To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Martha Lee Osborne entitled "Plato's Feminism." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Philosophy.

John W. Davis, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

Vice Chancellor
Graduate Studies and Research

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PLATO'S FEMINISM

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Martha Lee Osborne

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ABSTRACT

In an article entitled "Because You Are A Woman," J. R. Lucas, more or less echoing the traditional consensus, referred to Plato as the world's first feminist. This pronouncement was followed by a wave of feminist reaction, ranging from a few lone souls who see in Plato a precursor of contemporary feminism to a vast majority who find him blatantly sexist. In his dialogues Plato not only describes the lives of women in fifth- and fourth-century Athens, he prescribes for them in an ideal state as well. It is primarily his prescriptions that have attracted the critical attention. Sarah Pomeroy suggests that their apparent egalitarian nature masks Plato's basic misogynism and charges him with chauvinistic language. Other writers, both male and female, have criticized his arguments, finding them either invalid or inconsistent or both. It is popular to argue that Plato has been forced into prescribing sexual egalitarianism for his ideal republic, either by his view of woman's biological nature, by his proposal for the communal living of the guardians, or by his concept of justice. An alternative view is to find Plato insincere and regard his suggestions as humorous or symbolic. Some have denied that the views on woman voiced in the Platonic dialogues are Plato's at all.

An examination of the dialogues themselves exonerates Plato from most of the charges made by his feminist critics. His language appears no more sexist than that of any other writer, feminist or anti-feminist, writing prior to the second half of the twentieth century. His arguments concerning women seem neither better nor worse

than any of his other arguments. And his views on the basic equality of the sexes, although undeniably a logical consequent of his Theory of Forms or Ideas, seem to have been freely chosen, not reluctantly embraced in the interest of consistency. While there is evidence that Socrates too entertained enlightened views regarding the basic equality of the sexes, the egalitarian position taken in the Platonic dialogues appears to be Plato's own.

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INTRODUCTION

When Alfred North Whitehead proposed that "the safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato,"[1] he was referring to the richness of Plato's ideas, presumably without intending to cast aspersions about any ambiguity in them. Yet due in part, it would seem, to a wealth of metaphor in the works, scholars have not infrequently evinced a conviction that the dialogues need not only to be acknowledged in footnotes of indebtedness, but to be documented by a goodly number of explanatory footnotes as well. What was Plato saying in those deceptively simple Socratic conversations he left us? Or was Plato saying anything at all? Was he merely an Athenian Boswell, recording the words of a most unJohnsonlike subject?

Plato's remarks about woman are certainly not the least controversial of his views. At the beginning of the famous passage in Republic V proposing women guardians Socrates admonishes his interlocutors that they are stirring up a "hornet's nest of words," that many of their views, "being unusual, may appear ridiculous."[2] Almost twenty-four hundred years later the hornets are still swarming, and scholars still find those views ridiculous--if not because they are unusual, then

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[1]Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality (New York: Free Press, 1969), p. 53.

[2]Plato, Republic 452 A. Unless otherwise specified, all references to and quotations from the works of Plato are based on the Benjamin Jowett translation, third edition, reprinted in New York by Random House in 1937.

because they are inconsistent or idealistic or prejudiced or unnatural or unpopular or invalid or unsoundly based. As a matter of fact, there is little agreement as to precisely what Plato's sins are--or whether he is guilty of any.

There is sharp disagreement not only about what is actually said in the dialogues, but also about how it is said, why it is said, and by whom it is said. Francis MacDonald Cornford, for example, suggests that Plato regards women as equal to men.[3] R. C. Lodge contends that he manifests great contempt for them.[4] Sarah Pomeroy, in basic agreement with Lodge, maintains that Plato's language reveals his sexist attitude.[5] Julia Annas finds his arguments invalid.[6] Brian Calvert, in the wake of a host of others, investigates not the validity, but the consistency of the arguments in the Republic.[7] It is the matter of consistency not within the dialogue itself, but between it and certain other dialogues which captures the attention of Anne Dickason and leads her claim that the position given to women in the state is a product of

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[3]Francis MacDonald Cornford, The Republic of Plato (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 144.

[4]R. C. Lodge, Plato's Theory of Education (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1947), p. 237.

[5]Sarah Pomeroy, "Feminism in Book V of Plato's Republic," Apeiron, 8 (May, 1974), 33.

[6]Julia Annas, "Plato's Republic and Feminism," Philosophy, 51 (July, 1976), 317.

[7]Brian Calvert, "Plato and the Equality of Women," Phoenix, 29 (Autumn, 1975), 231-243.

