself proceed to maintain that, considered in terms both of the rational and the irrational principles they embody, individual, family and polis are discrete and different entities and not analogous expressions of one and the same substantial nature.

Plato's conception of unity as the end leads logically, Aristotle sees, not to the desired unity and harmony of a πολιτεία πολιτῶν πολιτείας, but to a reversion to the tragic division it seeks to overcome, a polarity such as that witnessed between the abstract reason of a Creon or Pentheus and the natural unconsciousness κοινωνία of feeling exhibited in the Bacchic chorus and sought by Antigone for her family in the potency of Hades. As tragedy, and Sophoclean drama in particular suggests, this division of reason and feeling, inherent to the human psyche, is to be overcome only by effecting a

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[22] See Pl. *R.* 462a-e. Cf. *R.* 422e-423d. Socrates does intend, as Aristotle says, to include to the greatest extent possible all the citizens (μάλιστα πάντες οἱ πολῖται, *R.* 462b5) within the ideal of unity to be aimed for. However, it is to be noted that Socrates is here extolling a unity of common feeling between the classes not a unity of kind. For criticism of Aristotle for apparently misrepresenting Plato on this point see, for example, Bornemann (1923:127-8), Proclus 361.14-362.24 [v.2 Kroll 1965] and Saunders (1981:103). Simpson (1991:104) argues that such criticism does not detract from the tenor of Aristotle's argument since "the household and the individual are still going to be more one in this sense than the city."

[23] For Aristotle's consideration of the importance of ὁμόνοια in the polis, see *Pol.* 1261b31-2, 1263b35, also *EN* 1167b4-16, *EE* 1241a16-34.

[24] Simpson (1991:104)

resolution within the individual human consciousness itself. Plato has taken up this challenge with his psychology of soul and city. However, Aristotle argues, because his principles remain polar contraries, Plato ultimately cannot satisfactorily comprehend their difference and must rely on an 'anti-tragic' logic which effaces human individuality and diversity. Socrates, Aristotle maintains, does not discuss in what way unity and ὁμόνοια can properly be said to belong to the political κοινωνία (1261a14). Socrates' underlying hypothesis, he argues, that on which his ideal is founded, is in fact incorrect (*Pol.* 1263b29-31). It is, Aristotle says, as if one were to make a concord (συμφωνία) a unison (ὁμοφωνία) or to reduce a poetic metre to a foot (*Pol.* 1263b34-5). The contrast between συμφωνία and ὁμοφωνία indeed captures well what is at the root of all Aristotle's criticisms of the project of the *Republic*, the difference between his own πρὸς ἕν metaphysics and the univocal conception of reality which Plato espouses.

From the perspective of Aristotle's πρὸς ἕν metaphysics, the move upwards through the three classes of the *Republic*, from the diversity of the economic class, to the single family of the guardians and finally to the individual philosopher ruler, in the approach to the principle, rather than preserving the polis and constituting its true reality, as Plato supposes, in fact destroys the very essence of what it is to be a polis.[25] The polis is of its nature, Aristotle says, πλῆθός τι and not μία (1261a17-22).[26] The distinction between individual, household and polis, considered as 'different kinds of unity', is, for Aristotle, integral to the way in which the ruling principle of reason is found to operate within these κοινωνίαι considered as themselves composite 'wholes of parts'.[27] Thus, at the very beginning of the *Politics*, he criticizes those who suppose there is merely a quantitative

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[25] Barker (1959:232) observes that Aristotle will oppose to Plato's "oneness" his own understanding of κοινωνία as "an association of individuals bound by spiritual chains about a common life of virtue, while yet retaining the individuality of separate properties and separate families."

[26] The polis, Aristotle will go on to argue, is not any chance multitude but a composite whole made up of many parts: a certain multitude of citizens, one with a view to the self-sufficient life (1271b39-41, 1275b17-21, 1328b16-20). The household too can be considered a kind of πλῆθος. Thus, the intended opposition, Stalley (1991:188) rightly observes, cannot be simply that of unity and multiplicity which would invalidate the distinction of household and polis that Aristotle makes. The implication must be drawn "that different kinds of unity are appropriate to different kinds of things."

[27] Irwin (1991:216) maintains that, since Aristotle himself (1253a15-29) uses the organic analogy of individual and polis, there is an apparent inconsistency "with his criticism of Plato's use of the analogy." Cf. Stalley (1999:145) who concludes that "the city, in Aristotle's view, if it is not a substance, is at least substance-like." See also Mayhew (1997a:16-20).

and not a qualitative distinction between the rule exercised by 'the statesman, the king, the manager of the household and the master' (1252a7-16).[28] It is Plato who is here again being criticized, this time for the contention in the *Statesman* that all these forms of ruling belong univocally within a single science (*Plt.* 258e8-10).[29] The conclusion reached by Plato's Eleatic Stranger is that there is no difference between ruling a large household and ruling a polis other than in the number of people under one's charge (259b9-10). By contrast, Aristotle will want to maintain that both different arrangements of rational rule and emotional ties of different strength mark the κοινωνίαι of individual, household and polis as being distinct in their nature.

Not only is the political κοινωνία constituted of a large number of individuals, Aristotle asserts, but it is also constituted from individuals differing in kind. For a polis does not come to be from similar kinds of people (1261a22-24). On the surface as a criticism of Plato this objection appears tendentious. For it is of course quite clear that Socrates has carefully incorporated different kinds, or classes, of individuals within the political structure of Callipolis. Indeed his primary hypothesis has been established to be a 'principle of specialization' which requires each individual to perform his own task alone.[30] Given Aristotle's already remarked reluctance to embark upon the criticism of Plato as his friend, and his overriding concern as a philosopher to uncover the truth, there is, therefore, a need to examine carefully the structure of his response in order that light may perhaps be shed on the underlying conceptions that are motivating him to make this charge. Two particular avenues of thought bear consideration, I believe, in determining how Aristotle may be viewing the political κοινωνία of the *Republic* at this point. These relate both to Aristotle's understanding of what is required to be, as a citizen, an essential structural element of a political κοινωνία, and to how it is that citizens associate together

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[28] The different kinds of κοινωνίαι, which are each in their distinct ways the objects of reason's rule can be distinguished as polis, household, and the individual in whom soul exhibits mastery over body cf. 1254b4-5. Stalley (1991:188-9) makes the further suggestion that Aristotle differentiates the three in terms of the extent to which they are unities by nature, arguing that "presumably ...the man is more closely knit together by nature than the household, and the household more so than the city" (188).

[29] Cf. Pl. *Plt.* 259c1-4. See further on the significance of the argument at *Pol.* 1252a7-16 in relation to Plato's *Statesman*, Saunders (1995:56-9). See also Stalley (1991:188) and Dobbs (1985:34).

[30] Saunders (1995:109, 1981:103) argues this point. See also Stalley (1995:144), Mulgan (1977:29), Proclus 360.17-361.13 [v.2 Kroll 1965]. Stalley (1999:145) concludes that "understood as a criticism of Plato, the argument seems to miss the point altogether."

to form a polis as an integral 'whole of parts', a κοινωνία ordered to the justice of the πολιτεία. In other words, on this understanding, Aristotle's concern at this point is to establish the conceptual formula defining the essence of the polis, its τί ἦν εἶναι, in distinction from other necessary attributes without which the 'idea' or 'form' could not come into being. What is essential to being defined as a citizen, he determines, is the entitlement to active participation in the public life of the polis through holding office and thus taking part to some extent in its deliberative or decision-making process.[31] It is from a multitude (πλῆθος) of such persons adequate for a self-sufficient (αὐτάρκεια) life that the polis is formed (1275a22-1275b21).

Simpson rightly observes that Aristotle is not suggesting that in the *Republic* Socrates failed to discern "that the city was a whole consisting of different parts", but that he failed "to draw out its implications, implications that point to the true account of what preserves a city and keeps it united."[32] Given his understanding of what it is to be a citizen, it is clear that Aristotle can maintain, as he does, that at the very least Socrates has not made clear whether his economic class are allowed input of any sort at all into the public affairs of the polis, and hence can be considered to be free citizens rather than subjects of an authority external to them (1264b34-37). For Aristotle as for Plato, the ruling classes are the warrior element (τὸ ὁπλιτικόν) and the deliberative element (τὸ βουλευτικόν). These are Aristotle's citizens, and it is to them, he says, that wealth and property should belong since it is prosperity that makes possible the life of leisure required for full participation in the public life of the polis. Excluded from citizenship in Aristotle's own best regime, one populated by men who are completely just, are the economic class, those such as the artisans, the merchants and the farmers whose occupations, lacking leisure, are not conducive to the active life of virtue. All these activities are necessary to the welfare of the polis but they are not constitutive parts of the political κοινωνία as such (1328b33-1329a39). Just as soul is to be regarded more a part of an animal than is body, so all those things connected with the work of justice in the polis are more a part of it than those activities concerned with necessary needs (1291a24-28).

Hence, Aristotle's focus on the ruling guardian class of the *Republic* as the effective

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[31] Holding office includes here the indefinite office exercised by the citizens on juries and in the assembly.

[32] Simpson (1998:75)

citizen κοινωνία is not at all unreasonable. It is from such considerations that Aristotle can argue against Plato that the polis must be distinguished from an alliance, which is in effect an aggregate of similar units that increases its effectiveness quantitatively through weight of numbers (1261a24-29). To the contrary, Aristotle argues, the polis must be understood to be intrinsically an ordered composite, a 'whole of parts', which derives its essential unity from actively bringing into relation parts which differ in kind.[33] What he means in saying this, he elaborates, is that there is a principle of proportionate reciprocity which must exist in relations between individual citizens as the ultimate elements or 'parts' of which the political κοινωνία is constituted.[34] It is this principle of reciprocity which both distinguishes from one another and holds in an ordered relationship with one another in κοινωνία the citizens as parts of the whole. What binds them together is the justice of their reciprocal proportionate relationships, a principle of equality so fundamental, Aristotle argues, that it is its presence that preserves cities in being (1261a30-31). Even among citizens who are free and equal therefore this principle is necessarily to be found operative in the relation of the ruling element in the polis to those ruled.[35] Indeed this will be argued to be its fullest articulation, reason active in the practical life of the polis as the expression of the justice of its πολιτεία as its ordering principle.

Whereas Aristotle will allow that if there were to be an individual so exceptional that he completely outclasses all other citizens, as gods and heroes are believed to do, then indeed he should rule permanently and all others should follow his lead, this he maintains

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[33] Barker (1959:234) notes that the polis is seen by Aristotle "as an organic compound, or 'whole' (ὅλον), in which the composition of the parts results not in their mere aggregation, but in a new identity." Ultimately the problem is that of the one and the many: how the whole can be said to be a whole of parts. The metaphysics of structure entailed by the Platonic doctrine of forms is one of identity whereas the Aristotelian doctrine of substance allows for a differentiated whole of parts. This, it should be said, is something towards which Plato himself aims in his later ontology but it is not reflected in his conceptions of the political ideal.

[34] This principle, Aristotle affirms, is that same reciprocal justice he has described in the *Ethics*. See *EN* 1132b33-1133a5, 1163b32-35. The citizen determines himself in relation to others in the public life of the polis in accord with reciprocal justice and friendship, however imperfectly existing polities realize the ideal. In modern parlance, Aristotle's citizens network with one another to form a mutually interdependent and proportioned structural matrix. Each of Plato's citizens, by contrast, separately perfects his soul in the 'having and doing of his own'. So that one can speak of the individual as in a sense a self-contained 'unit' who relates to others as similarly constituted to himself. Justice, Socrates has maintained, is concerned not with a man's external actions but with his internal self (*R.* 443c9-d1).

[35] πᾶσα πολιτικὴ κοινωνία συνέστηκεν ἐξ ἀρχόντων καὶ ἀρχομένων (*Pol.* 1332b12-13).

is not what is found in practice (1332b16-23).[36] Plato's philosopher rulers might be inferred here. In the *Republic*, as has been seen, a strict and inflexible hierarchy of rulers and ruled is envisaged, one based on innate natural differences among individuals which must not be overturned. Ultimately only the reason principle of the philosopher ruler is independently active in the decision-making of the polis of the *Republic*; all other citizens are governed by this reason, actualized in right opinion in accord with the innate limits imposed by their natural capacity.[37] However, Aristotle argues, where citizens are free and equal as independently active reasoning individuals capable of contributing to the end of the polis as its good, given that all cannot rule at the same time, justice requires that this responsibility should be distributed proportionately among the citizens in a way that allows every citizen to both rule and be ruled in turn, becoming thereby, as he says, 'other persons'. In this way the distinction of ruler and ruled is maintained, in imitation of the ideal, while at the same time the injustice of maintaining an inappropriate relationship between free and equal citizens as rational agents is avoided (1261a32-1261b6).

Since it is justice as reciprocity and not uniformity that saves cities, Aristotle concludes that it is clear that the polis is not by nature 'one' in the manner which Socrates has proposed.[38] Indeed the principle upon which the best polis of the *Republic* is founded far from being its greatest good must in fact be its greatest evil, the source of destruction of the political κοινωνία (1261b6-9). Rather than start from the conception of an externally determining universal rational principle to which the individual independently relates, Aristotle argues that the beginning must be with what is most evident to us, the citizens as concrete individuals actively engaged with one another in the life of praxis in the political community. Justice, as the good of the human community, is not found in the association of individuals as independent self-contained 'units', as Plato proposes. Rather

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[36] See also 1284a3-11, 1284b25-34.

[37] Saunders (1995:110) argues that what Aristotle "has in mind [is] what would happen in actual states, whereas the fundamental hypothesis of the *Republic* is that the Guardians rule permanently in virtue of their special knowledge ...so that permanent rule by the same persons *is* 'possible'." This is not the point at issue however. Whereas Plato's superior ideal ruler in the *Republic* rules in accord with an appearance of reciprocity, this is not the underlying principle espoused for the polis, which is unity and not reciprocity. Hence, in the 'practical ideal' of the *Laws* the philosopher king is superseded, not by free and rational equals ruling and being ruled in turn, but by the fixed and invariant rule of a sovereign Law.

[38] To the diversity brought about by an understanding of justice as proportionate reciprocity, Aristotle also ties the self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) of the polis (1261b14-15). Cf. Pl. *R.* 369b5-7. On αὐτάρκεια, see also Pericles in the Funeral Speech (Th. 2.36.3-4) and Solon (Hdt. 1.32).

it is actualized in the ordered reciprocal relationships between individuals which are constitutive of the social order.

9.3 Friendship: criticism of the guardian commune (*Pol.* 1261b16-1262b36)

The first criticism has centred attention on the kind of justice that is to be sought as the ordering principle of the best πολιτεία: justice as uniformity *vis à vis* justice as a proportionate reciprocity. From the examination of the work of reason in human society, Aristotle turns next to consider the activity of the soul in its capacity as feeling, and hence to the conception of friendship (φιλία) in the polis. Once again his objection to Plato's account can be seen to be a highly focused one.[39] Thus he contends that even if it were to be allowed that the justice of the political κοινωνία, how it is arranged so as to be best, entails that it be made as far possible one, the means that Socrates proposes to bring this about will not in fact achieve the desired end. In the *Republic*, Socrates has maintained that through the measures he suggests, in particular the holding of everything in common, wives, children and property, the ruling guardian community will be bound together in a natural unselfconscious κοινωνία of common feeling; so that they will respond in concert, thinking and acting as one, saying with one voice 'mine' or 'not mine' about the same things (*R*.462b4e2). In fact, Aristotle argues, the elimination of difference, all that is private and particular, from society will not result in the strengthened ties of feeling and increase in political unity that Socrates anticipates. It is impossible, he maintains, to extricate strength of feeling from the context in which it is resident in society as it is presently structured naturally. The individual ties which demarcate parent-child, spousal and sibling relations, as particular kinds of φιλία, cannot be simply abstracted from their natural origins in the institution of the family and overlaid on society as a whole as a formal ethical construct coextensive with the κοινωνία πολιτῶν to form a single unified family of guardians.

The question is first introduced (1261b16-32) by raising a logical problem which effectively dissociates Socrates' signifier from what is to be signified and exposes thereby the nature of the problem as Aristotle sees it.[40] It does not follow, he maintains, that from

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[39] As Saunders (1995:111) aptly puts it: Aristotle "goes for the jugular."

[40] The structure of the syllogism is a=b, b=c, therefore a=c. Where a = the greatest unity of the polis, b =

'all' saying together 'mine' and 'not mine' at the same time that this is a sign that the polis is completely one, a κοινωνία of feeling, as Socrates has supposed. First of all, Aristotle points out, it is possible for 'all' to be said two ways (1261b20). When 'all' is said in such a way that all separately and *individually* say "mine' with respect to the same thing the sense is distributive (ὡς ἕκαστος), such as when each speaks of the same boy as his own child, the same woman as his own wife, and so with regard to property and everything he encounters. This, Aristotle suggests, is more in accord with the intent of what Socrates is aiming to attain. Which is to say that where the focus is on a particular object of affection intensity of feeling is retained (1261b20-24).[41] However, the guardians, those having women and children in common, do not say 'all' *individually* in this way but 'all' *collectively* (οὐχ ὡς ἕκαστος) about everything connected with their κοινωνία. As a result, relations are effectively between groups and not between individuals; all who fall within defined age categories will call as a group all those in other categories collectively my 'parent', 'sibling' or 'child'. Thus, Aristotle submits, while to speak in the first sense of 'all' is καλὸν ἀλλ᾽ οὐ δυνατόν, to speak in the latter sense is οὐδὲν ὁμονοητικόν, in no way productive of concord (1261b31-2).

At the centre of Aristotle's response to Socrates' proposal for the holding of all in common is his contention that human nature is not thus to be gainsaid. It must certainly be agreed, as Plato has argued, that the intelligible is prior to the natural, that man does not form his communities in a simply instinctual determinate manner as do other colonial animals. Yet this is not to allow that the innate demands of nature are to be completely overridden or effaced. The realm of the lower gods, the sphere of necessity, must be accorded its proper honour. Socrates has brought his polis to birth directly out of nature by admitting from the outset an absolute priority to determinate rational distinctions which identify individuals as citizens, immediately and unequivocally brought within the

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all say 'mine' and 'not mine' in unison and c = the community of women, children, and property. Aristotle attacks, as ambiguous, b, the common middle term upon which the syllogism stands or falls. In one sense it is seen to be 'fine but impossible' and in another way 'not productive of concord' (1261b30-32). There is some disagreement among commentators on how the logic is to be formally interpreted. On this see the detailed exposition of Simpson (1998:77-80). Cf. Mayhew (1997a:60-61), Saunders (1995:111), Stalley (1991:192), Newman (v.2 1885:236).

