

## Comedy in Callipolis: Animal Imagery in the *Republic*\*

ARLENE W. SAXONHOUSE  
*University of Michigan*

*The political society founded by Socrates in the Republic has been seen by many as Plato's conception of the ideal political community, his Callipolis. However, a study of the language used by Socrates as he builds his perfect city reveals an unusually heavy concentration of animal images. This language seems to undercut the ostensible perfection of Socrates' city and illustrates rather its connections to the comic world of Aristophanes, whose comedy the Birds offers the model according to which the Republic is built. It is suggested that the city of the Republic is comic and ugly, indicating the limitations of politics rather than its potentialities. The Republic argues for the need to reorient the concept of justice away from social life and towards the individual. Ultimately, the Republic suggests that the notion of social justice is laughable and fit for the comic stage.*

In Book 7 of the *Republic* Socrates gives the city which he has founded with Glaucon and Adeimantus a name. While discussing the education of the philosopher rulers, Socrates says to Glaucon: "It must be established that those in your Callipolis in no way refrain from the study of geometry" (527c).<sup>1</sup> The name, deriving from the Greek *kalos*, suggests that the city is beautiful. The question I would like to raise is whether Socrates' Callipolis is really beautiful, or whether its name may be a deceptive wrapping for what can be considered a political monstrosity which makes its inhabitants ugly and fit for the comic stage. In comedy, the human being portrayed with hyperbolic exaggeration of human weaknesses appears grotesque. Existing on a plane between the gods and animals, human beings frequently become in comedy creatures whose concerns illustrate their ties to the animal world. In tragedy we try to become god-like and fail; in comedy, even as we succeed, we can appear to be only slightly above the animal world. Socrates' city parallels comedy as it transforms the members of its guardian class from individuals with the potential for private virtue into the inhabitants of a barnyard. The entire dialogue which begins and ends with death—that final sign of our inferiority

to the gods—is framed by tragedy, as human beings strive to obtain the political self-sufficiency which Plato portrays as impossible. But it is comedy which controls the central part of the dialogue, the growth of Socrates' city in Books 2, 3, 4, and especially 5. The tragic art can make the ugly beautiful; the comic art reveals what is ugly. The externally beautiful polis with the beautiful name appears similar to the wondrous bronze horse inside of which the ancestor of Gyges finds death and the magic ring which will lead him to injustice (359d).

Through a study of the language and metaphor which Socrates uses during his discussion of his supposed utopia, particularly the animal imagery which is used throughout, we find that Socrates' Callipolis imitates the comic art. This ugly city does not reveal how best to organize men and women into political units. It does not clarify the justice of the political system, even the best political system in words, but rather its necessary injustices. Socrates' city is founded on a series of injustices, according to his own definition as it occurs in the *Republic*. He demands injustice to the city's rulers, injustice to its women, and injustice to its neighbors.<sup>2</sup>

\*I would like to thank the Horace H. Rackham Graduate School of the University of Michigan for financial support during the early stages of research for this article, and the anonymous referees of this journal for their helpful comments.

<sup>1</sup>Standard Stephanus pagination will be used for all citations from Platonic dialogues. All translations are my own.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. e.g., 519d, where Glaucon comments that by driving the philosophers down into the cave "we shall be unjust to them and make them live worse lives [*cheiron zein*]." Socrates responds that it is not the concern of the law whether one race "share fare well [*eu praxein*]" (519e). In the last words of the dialogue Socrates enjoins his companions to be just and "fare well [*eu prattein*]" (621d). Women are treated unjustly when Socrates makes them equal to men and thus denied the opportunity to excel in that for which they are most suited by nature. Cf. Benardete (1971, p. 23)

To see Socrates' city as the expression of Plato's political values is to disregard the purpose for which it is founded: to set private justice within the soul in opposition to the justice which the political unit can never achieve. In the process of developing his new definition of justice, Socrates has reoriented the concept from one which may be called political or social, one having to do with an individual's external relationship with others, to a concept which is internal, relating to the soul. Socrates' just individuals do not become just through participation in the polis; rather, they must be made to recognize the inherent injustices in the demands which politics may make of them—to harm the city's enemies (who may in fact be their friends) and to depend on the power of opinion over the truth. The beautiful name becomes a mask which hides the injustices which are a necessary part of politics, even of Socrates' best city.

#### Comedy in the *Republic*

In the midst of the discussion of the education of the philosopher about which Socrates cares most, he catches himself: "I forgot that we were playing [*epaizomen*]" (536c; cf. 545e). The playfulness of the dialogue is frequently expressed by laughter. Cephalus is the first to laugh as he leaves the group assembled at his house (331d). The laughter which he bequeaths to the group along with the argument pervades the dialogue, despite Adeimantus' early plea that Socrates demonstrate that one hearing justice praised should not laugh [*gelân*] (366c). Throughout, Socrates as he tries to show why justice must be praised is himself deserving of laughter [*geloios*] (392d; 398c; 432d; 445a; 499c; 504d; 506d; 536b). Glaucon, his companion in this quest, similarly appears laughable, particularly when he tries to relate the value of various sciences to the mundane problems of war and politics (526d–527a; 527d; 528d–529c; 529e–530a).

In the *Philebus*, Socrates enumerates the causes of the laughable [*to geloion*]; he finds them in three variations of our failure to follow the Delphic maxim "know thyself." We become the source of laughter when we do not recognize our limitations with respect to wealth, beauty, and virtue (48c–e). By building his

supposedly beautiful city Socrates is guilty of the second offense against Apollo, becoming a source of laughter for presenting as beautiful what is clearly ugly. It is only in Book 10 that the unjust man and not Socrates becomes laughable (613d; 620c). Once the best city is left far behind, laughter no longer plagues the arrogant Socrates or the philosopher who is forced back (as Socrates is at the beginning of the dialogue) into the cave of the political world (517a,d). Only at the end of the dialogue is Adeimantus' request fulfilled that justice not be made laughable. Previously, the attempt to praise justice by uniting politics and philosophy and by making the philosopher Socrates engage in the political activity of founding a city only rendered the discussion of justice more laughable.

In Socrates' city, laughter, if not totally eliminated, is circumscribed. Homer is censored for portraying the gods as susceptible to "unquenchable laughter" (389a). The training of a good warrior accomplishes control over the warrior's emotions—and this includes control over laughter. The warriors and guardians by becoming divine must not change form. "It is necessary that they not be lovers of laughter; generally, whenever someone laughs violently, such a one seeks a violent change" (388e). All are prohibited even from imitating one who laughs. Yet, there is much laughter as Socrates founds his city, a fact too seldom recognized in our awe before the venerable philosopher.<sup>3</sup> Socrates himself introduces comic elements in his very language (Jowett and Campbell, 1894,