Plato's biological views.[8] Susan Okin argues that the admission of women to the guardian class of the ideal state is entailed by the communal living prescribed for the guardians.[9] Ernest Barker thinks that justice demands it.[10] A. E. Taylor denies that the ideas on woman expressed in the Republic are Platonic at all and attributes them to Socrates instead.[11] James Adam believes them to be characteristic of the entire Socratic school, and refers to the views of Antisthenes as well as to those of Plato and of Socrates himself.[12] Thus one footnote breeds another in a process of what appears to be endless generation. It is high time to dampen the wings of a few of the hornets.

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[8]Anne Dickason, "Anatomy and Destiny: The Role of Biology in Plato's View of Women," The Philosophical Forum, 5 (Fall-Winter, 1973-1974), 46.

[9]Susan Moller Okin, "Philosopher-Queens and Private Wives: Plato on Woman and the Family," Philosophy and Public Affairs, 6 (Summer, 1977), 356.

[10]Sir Ernest Barker, Greek Political Theory: Plato and His Predecessors (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1957), p. 219.

[11]A. E. Taylor, Plato: The Man and His Work (New York: Dial Press, 1929), p. 278.

[12]James Adam, The Republic of Plato (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), I, 280.

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS SAID

It is often remarked that the speakers in the Platonic dialogues are without exception male. The statement, of course, is not quite literally true. In Plato's early works, to be sure, Socrates is depicted talking with a wide variety of interlocutors, from youths like Lysis and Menexenus and Charmides to sages like the venerable Parmenides, all male; later, to be sure, the Athenian stranger converses with natives of Crete and Sparta, both male. Yet there is a single exception. It is Socrates' much-maligned wife, Xanthippe, who utters a single sentence in the Phaedo and is perfunctorily dismissed. The scene is recorded toward the opening of the dialogue, when on the morning of Socrates' execution, his friends, both native and foreign, are shown entering the Athenian prison, where Xanthippe, child in arms, is sitting beside him:

> . . . when she saw us she uttered a cry and said, as women will: "O Socrates, this is the last time that either you will converse with your friends, or they with you." Socrates turned to Crito and said: "Crito, let some one take her home." Some of Crito's people accordingly led her away, crying out and beating herself.[1]

Needless to say, it is a very perfunctory dismissal which Xanthippe receives. Although presumably she was among the "women of his family" with whom Socrates talked after his bath and before the cup was brought to him,[2] it was his male friends with whom he spent the balance

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[1]Plato, Phaedo 60 A.

[2]Ibid., 116 A.

of the day and who witnessed his execution, and when one of them, Apollodorus, was unable to contain himself and wept aloud, Socrates chid him as follows:

> What is this strange outcry? . . . I sent away the women mainly in order that they might not misbehave in this way, for I have been told that a man should die in peace.[3]

Yet brief though her appearance is, in the few strokes in which he paints Xanthippe, Plato gives the reader some valuable insights into the status of the Athenian matron. There are three significant details: First and foremost, Xanthippe is shown holding Socrates' son on her lap--a typical pose, for the chief function of the Athenian wife was maternity. Demosthenes summarized her role succinctly:

> Mistresses we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines for the daily care of our persons, but wives to bear us legitimate children and to be faithful guardians of our households.[4]

It is not without significance that the child Xanthippe is holding is male rather than female. The Greeks deliberately kept their female population low through the practice of the exposure of infants, for not only did daughters have to be provided with dowry, there were other valid reasons for maintaining a high male-female ratio as well. Vast numbers of marriageable men lost their lives in frequent wars, and marriage was the only occupation open to Athenian women of the upper classes.[5]

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[3]Ibid., 117 E.

[4]Demosthenes, "Against Neaera" 122.

[5]Alfred Zimmern, The Greek Commonwealth: Politics and Economics in Fifth-Century Athens (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), pp. 330, 334.

A second feature worth noting is the immediate dismissal of Xanthippe upon the arrival of Socrates' male companions. Unlike the Victorian child, the Athenian matron was generally neither seen nor heard. She did not go out with her husband, and he was seldom home.[6] In the Oeconomicus Xenophon's Socrates quotes a remark made by Ischomachus, whom he has described as a true Athenian gentleman:

> . . . to the woman it is more honourable to stay indoors than to abide in the fields, but to the man it is unseemly rather to stay indoors than to attend to the work outside.[7]

The result may be inferred from an earlier exchange between Socrates and Critobulus, presumably also a typical Athenian gentleman. In reference to the wife of Critobulus, Socrates asks, "Is there anyone with whom you talk less?" and Critobulus replies, "There are few or none, I confess."[8] It should also be noted that Xanthippe had to be taken home, for the Athenian lady did not go out unattended.[9]

A third noteworthy detail is Xanthippe's self-flagellation. This may be explained in terms of the mourning customs of the day. Mourning was exclusively a female activity.[10] The funeral procession was one of the few excursions from the house permitted the Athenian woman. There, clad in black with part of her hair shorn, she would weep and wail and beat her breast as the bier was carried through the streets to the

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[6]Ibid., p. 61.