[41] Thus, Socrates makes clear (*R.* 463c8-d8) that these family relationships among the guardians are not to be merely nominal but must be accompanied by the appropriate actions: those due in a natural familial association.

compass of the political κοινωνία. The household as a separate institution, a κοινωνία with its own rational organizing principle, can find no place in this understanding. Rather it is seen by Socrates, Saxonhouse notes, to be "a force that draws affection away from the whole, turns citizens into private rather than public beings, and makes them aware of their own bodies which separate them from others."[42]

The central importance of human fellow-feeling, the φιλία needed to bind together as one even the most rational of human κοινωνίαι, the *Republic* explicitly acknowledges; and it is to the family that Plato and Aristotle both turn as the primary association in which these bonds of φιλία are found naturally articulated. For Plato's Socrates these familial bonds, made concrete in the particularity of individual family units, are a potent source of division and must hence ideally be negated by being subsumed to the larger whole of the political κοινωνία. Aristotle, however, will argue that, to the contrary, such individual family ties are to be celebrated not only as 'what is by nature' but as the fundamental and sustaining source of the ethical bonds which allow the polis itself to come into being for the sake of τὸ εὖ ζῆν in the human community. The disturbance of the natural order through the elimination of family and property as private and particular, Aristotle maintains, strikes at the heart of what is the basis of all caring, the recognition of something as individually 'one's own'.[43] Since people take care especially of what is their own, to hold all things in common, far from guaranteeing that they will be the object of universal care, is rather to ensure that they will be accorded a uniform neglect. No one will assume responsibility, each anticipating someone else to be doing so. So that, if each citizen has in common a thousand sons, rather than being reinforced, affection must hence necessarily be fractionated and dissipated and they will slight all of them similarly.[44]

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[42] Saxonhouse (1982/83:203).

[43] Socrates has argued (*R.* 412d1-e3) that 'one cares especially for what one loves.' However, the sole object of the guardians' collective love and care must be what is of benefit (συμφέρειν) to the polis, for it is with this activity, and not any private end, that they are to identify their own good. Aristotle, by contrast, will insist that man must relate to a hierarchy of subordinate ends comprehended within the life of the polis and its architectonic πολιτικὴ ἐπιστήμη (*EN* 1094a6-1094b7).

[44] Proclus 367.16-23 [v.2 Kroll 1965] considers this objection to be absurd, arguing that the education and testing the guardians have undergone ensures this problem would not arise. See too Bornemann (1923:135-6, 142). "Platons Wächter sind so erzogen, daß sie nichts von Selbstsucht und Eigentumsliebe wissen" (135).

By contrast, the system that is actually in place in cities, Aristotle points out, allows a person to be spoken of at once in many ways and individually as 'mine' as a relation by blood, by marriage, and by extended kinship through clan and tribe; and indeed by way of a whole host of differentiated and interconnected relationships which he will determine as necessary to and constitutive of the formation of φιλία in the polis as a whole. It is, he concludes, better to have a cousin for oneself than a son in the fashion of Socrates' guardian κοινωνία.[45] For Aristotle, it is simply παρὰ φύσιν and hence ultimately futile to attempt to thus abstract man from the particularity of his relations with the external world in which he lives. One could also note how extraordinarily ineffective it would be if each did in fact try to care for everything in common, all rushing at once to do the same thing. Indeed, nature will itself not be denied in this way, Aristotle argues, for it will reassert its own demand for recognition of what is 'one's own' in the similarities, the family resemblances, to be detected in offspring to those who are their blood relatives (1261b32-1262a24).[46]

The central importance of φιλία to the integrity of the political κοινωνία is agreed by both Plato and Aristotle. The rational order of the polis, its justice, cannot be severed from the bonds of feeling that draw humans in relation to one another in society. Thus, Aristotle concludes that φιλία is 'the greatest of goods for cities and what most of all will bring about freedom from civil strife' (οὕτως γὰρ ἂν ἥκιστα στασιάζοιεν, 1262b8-9).[47] In his conception of the guardian κοινωνία as bound together by familial ties, Socrates too has accepted that is through promotion of these naturally occurring bonds of φιλία

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[45] Provencal (2001:12) rightly notes that what Aristotle criticizes is "Plato's failure to recognize the impossibility of generating a sense of collective responsibility of 'all' toward 'all' except from a sense of individual responsibility of each toward his own." On the validity of Aristotle's objection, see also Simpson (1998:81-81) and Stalley (1991:192-3). In terms of property, Aristotle will go on to argue that private possession combined with common usage offers the best option (1263a37-39).

[46] So Saxonhouse (1982/83:216) concludes: "Socrates' city, supposedly based on nature, in fact defies nature." Cf. Strauss (1964:117). An unnatural construct in itself, in Aristotle's view, the guardian κοινωνία as Socrates has formulated it, will be a breeding ground for further iniquity in the offences against piety which will inevitably result from acts committed, even if unwittingly, against those who are true blood kin. Aristotle's comments on the impropriety of the incestuous erotic attachments that are not only permitted but employed as rewards in the guardian 'family' are pointed (1262a32-40). Mayhew (1997a:68-71) explores the issues raised by Aristotle in detail. He suggests plausibly that emotional ties among the guardians may be based more on lovers' ἔρως than, as intended, on familial φιλία. See further Saxonhouse (1982/3:216-7), Saunders (1995:114), Susemihl and Hicks (v.1 1894:227).

[47] See also *EN* 1155a22-24.

that the polis attains that unity which he has deemed most praiseworthy (τὸ μίαν εἶναι τὴν πόλιν ἐπαινεῖ ὁ Σωκράτης, 1262b9-10). However, just as he has argued that the *Republic*'s conception of the unity of the polis fails in being directly assimilated to the undifferentiated unity of an abstracted Idea of the Good as its rational principle, so too Aristotle will maintain that Plato's understanding of φιλία in the guardian κοινωνία is, in its turn, wrongly presaged upon a principle which is an abstraction beyond its product, an unmediated, unconscious 'oneness' of feeling which draws humans into relation with one another and which when pushed to its logical limit entails a sameness destructive of all that otherness and difference which the sensible world naturally displays.

As it has been construed by Plato, Aristotle discerns, familial φιλία is a πάθος which upon examination will be seen to entail an indeterminate dyadic of excess and defect.[48] In illustration of this point he presents a pair of contrasting images which bring out what he sees to be the implications such an understanding of φιλία must have in practice for the life of the political κοινωνία. Just as he has already argued with respect to Socrates' conception of polis unity, Aristotle will submit that with respect to φιλία also Plato neither aims at the right end nor achieves the end at which he aims. At one polar extreme, Aristotle suggests, is to be found the picture presented in Plato's *Symposium* by Aristophanes' description of two individual lovers as halves of a whole, who through their excessive love (τὸ σφόδρα φιλεῖν) for one another desire to grow together and so, from being two, to become one. It is just such an ideal as this that Socrates aims at within the guardian κοινωνία when he considers them as one large family, Aristotle submits. However, even were this end achievable, he argues, it could only be at the cost of the perishing of one or both of these individuals as they are taken up completely into the whole. That is to say that either both 'parts' will be destroyed in forming a new 'whole' or one 'part' is absorbed by the other which then becomes the 'whole'. Seen in terms of the guardian κοινωνία and in relation to the polis as a whole, this implies a consequent loss of all distinctions which make the polis a 'whole of parts'; all that remains in the end is the 'whole' in its self-identity.

The tenor of Aristotle's criticism remains the same throughout: Socrates attempts to

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[48] Cf. *EN* 1157b28-9. Aristotle's own developed understanding of human φιλία as properly a ἕξις will be discussed in the following chapter.

confer on his polis a unity that is incompatible with the nature of a polis as a πλῆθός τι. In the *Symposium*, Socrates' guide, Diotima, takes up Aristophanes' account and draws from it further implications, arguing that it is not the half or the whole *per se* that the lover seeks but only insofar as it is good (Pl. *Smp.* 205d10-206a1; cf. 212c4-6). The subsequent movement upwards towards the Beautiful or the Good, the movement from πενία to πόρος found in the *Symposium* is paralleled by a like movement in the *Republic.* Thus the 'natural' φιλία which binds together as one the individual guardians within a 'family' structure is taken up and focused in their identification with the common good of the rationally ordered political κοινωνία, grounded in a love of Justice Itself and the Idea of the Good. Significantly perhaps Aristophanes' intended riposte in the *Symposium* to Socrates' Diotima account goes unsaid (*Smp.* 212c4-6) due to the unexpected eruption onto the scene of the drunken disorderly Alcibiades.[49] Quite conceivably it is possible that Aristophanes and Aristotle might find a common ground for concern.

In fact, Aristotle argues, in attempting to generate bonds of φιλία in the polis in this fashion, what Socrates would actually achieve in practice would be the very opposite of what he anticipates and aims for (1262b15-24). Just as a little sweetener mixed with a large amount of water cannot be tasted in the resulting solution, so too will Socrates' proposals for kin relationships actually result in weakening the bonds of φιλία to a level that is undetectable. The outcome of such a κοινωνία, he maintains, is that φιλία in the polis will of necessity be 'watery' (ὑδαρής). Socrates has achieved the effective dissipation of φιλία in the polis and with this failure the very grounds for στάσις, which he has so determinedly sought to eliminate, are instead only further strengthened. Far from being saved, the polis will thus be brought to destruction. There are two things above all, Aristotle stresses, that especially cause human beings to care (κήδεσθαι) and to feel affection (φιλεῖν): that which is their own and that which is cherished (τό τε ἴδιον καὶ τὸ ἀγαπητόν).[50] Neither of these can be deemed possible, he concludes, for those governed in the way proposed as the ideal in Plato's *Republic.*

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[49] See House (2003:21). On the movement in the *Symposium*, he observes that each successive position as it is left behind is negated and it has to be asked whether one comes in the end "to a glorious vision of precisely what the pilgrim is not able to possess for himself always?"

[50] A friend is one who cherishes you for your own sake. Cf. Arist *Rhet.* 1371a17-21.

10

Bridging the Divide is 'Up to Us'

Aristotle on the Essential Nature of the Polis

ὧν καὶ αἱ ἀρχαὶ ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ αὐτὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν καὶ ἑκούσια
Arist. *EN* 1113b20-21

Coloured undoubtedly by his own experiences with the late 5th century polis where the human community is tellingly revealed as a heap of disparate and competing parts, Plato's response has been to attempt to eliminate to the greatest extent possible the impact of natural difference on the political κοινωνία. Individual citizens and citizen households, no longer to be acknowledged as distinct 'parts' of the political community are, insofar as this is possible, to be subsumed directly to the 'whole'.[1] This, however, Aristotle has argued, is to destroy the essential intelligible structure of the polis as a composite whole of differentiated parts, and to reduce it in practice to the status of an alliance as an aggregation of 'similars'. Underlying this understanding of composition, Aristotle identifies in Plato's thought a metaphysics of identity which is Eleatic in origin. What is logically entailed is a progressive abstraction from content in which all difference is ultimately collapsed into the unity and self-identity of the principle.[2] A way must be found between the extremes, the principles abstracted and opposed as contraries. The polis is not to be considered an undifferentiated unity but neither is it a heap of disparate parts devoid of any organizing and unifying principle. It is necessary to go back once more to that critical juncture where the path leading upwards towards the polis ideals of Aeschylus and Plato and downwards to the late 5th century reality of Euripides

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[1] In the second best city of the *Laws* the family is reinstated but uniformity is still the byword. All the citizens are gentleman farmers and family structure is highly regulated.

[2] Plato himself can be seen to come to grips with this difficulty in the puzzles of the first part of the *Parmenides*. In later dialogues such as *Sophist* and *Philebus* the doctrine of Forms and the 'One over the Many' gives way to conceptions of composite wholes of parts produced through combination of elements. Even here, however, Aristotle will see the elements as logically prior to the composite whole.

and Thucydides, diverges. It is at this point, the 'Sophoclean' point, that the objective good that sustained an older order falls into a substantial division as human knowing asserts itself in relation to the divine. Caught in the sensible flux, the good appears to man as divided against itself, a cause of seemingly intractable ethical dilemma which has its origin in the division of reason and feeling inherent in man as both 'rational' and 'animal'. With his insistence that the beginning is not with a δημιουργός, an Athena or philosopher king offering a revealed truth from without, but with the individual knowing subject as 'what *is* and *is one*', Aristotle will seek an understanding that is not there for Plato with his separate external realm of realities and 'vanishing' sensible order of becoming. The answer to the problem of 'whole' and 'part', or 'one' and 'many' will be found for Aristotle to lie in the conception of substance (οὐσία) as an underlying identity: potency in act. Brought back on stage by Aristotle, the Sophoclean tragic dilemma will be seen to be held now within an ontological ordering of being: sensible substance as a concretion of reason and feeling held in relation to its end, the complete actuality of substance as Νοῦς.

10.1 The essence of the political community as a 'whole of parts' (*Pol.* 1252a1-23)

Everything that we do, all our actions, Aristotle argues, have as their aim something which is held to be a good (1252a2-3). This he maintains is as truly said of the polis as a whole as it has already been shown in the *Ethics* to be of the individual citizens that constitute it.[3] The polis can be seen to be a kind of κοινωνία and like every human κοινωνία it is formed for the sake of some good, a purpose collectively desired (1252a1-2). The political association, however, is not, for Aristotle, just one κοινωνία among many; it is ἡ πασῶν κυριωτάτη, the most 'ruling' or 'authoritative' of all, aiming at the highest of ends, the greatest of human goods, and embracing within its compass all other human associations (1252a4-7). What is immediately evident from this understanding is that the polis is not to be seen as a simple undifferentiated κοινωνία of citizens such as is found in Plato's guardian κοινωνία. Barker comments that the polis for Aristotle is "not the one association and the sole end of man, as it had tended to become in Plato's hands,

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[3] This argument is introduced and expounded in the *Ethics*. See, in particular, *EN* 1094a1-3 and 1113a14-1113b2 where Aristotle notes the distinction that must be made between the good as it appears obscured by such corrupting influences as pleasure and pain and what is in reality the true good.

but the supreme association and the dominant end."[4] As he has in the *Ethics*, Aristotle will continue to assert in the *Politics* that the end of the political κοινωνία, as the complete good to be attained in action, is not achieved by a direct relation to the principle but through a mediated approach which involves the ordering to itself of the ends of all other κοινωνίαι as in themselves subordinate incomplete and partial goods.[5] Each of these discrete κοινωνίαι is ruled by its own particular definitive body of knowledge. So for instance it is the science of household management which rules the κοινωνία of the family and that of the statesman which rules the political κοινωνία. Plato, it has been noted, is specifically castigated by Aristotle for his supposition that ruling as a statesman or king, managing a household or being a master of slaves, all fall under one and the same science. This is to assume wrongly, Aristotle has argued, that these activities differ from one another only quantitatively in the numbers of persons ruled and not qualitatively in the form of the rule, with the result that it is concluded that there is no difference between a large household and a small polis (1252a7-16).[6] It is this underlying univocal conception of κοινωνία that Aristotle will set out to refute in the course of establishing the basis of his own understanding of the polis as an hierarchically ordered arrangement of κοινωνίαι reaching down into the community to allow a range of natural difference, but one which is at the same time contained within and dependent upon an overarching ruling political science as principle and highest practical good.[7]

The problem as Aristotle has inherited it, it has already been inferred, is to explain how within the political community the many, as parts, can be seen to be brought into an essential relation as a composite whole which can contain the fundamental oppositions between particular and common good, τὸ ἴδιον and τὸ κοινόν, that tragedy exposes and explores. The political κοινωνία must be structured in such a way that the elements of which it is composed neither completely lose their nature as distinct distinguishable parts

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[4] Barker (1959:228).

[5] In the *Ethics* Aristotle speaks of the subordination of the ends of individual sciences to the end of the ruling science (τῆς κυριωτάτης καὶ μάλιστα ἀρχιτεκτονικῆς, *EN* 1094a26-7) which is πολιτικὴ ἐπιστήμη. In general on this section of the *Politics* see the comments of Simpson (1998:14-16) and Saunders (1995:55-9).

[6] Cf. Pl. *Plt.* 258e8-259c4.

[7] Aristotle's comments on the reforms of Cleisthenes (*Pol.* 1319b20-27; *Ath.* 21-22) speak to his appreciation of the importance of containing and defusing in this way the opposition between the oligarchic and democratic elements which he sees to characterize all polities in practice. Cf. Pl. *Lg.* 738de.

nor, on the other hand, completely retain their separability and independence so that the composite, far from being a unified whole, is a mere heap. The difficulty is to be investigated, as is Aristotle's customary practice, by first dividing the composite (σύνθετον) into its elements; the smallest constituent parts of the whole. By examining the parts from which the polis is composed, he argues, it will be possible to come to a better understanding both of how they differ from one another and of whether different kinds of ruling require their own characteristic expertise. What will be thus brought to light is the causal principle, the ἕτερόν τι, which gives unity to the κοινωνία as a whole of a particular kind.[8] Aristotle's point, Simpson notes, is that it is insufficient simply to identify the parts, it must be seen also "how the parts come together to form the whole ...since parts are parts in view of a whole."[9] *Contra* Plato, Aristotle will argue that this does not occur through the direct association in political κοινωνία of rationally pre-differentiated individuals but that the polis, as the 'whole' which is the telos towards which man tends, emerges naturally from more elemental human κοινωνίαι. Aristotle's polis requires no external δημιουργός to bring it into being. Founded in a natural necessity which all living things share in common the political κοινωνία is the natural end of an innate moving principle (νοῦς) resident within man himself.[10]

10.2 The natural origins of the political community (*Pol.* 1252a23-1253a39)

As he develops his own account of the necessary natural relationship between the individual as its smallest element and the polis as the composite whole of parts, Aristotle looks back, as is his wont, upon the thought of his predecessors and takes up into his own account the fundamental beliefs, the ἔνδοξα, he finds expressed there. Hence, his

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[8] This section (*Pol.* 1252a17-23) is, as Saunders (1995:59) well notes, "rather foggily written." See too on this Newman (v.2 1887:102-3). However, taken in the context of what has been said already and what will follow in *Pol.* 1, it is clear that what Aristotle must refute is Plato's contention that all ruling falls under a single science, for otherwise there is no distinction to be made in principle between household and polis. He will begin his response by locating the simplest elements of the polis in the household, where the relations between husband and wife, master and slave, father and child will be argued to exhibit different kinds of rule exercised by the same person, contrary to what Plato has argued. The relation of master and slave is examined in *Pol.* 1.4-7 and that of husband and wife, father and child in *Pol.* 1.12.

[9] Simpson (1998:17).