<sup>3</sup>Jowett and Campbell (1894) comment in the note to 563a: "The most extravagant and comical ideas often occur in the works of Plato. But the manner of saying them does away with the feeling of bad taste." The sensitivity which Jowett and Campbell frequently show in their notes to the Greek text unfortunately does not influence their general analysis, nor Jowett's translation. Rosen (1964, p. 460, cf. p. 464) in contrast does recognize the humor in his analysis of the *Republic*, "making the same suggestion about the *Republic* that Spinoza and Rousseau made about Machiavelli's *Prince*: that it is a kind of satire whose exaggerations are meant to teach the opposite of what they explicitly say." Though I do not agree with several of Rosen's conclusions, I do value the attempt to look at the satire and the humorous goals of the *Republic*. See also, Strauss (1964, pp. 51–52, 61 and passim). On comedy in Plato in general, see Klein (1964, pp. 4–7) and Greene (1920). Greene (1920, p. 101, cf. p. 97) concentrates primarily on the comedy of language, the unusual or unexpected metaphor, not on the comedy of action, and sees the "injecting of detail in a serio-comic vein" as the "method of filling the *lacunae* that are bound to exist between actual and ideal conditions."

and Saxonhouse (1976, pp. 206–11). Neighbors whose land must be acquired to support the non-farming population are injured and their land taken away (373d).

pp. 116, 160), and in Book 5, despite all of Socrates' admonitions, the inhabitants of his best city, though they themselves do not laugh, enact their own comedy and cause others to laugh. The comedy in this book is expressed by the explicit laughter which surrounds Socrates' proposals for the social structure of his society and, as we shall see below, by the relationship between these reforms and the humorous reforms found in the plays of Aristophanes.

Book 5, until after the introduction of the philosopher king, is filled with laughter, or the mock fear of it. Socrates begins his own discourse on the topics of sexual equality, communism, and philosopher rulers with admonitions as to his own doubts (450c); the proposals set forth are to be taken as most tentative. He does not fear, he says, any laughter [*ti gelôta*], for that would be childish (451a). Glaucon responds by laughing (451b). Socrates is laughable because his proposals are opposed to convention, as he himself explains (452a). Nevertheless, he next proceeds to suggest what will be most laughable of all: naked women practicing alongside naked men in the palaestras (452a-b). Glaucon, swearing by Zeus, agrees that it would be laughable in the present state of affairs and Socrates repeats that they must not fear the jokes which clever men will make about such a sight.<sup>4</sup> Socrates begs those who find it laughable not to treat as laughable that which is opposed to what is customary; rather, he argues, the laughable must be defined by the criterion of good and bad (452c-e). Socrates, however, has yet to prove that the naked female engaging in gymnastics is good. The process of this proof is dubious, and it is based on a prior understanding of the good, the bad, and the laughable, since all arguments in opposition to his theory are discarded as laughable (454c; 455c-d; 456d; 457a-b).

The biggest joke of all in Book 5 is the proposal for the philosopher ruler. Socrates realizes that this proposal is likely to drown him in a wave of laughter (473c), and in Glaucon's violent reaction to this proposal (473e-474a) "we are reminded of the manner in which the upholders of paradoxical or revolutionary ideas are threatened with popular hostility in Aristophanes' [comedies]. . . . The real solemnity of the revelation is instantly broken by the ludicrous outburst which follows . . . relieving the discourse by ludicrous imag-

ery" (Jowett and Campbell, 1894, p. 254). After Socrates makes his outlandish suggestions in Book 5 the laughter fades away, only to surface again at the beginning of Book 7 in the allegory of the cave. There, the philosopher returning from the light of the sun to the shadows of the cave appears laughable because he does not understand the conventions of the cave (517d). The philosopher is laughable because he is outside society and its conventions.

The Platonic dialogues are humorous; they mock both the characters within the dialogues and the readers who are drawn into the dialogue. We cannot isolate the famous Socratic irony from Plato's own comic art. Plato's humor, though, is not an arbitrary literary flourish. Plato is a literary artist as well as a philosopher, but his literary skill serves his philosophy, and the playful games he invents serve the propaedeutic purposes of the dialogue (Klein, 1964, pp. 4-5).<sup>5</sup> Recently, considerable attention has been given to the dramatic quality of Plato's dialogues and to the integration of the action of the dialogues and the philosophic content (e.g., Bloom, 1968; Klein, 1964; Strauss, 1964).<sup>6</sup> Similarly, we must study how comic elements frequently expressed through language and metaphor appear at certain points in the dialogue and illuminate the philosophic content. However, before we can understand the role which this humor plays in the dialogue, it might be helpful to refer to earlier Greek literature to which the *Republic* may be a reaction, particularly the work of Aristophanes.

#### Plato and Aristophanes

Plato's desire to use the dialogue as an educational device is hindered by the Greeks' devotion to the poets of the past and present, the poets who provide values and belief systems for the Greeks. When Cephalus, Polemarchus, Glaucon and Adeimantus talk about justice, they talk about the justice which the poets have described for them (331a; 331d; 362a-b; 363b-c; 364c-e; 365b). Though Socrates attacks most harshly the poetry of Homer, it is

<sup>5</sup>For the importance of play as a tool for education, cf. 424d-e and 537a. In the *Laws*, the discussion is often described as a sort of game: 685a; 712b; 769a; and games are used as educational devices: 797a-798e; 819a-d.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Klein (1964, p. 4, n. 10) for a limited bibliography from the early nineteenth century through the middle of the twentieth century, as well as his introductory remarks (1964, pp. 3-31) for a full exposition of the value and necessity of this approach.

<sup>4</sup>Jowett and Campbell (1894, p. 225) comment: "Jests about the gymnastics of the Spartan women such as Plato describes are found in the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes (80-83)."

clear that the epic poet does not have exclusive control over the education of the young. Those who write for stage productions, those who do not use the intermediary narratives of "he said" and the like, are poets and educators as well. These poets must also be overthrown by the prose of Plato's dialogues if his new education is to succeed. The poets who write without the narrative parts can be writers of tragedy or of comedies. Socrates clarifies this in his correction of Adeimantus, who at first recognizes only tragedy (394b-c; 394d). There were three major tragedians in the Periclean Age and they all receive hostile mention in the *Republic*. Sophocles appears as one who was overly erotic in his youth (329b-c). Aeschylus blasphemes the gods (380a; 383a-b). Euripides encourages tyranny (568a-b). While the three tragedians are discredited by name, among the writers of comedy there is only one who has such preeminence. This is Aristophanes. Yet in the *Republic* he remains unnamed, though like the tragedians and epic poets he remains one of Plato's most serious rivals in the education of the youth. Plato remains silent about Aristophanes because of the use which he is to make of him, overcoming him by appearing to ignore him (Bloom, 1968, pp. 380-82).

The comedy by Aristophanes which is important for our consideration of the *Republic* is the *Birds*. Here, two Athenians leave Athens to find a commodious and pleasant place in which to live, one which is free from the tribulations of Athens with its plethora of sycophants and trials. What they seek, it turns out, is the natural city, one which accords with natural desires and needs, where one may act without the inhibitions imposed by conventional society. These men find their natural city, devoted to the pursuit of pleasure, among the birds. There they find no money, no private property, no servants, and complete sexual freedom for both heterosexual and homosexual activities. Aristophanes suggests that the bird society is the natural society. Behind this comedy is the contemporary intellectual conflict between the demands of nature and the restrictions which conventional society imposes on human activity.<sup>7</sup> Socrates tries in the *Republic* to create the natural city in which natural justice will be found. As the city is founded in Book 2, nature [*physis*] is the criterion (369a-b; 370c). The city of nature is Socrates' true city (372e). For Aristophanes, as for the Sophists of his time, the natural city is one based on hedonistic pleasure; in the *Republic* Socrates adapts the

sophistic ideas by trying to find justice, the true source of pleasure, in nature.