[7]Xenophon, The Economist vii, 30.

[8]Ibid., iii, 12.

[9]H. D. F. Kitto, The Greeks (Great Britain: C. Nichols and Co., 1951), p. 219.

[10]F. A. Wright, Feminism in Greek Literature (Port Washington, New York, and London: Kennikat Press, 1923; reissued 1969), p. 199.

grave.[11] Obviously Xanthippe is anticipating the events which are to transpire later in the day.

Sketchy though it is, the portrait of Xanthippe is the most detailed picture Plato draws of an Athenian lady. Other Athenian women receive only the briefest mention in the dialogues: Phaenarete, Socrates' mother, described in the Theaetetus as "a midwife, brave and burly,"[12] and Dinomache, mother of Alcibiades (if the first dialogue named for him is genuine),[13] to mention two.

Yet in other dialogues, speaking in general terms, Plato manages to broaden this picture of Athenian woman to some extent. One of Socrates' questions to Lysis, for example, in the dialogue subtitled Friendship, rests upon the unchallenged assumption that the typical Athenian matron both spins and weaves.[14] In Republic V she is described as a practitioner of other household arts as well, chiefly culinary.[15] In Laws VII the Athenian stranger adds that "women . . . are the stewards of [our goods and chattels]."[16] But Athenian life can scarcely be described as all work and no play, even for woman, as there is ample evidence that women attended the theatre[17] as well as certain

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[11]Will Durant, The Story of Civilization: Part II, The Life of Greece (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1939), p. 311.

[12]Plato, Theaetetus 149 A.

[13]Plato, I Alcibiades 105 D, 123 D.

[14]Plato, Lysis 208 D.

[15]Plato, Republic 455 C.

[16]Plato, Laws, 805 E.

[17]Plato, Gorgias 502 D.

Bacchic rites.[18] With the exception of paid entertainers, however, flute-girls, dancing girls, and harp-girls,[19] and with that of ladies of low repute, women did not attend banquets, even those given in their own homes, but were confined on such occasions to their own quarters of the house.[20] The Cratylus mentions the conservative nature of women's speech[21]--but of course they did not speak much--or at least they did not speak much in the presence of men.

Throughout the dialogues Plato makes both implicit and explicit comparison between Athenian women and foreign women. Thracian women, for instance, are said by the Athenian stranger to occupy an extremely unenviable position, being used to till the soil, herd the sheep, and wait on their menfolk like slaves.[22] Lacedaemonian women, on the other hand, are educated in music and gymnastics as boys are, and upon attaining maturity, are not expected to perform such chores as spinning, which, as has been pointed out, is one of the functions of the Athenian wife and mother.[23] Along with the women of Crete, Spartan women are celebrated for their high degree of cultivation.[24] Their emancipation, however, is incomplete, for like their Athenian sisters, they assume

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[18]Plato, Ion 534 A; Phaedrus 253 A; Laws 790 E.

[19]Plato, Protagoras 347 D.

[20]Plato, Symposium 176 C.

[21]Plato, Cratylus 418 B.

[22]Plato, Laws 805 D-E.

[23]Ibid., 806 E.

[24]Plato, Protagoras 342 E.

responsibility for the care of the house[25] and unlike them are also expected to supervise the education of their children.[26] Nor are they permitted on the battlefield, as are the Sarmatians.[27] Sarmatian women, according to the Athenian stranger, ride horseback, wield bow and arrow[28] and, "when compared to ordinary women, would appear to be like men."[29]

As modes of communication had improved and foreign trade had increased in Athens in the fifth century, more and more unattached foreigners had flocked to the city, among them, of course, a number of women. At first these immigrants were virtually indistinguishable from native Athenians: the men were granted many of the privileges of the free citizen, and the women, particularly the Ionians among them, were frequently chosen as wives by sons of the Athenian nobility. But in 451 a law was passed denying Athenian citizenship to children of mixed marriages as well as to the offspring of aliens. The effect was to make the Outlander woman unmarriageable and to divide the female population of Athens into two discrete segments: native Athenians, who at an early age normally passed from the tutelage of a father to that of a husband and thus were economically secure--and economically dependent--all their lives; and metics, who were generally forced to become financially

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[25]Plato, Laws 806 A.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid., 806 A-B.

[28]Ibid., 805 A.