[10] Hence, the establishment of a necessary natural relationship between the individual as its smallest element and the polis as the composite whole of parts is essential to Aristotle's account.

contentions that the polis exists by nature not convention (1252a24-1253a2), that man is naturally fitted for life in the polis (1253a2-18), and that the polis is prior by nature to both the household and the individual (1253a18-29) are all assumptions constitutive to the ethico-political thought of the period.[11] It is from within this tradition that Aristotle begins his account of the natural origins of community with the premise that on his own, as individual, man is radically incomplete and must associate with others of his kind to satisfy the needs of his nature. It is this insufficiency, the lack of αὐτάρκεια in the individual, Aristotle argues, that makes the political κοινωνία both necessary and natural.

On the boundary of nature and reason, the beginnings to human community lie in the association of male and female, brought together by the natural instinct for the survival of the species. This is not a matter of rational choice (προαίρεσις), Aristotle asserts, but occurs in humans, as in all other living things, by force of necessity (ἀνάγκη). Concomitant with this urge to reproduce the species, is the further natural requirement to maintain it in its being through the satisfaction of the basic material economic needs for survival. This entails postulating a further association of elements, those which are particularly suited by their nature to ruling and to being ruled; a distinction epitomized in the relation of master and slave.[12] One who is naturally able through his intelligence to exhibit forethought in ordering external necessity to man's needs must exercise authority over one who is because of his physical ability suited through his labours to satisfying these needs, and so is by nature ruled and a slave; for this is to the mutual benefit of both. It is from these two primary κοινωνίαι, founded on mutual benefit, that of male and female, master and slave, that the household can be said to exist as a κοινωνία κατὰ φύσιν in order to satisfy the requirements of daily living (1252a26-1252b15).[13]

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[11] See further Introduction, pages 8-9.

[12] All composite 'wholes of parts', whether living or non-living, Aristotle argues, always constitute a ruling and ruled element (1254a28-33). In living organisms, Aristotle discerns first of all the rule of mastery, in that soul by nature (φύσει) rules over body. Also, to be detected in living organisms (ἐν ζῴῳ), is what he determines as a political or kingly rule, the rule of the rational element over appetitive desire (ὁ δὲ νοῦς τῆς ὀρέξεως πολιτικὴν ἢ βασιλικήν, 1254b5-6). What is thus found to be present by nature in living substantial 'continuous' organic wholes is seen to be constitutive to the natural formation of the 'non-continuous' human κοινωνίαι of the household and the polis in terms of their relationship of ruling and ruled elements.

[13] Aristotle will later be seen to redefine his definition of a true κοινωνία in a way that will exclude associations like that of master-slave, soul-body in which justice is absent.

A natural extension of the individual household, village communities arise through the association of kinship groups which allow the satisfaction of needs beyond the basic. Although Aristotle does not elaborate at this point, it is reasonable to suppose that benefits of this expanded association would include, as Plato had earlier suggested, both a greater diversity and efficiency in providing for wants and better protection for the group as a whole from external contingencies that threaten its survival. The culmination of this natural trend to associate in human community is the polis itself as the complete and self-sufficient κοινωνία which results from the coming together of several villages under a single rule.[14] However, the initial emergence of the polis for the satisfaction of human material welfare is not the complete end toward which the polis naturally tends; for it is not for the sake of living (τὸ ζῆν) but for the sake of living well (τὸ εὖ ζῆν) that the polis comes to be (1252b29-30). Only with his physical needs taken care of, is man free to perfect his true nature as rational, which for Aristotle as for Greeks in general in the Classical period means the active engagement of human reason in the ethical life of the polis. As τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα καὶ τὸ τέλος βέλτιστον (1252b34-1253a1), the polis is the final cause which encompasses within its order the successive series of human κοινωνίαι, arising out of natural necessity and culminating in the actualization of man's inborn nature in the self-sufficient life of reason which the political κοινωνία affords. The polis is thus, Simpson rightly notes, to be seen in Aristotle's terms as a natural composite whole which encompasses household and village "as its subordinate parts and is their natural completion."[15]

Aristotle's conception of a natural continuum from the primary biological κοινωνίαι to the rational ethical κοινωνία of the polis has not, however, gone unchallenged. Keyt, for example, has recently been particularly influential in claiming that Aristotle's philosophy

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[14] Just as households and villages are said to be under the 'kingly' rule of the most senior member, so too were the first cities. Indeed nations continue to be ruled in this way, Aristotle notes (*Pol.* 1252b19-22). Kingly rule which characterizes the nascent polis will be found to give way in the fully fledged polis to a 'political' rule where all citizens participate in some way in communal deliberation and decision-making (1275a22-1275b21). See further Simpson (1998:20) and Saunders (1995:67).

[15] Simpson (1998:21). Barker (1959:269-70) eloquently and effectively presents Aristotle's case that the polis "is natural because it is the conclusion of human development, in which each step is necessary and natural, the outcome not of human purpose but of human instinct (ὁρμή) struggling towards its goal, while the whole is marked by an unbroken continuity from beginning to end" (269).

is self-contradictory on this point.[16] At issue is the transition that takes place from a natural necessity to a self-conscious rational freedom. Thus, while, acknowledging Aristotle's claim that there is an innate capacity in man for virtue, Keyt maintains that by Aristotle's own account it is "not by nature, but by habituation guided by law and practical wisdom" that men become good. The polis is, therefore, he argues, "an artificial rather than a natural entity."[17] It is certainly true, as Barker observes, that "the volition and action of human agents 'construct' the state in co-operation with a natural immanent impulse."[18] However, this is not in itself indicative of any inconsistency in Aristotle's thought.[19] Human intellect is not to be seen as an end in itself separate and apart from that completion towards which Aristotle argues that the human community is ordered naturally: nature finds its fulfilment in νοῦς.[20] As his thought ranges from inanimate nature, with its external principle of motion, through living organisms with their own intrinsic principle of movement and cognition it comes to a final rest in Noῦς as the first principle of all reality.[21] All of nature unfolds as a seamless tapestry for Aristotle. The movement is both inward and upward as nature is drawn by νοῦς from its external necessity to a knowledge of itself in its own freedom and self-relation. As the science of the highest and most complete good for man in praxis, it is πολιτικὴ ἐπιστήμη that enables man, in association with others of his kind, to self-consciously actualize his nature as rational. Through the activity of νοῦς πρακτικός in the life of virtue in the political κοινωνία man comes to be what in reality he is.[22]

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[16] Keyt (1991:118-41). "There is a blunder at the very root of Aristotle's political philosophy" (118).

[17] Keyt (1991:134-135). Saunders (1995:69) concludes likewise that Aristotle's "argument fails," but suggests that "it could be rescued by treating the polis as a 'natural artefact', subserving" the end as that which is best. Miller (1995:42) too favours the hybrid approach whereby the polis results from the conjoint activity of nature and human reason as "two distinct causal factors."

[18] Barker (1956:7).

[19] See further Simpson (1998:24-5) who stresses this point.

[20] The objection that Keyt *et al.* raise could be more reasonably asserted against Plato's account. It is with the specific intention of addressing this Platonic χωρισμός that Aristotle develops his own account of the development of human κοινωνία.

[21] Underpinning Aristotle's ethico-political thought is his doctrine of substance as it is developed in the *Physics*, *de Anima* and *Metaphysics*.

[22] The problem observed here in the *Politics* is found 'writ large' by commentators on *EN* 10.7-8 in the seeming contradiction between the life of contemplation and the life of praxis as the best life for a man. That some tension persists is inevitable and must be accepted, Aristotle would argue, since this is inherent in the divided nature of man, as both rational and animal. Although the rational life is the supreme felicity

Not only is the polis one of those things which exist by nature and not convention, but it is further argued that man, its most elemental part, is himself φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον, fitted by his nature for polis life (1253a2-3).[23] There is, Aristotle declares, in every man by nature an impulse (ὁρμή) towards the political κοινωνία (1253a29-30).[24] Other animals can be seen to form communities, associating for a single common purpose in herds and even showing differentiation of function under a leader, as do bees, but man has something in addition, something that makes him the political animal *par excellence*.[25] Man not only has, like other animals, a voice by which to indicate the pleasant and painful in reaction to stimuli, but he alone is capable of articulating and communicating through the medium of language a conception of benefit and harm. It is from the exercise of this capacity that there comes the sense of what is good or bad, just or unjust, and it is this ethical association which most truly constitutes the human political community (ἡ ...τούτων κοινωνία ποιεῖ οἰκίαν καὶ πόλιν, 1253a18). Thus, Barker observes, "[s]peech (λόγος) is the voice of reason and to make speech the bond of the State is to make the State cohere in virtue of a principle of reason."[26] 'Nature makes nothing in vain', Aristotle argues (1253a8), and it is only through participation in the ethical life of the political κοινωνία that man achieves αὐτάρκεια.

Aristotle has to his own satisfaction traced the path that leads from a κοινωνία born out

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for man, the actualization of his formal principle, contemplation is not in the technical sense something proper to man who must exist in matter. Thus man engages in contemplation not *qua* man but in virtue of the divinity within in him, i.e. as possessing intellect (νοῦς) which is θεῖόν τι (*EN* 1177b28-30). Cf. *EN* 1178a9-10.

[23] One who is by nature ἄπολις is ἀφρήτωρ ἀθέμιστος ἀνέστιος, eager by nature for war, an isolated game-piece (1253a3-7). Cf. descriptions of the Cyclopes in Hom. *Od.* 9.112ff; Pl. *Leg.* 680b4-8.

[24] The one who first founded such a κοινωνία is responsible for the greatest of goods (1253a30-31). Cf. Arist. *Metaph.* 980a1. The desire to understand is the means to the fulfilment of this primary urge drawing men together, a desire grounded in Noῦς, the unmoved mover; for κινεῖ δὲ ὧδε τὸ ὀρεκτὸν καὶ τὸ νοητόν (*Metaph.* 1072a26).

[25] See Arist. *HA* 487b33-488a13 on animal associations as 'political'. Cf. Pl. *Plt.* 276e10-14; *R.* 451c8, 451d9, 459e1, e3). The observation that some animals naturally form herds and that in a few of these there is observed both functional differentiation and a ruling and a ruled element is an important consideration in Aristotle's argument that the polis emerges from within the natural. He is not, of course, suggesting that bees, for example, live in a polis. Saunders (1995:69) observes that Aristotle's "point is that animals have two characteristics which are necessary but not sufficient for life in a state: the sensations (*aisthesis*) of pleasure and pain, and 'voice', *phonê*, with which to indicate them to one another." See further the interpretations of Simpson (1998:22), Miller (1995:30-1), Kullmann (1991:108, 1980:419-43), Bodéüs (1985:65-81), Mulgan (1977:23-5).

[26] Barker (1959:270).

of a necessity man shares in common with the brutes to the fulfilment of human nature in the ethical life of the κοινωνία τέλειος πόλις. As the whole is of necessity prior to the part, he now argues, the polis is thus prior by nature both to the household and to each individual (1253a19). The collective good of the polis, Aristotle insists, is always to be deemed a greater and more complete good than that of the individual alone, even when the two concur. For it is both more noble (κάλλιον) and more divine (θειότερον) to attain the common good of the polis as opposed to the private good of the individual' (*EN* 1094b7-10). It is this principle that Aristotle will see to underlie the resolution of the very real oppositions that can arise in the sensible between the collective good of the polis and personal and family interest. Clearly, on this understanding Sophocles' Philoctetes, whatever his private anguish, is duty bound to go to Troy and save his community. This is not to say, of course, that the true nature of the ethical imperative that presents may not be misconstrued through the inadequacy of human reason and under the influence of feeling. This is the lesson tragedy teaches; one the tragic confrontations of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and *Antigone* amply demonstrate.[27]

The analogy Aristotle draws upon to illustrate the priority to be accorded to the good of the whole is a comparison between the polis and a living organism. Just as when the whole body is destroyed, he says, there can be no foot or hand other than homonymously, as one might speak of a stone hand, so also men separated from the life of the polis and thus lacking in self-sufficiency are men in name only, parts separated from the whole that defines their proper nature. The point he makes is that everything is defined by its function and capacity (πάντα δὲ τῷ ἔργῳ ὥρισται καὶ τῇ δυνάμει, 1253a23). So that if the conditions necessary to perform that function are absent something cannot be said properly to be what it is in its nature to be.[28] It is clear that in metaphysical terms, for Aristotle, man deprived of the self-sufficiency he attains in the communal life of the polis as an integral part of a higher whole has to be considered only *potentially* an individual substance in the fullest sense. It is a failure to recognize that Aristotle consistently thinks in his ethico-political works from within his own logic of substance in potency and act that leads to difficulties in interpretation. Thus, Keyt, noting that "by Aristotle's own

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[27] Aristotle's understanding of the opposing principles in *Antigone* will be discussed later in this chapter.

[28] Cf. Arist *Mete.* 390a10-1. See also Mayhew (1997b:336-7), Miller (1995:49-50, 52-3).

principles Philoctetes while living in isolation remains a human being," since it is by chance not nature he is ἄπολις (1253a3-4), concludes on this account that this necessarily refutes Aristotle's "organic thesis."[29]

Not only at this point in the argument but in a number of places in the *Politics*, Aristotle makes the comparison between the polis and a living organism so that it is clearly something upon which he places some weight in coming to an understanding of the essential nature of the polis as a composite whole of parts.[30] The analogy, has however drawn considerable critical fire. Thus Keyt calls it "undoubtedly the most provocative assertion in the *Politics*."[31] The question most often raised is whether there exists in such a conception of the polis any room for human freedom: Are the citizens to be considered a possession of the polis in the same way that an organ is determinately subordinated to the functioning of a living animal as a whole?[32] It is also asked how, in terms of Aristotle's own metaphysics of substance, the polis can even be considered in this way a substantial organic whole of parts when the parts themselves, the citizens as human individuals, are substances.[33]

The fundamental difficulty with which these commentators see themselves faced has already surfaced in the problems they have in accepting Aristotle's argument that the polis exists by nature. For it is from this that the comparison of the polis to a living substance is seen by Aristotle to naturally follow. Like other living things, the polis has

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[29] Keyt (1991:139).

[30] Cf. *Pol.* 1277a5-10, 1290b21-38, 1291a24-28, 1302b33-1303a2, 1309b23-35, 1326a35-40.

[31] Keyt (1991:139). Barnes (1990:263) is particularly condemnatory. "For I am an independent individual ...a fact which, in the *Politica*, Aristotle ignores or suppresses." For Barnes, Aristotle here exhibits an "implicit totalitarianism." Yack (1999:276), in response, points out that in these terms, Aristotle should deem bees more 'political' in their devotion to a common end. "If man is 'more political' than bees and ants, then ...[t]here must be some other kind of sharing in which human beings surpass all other creatures." For a thorough and cogently argued refutation of the 'totalitarian' interpretation see Mayhew (1997b:326-340).

[32] That Aristotle does not intend to say that the polis is an organism in the sense that its ruling principle takes the form of an invariant mastership is clearly evident in his assertion that the polis is properly to be considered a κοινωνία τῶν ἐλευθέρων (1279a21) and from the whole tenor of his consideration of polis justice.

[33] See on this point Mayhew (1997b:238-335). A substance cannot be composed of other substances existing in complete actuality (ὡς ἐντελεχεία). Things in actuality two are never in actuality one (ἓν ἐντελεχείᾳ). However, if something is only *potentially* two (δυνάμει δύο) it will be one (*Metaph.* 1039a3-6; cf.1041a4-5).

been seen to emerge through a natural necessity as a composite whole of parts which has an inner moving principle ordering it to its end. Nevertheless, Mayhew is right to conclude that "when, in *Politics* i 2, Aristotle states that the city is or exists by nature, he cannot mean by this that the city is a natural organism" at least insofar as this indicates it is on an par ontologically with other living things in the determinate subordination of its parts.[34] Aristotle's criticisms of Plato have made it very clear in fact that, as far as he is concerned, the polis is not to be considered as an individual 'writ large'. Bridging the divide between natural necessity and reason and underpinning Aristotle's ethico-political thought on the good for man is his metaphysical doctrine of substance as a relation of potency and act and the psychology of the *de Anima*. Thus, it has already been noted that for Aristotle the inner moving principle in man ordering him to his end as the human good is νοῦς actualizing itself in virtue in the political life of praxis.

All living substances share in common that they are composite 'wholes of parts' constituted of a ruling and ruled element and possessing an essential nature, an intrinsic end to which they are ordered. However, this is not to say that for Aristotle all living things are considered to be ontologically on a par with one another. Some understanding of how Aristotle sees the polis to possess the nature of a substance can be gained from looking at his argument in the *de Anima*. There sensible substance is itself revealed as concretely instantiating in nature different forms of actuality in plants, animals and man, all of which can be contained within a common structure to which they are successively (ἐφεξῆς) ordered.[35] In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle speaks of the ordering of sensible substance to eternal substance as ἐφεξῆς (*Metaph.* 1004a6-9, 1069a20). It can certainly be argued on these grounds that the polis, construed as an ethical substance, fits well within this overall ἐφεξῆς ordering of nature to reason which culminates in the full actuality of Noῦς as first principle. Man's good, as in other social animals, is realized not *qua* individual but ἐφεξῆς, in his case as an integral part of a larger rational community which is a higher actuality containing the lower elements in potency. In the movement of

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[34] Mayhew (1997b:335)

[35] Just as 'figure' provides a general account common to all figures in a series containing 'triangle', by analogy, Aristotle argues 'soul' is similarly ordered so that what is earlier belongs successively to what comes later (*de An.* 414b28-32). The lower is conceived as successively (ἐφεξῆς) contained, in potency, within a higher actuality. Thus man's intellectual soul possesses in potency the sensitive soul of the animal and the nutritive soul of the plant.

human νοῦς towards the first principle, the κοινωνία of the polis, the ethical ideal which is the actuality of ethical substance, contains ἐφεξῆς, in potency, the actualities of the individual and household.[36] The actual is always prior to the potential and it is the polis as an ethical substance that is the rational actuality of the common human life of virtuous action, through participating in which, man attains to the realization of what is most divine in him.

What the organic analogy effects is to keep before us the essential teleological nature of the polis, and its structure as a composite whole of parts with a ruling and ruled element. However, whereas man is thus ordered to his end in the political κοινωνία as the human good, the potential that is in him cannot be said to unfold of necessity as it does in other living organisms and in this lies the locus of human freedom; the transition from necessity to freedom, from the animal to the rational in man's nature.[37] Whereas the bonds that hold together the organism and determine its physical structure and function are necessary constraints, the polis is structurally held together and shaped by rational ethical ties. Within the limits imposed by external necessity, humans, both individually and collectively, are capable of freely determining themselves in relation to nature through the choices they make.[38] This human freedom, however, is not to be understood in terms of a modern liberal conception of freedom from constraint, which for Aristotle is but the freedom of a slave to act thoughtlessly at random (*Metaph.* 1075a19-22). Rather it is to be seen as the freedom for man to actualize himself in relation to the order of his true nature as rational in the life of virtue, performing noble actions and perfecting himself within the political κοινωνία.