As Aristophanes' comedy progresses, one of the Athenian travelers organizes the birds into a polis. He changes the natural life of the birds into a city based on convention, having a name and artificially organized into leaders, workers, and messengers. In the same way Socrates turns his natural polis into a conventional society as he organizes his own flock of animals into a highly structured city with its own three classes. The Athenian of Aristophanes' comedy continues to build defenses and ultimately deposes the Olympian gods; Socrates does the same in the *Republic*, establishing the military class of warriors and the guardian rulers and in his own way deposing the gods of Olympus through his reforms of poetry and the replacement of the old gods with his "ideas." In Aristophanes the laughter comes from the fantasy of the episode, the absurdity of human beings founding a city among birds, and from the appealing freedom from standard conventions which such a society might offer. In the *Republic* the laughter comes as Socrates, rejecting that which is habitual, tries to found a city with animal inhabitants; but it comes as well in the reaction to the fantasy of the just city, an ideal which has for Plato some of the same absurdity and yet initial attraction which the city of the birds has for the Athenians.

The relationship between the *Republic* and Aristophanes' other utopian comedy, the *Ecclesiazusae*, has been the subject of discussion for well over two centuries.<sup>8</sup> Similarities in the communistic programs, both economic and social, and the introduction of women into the ruling classes suggest a close link between the two, but the significance of the link has seldom been considered with attention to the attendant comic interrelationships. If it is funny in Aristophanes, why isn't it funny in Plato? If it is a comedy when Aristophanes inhabits his utopia with birds, why isn't it funny when Socrates inhabits his with dogs? If equality between the sexes is funny in Aristophanes, why isn't it funny in Plato? Although Plato does not intend to be the comic artist that Aristophanes is, neither can he be read without an awareness of Aristophanes' literary career. There are too many references throughout the Platonic corpus to Aristophanes to pretend that Plato would have been oblivious to Aristophanic themes and the uses which the comic

<sup>7</sup>Cf. esp. Fragment 44, "On Truth" by Antiphon the Sophist in Freeman (1971, pp. 147-49).

<sup>8</sup>Adam (1902, Vol. 1, pp. 345-56) gives a detailed history of the arguments; also Ussher (1973, pp. xvi-xx); and most recently Bloom (1977, pp. 324-28).

poet makes of them. Though the *Republic* does not provoke the open laughter that Aristophanes' comedies do, the comic themes cannot be ignored.<sup>9</sup>

### Animal Imagery in the *Republic*

With this literary background, one can begin to look at the language of the *Republic* from a new perspective. As one goes through the *Republic* noting the animal images, one is struck by the preponderance of such images; and frequently it is this imagery which highlights the humorous aspects of the dialogue as Plato rewrites Aristophanes' *Birds*. The animal imagery appears most frequently in Book 5, the most comic book, where Socrates elaborates upon the social and political structure of his best city, but it begins already in Book 1 with the dramatic treatment of Thrasymachus.<sup>10</sup> In the actual discussion with Socrates Thrasymachus introduces a form of animal imagery which can hardly be considered unique in Greek political thought: that of the political leader as shepherd of his flock. Thrasymachus finds fault with Socrates' putative nurse for failing to point out the difference between the sheep and the shepherd. "Do you think that shepherds and cowtenders look to the good of the sheep and cows, and fatten them and care

for them, looking for anything else than the good of their masters themselves?" (343b) Socrates, of course, twists the intent of Thrasymachus' statement and shows that the shepherd is indeed concerned with fattening his sheep for the sheep's sake, and that likewise the true political leader must take the best possible care of his subjects. By introducing the shepherd model, Thrasymachus is going back at least as far as the Homeric formula where the expression *poimnē laōn*, the flock of the people, entailed within it the concept of the ruler as shepherd.<sup>11</sup>

The shepherd imagery which appears elsewhere to describe the political relation of ruler to subject, however, is not the central image of the *Republic*. On two occasions the city is described as the flock protected by the shepherd and his dogs (416a and 440d). In the latter instance it is Glaucon who establishes the analogy, to which Socrates replies: "You understand well what I wish to say." But it is not within the benevolent shepherd model that the best city of the *Republic* is discussed. If it were, we might have no cause to see anything unusual in the animal imagery. Shepherd imagery in the *Republic* appears in terms alien to the traditional picture of stability and protection. Concern in each case is expressed about the shepherds' ability to restrain their dogs from harming the sheep which they are tending. Such problems are not inherent in the traditional model. The variation on this theme must call attention to the peculiarities of Socrates' use of these animal images.

In the sections of the dialogue which do not deal with the ideal city, the political world is described in animal terms as well, with decisively derogatory connotations. The philosopher in the city is compared to a man who has fallen among "wild beasts" and who is unable to withstand their savagery (496d). In another parable, the *demos*, the core population of the democratic state, is compared to a wild beast which must be petted and accommodated so as to make it most pliable (493a-c). The images of a savage political community, emphasizing the bestiality of the ignorant men who comprise and rule this community, underscore Socrates' disdain for conventional politics. But when he turns his own city into a community of animals we find that the difference between this polis and the one which is soon to kill him is not the quality of the human being, the

<sup>9</sup>Another possible earlier influence on Plato may have been those pre-Socratic philosophers called by Havelock (1957, Ch. 5) the Greek anthropologists. Such authors as Anaximenes, Anaximander, Anaxagoras, Xenophanes, and Archelaus treated man as simply another animal whose origins paralleled those of other animals. Frequently, it was speculated that men were even born from other animals. This man studied by the pre-Socratics had no distinctive *nous* or *psyche* which distinguished him from other living beings. Cf. Fragments 136, 137, 139, 140, 172, 184, 185, 534, and 542 in Kirk and Raven (1957). However, our knowledge of pre-Socratic thought is so limited by the fragmentary condition of their writings, that it can only be tentatively suggested that Plato may be reacting to their equation of man with animal as well as to Aristophanes in the *Republic*.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. 336b, d; 341c; and 358b for the portrayal of Thrasymachus as an animal. The taming of Thrasymachus is suggested not by reference to the Sophist himself, but to the animals with which he is associated. Cf. 411d. In Books 8 and 9 the animals of Thrasymachus reappear, recalling the earlier role of Thrasymachus as the potential (though far from complete) tyrant whose soul is now laid bare to reveal the internal condition of what was previously seen only as a savage and bestial exterior. Cf. 566a; 588c; and 590b. Though the animals of Thrasymachus are not directly related to the theme of comedy in the *Republic*, they do suggest the value of focusing on such images as they recur throughout the dialogue.

<sup>11</sup>Louis (1945, p. 162) counts 41 instances of this phrase in the *Iliad* and 10 in the *Odyssey*. He also cites Hesiod's *Theogony* 1000 and Euripides' *Suppliants* 191.

*anthropos*, who inhabits it, but merely in the distinction between the tame and the wild beast.