With the polis now conceived as an ethical substance, the elements of reason and feeling, of πολιτεία and citizen κοινωνία, are seen in their true relation as formal and material potencies, moments of a single actuality through which νοῦς πρακτικός unfolds its

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[36] Temporally prior to the polis as actualities, individual and household are ontologically posterior.

[37] No universal innate good nature is thus to be found 'hardwired' within us as we might describe the instincts of the beasts, for example those for migration or nest-building.

[38] Thus, Aristotle argues, human rational soul, although potentially all it can be, is not at birth any one thing (*de An.* 429a4). While we, in a sense, create ourselves, we do so in relation to an end which is a prior actuality, actualizing what is potential within us. The soul is the place of the forms (τόπος εἰδῶν) and Aristotle commends Plato for recognizing this to be so (*de An.* 429a27-9). For Aristotle's understanding of how universals come to be stabilized within the soul see *APo.* 100a4-14.

nature in discrete concrete realizations of the end as a good.[39] In this sense, Aristotle will argue that there is a single end for every polis (ἕν δὲ τέλος τῇ πόλει πάσῃ, 1337a21-2) in light of which it is necessary to consider each citizen as belonging not to himself but to the polis; 'for each is a part of the polis and the care of the part looks naturally to the care of the whole' (1337a27-30). In order for this to be effected, it is essential that from earliest youth the citizens be habituated and educated to the ideals upheld by the polis as prior and actual in their ethical life.[40] The bonds that bind the citizens to the polis as parts of a whole, although grounded in feeling are ultimately to be identified as rational; so that the aim of the polis is to first habituate its citizens to an instinctual recognition of polis virtue and then to educate them to a self-conscious understanding of the justice that is the order of their πολιτεία.[41] This is pre-eminently to be realized in the institutions of family and polis through the actualizing of incipient bonds of friendship and justice, ties which can be seen to have their roots in the natural and their end in the divine. If reason and feeling are not to fall into opposition as opposed and partial goods mistaken for the whole, it must come to be understood how they are brought into relation with one another to cohere as justice and friendship in the κοινωνία. On his own, living a solitary life, man is not self-sufficient; by nature fitted for the polis life (φύσει πολιτικὸν ὁ ἄνθρωπος) man is able to actualize his nature as virtuous only in association with family, friends and fellow citizens (*EN* 1097b8-11). It is not only those physically separated from polis life, like Philoctetes, but also the philosopher of *Republic* 592b, who isolates himself intellectually from the public affairs of his polis and attempts to perfect his soul solely though θεωρία in contemplation of the Good, who is found by Aristotle not to be living a sufficient human life. The incipient φρόνιμος, irrespective of the condition of his polis, must actively engage in the life of noble actions in order to actualize the forms of

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[39] At 1290b21-38 Aristotle speaks of establishing the number of different πολιτειῶι according to the way animal species are differentiated. A distinction is to be made between 'correct' constitutions, those which are κατὰ φύσιν, and deviant forms which are παρὰ φύσιν (1279a17-21, 1287b41).

[40] Like Plato, in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, Aristotle places great emphasis on education of the young in good habits by the polis and he can be seen to draw considerably upon Plato's account, particularly that of the *Laws*. In *Politics* 7.17, for example, Newman (v.3 1887:478) remarks that Aristotle in his account of early education seems to write throughout with *Laws* Book 7 in front of him. Aristotle himself confirms his agreement with Plato on the necessity of inculcating from earliest youth the appropriate responses to pleasure and pain in pursuit of moral excellence (*EN* 1104b11-13).

[41] The constitutive virtue of the polis is justice; justice is the πολιτικῆς κοινωνίας τάξις (1253a37-39).

virtue potential within his soul.[42] The investigation of τὰ ἀνθρώπεια φιλοσοφία must therefore turn to the quintessentially human κοινωνίαι of family and polis and address itself to the relations that pertain there with respect to the ordering of human ἤθη and πάθη (*EN* 1155b9-10).

10.3 The foundations of friendship & justice in the household

In every κοινωνία, Aristotle observes, there seems to be some sort of justice and friendship (*EN* 1159b26-27). Just as in the household there are to be found the most elemental of human κοινωνίαι, there too, he submits, are to be discovered the origins and wellsprings of friendship as well as of polity and of justice (φιλίας καὶ πολιτείας καὶ δικαίου, *EE* 1242a40-b1). While both friendship and justice are found to have their roots in the household, there is nevertheless a definite sense in which Aristotle sees φιλία as more fundamental to κοινωνία.[43] The attractive force that first draws the parts in relation to one another shows itself as implicitly rational, making possible the structured order of the whole which is its justice. Being friends, Aristotle maintains, people have no need of justice whereas being just they will need friendship in addition for τῶν δικαίων τὸ μάλιστα φιλικὸν εἶναι δοκεῖ (*EN* 1155a26-28). When Socrates sought to stimulate in the guardian κοινωνία common bonds of feeling so that they would think and act as one, he rightly recognized, Aristotle would allow, that the source of human φιλία is to be found in the natural innate bond of feeling that instinctually binds the members of a family to one another in φίλησις. This natural love for what is one's own is a πάθος that man shares with other animals who instinctually associate to care for their young (*EN* 1155a16-21).[44] What humans have in addition and alone possess, however, is the power

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[42] Only when the moral virtues have been firmly established therein, does he come to have possession of his end as the happiness and self-sufficiency of θεωρία. Even so, ὁ δὲ τοιοῦτος ἂν εἴη βίος κρείττων ἢ κατ᾽ ἄνθρωπον; a life to be lived by a human only insofar as he has is able to actualize, however temporarily, the divine element within him (*EN* 1177b24-1178a8). Cf. *EN* 1145a6-11.

[43] The singular importance that Aristotle attaches to φιλία is attested by his devotion of two full books of the *Nicomachean Ethics* to its consideration. See also *Eudemian Ethics* Book 7 and *Rhetoric* 1380b35-1381b37. In general, Aristotle will go on to argue that the extent to which the affectionate feeling arises from nature or compact, the extent to which it is imbued with reason, whether or not the relationship is one of superiority or of mutual reciprocity between equals, and the nature of the objective as pleasure, utility, or good, are all considerations to be taken into account in determining the character of the φιλία as a 'friendship'. Konstan (1997:67-72) emphasizes, that φιλία covers a much broader range of "affectionate ties or relations in general" than is to be understood by the English notion of friendship (67).

[44] See too Arist. *EE* 1241b2-4. In *GA* 753a7-17 Aristotle argues that the natural desire to care for offspring

to communicate through language in a way that allows them to form an ethical community in which the relations of individuals, while founded in φίλησις, are rationally differentiated. Loving, Aristotle points out, would seem to be a feeling (φίλησις πάθει) whereas friendship is to be further distinguished as a stable disposition (ἡ ...φιλία ἕξει) a kind of loving which entails προαίρεσις, the involvement of rational ethical choice (*EN* 1157b28-31). Properly speaking, φιλία, as distinct from φίλησις, involves an actively rational component, friendship as a reciprocated goodwill embodying an ongoing concern for the good of the other of which we are consciously aware (*EN* 1156a3-5). What first draws humans together in friendship, however, is what is loveable (τὸ φιλητόν), the object of desire as an unmoved mover and the first cause of action. This, Aristotle determines, is what is deemed to be either good, pleasant or useful; although strictly speaking, the useful is not an end in itself but is for the sake of some good or pleasure so that φιλητὰ ἂν εἴη τἀγαθόν τε καὶ τὸ ἡδὺ ὡς τέλη (*EN* 1155b17-20).[45]

It is the distinction that Aristotle makes between what is entailed by a πάθος and a ἕξις that can be seen to be key to his response to Plato's account of the guardian φιλία. The impulse or ὁρμή that Aristotle notes is present in every man towards political κοινωνία (*Pol.*1253a29-30) reveals itself in the *Ethics* as that φιλανθρωπία which men everywhere show to another human as being οικεῖον ...καὶ φίλον (*EN* 1155a19-22).[46] Reason and

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is more persistent in animals that are φρονιμώτερα; some, like humans exhibit συνήθεια and φιλία towards their offspring even when fully developed. Belfiore's recent article (2001:113-132) is an in depth look at family friendship in Aristotle in relation to his broader conception of φιλια which I have drawn upon in developing my own account. She rightly notes that, while Aristotle's "ideas about friendship among unrelated people are now much better understood, his views on family friendship (συγγενικὴ φιλία) continue to present difficulties to scholars" (113). See too Provencal (2001:1-21) and the references cited in these articles. On Books 8 & 9 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which contain Aristotle's fully developed account of friendship, see, in particular, Joachim (1951:241-61). Pakaluk's (1998) commentary on *EN* Books 8 & 9 in the Clarendon Aristotle Series offers a contrasting analytic perspective. On friendship in general, in terms of Aristotle ethical theory see, for example, Cooper (1999), which contains a collection of his earlier writings on the topic; also Stern-Gillet (1995), Schollmeier (1994), Price (1989). Konstan (1997) provides a broad perspective on friendship in the ancient world with an extensive bibliography. Pangle (2003) offers a modern sociologically oriented viewpoint.

[45] As the causes differ, so too do the kinds of loving and friendship (αἱ φιλήσεις ...καὶ αἱ φίλαι) that are to be distinguished. There are, Aristotle submits, three species of friendship corresponding to the objects of love. The primary form of friendship, however, is that for the sake of the good. See further *EE* 1236a16-32.

[46] Provencal (2001:7) notes the significance of φιλανθρωπία and its relation to φιλαυτία. Some of the inferences he draws, however, could certainly be queried. For example, his claims that, for Aristotle, φιλία "manifests itself in that universal love of humanity for which we praise a few individuals as [φιλάνθρωποι]" and that φιλανθρωπία is praised as "the love of all attained by the few, as a kind of heroic

feeling are not separate principles brought into relation externally by a δημιουργός, as Plato and before him Aeschylus portray them. Rather they are from the beginning two aspects (potencies) of a single actuality which is realized concretely in human ethical agency; προαίρεσις as a βουλευτικὴ ὄρεξις (*EN* 1113a10-11).[47] The movement is one from potency to actuality; from a natural universal disposition in man for friendship with his fellows (τοὺς γὰρ φιλοφίλους ἐπαινοῦμεν, *EN* 1155a29-30) to an understanding of a complete φιλία founded upon virtue, in accord with which good people reciprocally wish goods to a friend for the friend's sake. Such friendships, Aristotle observes, are rare but they are, he sees, the means to the full realization of the rational self in the ethical life, the activity of νοῦς πρακτικός in the recognition and actualization of oneself in what is other. A friend is in fact another self (ὁ φίλος ἄλλος αὐτός, *EN* 1166a31-32, *EE* 1245a30). Indeed the activities that delineate our relations to other humans, Aristotle argues, seem in fact to stem from a friendship towards oneself (*EN* 1166a1-2); φιλαυτία is therefore the actuality of that impulse to φιλανθρωπία that is observed to be resident as a potency in every human. As such, φιλαυτία is implicitly present in all forms of human φιλία as the rational end towards which it is moved.[48] A friend is as it were a self divided (αὐτὸς διαιρετός, *EE* 1245a35); and since one is a friend to oneself, it is oneself one should love most of all (*EN* 1168b9-10). Belfiore notes well Aristotle's indication

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virtue," are manifestly incorrect. What Provencal fails to come to grips with, I would suggest, is the significance of the Aristotelian conception of potency and act that underlies the movement of thought here. Cf. Aristotle's use of φιλανθρωπία elsewhere in his works to intimate a general feeling of benevolence one man exhibits towards another man (*Po.* 1452b3, 1453a3, 1456a21; *Rh.* 1390a20; *Pol.* 1263b16 *Ath.* 16.2.4, 16.8.3, 18.3.4) That this fellow-feeling is an innate potency in man which is implicitly rational is brought out in the discussion of family friendship and ultimately of complete friendship.

[47] Cf. *EN* 1139b4-5: διὸ ἢ ὀρεκτικὸς νοῦς ἡ προαίρεσις ἢ ὄρεξις διανοητική, καὶ ἡ τοιαύτη ἀρχὴ ἄνθρωπος. Plato also sites within the natural, impulses to the gentle and the fierce which when properly educated in the human soul become the polis virtues of wisdom and courage (*R.* 375b9-c2, 376c4-5, 410e10). However, without Aristotle's conception of substance in potency and act, he is unable to link these natural impulses intrinsically to his objective rational principle of the Good.

[48] Τὰ φιλικὰ δὲ τὰ πρὸς τοὺς πέλας, καὶ οἷς αἱ φιλίαι ὁρίζονται, ἔοικεν ἐκ τῶν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐληλυθέναι. At *EN* 1168b1-10 Aristotle reiterates that all that defines a friend relates most especially to oneself (*EN* 1168b3-4). Hence the common proverbs relating to friends such as 'μία ψυχή', 'κοινὰ τὰ φίλων' (*EN* 1168b7-8). Aristotle summarizes his conception of friendship towards self and other as: (i) wishing and doing the good (or what appears to be the good) for a friend's sake (ii) wishing the friend to be and to live for the good of the friend (mothers are given specific mention here) (iii) spending time in the company of a friend, (iv) making the same choices as the friend and (v) sharing the friend's pleasures and pains, rejoicing and grieving with him (*EN* 1166a2-8). Joachim (1951:254) comments that "[w]hat is true of the good man (who in these matters is the standard) is true of the majority of men so far as they approximate to him." Cf. Arist. *Rh.* 1380b35-1381a1.

"that self-love is both paradigmatic of (μάλιστ' ...[1168b4]) and a source for (ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ...[1168b5]) love of others."[49]

Plato has spoken of justice in terms of the ordered σώφρων soul as resulting in one being a 'friend to oneself' (*R.* 443d3-5) and of injustice, by contrast, in terms of the disordered soul as an enemy to itself, rent by στάσις (*R.* 444b1-8). Justice, Plato's Socrates submits, is not to be found in a man's external actions but solely in how he conducts the inner life of his soul. Aristotle agrees that justice and friendship go hand in hand and that the conflict in the soul (στασιάζει ...αὐτῶν ἡ ψυχή) which occurs in those who are vicious and base results in each part of the soul pulling in a different direction as if it is breaking apart (*EN* 1166b19-22).[50] However, whereas for Plato, φιλαυτία can be seen to be posterior, the result of reason perfecting itself as justice in the soul, Aristotle, by contrast, will argue that reason in order to perfect its object as another self must first itself be moved by φιλία, the desire for the end as a good.[51] Justice is not self-regarding, as Plato would have it; it is another's good. It is in perfecting the other in virtue through the activity of νοῦς as πρακτικός, the performing of virtuous acts, that man overcomes the στέρησις in his own soul and realizes the good of his nature by bringing into actuality the forms of virtue in potency within it. Perfected in virtue, through φρόνησις, a lover of himself (φίλαυτος), man can at the last come to the possession of his true self as his understanding (*EN* 1178a6-8). This is the most divine and immortal element within us, one which fully actual is the universal first principle, Noῦς, the end and fulfilment of all desire. In the final analysis, for Aristotle however, it is not the individual that persists, but man as species (Arist. *GC* 338b5-19).[52] So we can say that the 'species potency' that is there in the universal fellow-feeling (φιλανθρωπία) man exhibits towards other men, and actualizes in the ethical life is ordered ultimately to its end in the complete actuality of Noῦς.[53] Every word of the opening sentence of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is pregnant

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[49] Belfiore (2001:119).

[50] Cf. *EN* 1166b11-13; *EN* 1138b5-10. Aristotle's discussion on justice internal to the soul and on whether there is friendship towards oneself is clearly addressing Plato's analysis of the parts of the soul at *R.* 436a-444e.

[51] Actuality for Aristotle is always ontologically prior although temporally it may be posterior.

[52] Cf. de *An.* 430a19-25, 415a26-b7; *Metaph.* 1933b29-32.

[53] Provencal (2002:8) observes that "[f]or Plato, all forms of community, that of soul, the family and the state, must be founded on love of the good, on *philosophia*. For Aristotle, *philautia*, the love of the self, is the creative principle of all forms of community." This is not to say that Aristotle does not himself regard

with meaning in this regard: all men, by nature desire to know (Πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει, *Metaph.* 980a1).

10.3.1 Friendship in the family

It is in the family and in the biological cycle of generation and growth that Aristotle sees that the movement from an undifferentiated feeling of φιλανθρωπία, naturally present in the human individual, to its full actualization in φιλαυτία in the ethical life of the polis is grounded and catalysed. The innate creative urge, the desire for immortality, is realized within the sensible world in the endless cycling of individuals through the species; an impulse which man shares with other living beings and which drives him by necessity to reproduce. However, as both 'animal' and 'rational', man creates his likenesses both physically, through natural biological processes, and intellectually, through the self-conscious actualization of νοῦς.[54] Man is first of all συνδυαστικόν, Aristotle says, fitted for coupling even more than πολιτικόν insofar as the household is prior and more necessary than the polis and childbearing more widespread in animals. However, he adds, while other animals come together only for reproduction and rearing of offspring, humans form families with an aim also to the benefits of life (*EN* 161a17-24). This is the quintessentially human movement from biological to ethical μαίευσις which finds its completion in the life of the polis.[55] At its epicentre, the family is to be understood as not only a natural but also an ethical κοινωνία with its own ordering principle. The marriage union, although impelled by necessity, comprises also an element of rational choice, looking not only inward and downward to φύσις and the lower gods of Hades but also outward and upward to λόγος and the higher gods of Olympus. Marriage

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all forms of community as ultimately dependent on a first principle, the Unmoved Mover as the good, and on φιλοσοφία, only that the relationship is mediated through sensible substance as a concretion of formal and material principles.

[54] Potentially able to think all things (πάντα νοεῖ, *de An.* 429a18), νοῦς before it thinks is nothing in reality (οὐθέν ἐστιν ἐνεργείᾳ τῶν ὄντων πρὶν νοεῖν, *de An.* 429a24).

[55] Belfiore (2001:114) speaks of "complete friendship" and "family friendship" as "two different paradigms of the 'other self' relationship." Cf. the account of Socrates' Diotima (Pl. *Smp.* 205d10-212a7). All men, Diotima tells Socrates, are pregnant both κατὰ τὸ σῶμα καὶ κατὰ τὴν ψυχήν (206c1-2). The true good however is to be found by leaving behind body, and the love of the particular ephemeral sensible object as one's own, and moving upwards to the Beautiful and the Good itself through bringing to birth the intelligible and universal offspring of soul. Aristotle, by contrast, with his metaphysics of substance, sees the movement as the unfolding of a single actuality within the composite individual as a concretion of what *is* and *is one*.

arrangements, Aristotle argues, in the interconnecting network of families that they bring about, further the end of the polis as ἡ τοῦ εὖ ζῆν κοινωνία. This, he says, is the work of φιλία for the choice to live together (ἡ ...τοῦ συζῆν προαίρεσις) is φιλία (*Pol.* 1280b33-39).[56]

To the primary spousal κοινωνία, male and female bring complementary functions; they are like σύμβολα which are from the very start differentiated such that in association they effect a good which is more complete, as opposites striving towards τὸ μέσον as their joint good (*EE* 1239b23-32). Integral to the attainment of this good, Aristotle argues, is the production of offspring.[57] Children are a bond (σύνδεσμος) that unites the parents in a common good (κοινὸν ἀγαθὸν ἀμφοῖν, συνέχει δὲ τὸ κοινόν); childless unions, he observes, are more quickly dissolved (*EN* 1162a27-29). Although held together in this way by bonds of φιλία, husband and wife, parent and child, are nevertheless not accounted to be friends (φίλοι) in the full meaning of the word; for their relationship is not one of equals but one of superiority (καθ' ὑπεροχήν): of husband over wife and father over child. Hence their loving (φιλήσεις) and their friendships (φιλίαι) are different (*EN* 1158b19).[58] Nevertheless, the unequal virtue relations of family friendships can be seen to image through their natural bonds of feeling, their φιλήσεις, the complete friendship of virtue attainable in relations between free and equal citizens involving rational choice, προαίρεσις. Thus Belfiore aptly observes that "family friends, even without being similarly virtuous, normally act toward one another as virtuous people act toward their friends. Moreover, family friendship provides habituation in

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[56] Hence, Belfiore (2001:118) points out, "[s]pouses can choose to dissolve their relationship to one another, although they both still retain their ties to their common offspring."

[57] As will be discussed later, the formal structure of the spousal κοινωνία can be seen to resemble that of the friendship of utility which binds together the citizens in the political κοινωνία through their joint 'offspring' - the end beyond the action.

[58] Aristotle maintains that while the female possesses the deliberative element (τὸ βουλευτικόν) it is lacking in authority (ἄκυρον), (*Pol.* 1260a12-13). Nevertheless, the φιλία of spouses is not only for utility and pleasure, but may also be on account of virtue if they are good people (ἐπιεικεῖς); for both husband and wife have each their own proper virtue (*EN* 1162a24-6). Cf. *Pol.* 1260a20-24 where Aristotle argues against the Socrates of the *Republic* that the virtues of male and female are not the same. There is for instance, he says, a courage associated with ruling and one with serving and the same can be said of all the other virtues. See also Plato's *Meno* where Socrates attacks a similar 'swarm' of virtues stirred up by Meno (*Men.* 71e-73c). Once again it is the univocal logic of Plato and the πρὸς ἕν logic of Aristotle that underlies. In children the deliberative element is incomplete. The φιλία between parents and children includes, however, both pleasure and utility emanating from their common life together. A man cannot be said to be a φίλος to his child. However, he loves him and is loved by him (*EE* 1239a1-6).

virtuous behavior with respect to 'natural other selves' that promotes the development of complete friendship between similarly virtuous 'other selves'."[59]

Although Aristotle clearly recognizes the importance of both parents, strictly in terms of his logic it is the father, the rational ruling principle of the spousal relationship, who is the formative principle productive of the child.[60] Thus within the family all forms of φιλία are seen to stem from the paternal (πᾶσα ἐκ τῆς πατρικῆς, *EN* 1161b17) which is responsible not only for the child's existence, which is to say his biological being, but also for his nurture and education: his ethical being (*EN*1161a15-17).[61] The relation of father to child, Aristotle argues, is to be conceived as being like friendship between gods and humans, or that of a king to his subjects, where the greatest benefits are conferred by the superior ruling element (*EN* 1162a4-9, 1161a11-17).[62] In the forming of the child's ethical nature, the parent can be said to exercise a φιλία which entails rational choice.[63] In this way, the element of προαίρεσις enters into the strong natural bonds of φίλησις that hold family members in relation to one another and catalyses thereby the development of a true rational φιλία in the offspring.[64] Hence, as the child grows to understand, he will gradually develop his own reasoning skills and his φιλία, embodying as he reaches maturity its own independently active element of προαίρεσις, will become the rational φιλία of the citizen. If the ground of the rational element of προαίρεσις in family φιλία is vested primarily in the father, it is in the mother that Aristotle sites most fully the natural element of φίλησις. Hence, Aristotle maintains, mothers love their children more (φιλοτεκνότεραι) than do fathers due to both the fact and the effort of producing them (*EN* 1168a23-5; *EE* 1241b7-9). Emblematic of the strength of the

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[59] Belfiore (2001:126)

[60] The formal principle, reason, emanates from the male while the female provides the matter (*GA* 729a10-12).

[61] The child is incomplete (ἀτελής) but is held in relation to virtue as the end by the person leading it, which is to say the father who does possess this self-relation as a virtuous agent (*Pol.* 1260a31-33).

[62] It is not possible to give such a superior a return in accord with their worth; so that a son is always in his father's debt (*EN* 1163b218-25). Nevertheless when the child accords to the parent what is their due and *vice versa* then their friendship will be lasting and good (*EN* 1158b21-3). 'When loving (ἡ φίλησις) is in proportion to comparative worth then an equality is in a way achieved, which seems that proper to φιλία' (*EN* 1158b27-8).

[63] The father primarily and the mother secondarily, as under the overall guidance of the male.

[64] See further on this Belfiore (2001:129).

natural φιλία a mother exhibits towards her offspring is the observation that even when she has to give up her child she continues to love him without return (*EN* 1159a27-33). Konstan remarks that "[t]his is love in its most elementary and natural form, and Aristotle esteems it as such."[65]

In the natural process of biological reproduction man begets man, another self to be nurtured and educated, brought to actuality in his own image. It is thus that parents love their children as being something of themselves. For in having come from them their offspring are substantial other selves (ἕτεροι αὐτοί), both in virtue of their origin and of their separate physical existence (*EN* 1161b18, 27-9). It is Aristotle's most urgent plaint against the organization of the communal guardian 'family' of the *Republic* that it eliminates this particular concretion of φιλία, the parent-child bond, which Aristotle sees to be a necessity in the process of actualizing φιλαυτία in the soul (*Pol.* 1262b22-3). In general, everyone is more attached to τὰ αὐτῶν ἔργα, Aristotle maintains. The producer's love for his production is in accord with nature (φυσικόν, *EN* 1168a8). The possessive love that parents show towards their children and poets exhibit towards their poems as their own creations are taken to be prime examples of this (*EN* 1120b11-14, 1168a1-3).[66] Belfiore well notes that the conception that the members of the family are in some way a single identity in multiplicity, as opposed to autonomous individuals is integral to Greek thought of the time.[67] She cites a number of instances from literature and oratory to illustrate the point that the evils befalling one member of the family were accepted by other members as being inflicted upon them personally. Oedipus, for example, "referring to his patricide, says that the crossroads 'drank my own blood, that of my father shed by my own hands' (S *OT* 1400-1401)."[68]

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[65] Konstan (1997:69).

[66] Here Aristotle seems to have before him *Republic* 330c2-6 where Socrates addresses comments of an identical nature to Cephalus.

[67] Belfiore (2001:122).

[68] Belfiore (2001:123). The use of αὐτο- compounds in reference to both suicide and kin murder is widely noted in Greek tragedy. Thus, for example Ismene (S. *Ant.* 56) calls αὐτοκτονοῦντε the deaths of Polyneices and Eteocles at each other's hands. The Chorus in Aeschylus' *Septem* speaks similarly of the brothers' actions as αὐτοκτόνος (A. *Th.* 681, 734) and αὐτοδαίκτοι (A. *Th.* 735). Euripides' Medea speaks of her χέρ' αὐτοκτόνον (E. *Med.* 1254) and Aeschylus' Cassandra of αὐτόφονα in the house of Atreus (A. *A.* 1091). Cf S *Aj.* 842. See also Loraux 1986b, Parker 1983:350-351. Belfiore identifies a number of passages in Aristotle that add to this understanding.

Nowhere is the sense of biological identity more significant than in siblings. In sharing a common origin, siblings are bound not only to their parents but to one another as the same thing in different subjects, a single identity (ταυτότης) existing in what is divided (*EN* 1161b30-33). Thus we speak, Aristotle says, of ταὐτὸν αἷμα καὶ ῥίζαν (*EN* 1161b32). The opening line of Sophocles' *Antigone* (ὦ κοινὸν αὐτάδελφον Ἰσμήνης κάρα) forcefully expresses this conception of sibling φίλησις. The whole tenor of Antigone's argument speaks tellingly to the power this natural familial bond, grounded in the universality of nature, exerts over her actions, reminiscent indeed of that one-sided φίλησις Aristotle observes the mother shows towards her lost child. Unlike the parental or the spousal relationship, however, the friendship of siblings is founded on equality. In normal circumstances, nurtured and educated together in the ethical life, siblings will be similar in character and will come to share the friendship of companions (*EN* 1161b35-36, 1162a9-14). Since they are more alike to one another than unrelated companions, brothers in particular, Aristotle concludes, have the capacity to exercise to the full their potential for virtue in the practical life of the citizen and attain to the excellence of a complete friendship.

10.3.2 Justice in the family

The family as it has so far emerged is seen to be held together in a κοινωνία by bonds of friendship through which, as an ongoing generator of both new citizens and new households, it maintains the integrity and continuity of the higher ethical κοινωνία of the polis to whose end it is ordered. To inquire into the nature of friendship however, Aristotle argues, is at the same time to look into the forms that justice is seen to take in κοινωνίαι. Justice and friendship are inextricably interconnected, coming together as one in the actuality of the complete friendship of the virtuous; and the roots of justice, as of friendship, are to be found in the family. In fact, all justice is seen to be in relation to a friend, either in the family or in life; for man is not only a πολιτικόν but also an οἰκονομικὸν ζῷον (*EE* 1242a19-23). As a result, it is possible to say that there would be a κοινωνία and some sort of justice (δίκαιόν τι) even if the polis itself were not to be (*EE* 1242a26-27). The different kinds of rule that are found in the household and in the polis can be seen to arise naturally and successively from distinctions already integral to the human individual, seen both as a concretion of formal and material principles, body

and soul, and in terms of his formal essence as 'rational animal' (*Pol.* 1254b4-6).[69] In the family are observed all the forms of πολιτεῖαι, both correct and deviant, that are found in the polis: hence paternal rule is deemed kingly, rule of husband over wife, aristocratic, while relations between brothers resemble those in a polity (*EE* 1241b29-32).[70] This familial differentiation may be considered ethically as distinctions within a single spiritual substance and contrasted to the rule of master over slave which is, for Aristotle, a despotic rule to be likened to that of soul over body, or of the craftsman over his tool, in expressing possession; a relation of part to whole in which no degree of rational freedom, potential or actual, is independently exercised by what is ruled. Master and slave are not in fact two but one, he says, the good of both that of the one for whose sake they exist (*EE* 1241b17-24).[71]

There are indeed, Aristotle contends, as many kinds of justice as there are forms of rule (*EE* 1241b32). However, in the same way and for the same reason as has been stated with respect to friendship, it cannot be said that there is justice properly speaking (ἁπλῶς) between those who are not on a level of equality.[72] For justice to be properly present in a relationship the reasoning element (τὸ βουλευτικόν) must be operative in both parties. The slave is considered to be wholly lacking this element, while in the female it is present but lacks authority, and in the child it is incompletely actualized (*Pol.* 1260a9-14). The slave *qua* slave is, therefore, inalienably a part of his master, like a hand or a foot, and the child, until he is old enough to be separated, is also to be considered as a part of his father. Hence there is no injustice unconditionally in relation to either slave or child, as what is one's own possession, since no one chooses to harm himself (*EN* 1134b9-12). On the other hand, the justice associated with the spousal κοινωνία is recognized to

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[69] Cf. *EN* 1102b30-2: the desiring soul listens to reason and obeys it. See Saunders (1995:77-8) for further comment. He rightly notes that "*alternation* of rule, characteristic of a statesman's rule (1252a1-16), is obviously excluded as between the parts of the soul, and indeed as between the parts of the household" (78).

[70] Cf. *EN* 1161a10-30 where Aristotle compares the φιλίαι ἐν ὑπεροχῇ in the family to the different forms of πολιτεῖαι: paternal friendship to kingship, spousal to aristocracy, and that between brothers to timocracy.

[71] Cf. *Pol.* 1254a8-15.

[72] Mayhew (1997b:332) notes that Aristotle allows that "[t]his is not to say that we can never use 'justice' when discussing family relationships. On the contrary, because they are so close, it is true to say, for instance, that striking one's father is more unjust than striking anyone else [1159b35-1160a7])."

approach near in kind to τὸ πολιτικὸν δίκαιον. Although inferior, a wife is close enough to her husband to share in a relationship which in its justice bears a close resemblance to the πολιτικὴ κοινωνία (*MM* 1194b23-8). Lacking in this relationship, however, is the alternation of ruling and being ruled which is found to be constitutive of the political κοινωνία.[73] What is just in all these relations καθ' ὑπεροχήν in the household corresponds, like the friendship between them, to a criterion of relative worth (*EN* 1161a21-2). This notwithstanding, however, there is in fact a certain sense, Aristotle allows, that all household relationships, even that of master and slave, can be said to have something of justice in them analogously through their capacity to participate in a community ordered by law and compact.[74]

10.4 The quest for concord: friendship & justice in the political community

The aim of the legislator (ὁ νομοθέτης) is above all to establish and maintain concord (ὁμόνοια) in the political κοινωνία while doing all that he can to eliminate στάσις, civic discord (*EN* 1155a24-26). Plato, it has been argued, responding to the excesses of the enlightenment polis, has sought to achieve ὁμόνοια on the basis of a new rationally articulated paradigm for political order, one founded in an objective rational good made actual in the rule of a philosopher king who unites theory with praxis to eliminate the grounds of στάσις and reassert the pre-eminence of the polis ideal as a whole comprehensive of its parts. That theory and praxis cannot in fact be thus united, as Plato supposes, that their subject matters are separate and distinct and the proper object of different ways of human knowing, will be the fundamental contention that Aristotle will mount in answer to Plato's claim. Thus he argues that it is necessary to make a primary distinction in the rational soul between that part (τὸ ἐπιστημονικόν) whose objects are universally necessary and unchanging and that part (τὸ λογιστικόν) whose objects are those that admit of being otherwise (*EN*. 1139a6-15).[75] The proper objects of τὸ

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[73] Miller (1995:243) comments that "[t]he fact that Aristotle assigns women a sphere of authority in the household implies that their deliberative capacity is partly functional." See *Pol.* 1277b4-5

[74] There is no justice or friendship towards a slave *qua* slave. Strictly, there is no κοινωνία in terms of a partnership in justice between them (*EE* 1241b8-19). However, in so far as both master and slave are human, there is the slight possibility of justice and friendship (*EN* 1161a32-b8).

[75] Joachim (1951:168) points out that, for Aristotle, "τὸ λογιστικόν is thus only one part of τὸ λόγον ἔχον: not (as Plato thought) the whole." He notes that Aristotle will later refer to it as τὸ δοξαστικόν (*EN* 1140b26).

ἐπιστημονικόν are demonstrable truths originating from rationally intuited first principles which admit of no exception.[76] No one deliberates about what cannot be otherwise, what is known scientifically through necessity. What we deliberate about are those things that at best we can say are true for the most part (ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ, *EN* 1094b22).[77] Plato's understanding of the intellectual soul as self-moving must be rejected, Aristotle argues. Thought or intent on its own moves nothing (διάνοια δ' αὐτὴ οὐθὲν κινεῖ): what moves us is the end which is aimed at in praxis (*EN* 1139a35-37).[78] It is the object of desire (ἡ ὄρεξις ἕνεκά του πᾶσα), the particular good as an unmoved end, that initiates the activity of νοῦς πρακτικός (*de An.* 433a15-17).

The end of political science as the human good is not knowledge but action (οὐ γνῶσις ἀλλὰ πρᾶξις), Aristotle submits (*EN* 1095a5-6).[79] Ethical inquiry, due to the nature of its subject matter, is not an exact science as Plato supposes, but aims archer-like at the target in the attempt to hit the right mark, which is the good for man (*EN* 1094a23-4).[80] A beginning is made from ἔνδοξα, what is most readily knowable to us through experience to be good and noble, and from that point thought moves dialectically in search of the origins: what is unconditionally knowable in itself (*EN* 1095b2-4).[81] In ascertaining what actions are just or unjust, honourable or base, and why they are so, no single universal

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[76] Arist. *APo.* 71b9-16, 87b19-27, 88b30-89b6. Such truths proceed from necessary premises, through necessary connections to necessary conclusions.

[77] Cf. *EN* 1139b12-13). The one unconditionally good in deliberating is the one able to aim in accord with rational calculation at the best good for man achievable in action (*EN* 1141b12-14).

[78] For the soul as self-moving see, in particular, Pl. *Phdr.* 245c5-246a2. Aristotle recognizes that the idea that the soul is self-moving was one widely held by his predecessors (*de An.* 403b28-404b8). See also Arist. *Ph.* 265b32-266a1 where Plato and the Platonists are criticized for making soul the cause of motion. In *de Anima*, Aristotle reiterates the claim that mind (νοῦς) moves nothing without desire (ὄρεξις). Wish (βούλησις), he notes, is a desire and the movement produced by reason is by that of wish. Desire, on the other hand, can act contrary to reason; for appetite (ἐπιθυμία) is a kind of desire (*de An.* 433a22-6 cf. 433a9). Aristotle's discussion of ἀκρασία (*EN* 1145a15-1152a36) is also relevant.

[79] Cf. *EN* 1103b26-30. In *Magna Moralia* (1182a24-29) Plato is criticized for confounding the investigation of moral virtue with that of the science of Being and Truth, whereas, it is maintained, they have nothing in common (οὐδὲν ...κοινόν). Cf. *EE* 1217b24-6.

[80] The exactness of a science is determined by the extent to which its premises can be subject to demonstration.

[81] See Arist. *Ph.* 184a16-21 where Aristotle asserts that this is the natural way to proceed in any scientific inquiry: First principles of demonstration of any science are always approached dialectically since as first principles they cannot themselves be subject to demonstration (Arist. *APo.* 100b2-17). Ethics, unlike mathematics, however, is not a demonstrative science since necessary truths do not follow upon its first principles only general rules (Arist. *EN* 1094b19-22, 1112b8; *APo.* 79a21).

unchanging definition can completely suffice, but on each occasion for action a complex of interacting determinants must be brought under consideration by νοῦς as πρακτικός. Ethical reasoning is not the bringing of a particular under a universal, as Plato argues, but rather the universalizing of what the individual is doing when acting rightly; so that what is required is a sufficient understanding of the end to enable it to be secured in praxis. Hence, we do not arbitrarily or formulaically determine what is just but conform our ideas of justice, in so far as we are able, to what we can determine of its nature objectively.[82] What we wish for unconditionally is the good; but the good that is the end of each individual wish is the apparent good so that it is only the ethically excellent person (ὁ σπουδαῖος) for whom the good that is wished is what is good in reality (*EN* 1113 a23-25). It is the person of excellent character therefore who, judging each sort of thing correctly, consistently hits the mark and for whom what is wished will be what is in reality wished; while for the base person, by contrast, what is wished is whatever he happens to want (*EN* 1113a25-6).