The founding of the just city begins in Book 2 and almost immediately the barnyard imagery intrudes. The first city, the true city, is one founded on needs, egoism, specialization, and craft. It is a city of human beings performing that task for which they are most suited by nature. It is a city in which pleasures are defined by the straw mat to sleep on, toasted acorns, and a life spent in peace. It is, as Glaucon phrases it, "a city of swine" (372d) whose inhabitants Socrates "fattens." The word used for fattening [*chortazein*] is one properly applied to cattle who are being fattened in a stall, not to human beings who may be fed, but usually are not fattened as though for slaughter (Jowett and Campbell, 1894, p. 87; Liddell and Scott, 1968: ad loc.).<sup>12</sup>

The fevered city of luxuries, which emerges as the result of Glaucon's outburst, includes meat as well as fodder. It is here that we find animal behavior providing a model for human behavior. The second city requires more land than the first and needs protection from foreigners who desire its luxuries. Thus, the military class, the warriors, are introduced and in order to understand their prospective natures and functions, we turn to animals, particularly dogs and horses. The imagery begins as Socrates says to Glaucon: "Do you think that there is any difference in nature between a well-bred [*gennaion*]<sup>13</sup> puppy and a well-born youth with regard to guarding?" (375a)<sup>14</sup> Glaucon, not always so ready to follow Socrates' lead this early in the dialogue, asks what Socrates means to say. Socrates explains: "Well, surely it is necessary for both of them to have a sharp sense [*aisthēsin*] and be nimble at pursuing what they perceive, and furthermore be strong, if it is necessary to do battle with what they have caught" (375a). *Aisthēsis* has a special use in hunting where it indicates particularly the dog's ability to pick up the scent of the pursued animal (Jowett and Campbell, 1894, p. 93).

Glaucon accepts this analogy and therewith the analogy between puppies and youths. From now on Socrates can freely use these analogies with Glaucon to carry forth the discussion.

The next question relies on the undisputed assumptions of the analogy. Socrates is anxious that his warriors be brave. "Is the one lacking spirit whether a horse or a dog or any other animal likely to be brave [*andreios*]?" (375a) *Andreios*, the Greek word for masculine courage, entails within it the traditional, aristocratic conception of virtue. It was the military heroes of the past, the brave men who stood on either side of the Trojan walls in Homer's epics, who had offered the Greeks their models of virtue until this time. Now these men are equated to noble puppies, dogs, or horses—hardly images which call to mind the greatness of an Achilles or a Hector. When the heroes of the *Iliad* were compared to animals it was to lions or boars, animals which symbolized power and violence.<sup>15</sup>

The analogy with puppies continues to serve as a source of supposed enlightenment. "How," asks Socrates, "will they not be savage [*agrioi*]<sup>16</sup> with one another and with the other citizens, being of such a nature [high-spirited]?" (375b) How can one have gentleness and spirit in the same individual? Socrates describes himself as being at a loss [*aporēsas*], a word repeated twice in this short passage to emphasize the difficulty of the situation. Thus, the resolution takes on greater significance. They were "justly" at a loss, for "we deprived ourselves of the simile [*eikōnos*] which we proposed" (375d). The *eikon* is the noble puppy.

One would see in other animals too, but not least in the one to which we likened the guardian. For you know concerning well-bred dogs that this is their character by nature, to be as gentle as possible to those who are familiar and known, but the opposite toward those who are unknown (375d–e).

Canine behavior becomes the model, not only the simile, for human behavior. Dogs show that

<sup>12</sup>Cf. 586a for the only other use of this term in Plato. Here it refers explicitly to animals, as Socrates describes those who live in a world of false pleasure "in the manner of cattle, always looking down with their heads towards the earth and the table, they eat, are fattened [*chortazomenoi*] and mate."

<sup>13</sup>*Gennaios* connotes nobility of breeding and is usually applied to humans, but Liddell and Scott (1961: ad loc.) citing Plato say that it can also be used for animals.

<sup>14</sup>Adam (1902, Vol. 1, p. 106) suggests that a play on *skulax* (puppy) and *phulax* (guard) is intended.

<sup>15</sup>E.g., *Iliad*, Bk. 2, l. 23; Bk. 4, l. 471, Bk. 5, ll. 136, 161, 299, 782; Bk. 7, ll. 256–57; Bk. 8, l. 337 (here Hector is like a hound, Achilles like a wild boar or lion); Bk. 10, ll. 295, 485; Bk. 11, ll. 113, 129, 172–75, 383; Bk. 12, ll. 42, 146, 293, 299; Bk. 13, l. 198. Cf. Redfield (1975, pp. 189–203).

<sup>16</sup>The word *agrioi* appears frequently in the *Republic*, far more so than in any other dialogue. Though it does not refer exclusively to animals, the term primarily connotes living in the fields or open spaces, hence wild and savage (Liddell and Scott, 1961: ad loc.).

it is not against nature [*para physin*] to search for a unity of gentleness and fierceness in one individual. Thus, we get guardians who will be fierce with their enemies and gentle with their friends.

Socrates goes so far in this analogy as to make dogs not only human, but even philosophic. In Book 1 Polemarchus had tried to defend Simonides' definition of justice as helping friends and harming enemies, but had retreated before Socrates' suggestion that one does not always know who is friend and who is foe. Simonides' definition floundered on an issue of knowledge. Lest this problem plague the founding of the best city, Socrates makes his guardians into philosophers who know their friends and enemies, defined purely by the criterion of familiarity. To do this, he turns again to animal behavior:

This also you will see in dogs, and it is a cause to wonder at the beast. . . . When he sees one who is unknown, he is harsh although he has experienced no harm. But the one who is known he welcomes, even if he has never experienced any benefit from him. Or did you not yet wonder at this? (376a)

Glaucon remarks that he had in fact not yet wondered, but acknowledges it now and goes so far as to accept Socrates' notion that we can call dogs on this account philosophic.<sup>17</sup> Later in the dialogue philosophy will come to have a very special meaning for Socrates which can only be understood in terms of human endeavor and potential and in terms of the rational faculty. Here, though, in the political development of the best city, the human watchdogs are admitted to the ranks of philosophers since their canine counterparts can differentiate between the good and the bad on the grounds of the known and unknown.<sup>18</sup> "Shall we, being bold," asks Socrates, "assume also in a human

being that it is necessary if he intends to be gentle towards his own and those who are known that he be by nature a philosopher and a lover of learning?" (376b-c) The boldness came earlier when dogs were ascribed the characteristics of those whom Socrates regards as engaged in the highest human endeavor. The political community demands Simonides' definition of justice. Friend is defined by fellow citizen, whether that person is truly a friend or not. Philosophy as the endeavor for wisdom is the pursuit of the unknown. The city which relies on traditional customs cannot accept the unknown. By bringing philosophy into the realm of politics, it is prostituted and made the possession of mere brutes. Simonides' definition is apt for the animals who inhabit the political world of the city.

As the discussion of the guardian class continues through Book 3, where Socrates turns to the education of the warriors and the purging of the poets, the animal images and the dog analogies are maintained, though not with the frequency of Book 2 or Book 5. The educational process is meant to turn the guardians into perfect watchdogs, to make them submit to the public sphere and forget their private needs. They are to be made void of personal desires and emotions, void of individuality. Their relationship to the political community is their only defining characteristic, just as the watchdog is defined by its relationship to the sheep which it protects. The training of the guardians is a taming process, one which while making them strong psychically and physically will make them obedient to their rulers.

The guardians must be made gentle, *hêmēros*, a word which may be applied equally to human beings and to animals, but which has its etymological roots in animal behavior.<sup>19</sup> In Book 2 the founders of the just city focused on courage for which dogs served as the model. Untamed courage, though, such as Thrasymachus displayed, can become savage. In Book 3, thus, attention is turned to moderation, the middle ground between being too savage and being too soft (410d-e). The education of the warriors must moderate both extremes and create a tame guardian, one who is not weakened by philosophy, nor made savage by gymnastics. The personality is no longer split in its orientations towards insiders and outsiders; education integrates the warrior into a tame animal. The major concern, though,

<sup>17</sup>Sinclair (1948, pp. 61-62) argues that "we must not take Plato's little jokes seriously." He sees in Plato's discussion of the philosophic dog, a parody of the "method of argument used by the 'nature' school of sophists, who advised that men should follow *physis* not *nomos*. The notion that observation of nature, especially of the animal world will show what is the way for men to behave was taken seriously." Adam (1902, Vol. 1, p. 108) suggests that perhaps this is an allusion to the Cynics, "who were called Cynics because they welcomed and were friendly to those who followed their pursuits, but hostile to those who were opposed."

<sup>18</sup>This definition will come back to haunt Socrates when he tries to put women into the guardian class and asks his interlocutors not to laugh at the unknown (452b-c). By accepting the unknown as Glaucon et al. showing themselves to be bad guardians?

<sup>19</sup>Liddell and Scott (1961:ad loc.) define *hêmēros* as "tame, tamed, reclaimed, of animals, opp. to wild, savage." The metaphorical use applies to men as gentle and kind.

is not the weakness brought on by too much philosophy, but the savagery which must be moderated. "It would be most awful and shameful for a shepherd to so raise the dogs as guardians of the flock that by wantonness or hunger or any other evil disposition, the dogs try to harm the sheep and become similar to wolves rather than dogs" (416a). The education of the warriors is to ensure that they do not turn into wolves instead of dogs, savage tyrants [*despotais agriois*] instead of allies (416b). It is education which tames these potential tyrants, just as Socrates tames Thrasymachus. It is education which the wolves of Book 9 lack as they taste of human blood, and it is this education which enables the warriors to be brave. The uneducated does not possess courage; his passion is like that of a wild beast. The trained puppy can be *andreios*; the wild boar cannot. The Homeric heroes displayed the courage of wild beasts. Socrates' new breed of men possesses the controlled vigor of the domesticated horse and dog.

In order to turn the potential wolf into a tamed dog, every aspect of its education must be controlled, from diet to sexual relations. The careful supervision exercised over the poets extends also to the craftsmen.

The one not able [to avoid bad qualities in his workmanship] must not be allowed to practice in our city, so that our guardians may not be raised amidst bad images, as if on bad grass [*botané*, fodder, pasture], plucking and grazing on much each day, little by little, from many places, drawing together one big evil in their soul (401b-c).

The warriors here are like human cattle. They match the surroundings in which they are raised and feed on education in the same indiscriminate way that cattle feed on the grass in their pasture. Socrates suggests that good natures nurtured on good grass or on good education "become still better than those before, in other things and in the breeding process, just as among other animals" (424a-b). The quality of the race depends on the quality of their fodder.

Within the educational scheme proper, the guardians are trained like animals and encouraged to become animals. It is necessary for the warriors to become "as wakeful as dogs and to see and hear as sharply as possible" (404a). The potential guardians are watched so that only those most suited to the arduous tasks of guardianship remain among the warrior class. Part of the selection process includes a test of one's own powers against the powers of magic; "just as they see if colts are fearful by leading them to noises and confusions, so too while they are young they must be brought against whatever is terrible" (413d). Once the warriors

have been properly trained and selected, the rulers will lead them forth and they will look for the fairest spot in the city to set up camp. "From there they would restrain those from without, if any enemy such as a wolf should come down upon the flock" (415d-e). As well-trained sheep dogs, they direct the sheep and defend them against predators. This image is carried on vividly at the beginning of the next book. Socrates' city will be safe from attack; neighboring cities would not choose war with the lean dogs of Socrates' city (422d). The lean dogs or warriors after setting up their camp, sacrifice and settle down to sleep in bedding [*eunē*] (415e), a word which may refer to the place where an army settles as well as to the lair of a lion or the nest of a bird.

Though animal imagery of this sort persists throughout, it appears most frequently in Book 5. Book 5 also contains the most frequent laughter.<sup>20</sup> On almost every page Socrates' suggestions are seen as laughable. Whereas previously the animal imagery may have been merely curious or mildly disturbing, in Book 5 we find that it is meant to be funny. The fifth book itself is offered as something of a detour. Socrates has discovered the just soul and is about to prove that this soul is happy while the unjust soul is not. He plans to do this through a discussion of the degenerate cities when the dialogue suddenly begins over again<sup>21</sup> and Socrates is forced to discourse on the social structure of his ideal city. He does so under compulsion, with many doubts<sup>22</sup> and with the assurance that he will be treated as guiltless, like the man who commits an involuntary murder. It is with these precautions that Socrates confronts the three waves of Book 5: (1) the equality of the sexes; (2) communism and the community of wives; and (3) the possibility of such a city ever existing, which turns into the issue of the philosopher king. For the first two waves, animals solve the paradoxes and serve as models for human behavior in the political world.

At the beginning of Book 5, Socrates realizes that thus far he has only dealt with the male act, with the possession and use of children and women, and that he has set up only men as "guardians of the herd" (451c). But if we look at the "female of the guardian dogs" we

<sup>20</sup>There are at least 20 uses of some form of *geloios* within the first 35 Stephanus pages of the fifth book.

<sup>21</sup>Cp. 449b with 327b.

<sup>22</sup>Socrates emphasizes his own hesitation by three references to his doubts in 450c.



discover that they "guard and hunt together [with the males] and do other things in common" (451d). They do not stay indoors "as incapable on account of the birth and rearing of puppies, while the males work and have every concern about the flock" (451d).<sup>23</sup> If there is sexual equality among dogs, why not institute it among the members of the city who thus far have been treated primarily as dogs? Women become guardians because "remaining in the city or going out to war they [women and men] must guard and hunt together just as dogs [*hōsper kunas*]" (466c–d). In fact, Socrates argues that "there is no pursuit relating to the governing of a city which belongs to a woman because she's a woman, nor to a man because he's a man, but the natures are scattered among both animals [*en amphoin toin zōoin*]" (455d). Equality of the sexes is asserted even though the female gives birth while the male "mounts" or "covers" (454e). The term used for "mount" or "cover" by Socrates is again one that applies in Greek only to animals.<sup>24</sup> Though Socrates in these pages is talking about the sexual equality of the inhabitants of his ideal city, it is sometimes hard to distinguish them from animals.

Once the equality of the sexes is proved with analogies to the animal world, it is necessary for Socrates to provide the same education for both sexes, since "to use any animal for the same things . . . you must give them the same nourishment and education" (451e). This equality of education means practicing gymnastics together in the palaestra, ignoring sexual differences, just as animals do except during the breeding season. The equation of men to animals and women to men leads immediately to laughter and a series of jibes.<sup>25</sup> Though Socrates and his companions agree that the fault belongs to the laughter, nevertheless comedy and the absurd enter the discussion—and the mind of the reader of the dialogue. In arguing for the equality of the sexes Socrates is

presenting a notion so alien to Greek thought<sup>26</sup> that it is fit only for the comic stage. Socrates in part captures the humor of the notion through his animal images, by making men look to the animal kingdom for the model of sexual equality.