Every composite whole of parts (σύστημα), Aristotle argues, can be identified most of all by its ruling element. Hence, he could agree that Socrates in the *Republic* has concluded rightly that the excellent person is a lover of his true self as νοῦς and a friend to himself (φίλαυτος). However, while it is νοῦς as his ruling element that the φίλαυτος seeks to gratify (*EN* 1168b30-33), this is not to say that as a result he no longer has need for friends and the communal life of the polis.[83] The need for friends, Aristotle consistently maintains, originates in human nature itself, in a lack that makes man *qua* individual radically incomplete and gives rise to an impulse towards friendship with 'other selves' which can only find fulfilment in the life of active association and cooperation of man with others of his kind (*EN* 1169b16-19).[84] Embodied as he is necessarily in matter, man

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[82] The good man is alive to what is required in the circumstances. Aristotle does understand that truth can be reached by being intuited in ethical reasoning; but knowing and being become one only in the actuality of each decision as it is realized in the particularity of its contextual parameters. This is not, it should be said, to be confused with what is commonly understood in a pejorative sense as ethical casuistry.

[83] Here as so often Aristotle can be seen to be working out his own philosophy from within the argument of Plato's *Republic*. An extended discussion in support of the contention that the excellent man needs friends is found at *EN* 1169b3-1170b19. Cf. *EE* 1244b1ff. For commentary on this see also Joachim (1951:257-261).

[84] God alone is completely self-sufficient, in need of nothing outside of himself, and therefore has no need of a friend (*EE* 1244b7-10). Joachim (1951:261) notes that friendship "far from arguing a want of self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) in the εὐδαίμων, is a necessary condition of the αὐτάρκεια of his life. For

can never, while living, escape entirely from the contingent and so must always be to some extent at the mercy of τυχή whether for good or ill; in need of friends for assistance in hard times but even more so as beneficiaries of his good fortune (*EN* 1171a21-27).[85] However, even when they have no need of assistance from one another, men strive (ὀρέγονται) nonetheless to live in association; brought together by the common advantage (τὸ κοινὴ συμφέρον) that accrues to each in living well (τοῦ ζῆν καλῶς) which is above all the end both for all in common and for each separately (*Pol.* 1278b19-24).

10.4.1 Friendship in the polis

Emerging out of the family to join their elders in the public arena of political life are the adult sons; brothers and comrades, friends similar in nature (φύσις), stabilized in good habits (ἕξεις), and ready to strive to their utmost to act virtuously in accord with the laws of the polis, perfecting their nature through noble actions in relation to others.[86] In this way, particular and common good will be as one; everything necessary for the attainment of the good of the whole will be done and each individual will at the same time achieve the greatest of goods in being virtuous (*EN* 1169a6-11). There is a definite sense that Aristotle is wanting here to bring out the contrast between the ὁμόνοια that is the outcome of all contending to outdo each other in civic virtue and the στάσις that is the result when individuals strive to exert themselves in pursuit of their own misconstrued private ends.[87] Looking back to the earlier part of this investigation, we can see taken up into this contrast the span of 5th century tragic drama, from the ὁμόνοια effected as the

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without it he would actually be ἐνδεής -i.e. deficient in something intrinsically αἱρετόν (choiceworthy) to him, something therefore he ought to have." Cooper (1990:227) observes that "the fundamental aspect of city life that in Aristotle's eyes marks it as natural for human beings is its involving the cooperative working together of all those who take part in it in an interlocking, differentiated, mutually supporting single set of activities."

[85] Cf. *EN* 1155a5-16.

[86] The political κοινωνία is for the sake of noble actions, not simply living together (*Pol.* 1281a2-3). Hence, Aristotle argues, everyone praises those who distinguish themselves by their eagerness to act nobly; those who strive (ἁμιλλάομαι) towards what is noble and exert themselves to the uttermost (διατείνομαι) to do the finest of actions (*EN* 1169a8-9). Protagoras' account (Pl. *Prt.* 325c-326e) of traditional Athenian education and the importance attached by parents to inculcation of virtue in the youth is pertinent here in the detail it provides. Plato and Aristotle, in turn, lay considerable emphasis on the establishment of a stable disposition as a prerequisite to the active life of virtue. It is not sufficient to know the good: to do good one must be good.

[87] Cf. Joachim (1951:256).

ideal in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* to the destructive στάσις that reflects the reality of the death throes of the polis in Euripides' *Bacchae*. Aristotle, like Plato, is very cognizant that this is the fundamental problem the polis must resolve if it is to persist and he sites himself firmly within the dilemma.

Like the tragedians, Aristotle understands that the inherently divided nature of man is an ever present constitutive impediment to human attainment of divine knowing. In the flux of the sensible world of becoming, the good can appear to man as divided and opposed, with tragic consequences for political κοινωνία. The potential for resolution of this quintessentially human problem, Aristotle recognizes, as Sophocles has been seen to in *Antigone*, must emerge out of the dilemma as it takes form in the natural world of contingency and human fallibility, if man is to come to understand what motivates him in the kinds of moral choices he makes. Hence, the significance of the ethical import of tragic drama, of the larger than life noble nature aiming at the mark and missing it to fall to its doom, is acknowledged by Aristotle and restored to its place of honour in the education of the community. From the tragic clash of opposed ethical powers, Hegel argues, "there arises the right and wrong of both parties and therefore the true ethical Idea, which purified and in triumph over this one-sidedness, is thereby reconciled in us."[88] An account of the essential nature of political κοινωνία must be one that is able to encompass within it what it is to be human, an imperfect knower, as opposed simply to what would ideally be the case if man could fully actualize what is θεῖόν τι in his nature by ascending to the citadel of the gods and accessing at will the divine knowing. In other words, what Aristotle argues is that to see the polis, as Plato has, as a falling away from an ideal of justice that one can hope but not expect to reach, is not a sufficient answer to the problem of τὸ εὖ ζῆν in the political κοινωνία.

In response to Plato, who has argued that from the prior establishment of justice there will follow friendship and κοινωνία, Aristotle will maintain that it is from within the κοινωνία of friendship that polis justice is itself brought to birth. That justice, as the rational ruling principle of the political κοινωνία, has to be considered prior logically to considerations of friendship he will agree with Plato. However, he maintains that it is friendship and the ὁμόνοια it brings about in community that is temporally prior. The

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[88] Hegel (1952 §140).

polis, as he makes clear at the outset of the lengthy discussion of friendship in the *Ethics*, is ideally to be conceived as a community of friends whose common end is the promotion of concord; for it is φιλία that seems to hold cities together and πολιτικὴ δὴ φιλία φαίνεται ἡ ὁμόνοια (*EN* 1167b2-3).[89] It is the presence of ὁμόνοια that draws the parts into relation with one another and orders them to their end in the polis as a whole, making possible the actualization of the ideals to which the polis subscribes. Viewed as such, friendship, Aristotle argues, is even more important than justice as the necessary prerequisite, the condition *sine qua non*, without which the political κοινωνία cannot properly come to be. The polis is not merely an alliance contracted to ensure that laws are in place to see that no one suffers injustice in their personal or business relations (*Pol.* 1280a34-b12). What distinguishes the polis from the purely contractual agreement, the abstract workings of reason, is seen to be the work of feeling; for φιλία is the innate motive force that brings people together by choice (προαίρεσις) in a common concern for the good of the whole achieved in the life of noble actions (*Pol.* 1280b17-38).[90]

Yet even as Aristotle makes this point, it appears to raise a problem, as has often been recognized, in conceiving how political friendship in the terms he describes it is to be understood. It is generally agreed that concern for the common good is the animus motivating political friendship and that this entails a care for the ethical calibre of fellow citizens (cf. *Pol.* 1280b29-40). However, there is dispute as to how Aristotle intends the relations between individual citizens to be understood in terms of political friendship; and more particularly how political friendship is to be understood in relation to friendships of virtue and advantage the species of friendship to which it seen to be most akin.[91] Ideally,

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[89] Cf. ἡ ...ὁμόνοια ὅμοιόν τι τῇ φιλίᾳ ἔοικεν εἶναι (*EN* 1155a22-25); καὶ ἔστιν ἡ ὁμόνοια φιλία πολιτική (*EE* 1241a32-3). See also *EN* 1167b4-9 where Aristotle notes that the ὁμόνοια that constitutes πολιτικὴ φιλία is found in those who are decent (ἐπιεικής).

[90] Cf. *EN* 1160a20-28. Even if people live in association with one another and have laws regulating their transactions with one another, as carpenter, farmer, and shoemaker for instance, they do not simply by these means form a political κοινωνία. While all these things must necessarily be present, the polis, as a partnership for τὸ εὖ ζῆν requires something in addition; activities that go beyond the satisfaction of the immediate need and are for ἅπαντα τὸν βίον. It is for this reason that marriage connections, brotherhoods, festivals and shared pastimes arose, Aristotle says; so that, for example, people perform sacrifices both to provide honour to the gods and as a pleasant relaxation for themselves through arranging and participating in them. For the importance of festivals and common gatherings in the furthering of social coherence, see also Pl. *Laws* (653d, 828a).

[91] See on this, Cooper (1990:220-41, 1997:642-48), Stern-Gillet (1995:166-9), Irwin 1990:73-98), Annas (1990:242-8), Price (1989:204-5). Annas (1990:248), concludes, *contra* Cooper (1990:241), that because civic friendship is advantage friendship it must therefore be confined to "personal friendships between

Joachim observes, if each and every citizen were able to achieve "a complete and concrete identity of interest with his fellows, the whole state would be a society of ideal friendship or ideal justice."[92] However, Aristotle recognizes that it is not practically feasible for anyone to have more than a very limited number of friendships for virtue given the time that individuals must spend in company getting familiar with each other's moral character (*EN* 1158a10-11).[93] Indeed he is careful to distinguish the kind of friendships that companions and also blood relations share from other kinds of friendship to be found in community (1161b12-13). Both the reason based friendship of companions, which is of the kind which can lead to the complete friendship of virtue, and friendship based upon blood relationship, which involves strong feeling, Aristotle sees to share in common the fact that they are focussed upon a particular individual (*EN* 1171a10-13). In both cases there is a 'sameness', a conception of two becoming one. Friendships that are eulogized, he observes, are those between two people (*EN* 1171a15). Friendships tending to either extreme, that is to say founded primarily on reason, as virtue friendships are, or on feeling, as erotic and family friendships are, are by their nature limited in extent to at most a few individuals. This latter contention indeed is at the centre of Aristotle's criticism of Socrates' guardian community and can be construed also as a limitation of the private familial φιλία espoused by Antigone when raised to the level of the political arena.

Whereas it is impossible to be a friend for virtue to more than a very few individuals, it is possible to extend friendship to very many in what can be called a 'fellow citizen' way (*EN* 1171a17-20). The friendships of fellow citizens, fellow tribesmen, voyagers and their ilk are akin to friendships for partnership (κοινωνική) in that they appear to be formed according to agreement (ὁμολογία), Aristotle argues (*EN* 1161b13-15).[94] It is

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particular citizens, not a special form of extended friendship linking every citizen to every other citizen." Price (1989:204) interprets Aristotle as concluding that "civic friendship is an extended variety of the friendship of the good ...such that "individuals become as it were centres of overlapping circles of *eudaimonia*." Irwin (1990:95) also sees political friendship to be an incomplete form of friendship for virtue. Stern-Gillet (1995:167) rightly points out the disparity between these latter contentions and what Aristotle himself says (cf. *EN* 1156b24-5, 1155a22-3, 1171a17-20; *Pol.* 1262b7-9).

[92] Joachim (1951:250).

[93] Cf. *EN* 1170b33-1171a8. In practice, these fully formed friendships of the good are in any case likely to be rare (σπάνιος) in occurrence in that not many individuals are capable of achieving such excellence (*EN* 1156b24-25).

[94] Political friendships are not merely friendships but also partnerships as friends ὡς φίλοι κοινωνοῦσιν

justice as a proportionate reciprocity that equalizes and preserves this kind of friendship. Thus, in political friendship, the cobbler and the weaver along with all the rest of the citizenry receive an exchange for their goods κατ' ἀξίαν, according to worth (*EN* 1163b29-1164a2). The point he makes is that a political κοινωνία, properly speaking, is a differentiated whole of parts in which the citizen elements which constitute it are drawn together through φιλία to attain to a higher good in which they jointly rationally participate in accord with the dictates of a reciprocal proportionate justice.[95] Justice in the polis can be understood to emerge thus as a rational articulation of φιλία aiming at a common end: τὸ μέσον. Hence, Aristotle argues that the justice entailed in a friendship of utility (τὸ χρήσιμον), undertaken for the sake of some common object (ἕνεκα κοινοῦ τινός), is to the greatest extent just, in that this is the principle of πολιτικὸν δίκαιον (*EE* 1242a11-15).[96]

Unlike friendships of companions and blood relatives which are based on likeness (τὸ ὅμοιον) and find their end in the activity itself as good or pleasure, friendships of utility arise out of contrariety; not ends in themselves but entered into for the sake of τὸ χρήσιμον as an end beyond the immediacy of their action (*EE* 1239b23-27).[97] What these friendships thus strive to achieve is not the sameness of other selves but τὸ μέσον, a concretion in a common good to which both friends contribute their share, and which is the cause for them of τὸ φιλεῖν (*EE* 1239b30-1240a1).[98] It is in just such a way, as has been noted, that Aristotle understands the spousal relationship as a friendship of utility (φιλία ὡς χρήσιμον καὶ κοινωνία, 1242a31-3); male and female each contributes their own special function and virtue to the union to bring into being as a concrete actuality a higher common object: the rational ethical principle which is the good of the family as a

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(*EE* 1142a9-10). Cf. *Pol.* 1283a38-9: κοινωνικὴν γὰρ ἀρετὴν εἶναί φαμεν τὴν δικαιοσύνην.

[95] Cf. *EN* 1165a30-33.

[96] This is in contrast to the relation of a craftsman to his tool, (or it could be added the relation of master to slave, father to young child, soul to body) in which the one exists wholly for the sake of the other as its possession. At *EE* 1241b18-24 it has been maintained that there is no κοινωνία in the case of craftsman and tool, soul and body, master and slave because they are not two; the former is one and the latter a part of that one and not itself one.

[97] τὸ δ' ἐναντίον τῷ ἐναντίῳ φίλον ὡς τὸ χρήσιμον. Cf. *EN* 1156a10-12, 1159b12-14.

[98] Cf. *EN* 1159b19-21. Contrary seeks contrary not in itself but incidentally. The desire is for τὸ μέσον as the good (ἡ δ' ὄρεξις τοῦ μέσου ἐστιν· τοῦτο γὰρ ἀγαθόν).

whole of parts.[99] The cooperative relationships between citizens, originating in lack of αὐτάρκεια and aiming at τὸ εὖ ζῆν, can be conceived similarly. Political φιλία is thus seen as friendship of utility, a means by which all citizens contribute through their specific interactivities to bring about a higher end as the common good of the whole: the πολιτικὸν δίκαιον that is the πολιτεία in act. By their nature, friendships of this kind are entered into as temporary arrangements to fulfil a need and are readily dissolvable as circumstances change (*EN* 1156a19-20). What grounds and stabilizes these transitory associations is the structural architecture of the political association itself, within the bounds of which they come to be and pass away; the justice embodied in the laws that define the πολιτεία and regulate a proportionate reciprocity that ensures equality.

The polis finds its "*inner* unity", Barker remarks, "in the justice and friendship that unites its members."[100] The outer sign of this unity in its fullest expression is the ὁμόνοια that the political κοινωνία exhibits in deciding and acting collectively upon resolutions concerned with what is beneficial for the common good. Hence the particular concern of ὁμόνοια, as the culmination of political φιλία, is with practical matters of great substance (περὶ τὰ πρακτά ...ὁμονοοῦσιν ...τὰ ἐν μεγέθει) concerned with the polis as a whole (*EN* 1167a26-30).[101] It is through active participation in deliberation and adjudication, in both ruling and being ruled, in concert with his fellows, that the good citizen makes actual the rational order of the whole as τὸ μέσον. Aristotle in developing his own ideal for praxis can be seen here to be very much still within the spirit of Athena's foundation of the polis ideal in *Eumenides*. Political friendship, he argues is founded upon equality, on equal sharing of burdens and benefits, entailed in the inner principle that sustains the κοινωνία, that of ruling and being ruled in turn (*EE* 1242b22-32). Thus it is when the same choice is made concerning who is to rule that there is in the fullest sense ἡ ὁμόνοια φιλία πολιτική (*EE* 1241a30-32). This will be Aristotle's answer to the guardian

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[99] Where there are ends beyond the actions, the products are by nature better than the activities that produced them (*EN* 1094a5-6).

[100] Barker (1959:235).

[101] ὁμόνοια, Aristotle clarifies, is not agreement on theoretical matters such as astronomical questions. Nor is it simply identity of opinion (ὁμοδοξία) which occurs between those who are unknown to one another. Nor is it having the same thing in mind, but each for himself, which results in στάσις, as in Euripides *Phoenissae* where the fateful clash of Polyneices and Eteocles is played out. Questions such as resolving to make offices elective or to make an alliance with the Spartans are emblematic of ὁμόνοια (*EN* 1167a31-1167b1).

κοινωνία of the *Republic*, and at the same time a rational articulation of the κοινοφιλὴς διάνοια of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. The disposition to ὁμόνοια, firmly implanted through a habituation and education of the youth in polis virtues, is reinforced in response to the justice resident in each of the individual transactions of friendship of utility undertaken for τὸ μέσον as the common good of the participants. Brought to bear on the common good of the citizen body as a whole, as ἡ ὁμόνοια φιλία πολιτική, it is friendship of utility 'writ large'. Concomitantly, τὸ πολιτικὸν δίκαιον, the justice constitutive of the polis as a whole, that of 'rule and be ruled' is seen to be a culmination of the reciprocal justice inherent in each individual transaction. Simply put, it can be said that, whereas for Plato the polis is the just and harmonious individual 'writ large', for Aristotle it is the friendship and justice embodied in friendships of utility that 'writ large' in τὰ πρακτά τὰ ἐν μεγέθει embodies the political ideal in praxis.

Having established the structure of the ideal, it is necessary to identify those factors that will be important in affecting its success. The young citizen as he is to be envisaged entering the political sphere can expect, based on the argument to this point, to form a few strong and lasting friendships based on a commonality of reason and feeling. For the most part, however, he will find himself engaged in day to day transactions of a temporary nature with his fellow citizens κατὰ τὸ χρήσιμον. In the former relationships, Aristotle argues, there will be little occasion for accusations and censure since benefits are freely offered and accepted and justice is implicitly present. Friendships of utility, by contrast, are a fertile source for possible disputes, grounded as they are in concerns of individual interest; the calculation of benefits which may not be realized in accord with expectations. A look at how Aristotle addresses this concern sheds further light on his understanding of the contribution friendships of utility can be understood to play in the ethical life of the polis. This is the crucial juncture for Aristotle between particular and collective good, one that is enacted many times a day in the individual transactions between the citizenry. The whole discussion at this point, I believe, is aimed at moving beyond the Platonic position in the *Republic* (ethical) and in the *Laws* (legal) by establishing the centrality of the individual moral agent as ἐπιεικής in decision-making, and with this the reinstatement of the tragic.

The problem 'writ large' on the tragic stage in *Antigone* is seen by Aristotle to be present in a very basic form, 'writ small', in the structure of all those individual interactions of

'utility' which relate citizens to one another and are crucial to bridging the divide between the sphere of personal interest and the common good. There are two ways in which justice is to be found active in the polis, Aristotle reminds: one unwritten and the other in the form of posited laws. Corresponding to these two kinds of justice, he now adds, there are two kinds of friendship of utility that can be postulated: one based on ἠθική and the other on νομική (*EN* 1162b21-23). However, if the relationship in a friendship of utility is one of trust, based purely on the respective moral characters of disparate individuals, with no fixed terms agreed for the transaction, then inevitably, Aristotle concludes, *pace* Plato, misunderstandings will arise which will lead to contention. Friendship based on goodness and that based on utility are different in kind, he insists. Nevertheless people want to have it both ways at once; they associate for utility but make it ethical, as if the transaction is between ἐπιεικεῖς (*EE* 1242b38-1243a1). That disputes arise as a result is simply human nature, because, while all or most people wish for what is noble, they choose what is advantageous (*EN* 1162b31-36).[102] On the other hand, if rules are established and unwaveringly adhered to, the danger to be recognized is that the exchange thereby becomes simply mercenary. The purely ethical community committed to an ideal of justice which needs no written legislation can find no practical expression in the day to day existence of the political κοινωνία given the 'animal' in man's nature. However, to arbitrarily apply a set of rules is to abstract the 'rational' form at the expense of human difference. What Aristotle suggests is a middle way, a tempering of friendship and justice, feeling and reason, that involves a clear agreement between the parties, but with some leeway in time provided for the satisfying of these conditions. In this way, he says, the expected benefit is clearly and unambiguously defined in accord with justice but there is a mark of friendship (φιλικόν) displayed in the postponement (*EN* 1162b21-36).[103]

10.4.2 Justice in the polis

As bonds of friendship based on recognition of self in other lessen their hold over relationships, those of justice, as has been seen, come commensurately into view as right

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[102] Aristotle, as always, is keenly aware of what is achievable in praxis; of the limitations imposed by man's nature as both 'rational' and 'animal'. Even for people of good character, most friendships in practice will be on a basis of utility, a relation not between 'sames' but between 'differents'.

[103] Cf. *EE* 1242b35-1243a14.

reason posited in law. The nature of the political κοινωνία as a 'whole' is defined by the justice its πολιτιέα embodies. Indeed, Aristotle maintains, all πολιτεῖαι, as κοινωνίαι are a form of justice (δικαίου τι εἶδος); for what is common is established through justice (*EE* 1241b13-15).[104] It belongs to a single science therefore, he argues, to investigate both what is unqualifiedly the best πολιτιεία, the one everyone would above all pray for, the one which freed from the contingency of external constraints most closely approximates the essential nature of the polis, and also those forms which are found to be the best possible given the circumstances that actually prevail in different cities.[105] With this in mind, Aristotle maintains that political science must concern itself not only with examining correct forms of πολιτεῖαι but also with those that are φαυλότερα, to determine how they can be constituted and preserved in being for the longest time (*Pol.* 1288b21-35).[106]

Central to Aristotle's understanding of constitutional change is his conception of the polis as an 'ethical substance' which is actualizable in the sensible as distinct concretions of formal and material potencies exhibiting different stages of actuality. The movement ranges between what is posterior and potential and what is logically prior and actual; from the externality of the claims of sensible difference, of individual freedom and private property, to a conception of the full actualization of the formal principle of reason in the universal justice of that one πολιτεία which is by nature best everywhere' (*EN* 1134b35-1135a5).[107] Political κοινωνίαι are subject not only to στάσις and decay, a

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[104] Justice in a political association is found in those who are free and equal, either numerically or proportionally, sharing a life in common aiming at self-sufficiency. Those for whom this is not the case have nothing politically just in their relations with one another, except in so far as they are similar to this (*EN* 1134a27-31).

[105] See the comments of Simpson (1998:285-6), Miller (1995:183-190), Newman (vol. 4 1887:135-6).

[106] Not only the most common forms of defective πολιτεῖαι, democracy and oligarchy, are in intended here but even tyranny, the worst case scenario. Aristotle offers an extended discussion on the preservation of tyranny, one in which the Thrasymachus of *Republic* Book I might well be interested (*Pol.* 1313a34-1315b10). What is important is that he presents two diametrically opposed ways in which tyranny can be preserved. The first is an account of the traditionally recognized oppressive means by which the tyrant subjects those under his control to slavish domination. Aristotle, like Plato, condemns this form of tyranny by his thorough exposition of its nature. He goes further, however, and presents the tyrant with a viable alternative, an opportunity to keep and even better preserve his power while at the same time moving away from the tyrannical extreme towards at least the emulation of a kingly form of rule. Thus, he says, the tyrant by pursuing moderation in his own life and courting popularity will decrease the hatred and fear among those he rules and preserve his rule longer. He himself will become in this way, if not virtuous, at least on the way to virtue: half-wicked rather than wholly wicked. See Simpson (1998:413).

[107] μία μόνον πανταχοῦ κατὰ φύσιν ἡ ἀρίστη (*EN* 1135a5). See Simpson (1998:27), Joachim (1951:156).

process Plato describes so well, but also, Aristotle argues, to a process of reform and improvement from within, one which allows them to approach their true essential nature stepwise through a series of partial goods successively realized in the sensible. Each of these partial 'concretions' has its own justice, however circumscribed in nature, in the form of the laws embodied in its specific πολιτεία. It is in accord with the particular conception of justice that the polis espouses that its citizens achieve their particular excellence; so that for Aristotle the good citizen is not necessarily or even for the most part identical with the good man.[108] Seen as differentia of the citizen κοινωνία as the genus, the various πολιτεῖαι are rationally (mis)construed by man in accord with the understanding he has of the true end of the polis. Where Plato in the *Republic* charts a falling away from the good which ultimately despairs of any real possibility of justice in human communities, Aristotle holds out hope. While recognizing and taking into consideration the difficulties Plato and others, including the 5th century tragedians, have exposed, he plots a return course towards the human good which allows the stepwise attainment of stabilized intermediate and partial ends, defective πολιτείαι as platforms from which further reform can be initiated by the good ruler. What Aristotle seeks to discern, Simpson rightly emphasizes, is "not just the simply best, but also the best in the circumstances, and not just making men simply good, but also as good as they and the conditions allow."[109]

Despite the historical appearance of so many different forms of πολιτεῖαι, it is not the case, as some would say, Aristotle argues, that what is politically just (τὸ πολιτικὸν δίκαιον) is simply conventional, equated with what is enacted in law and held through custom.[110] What is politically just, that is to say embodied in the rational authority

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An overt correspondence between the aims of Aristotle's ideal and that of the *Republic* is clearly evident. What fundamentally distinguishes the two, it has been shown, is the very different metaphysical logic upon which their κοινωνίαι are founded as 'wholes of parts'.

[108] The good man is said to have a single excellence which is complete virtue. Therefore someone can be an excellent citizen while not possessing the virtue that is constitutive of being an excellent man (*Pol.* 1276b16-35). However, Aristotle argues, in the best πολιτεία, where the excellent ruler is both ἀγαθός and φρόνιμος, the virtue of the excellent man and the excellent citizen can be said to coincide (*Pol.* 1277a14-15, 1288a37-9).

[109] Simpson (1998:284).

[110] Some people, Aristotle observes, believe that because justice is seen to change from polis to polis and what is natural must be immutable and universal (τὸ ...φύσει ἀκίνητον καὶ πανταχοῦ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει δύναμιν), as fire burns everywhere the same, then everything is just only by enactment (*EN* 1134b24-27).

exercised by a πολιτεία, is in part by nature and in part simply by legislation. The regulation of what is in itself ethically indifferent is just by convention and expediency (κατὰ συνθήκην καὶ τὸ συμφέρον).[111] However, on matters integral to the conduct of the good and virtuous human life there is to be found, underlying and grounding political justice as νομικόν, a universally valid φυσικὸν δίκαιον. It is important to recognize, Miller notes, that Aristotle here "makes the distinction *within* political justice itself."[112] Thus φύσις and νόμος are not inherently opposed, as certain sophists claim.[113] Nor is φύσις to be seen, as Thrasymachus has understood it, in terms of individual human nature and the doctrine that might is right. Natural necessity (φύσις) is ordered to νόμος in the activity of the principle; the justice of Zeus is seen to be resident now in divine Noῦς as the Unmoved Mover of the cosmos: 'all human laws sustained by the one divine law'. The problem is that, given the fact that motion and change characterize the whole of the natural world, it is only within the realm of the gods that there exists the possibility of actually realizing φυσικὸν δίκαιον as absolutely unchangeable (*EN* 1134b18-30). Hence, it has to be allowed that what is in principle a unity is to be found in the sensible world divided and seemingly opposed, as Sophocles has observed. Even the primary distinction inherent within political justice between what is just universally by nature (φύσις) and what is just by posited human law (νόμος), Aristotle points out, is not in practice an absolute one.[114] Sophocles' Antigone was undoubtedly right, he concludes, to invoke the authority of a universal natural unchanging law (ὡς φύσει ὂν τοῦτο δίκαιον)

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[111] This includes such things as measures, quantitative determinants of what is appropriate in particular circumstances: measures for wine or corn, the amount of a ransom, whether a sacrifice should be of one goat or two sheep (*EN* 1134b21-24, 1134b35-1135a3). Even here, however, it can be argued, if one were to look to what underlies the examples Aristotle gives, universal principles of justice can be discerned to be operative.

[112] Miller (1995:75).

[113] See, for example Antiphon DK 87.B.4.

[114] Cf. *MM* 1195a1-7. Miller (1995:74-79) provides a good recent discussion of natural and legal justice in Aristotle, one which recognizes the significance of Aristotle's natural teleology. For a very different view, which denies any teleological understanding see Yack (1993) and the literature there cited. Natural and conventional right, Yack maintains, are viewed by Aristotle "as two *kinds* of judgement about justice that normally emerge in political life" and "not *standards* against which to measure the justice of our judgments" (141). Aristotle, he says, is expressing his "understanding of the indeterminate and open-ended nature of the standards of justice invoked by members of political communities" (141). While he recognizes the distinction Aristotle makes between natural and conventional in political justice, Yack persistently confutes natural law codified and what is simply law by convention in arguing to his conclusions (see in particular pp.144-5). Aristotle's account on universal natural law in the *Rhetoric*, he is thus forced to conclude, "plainly contradicts his account of natural right in the *Nicomachean Ethics*" (146).

in her conflict with Creon, but not *necessarily* so.[115] As has been discussed in Chapter 4, Sophocles himself presents in *Oedipus Coloneus* the same understanding when he shows Antigone yielding to the divine plan and forgoing the burial rites of Oedipus. Poet and philosopher are in agreement that these universal laws are not in the sensible world invariant but ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ, holding with such a high degree of probability that to all intents and purposes they can be said to be true (*EN* 1134b30-32). This being the case, it must be recognized that, since no law is completely without exception, at every level of human interaction there exists the possibility for the division and conflict found 'writ large' on the cosmic canvas in tragic drama.

Nevertheless, Aristotle concludes, like Plato, that there is only one πολιτεία that is by nature everywhere the best. In determining what πολιτεία is essentially the best, and hence the ultimate telos of all other πολιτεῖαι, he asserts, it is necessary to consider the end to which it is ordered to be that which is most worthy of choice for humans. This for both each one individually and for the polis as a whole is the life in accord with virtue (*Pol.* 1323b21-36).[116] Correct πολιτεῖαι will therefore be those which rule for the sake of the common advantage in the noble and virtuous life.[117] If it happens that there are some one or a few persons in the polis who are outstanding in virtue, far surpassing others in their political capacity so that they appear like gods among men, it is clear that such individuals cannot be considered any longer as a part of the polis; treated as if on a par with the rest of the citizenry and held within the bounds of laws that require all to rule and be ruled in turn. In fact they themselves are the law and it would be ridiculous for anyone to attempt to legislate with respect to them (*Pol.* 1284a11-15). The only proper recourse in dealing with such individuals is for all to obey them gladly so that they become permanently kings in their cities (1284b32-34).[118] There is undoubtedly a

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[115] See further, the discussion in Chapter 4 on S. *Ant.* 456-7 and Aristotle's comments in *Rh.* 1373b1-13.

[116] Aristotle's description of the citizen of the best πολιτεία at *Pol.* 1284a2-3 is one who is capable of and chooses to be ruled and rule with a view to the life in accord with virtue Cf. *EN* 1099a31-b2, 1102a5-6.

[117] The essential characteristics of correctly conceived πολιτεῖαι is that they look in accord with an unqualified justice to the common interest (τὸ κοινῃ συμφέρον). The polis is a κοινωνία ἐλευθέρων and those πολιτεῖαι that look to the interest of the rulers alone are despotic in nature and thus are said to be defective (1279a17-21).

[118] Cf. *Pol.* 1284b25-31, 1288a15-29. Kingship or aristocracy, correct πολιτεῖαι ruled by men of surpassing virtue, is the best possible. The ruler must be completely virtuous (τελέαν ...τὴν ἠθικὴν ἀρετήν); his function is that of the master craftsman and reason (λόγος) is a master craftsman (*Pol.* 1260a17-18). It is clearly better in such cases for ἡ κοινωνία ἡ πολιτικὴ if the same persons always rule,

marked similarity again to the Platonic ideal, here to the conception of a philosopher king developed in the *Republic*. In light of this, Aristotle's earlier criticism of Plato (*Pol.* 1252a7-16) for conflating within one ruling science, the king, the manager of the household and the master, will be recalled. The supremely virtuous individual ruling in a kingly manner over others, Aristotle admits, is in effect the part ruling over the whole which does not accord with nature; nevertheless it must be the case wherever someone exhibits such superiority (*Pol.* 1288a24-29).[119] The stability of this ideal is in fact what the continuous cycling of individuals between ruling and being ruled in the polis of οἱ ὅμοιοι seeks to emulate.

Aristotle, like Plato, deems the existence of heroic and god-like men, possessed of ἀρετὴ ὑπερβολή, to be rare (ἐπεὶ δὲ σπάνιον καὶ τὸ θεῖον ἄνδρα εἶναι), but not impossible (*EN* 1145b17-28). Noticeably he does not criticize Plato's Kingly ruler of the *Republic* and the *Statesman* as such. Indeed, as earlier noted, he can be seen to be working very much from within the same context as Plato, although having put philosophy on what he sees to be a sounder metaphysical basis for an understanding of the relation of the sensible world to the intelligible and of the place of man's divided nature within the cosmic order: his own metaphysics of substance in potency and act. The ever present potential that the 'divine man' represents is what draws human society with all its difference and diversity in relation to the gods, relating all the many different kinds of πολιτεία found in the sensible to their telos in the formal principle that contains them all: the actuality of νοῦς πρακτικός as that one πολιτεία which is everywhere by nature best.[120] It is by understanding things in this way that it becomes evident "how a treatment of inferior regimes can be necessary or appropriate in a study whose intention is the best

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where possible (*Pol.* 1261a37-39).

[119] Newell (1991:195) sees this "as a rather puzzling relapse into Platonism." Saunders (1981:210, 220) and Ross (1960:255) are also among the perplexed. Alexander (2000:203) concludes that Aristotle's "simply best regime or aristocracy in the strict sense ...is equivalent to the best regime in speech in the *Republic*." See further Strauss (1978:37) and Nussbaum (1980:421-2) whose attempts to explain away the difficulties, by denying Aristotle ever really conceived of the possibility such individuals might actually come to exist, miss the mark.

[120] Simpson (1998:284) notes the common conclusion of scholars, the chief proponent cited to be Jaeger, that there is a conflict in Aristotle's account between the 'ideal' simply best πολιτεία and the practical considerations of 'real' and existing πολιτεῖαι which predominate in the work. Simpson's own conclusion is that it is manifestly evident that Aristotle did not in fact make such a distinction but rather "saw a comprehensive treatment of all regimes as constituting one and the same science."

regime and making men good."[121] The same tensions, which have at their root that θεῖόν τι which draws man beyond the limitations of the changing sensible world, are found in *EN* 10.7-8 in the comparison of the life of contemplation to that of praxis. What Aristotle says there is relevant to his argument on the παμβασιλεία in the *Politics*. Just because we are mortal we should not think mortal. Rather, to the extent we are able we should live a life that expresses what is the supreme element in us (*EN* 1177b26-1178a2).[122]

Once one steps back from the undoubted superiority of the 'divine man', the clear-sighted σπουδαῖος whose unerring aim allows him to gain possession of the end in praxis, however, one enters again the world of change and uncertainty. This, as Aristotle defines it, is the proper sphere of the political κοινωνία, which is to say of those who associate together as free and equal citizens in a polis (*EN* 1134a26-30).[123] It is in the relations among these free and equal associates, governed by law, that justice and injustice are said to exist: where laws do not rule there is no πολιτεία (*Pol.* 1292a32). Only tyranny and extreme forms of democracy and oligarchy are judged by Aristotle to be outside of the rule of law, purely products of human will and hence not strictly πολιτεῖαι (*Pol.* 1292b5-10). Where men are by nature similar (τοῖς ὁμοίοις φύσει) justice and worth (ἀξία) are necessarily the same and they must be accorded, as equals, the right to rule and be ruled in turn (*Pol.* 1287a12-18). Plato's Socrates is to be criticized for not giving sufficient weight in the *Republic* to the potential for στάσις resident in the fact that he has the same persons always ruling. This, given human nature, in Aristotle's estimation, will be sufficient to breed resentment even in men of little worth, let alone those who are driven by the θυμοειδές and πολεμικός (*Pol.* 1264b6-10). The innate power of θυμός, he argues, is sufficient to pervert (διαστρέφω) even the best of men, including the rulers themselves (*Pol.* 1287a31-32).[124]

Nevertheless, even when it is allowed that all citizens must have a share of ruling and

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[121] Simpson (1998:284). Cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1288a39-b2, *EN* 10.9.