This sexual equality, however, creates difficulties for Socrates' city. The Greek family, based in large part on the invisibility of the female outside the home and on the female as the means of transferring property, no longer offers a model for patterns of procreation and education. The traditional pattern must be replaced with a radically new one, and once again the model comes from animals. Although procreation had not previously been considered a part of the political dialogue and the female's role as the bearer of children had been ignored, now that the traditional family had been destroyed, political control over procreation fills up the middle section of Book 5. "Tell me this, O Glaucon, for I see in your house both dogs for hunting and a large number of well-bred birds. Have you ever noticed anything with regard to their marriages and child making?" (459a) Glaucon is uncertain, as well he might be, as to what Socrates is suggesting. Socrates explains that he is referring to the careful breeding of these animals and how one does not breed birds, dogs, horses or "the other animals, except when at their prime." "Aha, dear friend," Socrates exclaims, "how much is it necessary that we have rulers of the highest quality if it is the same about the race of human beings" (459b). The rulers then are to breed their guardian class as if they were dogs or horses, raising only the offspring of the best "if the flock is to be the most excellent" (459e).<sup>27</sup>

The rulers' manipulation of the breeding process, however, must be kept secret so that the "herd of the guardians may be as free of

<sup>23</sup>Jowett and Campbell (1894, p. 218) comment that the words *hē anthropolē hē theleia* of 452e "keep up the analogy between man and the other animals which runs through the passage."

<sup>24</sup>Liddell and Scott (1961, ad loc.) comment: "It seems to have been the generic word for all animals. . . ; but was not properly used of mankind, though in Pl. R. 586a it is used of men like beasts." Cp. 586a and above n. 12, where the word for "mate" is also *ocheuō*.

<sup>25</sup>452a (twice); 452b; 452c; 452d [*kômōidein*]; 456c (four times); 457a; and 457b (twice).

<sup>26</sup>The question of the role of women in Greek society is a much-debated issue, but see esp. Arthur (1973) and Pomeroy (1975).

<sup>27</sup>Jowett (1892, Vol. 3, pp. clxxxi–clxxxii) comments: "There is no sentiment or imagination in the connections which men and women are supposed by him to form; human beings return to the level of animals, neither exalting to heaven, nor yet abusing the natural instincts. . . . The analogy of animals tends to show that mankind can within certain limits receive a change of nature. And as in animals we should commonly choose the best for breeding, and destroy the others, so that there must be a selection made of the human beings whose lives are worthy to be preserved."

conflict as possible" (459e).<sup>28</sup> The secrecy is to be accomplished by the drawing of lots which match the selected guardians. Once the partners have been matched, they do not retire to a private bedchamber. Rather, they are shut up together as if the rulers were breeding cattle or dogs. The word *sunerxis* used twice in this short passage (460a and 461b) to indicate the enclosing of the mating couple is one "properly used of penning animals" (Jowett and Campbell, 1894, p. 230).<sup>29</sup> The mates in this union, as Socrates learns from his observation of Glaucon's pets, are to be in their prime. For a woman this means from her twentieth year until her fortieth year; men shall engender children from the time when they are beyond the "fast prime of running" until the fiftieth year (460e). Adam (1902, p. 310) suggests that the phrase "the swiftest prime of running" is a poetic formulation which was probably not applied to a man, but to a race horse. He argues that the "comparison gains in realism and point, if it was the custom of antiquity, as it is now, to bring a first-rate racer to the stud . . . when he ceased to run." (The animal imagery here may have been carried beyond simply language to poetic echoes which are difficult for a modern reader to recognize.) As soon as the offspring from these unions are born, they are taken to a pen [*sēkos*] to which the mothers are led when they are full of milk (460c). Jowett and Campbell (1894, p. 231) refer the reader to the use of *sēkos* in *Odyssey* 9 (219 and 227) to describe the place where lambs and kids await their mothers to be fed. Thus, it occurs as well in Socrates' own barnyard. While the adults breed as if they were animals, the offspring are treated as if they were lambs or kids.

When Socrates turns from procreation to the military training of the members of his city, the animal images continue. The young are brought close to battle because "every animal [*pan zōon*] fights eminently when those are near whom it has borne" (467a–b). That neither the women nor the men know which children they have borne or sired is ignored. Later we learn that the children "if it is safe anywhere, must be led near [to the battle] and must taste

blood, just like puppies" (537a). The young who may watch the battles are also compared to birds; it is necessary that they be "winged straightaway as children," so that if need be "they may flee by flying" (467d). The wings, as it turns out, are to be the horses whom the children must learn to ride, but Socrates chooses to elaborate on this theme with a metaphor—one which underscores his own continuing interest in the animal images. The treatment of military procedures in the fifth book ends when Socrates and Glaucon agree that their city will not pay a ransom for any guardian who is captured alive by the enemy. Rather, they will offer the "catch" as a gift to their captors to deal with as they wish (468a). The word for "catch" is *agra*, one used to describe the animal which has been taken in the hunt.

As Socrates turns to the third wave of Book 5, the question of feasibility, he asks whether "it is possible among human beings [*en anthrōpois*], as among other animals [*en allois zōois*] that there be this community, and in what way it is possible" (466d). The phrasing of the question suggests that animals are able to achieve this social structure and that the human being is asked to model his society after that which the animal kingdom has naturally followed. The conclusion will be, as is well known, that this parallel is realizable if, and only if, philosophers become kings or kings become philosophers; i.e., with philosopher kings we can create the organized polity of animals. The section dealing with the question of feasibility and subsequently the philosopher is largely free from the animal imagery so prevalent in the earlier sections of the book. However, even the philosopher kings on at least two occasions do not escape description in animal terms. "When strength leaves them and they are far from political and military affairs, let them be released to go out to pasture [to graze, *nemesthai*] and do nothing else that is not a pastime" (498b–c). The veteran philosopher kings like old cattle are sent out to the fields when they are no longer of service to the polity. Even these venerable old men and women who have pursued the philosophic education and are headed up out of the cave to the world of being become through their involvement in Socrates' utopia comparable to old cows or horses. The obligation which these rulers have towards the city is later discussed in the language of bees. Glaucon shows concern about forcing the philosopher down from his contemplation of the good into the shadowy world of politics. Socrates responds that the philosophers must be told: "We have begotten you for yourselves and for the rest of the city

<sup>28</sup>Jowett and Campbell (1894, p. 229) and Adam (1902, Vol. 1, p. 298) comment that the use of *agelē* here is intended "to recall the analogy of the lower animals."