[122] Cf. Arist. *de An.* 3.5 and *Metaph.* 12.10.

[123] Equality is either proportionately or numerically determined. Without these preconditions there is no πολιτικὸν δίκαιόν properly speaking, Aristotle says, although there is something of justice in so far as there is a resemblance to this.

[124] 'The beginning is half the whole'. It takes only very small perturbations in civic justice and friendship, particularly when these take place among those in positions of authority and influence, to initiate major internal disruptions (*Pol.* 1303b17-1304b18).

being ruled, the question raised in tragic form by Sophocles in *Antigone* remains. Is it to be human practical reasoning, or those laws enacted in accord with what experience has shown to hold ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ that will take precedence in political decision-making; is it is man or the law that is to rule (*Pol.* 1286a7-9)? The problem lies in determining whether and how the universal and the particular can be brought into relation in an informed judgement. Plato has argued that, in the absence of the true statesman, or philosopher king, there is no unfailing knowledge of the true good in the world of becoming. Men must imitate, as best they can, the one correct πολιτιεία by a strict adherence to its laws (τὰ γεγραμμένα καὶ πάτρια ἔθη, *Plt.* 296c9-10), even though admittedly in their fixed form these laws fall short of the ideal (*Plt.* 297d3-8).[125] This second best way (δεύτερος πλοῦς, *Plt.* 300c2), strict conformity with the law, will be the guiding principle of Plato's own second best polis in the *Laws*.[126] It is with this conception of a fixed, unbending rule of law abstractly enforced that Aristotle, following in the tragic tradition takes issue.[127]

The recognition that laws speak to the unchanging and universal but are blind to the multifactorial particularity of circumstance that presents in the life of praxis is something upon which Plato and Aristotle agree. Aristotle is also, like Plato, keenly aware that when separated from νόμος and δίκη man is χείριστον πάντων (*Pol.* 1253a32-3). The one bidding the law to rule is deemed to ask god and νοῦς alone to rule while the one looking to man to rule adds the beast in the shape of human desires and passions which can pervert even the best of rulers (*Pol.* 1287a28-32).[128] It is the laws that bound and shape the life of the polis, moulding its young citizens in their image and determining the

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[125] See *Plt.* 293e6-301a4 for the whole discussion which pointedly addresses itself also to what are judged to be the gross inadequacies of Athenian political practices. For the superiority of the wisdom of the true statesman to written laws, see *Plt.* 294a7-8, 297b7-c4, 300c9-d2. The rarity of such individuals is acknowledged (*Plt.* 301d8-e4). Cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1332b23-5.

[126] See, for example, *Lg.* 875c3-d5.

[127] The problem, as it is found in Plato's political thought, is that the sensible participant is ordered to the Good and the forms in a fixed and linear relationship which does not entail meaningful commerce between individuals. Thus the object cannot take on a concrete form within the sensible world and ultimately is lost in the universality of the Good. While, he has an epistemology, Plato, unlike Aristotle, does not have an ontology of the sensible which allows being and non-being to come together as concretions at different levels of reality.

[128] Cf. *EN* 1134a35-b2.

nature of the end towards which the community as a whole sets its aim.[129] Rulers must assuredly have available to them this universal account, Aristotle affirms. Yet, in the throes of the particular, where law and justice can be found incommensurably opposed, the laws cease to be authoritative and must be replaced by human adjudicators who can deliberate more finely on the issues in coming to a conclusion on how to act. The problem lies not in the law but in the nature of the object itself as matter (*EN* 1137b17-19). Hence, Sophocles' Antigone exerts fixedly and unflinchingly an ethical imperative which is a universal right but one that, caught in the flux of circumstance is still nevertheless ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ and therefore not, as Antigone holds, *necessarily* universally applicable. Creon in challenging that right, however, is shown, for his own part, to have failed to deliberate finely and thus revealed himself, in Aristotle's eyes as not ἐπιεικής.

The citizens, Aristotle concludes, in response to Plato, and in company with Aeschylus, are guardians of the laws, but not simply their subjects. Educated by the laws themselves, they can submit what is indeterminable under law to considered deliberation and judgement (*Pol.* 1286a21-26). The most important consideration in the preservation of πολιτεῖαι, Aristotle asserts, is habituating and educating the citizens to the laws of their own πολιτεία: if the laws are democratic, in the spirit of democracy, if the laws are oligarchic, in the oligarchic spirit. This does not mean to do what the oligarchs wish or what the democracy enjoys, but to act so as to further the end that allows these πολιτεῖαι to function at their best (*Pol.* 1310a12-22). Applying the law according to the spirit in which it is couched, rather than the letter in which it is formulated, is what distinguishes that which is equitable (τὸ ἐπιεικές) from what is legally just (νομικὸν δίκαιον). What is required, Aristotle argues, is to establish equity through rectifying the deficiency in the law that results from its abstract nature (*EN* 1137b26-27). This, he says, is to prescribe as the legislator, if he were present himself, would do on being faced with the same set of circumstances (*EN* 1137b11-27).[130] In considering the nature of human action it is clear that τὸ ἐπιεικές, what is decent, is better than a merely formal conception of justice that fails to allow for a concretion of universal and particular. The ἐπιεικής is the one who decides upon and carries out (ὁ ...προαιρετικὸς καὶ πρακτικός) actions that are truly

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[129] Cf. Socrates eulogy on the Laws in the *Crito* (50a11-54d1).

[130] Simpson (1998:185) makes the important point that, "even when humans do the deciding, the law is still operative, but as educating them how to decide not as telling them what to decide."

just. His ἕξις, Aristotle states, is ἐπιείκεια which itself is nothing other than a sort of justice (*EN* 1137b34-1138a3).[131] It is education and habits that above all make a man excellent and it is this that make possible the excellent πολιτεία (*Pol.* 1288a39-b2).[132]

Central to Aristotle's understanding of the nature of the political κοινωνία practically realized as a whole of parts is his very detailed analysis in the *Politics* of the causes and means of prevention of στάσις as a privation of ὁμόνοια.[133] The fundamental significance of education and virtue in shaping the lives of the citizens to this end is constantly stressed by Aristotle. Whoever takes thought for good order (εὐνομία) has to give careful consideration to political virtue and vice (περὶ ...ἀρετῆς καὶ κακίας πολιτικῆς), he insists (*Pol.* 1280b5-6). However, it is necessary to recognize the essential imperfection that marks the human condition as 'rational animality'. The concern of the legislator is not to try to impose upon the citizens an unrealistic ideal but, consistent with the constraints imposed by the nature of the material he has to work with, to attempt to bring to the community that dynamic balance and proportion which will elicit in them a sense of ὁμόνοια. To produce good citizens in relation to the end at which their πολιτεία aims, however far short this falls of the ideal, must be a first concern of the rulers if στάσις is to be kept at bay.[134]

There is general agreement in principle, Aristotle argues, that justice and proportional

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[131] Cf. Arist. *Rh.* 1374a25-b3 where Aristotle discusses the kinds of factors that that are to be taken into account in reaching equitable and just decisions. Aristotle here comes firmly to grips with the problem that Socrates put to Cephalus on whether it is just to return a weapon to a madman (Pl. *R.* 331c). Cephalus, a decent man, well habituated in virtue, and the true spirit of the laws, does the good through being good. While he is no φρόνιμος, he is nevertheless capable of ἐπιείκεια in his interactions with his fellows.

[132] Aristotle notes that Socrates too has recognized the singular importance of habituation and education in virtue for unifying the polis and bringing about τὴν πόλιν σπουδαίαν. However, the radical reforms to social structure Socrates proposes, Aristotle argues, far from furthering this end will be counterproductive to it (*Pol.* 1263b37-40).

[133] In particular, *Politics* Books 5 & 6. See on this, Kalimtzis (2000) whose study of the concept of στάσις in Greek thought, and particularly in Aristotle, enriches the argument presented here. See also Simpson (1998:362-421).

[134] Kalimtzis (2000:181-183) remarks the difference between Aristotle's understanding of the means to prevent στάσις and promote ὁμόνοια and those generally promulgated at the time, which focussed upon uniting Hellas against a common external enemy: the Persian Empire. Thus, he observes, "Aristotle's reforms look inward to the soul of the citizens to revitalize the power of a constitution, while Isocrates' proposal [in his tract *Panathenaicus*] looks outward to objects and to any constellation of forces that might achieve it." Although the latter approach is doubtless effective in controlling the symptoms of στάσις and in furthering at least temporally a feeling of ὁμόνοια, it does not thereby address, Aristotle would argue, the root causes of political unrest.

equality are constitutive to any πολιτεία. However, different conceptions of what is to be accounted just give rise to different forms of πολιτεῖαι; different distributions of rule which, although they cannot be said to be just unqualifiedly, do possess justice of a sort. The problem has its root in the fact that virtue, as excellence of the soul, demonstrably has need of certain external goods to assist man in attaining the fulfilment of his nature in τὸ εὖ ζῆν. Wealth, good birth and freedom are all seen by Aristotle to be beneficial ancillary goods when properly ordered to the life of virtue. When present disproportionately in the population, however, desired as ends in themselves rather than as a means to virtue, they become a focal point of instability, the beginning points and well-springs of στάσις (*Pol.* 1301a25-b5). Nevertheless, Aristotle sees, this is the human condition. Thus, it is on the prevention and management of this disproportion, through the amelioration of its injustices, that Aristotle argues the best efforts of the legislators should be focussed. Taken together with the primary directives that citizens must be educated and habituated to the ends of their particular πολιτεία, as embodied in its laws, and that as equals citizens must be included in the ruling process, this is Aristotle's considered response to the problem that human θυμός presents as an instigator of change and instability in the political association.

In the final analysis, Aristotle concludes, for all intents and purposes, the form that the political κοινωνία takes in practice is either that of an oligarchy or a democracy (*Pol.* 1301b39-1302a1).[135] As a result, the potential for στάσις is an ever present threat to stability, fed by the innate human desires for personal honour and gain (*Pol.* 1302a31-b2).[136] The πολιτεία which is the best attainable in practice, although even this is unlikely, will be formed from a judicious mixture of oligarchic and democratic elements (*Pol.* 1293b22-34). It is this 'middling' sort of πολιτεία that is alone without στάσις (*Pol.* 1296a7).[137] It is against this polity, as a measure, Aristotle concludes, that the various

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[135] Good birth, like virtue, is found only in a few persons. As a result it is polities that emphasize the good as either wealth (oligarchy) or freedom (democracy) that come to predominate in the human community. Thus, Aristotle observes, those (the δῆμος) who consider themselves equal, being free persons, make numerical equality the prime consideration for justice. On the other hand, (the ὀλιγάρχαι), who are unequal on the basis of property, conceive it as just to be unequal in all respects to the rest of their fellow citizens (*Pol.* 1301a28-35).

[136] Cf. *Pol.* 1271a16 where it is argued that most voluntary acts of injustice among human beings result from ambition or greed.

[137] The opposition of oligarchy and democracy is that of rich and poor, the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. The answer, Aristotle sees to be in the development of a 'middle class' (οἱ μέσοι), those of moderate wealth

forms of democracies and oligarchies which preponderate in actual cities can best be evaluated.

10.5 Preventing and resolving conflict in the political community is 'up to us'

Alisdair MacIntyre, although a committed champion of Aristotelian moral philosophy against "the voices of liberal modernity," has been very influential in arguing that Aristotle fails in not examining the scenes of conflict the political order demonstrates.[138] Thus he submits that "[i]f Aristotle had asked this question both of the *polis* and of the individual agent, he would have had an additional resource for understanding the teleological character of both the virtues and the social forms that provide them with a context."[139] Conflict, MacIntyre argues, has to be seen as "central to a city's life," and not as Aristotle has understood it "reduced to a threat to that life."[140] It is, he concludes, "a Sophoclean insight-that it is through conflict and sometimes only through conflict that we learn what our ends and purposes are."[141] What is very evident, however, from even the most cursory examination of the *Politics*, is that in fact Aristotle is very fruitfully able to incorporate these insights of Sophocles into his own ethical theory. Tragedy and theory are not to be seen as mutually exclusive but as complementary approaches to an increased awareness of the forces at work within the human soul as it strives to come into possession of its end.[142] Although, like Sophocles, Aristotle offers no panacea, the thorough and insightful analysis of the causes of στάσις and the means that may be instituted to combat it that he sets out in the *Politics* allows a deepened understanding of the human condition. For Aristotle, Kalimtzis remarks, "the avoidance of *stasis* is not an end of the political art but a precondition for something higher to be achieved."[143]

(*Pol.* 1295b34-8). However, since the 'middling' element [like the aristocratic, and the virtuous elements] is for the most part outnumbered by the democratic and oligarchic elements, a 'middling' πολιτεία occurs but infrequently if at all (*Pol.* 1296a22-38).

[138] MacIntyre (1984:146).

[139] MacIntyre (1984:163-4).

[140] MacIntyre (1984:157).

[141] MacIntyre (1984:164).

[142] This point earlier emerged in the analysis in Chapter 2 of the understanding of tragedy in Aristotle's *Poetics*.

[143] Kalimtzis (2000:189). Hence, he points out, Aristotle concludes that "[a] deviant constitution that has a

Bernard Williams, also an influential leader in the field of moral philosophy, although he does not accord to the Sophoclean universe quite the degree of ethical ambiguity that it is invested with by MacIntyre, has argued similarly that Sophocles, in presenting a world which is "only partly intelligible to human agency," provides a more fruitful source for moral thought than does Aristotle, for whom, according to Williams, "human life and human aspirations" when properly understood are fully intelligible.[144] Together, MacIntyre and Williams have placed Sophocles and Aristotle on opposing sides of what appears to them to be an unbridgeable divide, effectively ruling out a meaningful dialogue between poet and philosopher. On one side of this divide, Williams includes, in company with Sophocles, the other tragedians and Thucydides, as well as Freud, while on the other side he places Aristotle in the company of Plato, Kant and Hegel.[145] However, the "absolute understanding of nature" which Williams and MacIntyre attribute to Aristotle and which is central to their distinction between Aristotle and Sophocles has not gone unchallenged.[146] Thus Gill argues in response to Williams' claim, that the normative ideal is for Aristotle "not so much an already achieved or readily achievable world view, but rather a target or project."[147] Nussbaum, noting that Williams' view of Aristotle's account of human nature is one held, at least in part, by a number of 'other influential writers past and present', including MacIntyre, criticizes it on similar grounds.[148] Yack, points out that "[o]nly an extremely selective reading of the *Politics* could support the claim ...that Aristotle fails to recognize 'the centrality of opposition and conflict in human life'." Yack himself, however, goes to the opposite extreme when he further maintains that, far from denying conflict, Aristotle is in fact saying that "[t]he distrust and conflict which tend to grow out of political argument are part of the price one pays ...for a *political* community."[149] In thus privileging duality over unity in Aristotle, Yack destroys the integrity of Aristotle's fundamental conception of the political

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form of *homonoia* is preferable to the mindless bloodletting of *stasis*. It is a framework of justice and friendship that, however limited, may be reformed to bring it closer to the ideal."

[144] Williams (1993:163-4).

[145] Williams (1993:163). Cf. MacIntyre (1984:163).

[146] Williams (1985:52); MacIntyre (1984:148).

[147] Gill (1996:439).

[148] Nussbaum (1995:86-131).

[149] Yack (1999:283; originally published 1985).

κοινωνία as a 'whole of parts' and grinds out yet one more victim, however unlikely a one, from the post-modern mill. The claim, earlier noted to be currently pervasive in interpretation of tragic drama, that its "orientation towards the social context is interrogative and even adversarial" is seamlessly extended by Yack to embrace Aristotle in its clutch.[150]

Aristotle, it has been shown, offers man a way back towards the principle which is graduated, mediated by the existence of sensible concretions, species of πολιτεία which offer stable staging points from which he can seek to advance his progress stepwise towards the political ideal. Whereas tragic man falls short of that conception of the φρόνιμος that Aristotle portrays as the theoretical ideal in the *Ethics*, he is not thereby seen to be divorced from any meaningful relation to the end as an ultimate human good. Aristotle is not blind to the exigencies of human existence in an imperfect world. The 'rival allegiances to incompatible goods' which Sophoclean tragedy exposes are not, as far as Aristotle is concerned, irreconcilable with his 'conception of a unity of the virtues'. The difference is one of perspective and not of doctrine. The divided nature of man, the gap between human knowing in a world of contingency and a universal principle of unchanging order, integral features of traditional Greek morality, are fundamental topics that Aristotle examines in his philosophical works. From its own distinctive viewpoint, the tragic poetry of Sophocles, through its exploration of the interrelationship between a noble and committed nature and the exigencies of circumstance, as this is displayed in the ethical choices of the heroic individual, informs and illuminates the conceptual framework of the Aristotelian account

There are two things that living well consists in for all, Aristotle argues, aiming correctly at the end of actions and discovering the actions that are consonant with achieving that end. In practice however either the end or the means, or sometimes both, may be misconstrued (*Pol.* 1331b26-34). Attainment of the good in action requires not only the establishment by habituation of a virtuous disposition with regard to pleasures and pains

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[150] Gellrich (1988:68) quoted in Chapter 2, p. 32. Swanson (1992:186) concludes also that "Yack goes too far ...[in] contending that Aristotle maintains that political communities are based not on common moral perceptions but on an argument about them. In Yack's view Aristotle's citizens argue about 'general standards of justice and goodness', about the very thing that, Aristotle implies, makes their disputation and decision-making possible."

(*EN* 1104b10-15) but also the insight and experience to discern amidst the complexity of each individual situation a proper course of action to follow. This is the lesson tragedy instils within the hearts and minds of its audience. Since there is no set of axioms from which the truly good end can be universally and necessarily deduced, what is deliberated about in ethical action is always what is only for the most part true, ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ. Although man is ordered to the true good as his end, he is not determined to it necessarily, but must actualize the good of his nature through the kinds of ethical choices he makes. What must be sought in practice by the good person is sufficient understanding of the nature of the end to enable it to be secured in action. It is the excellent person who has the capacity, either individually or in concert with his fellows on 'great matters', to recognize and achieve the good in the face of all the confounding circumstances that may surround an act and obscure the true end. On examination, it will be seen that the conflicts presented by Sophoclean tragedy are precisely not, in themselves, intractable to human understanding. It is in coming to a recognition of this, in learning, as MacIntyre puts it, "what our ends and purposes are" that an objective order becomes intelligible in praxis to man. In the final analysis, good or shameful actions are within the power of each individual so that, as Aristotle never tires of saying, on each occasion for voluntary action the responsibility for bridging the divide of reason and feeling is ἐφ' ἡμῖν: it is 'up to us'.

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