<sup>29</sup>The only other appearance of this term in Plato is in *Timaeus* 18d, a clear reference back to this passage in the *Republic*.

as if you were the leaders and rulers in a hive" (520b).<sup>30</sup>

### The Body and Politics

After citing all of the examples of animal imagery in Socrates' ideal city, we must ask why he makes his citizens equal to animals. Why has he chosen to undercut what has appeared to so many as a beautiful ideal by imposing an Aristophanic theme? A few of the many commentators on Plato and on the *Republic* have tried to come to terms with his use of such language. Rankin (1964), Adam (1902), and Sinclair (1948) all recognize Socrates' concern with nature [*physis*], from the first references to it as the city is founded in Book 2 to the natural decline of states which begins in Book 8. Rankin (1964, pp. 54–55), though, while recognizing this relationship and tying it to Plato's concern with what exists by nature (i.e., the forms), does try to explain away the significance of the animal language by recourse to "Plato the poet" who was "capable of being led further by the spell of his images than was convenient for Plato the philosopher." Instead of taking the animal analogies seriously, Rankin (1964, p. 92) claims that it "colours the material . . . it is intended to support, and in a sense, perverts it." Adam (1902, Vol. 1, p. 299) is not so ready to discard the appearance of these analogies. In his notes he makes frequent reference to their meaning and significance and recognizes in them "an excellent example of the uncompromising rationalism with which Plato carries out his theories to their logical conclusions."

Adam, however, appears to believe the frequent Socratic refrain that the argument shall determine the direction of the discourse. The argument does no such thing. It is Plato the philosopher and the artist who determines the direction of the argument, who introduces myth or "uncompromising rationalism." We cannot explain away the appearance of animals in the *Republic* by making them examples of poetry or argument conquering Plato; we must instead consider them as part of the Platonic arsenal for clarifying the meaning of philosophy for the human being enmeshed in a political

world. The images raise for the reader of Plato's works a variety of problems concerning the nature and perfection of the human being, of the uniqueness and the perversion of the individual by the political community. The source of the analogies must be sought in many different places, but the most important remains Plato's unwillingness to accept the political world of becoming. By turning human beings into animals as they participate in politics, Socrates takes away from them their humanity.

On one level we can see this language as a critique of the Aristophanic character who, concerned with bodily functions, frequently becomes little more than animal on stage. Even those such as Lysistrata and Praxagora, whose political aims may appear noble, are motivated primarily by sex. Politics, as traditionally practiced, treated the individual as a body to be fed, clothed, and shod—as in the first city, the true city (372e), of the *Republic*—and protected, as in the second city of Glaucon's pleasures. The Socratic understanding of virtue was based on the notion of the soul. The primary emphasis in earlier moral discourse had been on man as an external and social being, displaying virtue through beauty and ability in battle, through wealth and political success. The good man was the one recognized as the "most effective in assuring the security, stability and well-being of the social unit, in war and in peace" (Adkins, 1972, p. 60; 1970, pp. 74–79). The political unit did not demand attention to the virtue of souls, since its focus remained on the bodies which comprised it and which could, if need be, be killed in order to protect it. The third city of the *Republic* is an attempt to purge politics of its attention to body. In Book 3 Socrates tries to transform politics into education, turning politics away from the concern with body. Initially, Socrates suggests that the education of his warriors include "gymnastic for the body and *mousikê* for the soul" (376e). The former, however, is entirely forgotten except for a short passage in which the details of the gymnastic education are left to the well-educated mind (403d). Rather, the *mousikê* that dominates the warriors' education eliminates all concern with the body and purges the young men of any strong physical desires for food, drink, or sex. Even doctors who tend to the needs of the sick body are eliminated (405a–410a). Originally the polity emerged because of needs, physical needs of the body for food and shelter (369b–c).<sup>31</sup> Once the focus of the discussion

<sup>30</sup>When Socrates describes the deterioration of the best city into the tyranny in Book 8, the animal images continue; here, though, the primary image is that of the bee to which the philosopher had previously been equated: 552c–d; 559d; 564b; 564c; 564d; 564e; 565a; 567d. The bee is a very different animal from dogs and birds which are capable of being trained and manipulated, as bees are not.

<sup>31</sup>It is interesting to note that one of the "needs" is shoes (369d), something Socrates did very well without.

changes in Book 3 to education rather than the polity concerned with necessities, the physical needs of at least one group of citizens are ignored and to the greatest degree eliminated.

However, in Book 5 we are shown that politics cannot abstract from the body in the way that education does, that politics must confront the Hobbesian problem of organizing bodies in motion, even those of the leaders, for procreation and for war. Socrates' attempt to ignore the body is unsuccessful. The fact that he has introduced the city into his discussion of justice means that he is tied down by the city's orientation towards the body. If Socrates had been able to escape the discussion of the actual organization of the city, of the bodies who comprise the city, as he intends to do at the end of Book 4 (445d), he would have avoided his discussion of women, children and communism. But Adeimantus and Polemarchus do not allow him to escape; he cannot avoid the topic, for politics demands attention to the body and, in those sections of the *Republic* in which the city is founded, ignoring the soul. Human beings are tied by their souls to the divine, as the parables of the divided line and the cave so vividly suggest. It is the soul properly educated that is just and that chooses wisely in the apportionment of lives in the myth of Er. But human beings are also tied by their bodies to the animals. Thus, in the treatment of the political organization of bodies, the animal (and comic) side of humanity predominates. The guardians are bred to produce the finest stock, while all the elements of human sexuality such as enchantment and the shame leading to the desire for privacy are forgotten. In elaborating the social, military, and political structure (as opposed to the educational system) of his Callipolis, Socrates puts the human body into its proper relation to another human body, but omits what he himself recognizes as the defining characteristic of humanity, namely the soul. It is in terms of the soul, what is unseen, that the individual can achieve virtue. We have here once again the contrast between the wrapping and what is inside, the beautiful name and the ugly, comic interior, or the bronze horse and the magical yet dangerous ring of Gyges' ancestor. In structuring his city in Book 5, Socrates concentrates only on the external body, and treating his inhabitants as animals has removed from them the opportunity to achieve their own virtue. In Book 3 the education of the soul for the sake of the polity means training only to be courageous, to hate and harm one's enemies, and to control the passions relating to one's bodily needs. The virtues defined in Book 4 with regard to the war-oriented society before

the arrival of the philosopher are those which require submission to the demands of the political community.

By depriving his animals of souls in Book 5 or making the soul serve the needs of an entire polity which is oriented to the body, Socrates takes away from his inhabitants the potential for moral virtue. While the whole regime may be just (though even this may be questioned), there is no opportunity within the structure presented for the individual to be just. The individual, before the introduction of philosophy and eros at the end of Book 5, remains an animal controlled and manipulated by those outside the system. The primary concern of the *Republic* is individual justice. The question posed to Socrates at the beginning is whether justice pays—that is, whether it is more to the individual's interest to be just than to use the ring of Gyges for private power and aggrandizement. The question is which—justice or injustice—serves the individual most. The city demands of its citizens an unselfish virtue and in so doing removes from them their private concern with their own souls—the locus of private virtue. The polis must thus ultimately turn those who will not be philosopher kings into soulless bodies who are controlled much as animals in the barnyard are. The just individual whose soul is properly structured and therefore who is happy needs to escape from the polity, not become immersed in it so as to become little more than a dog or a bird. Even the philosopher kings who are capable of being happy are forced by the city into a life which for them means death (516d; 386c). The tension between private and public builds as the analogy between the individual and polis falls. Socrates finally finds fulfillment away from the animal inhabitants of the best city in the freedom of democracy (557d). In the *Republic* Socrates is not interested in social justice. This is neither the question asked nor the answer given.

Two other dialogues may hint at the significance of animals in the *Republic*. In the *Statesman* a young Socrates listens to a stranger search for a definition of the art of statesmanship. Initially the stranger defines the statesman as one who cares for a herd of two-legged, land-living, hornless animals. In the last analysis, this animal is only a two-legged pig or a featherless chicken. This object of the statesman's control is like the inhabitant of Socrates' ideal city, having no individual soul. The stranger proceeds in his search for the statesman by telling the myth of the age of Cronos. It was an age when God controlled the movement of the earth. Consequently, it was an age of perfection. Demigods were set over the

herd of humanity (271d) and, as in the *Republic*, human beings were earth-born (271a–b). Similarly, there was no private property (272a–b), though in the *Statesman* because of a natural abundance rather than the workers of the *Republic*, and there was no possession of wives or children (271e–272a). This age of perfection under the benevolent rule of Cronos is a restatement of the utopia of the *Republic*. But, if we look at the inhabitants of this world we find again that they are only animals, governed by a divine shepherd. The stranger in the *Statesman* goes one step further, people here even talk to the animals (272b); there is no distinction between them. Human beings in the myth of Cronos equal animals because of their perfection, their completion, the absence of any deficiency. In his discourse on the nature of love or eros in the *Symposium*, Socrates defined love as the desire of the good which we are lacking. In the age of Cronos mankind lacks nothing; therefore there is no eros. Throughout the *Republic* there is a similar purging of eros, a deadening of the aspirations. Dramatically it starts immediately with the old Cephalus who can no longer enjoy sex, in which he had indulged as a youth (329c–d), but it receives its full expression in the regime of the *Republic* where there is no love even of one's own body. Thus, the communism and community of wives and children can be accepted. With eros absent from the inhabitants of Socrates' city, its men and women have no potentiality. It is only the philosopher, introduced after the city has been founded in Book 5, who brings eros back into the discussion (474d–475c). But this is only the initial definition of the philosopher. The philosopher who is made part of the city of the *Republic* also lacks this eros. Thus, compulsion enters the city.<sup>32</sup>

The stranger in the *Statesman* continues his myth: after an appointed period of time, Cronos releases the reins of power and the universe unwinding enters the age of Zeus when God no longer controls the movement of the earth. A degeneration away from perfection occurs. Human beings are no longer governed by divine shepherds; they must form their own political communities. Deficiencies appear and with these deficiencies eros returns. There is birth and genesis; it is an age of growth and decay and specifically each individual cares

about conception, procreation and the rearing of the young (274a). The communism of the *Republic* disappears and with it the equation between people and animals as well. Human beings, unlike animals, have potential; they desire the good and the beautiful. The stranger had raised the question whether human beings philosophized in the Age of Cronos, but he did not answer the question. The implication is that they did not, for philosophy is an activity of the soul, an erotic activity of striving for that in which mankind is deficient. The perfection of the Age of Cronos and likewise the regime of the *Republic* would preclude such activity. Thus, in the *Republic* the philosopher must be dragged up out of the cave by the founders Socrates and Glaucon. He does not willingly ascend to the light of the sun, and once he has viewed the Good or the sun, the philosopher having reached perfection must be forced back down into the cave. The eroticism of the *Symposium* which drives human beings up the ladder of love in Diotima's imagery is totally absent in the *Republic*. It is only when human beings are allowed to recognize their deficiencies that philosophy is possible. Such opportunities are absent in the perfection of Socrates' utopia, precisely because by creating the perfect city it eliminates potentiality and makes people into animals. It denies them their selfish pursuit of virtue. Consequently, Calipolis fails as an ideal and as the Platonic model for political life.

If we are to look for Plato's "political philosophy" we must look elsewhere than in the *Republic*, or even the *Statesman*. Perhaps the most powerful statement appears in the *Gorgias* where after a long debate on the nature and value of rhetoric, Socrates makes the bold claim that he is one of very few Athenians, if not the only one, to pursue the genuine political craft [*politiké*] and that he is the only man living to put it into practice (521d). According to this notion, the political exists not in the organization of a regime, but in making humanity better. The philosopher king organizing and governing the regime of the *Republic* cannot make people better if his subjects are soulless animals. For Socrates, it appears, the true pursuit of politics must be practiced outside any political organization, whether that of the *Republic* or that of Athens. True political activity occurs not in the highly organized communistic utopia founded in Cephalus' house, but in the private discourse of a few individuals engaged in intellectual inquiry and philosophic endeavor, recognizing their deficiencies, their distance from perfection, as the animals of Socrates' city reenacting the comedies of Aristophanes do not and cannot.

<sup>32</sup>The parable of the cave which is supposed to represent the ascent and descent of the philosopher ruler is filled with words suggesting the use of force and compulsion. The philosophic dog must be dragged up to see the sun. E.g., 515c,d,e (both *anagnazein* and *bia* are used here); 519c,e; 520a,d; 521b.

The search for justice which initiates the founding of Callipolis must needs go beyond the city, for there is no justice in the city. Thus, the quest continues well after the city has been founded and after it decays, for the city has not provided the answer which Socrates initially expected it would. Instead, it has raised new questions which cannot be ignored in the search for why anyone should live the just life; in its turn, Callipolis presents a further difficulty which must be resolved before we can answer even the first question concerning justice: what precisely is the relationship between the human and animal forms, and what effect does the answer to this question have on the meaning of justice and the purpose of the political community?

### References

- Adam, James (1902). *The "Republic" of Plato*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Adkins, Arthur W. H. (1970). *From the Many to the One*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- (1972). *Moral Values and Political Behavior in Ancient Greece*. New York: Norton.
- Arthur, Marilyn B. (1973). "Early Greece: The Origins of the Western Attitude Toward Women." *Arethusa* 6:7–58.
- Benardete, Seth (1971). "On Plato's *Timaeus* and *Timaeus'* Science Fiction." *Interpretation* 2:21–63.
- Bloom, Allan (1968). *The Republic of Plato*. New York: Basic Books.
- (1977). "Response to Hall." *Political Theory* 5:315–30.
- Freeman, Kathleen (1971). *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Greene, William C. (1920). "The Spirit of Comedy in Plato." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 31:63–123.
- Havelock, Eric A. (1957). *The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Jowett, Benjamin (1892). *The Dialogues of Plato*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- and Lewis Campbell (1894). *Plato's Republic, The Greek Text*. Vol. 3. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kirk, Geoffrey S. and John E. Raven (1957). *The Pre-Socratic Philosophers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Klein, Jacob (1964). *A Commentary on Plato's Meno*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Liddell, Henry G. and Robert Scott (1961). *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Louis, Pierre (1945). *Les Métaphores de Platon*. Paris: Société d'édition "Les Belles Lettres."
- Pomeroy, Sarah B. (1975). *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*. New York: Schocken.
- Rankin, H. D. (1964). *Plato and the Individual*. London: Methuen.
- Redfield, James M. (1975). *Nature and Culture in the Iliad*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Rosen, Stanley (1965). "The Role of Eros in the Republic." *Review of Metaphysics* 18:452–75.
- Saxonhouse, Arlene W. (1976). "The Philosopher and the Female in the Political Thought of Plato." *Political Theory* 4:195–212.
- Sinclair, Thomas A. (1948). "Plato's Philosophic Dog." *Classical Quarterly* 62:61–62.
- Strauss, Leo (1964). "On Plato's Republic." In *The City and Man*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Ussher, Robert G. (1973). *Aristophanes' Ecclesiazusae*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.