[29]Ibid., 806 B-B.

independent. By the fourth century there were a number of professions open to women: wool-working, retailing, even cobbling, although women cobblers were rare. But the profession chosen by most of the Outlander women was that of the hetaera, the companion.[30] The word means literally female companion, helper, or friend, but in Attic dialect it is used in opposition to lawful wife and connotes concubine, courtesan, or harlot.[31] There were at least three classes of hetaerae living in Athens in the fourth century: in ascending order, prostitutes, flute girls or dancing girls, and mistresses of Athenian men.[32] Just as the privileges of citizenship were not extended to these women (marriage in particular), neither did the restrictions imposed upon Athenian women apply to the hetaerae. They were not physically secluded from male society: they moved about freely in the streets, in the marketplace, at social gatherings; they walked with men, talked with them, dined with them. Some were the companions of the most prominent men in Athens.[33]

Two foreign women appear in the Platonic dialogues, not directly, but in reported conversation or extended quotation. They are a priestess, Diotima of Mantineia, and, if the dialogue in which she appears is genuine, a courtesan, Aspasia the Milesian. For a time there was quite a lively controversy over whether Diotima was a historical personage or

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[30]Zimmern, pp. 338-342.

[31]George Ricker Berry, The Classic Greek Dictionary (Chicago: Follett, 1949), p. 277.

[32]Verena Zinzerling, Women in Greece and Rome (New York: Abner Schram, 1972), pp. 38-41; Durant, pp. 299-300.

[33]Zimmern, p. 341.

a device, somewhat like the disclaimer in the Philebus[34] or the dream fiction of the Theaetetus,[35] introduced to allow Plato to take liberties with the actual theories of the historical Socrates. Initially Diotima was generally taken to be a mouthpiece for Socrates or for Plato. Then historical research appeared to confirm her actual existence. In his edition of the Symposium Otto Jahn included a quite impressive list of ancient writers who referred to her.[36] A. E. Taylor, on the grounds that it is unlike Plato to invent names for fictitious persons used in his dialogues, cast his vote for her authenticity. Taylor confirms the fact that there were priestesses in Mantineia at the time and suggests that Plato, with his passion for historical accuracy, would not have merely invented such a detail as her ten-year delay of the Athenian plague.[37] But the pendulum has begun to swing in the other direction. Helen North, noting the similarity between Διοτίμα Μαντινική, Diotima of Mantineia, and Διοτίμα μαντική, Diotima the prophetess, smells a pun and consequently suspects that Diotima is fictional.[38] Paul Friedländer, more or less evading the question of her historical authenticity, comments that "there is little

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[34]Plato, Philebus 20 B.

[35]Plato, Theaetetus 210 D.

[36]James Donaldson, Woman: Her Position and Influence in Ancient Greece and Rome, and Among the Early Christians (London, New York, Bombay, and Calcutta: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907), p. 59 n.

[37]Taylor, Plato, p. 224.

[38]Helen North, "The Wise Woman of Ancient Greece," a public lecture delivered at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, October 5, 1976.

doubt that the essential features of Diotima are a creation of the Platonic Socrates . . . ."[39] And Stanley Rosen laments:

> . . . the energy that has been expended in the effort to determine the historical existence of Diotima might have been better invested upon her dramatic significance. It is regularly taken for granted that Diotima is a thinly disguised Socrates, or even Plato. If this were true, one would have to explain with some care why Plato assigned the highest mysteries of Eros to a woman, a stranger, and a prophetess.[40]

Yet denying that Diotima is a Platonic or Socratic mouthpiece by no means leads Rosen to assert her authenticity. He speaks of "Plato's invention of Diotima"[41] and gives the following account of her introdiction into the dialogue: "In anticipation of Diotima's teaching that Eros is born of need and cleverness, Socrates himself gives birth to the prophetess from the marriage of wisdom and the need to persuade . . . ."[42]

For Rosen, Diotima is a symbol of Socrates' transition from a myth-making youth to a mature visionary capable of seeing the truth. It is in her own name, not that of her native city, that Rosen sees significance, the suggestion of honor being due to the gods.[43] Yet, although honor is unquestionably one of the many possible meanings of

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[39]Paul Friedländer, Plato: An Introduction, trans. from the German by Hans Meyerhoff (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 148.

[40]Stanley Rosen, Plato's Symposium (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), p. xxxi.

[41]Ibid., p. 233.

[42]Ibid., p. 226.

[43]Ibid., p. 225.

τιμή, the διο- prefix means not to, but from--literally "sprung from Jove (Δίς, Δῖος) or from the gods, hence excellent, god-like."[44] Rosen fails to spell out the precise significance that he sees. He does attempt to explain the significance of Plato's choosing a woman and a priestess as Socrates' instructress, however. The combination of the two, he claims, provides sufficient passivity to assure that what is revealed by the gods is merely imparted to Socrates.[45] Yet, although in his introduction he appears to promise the reader an explanation for "why Plato assigned the highest mysteries of Eros to a woman, a stranger, and a prophetess [italics mine],"[46] the only reference he makes to Diotima's foreign origin is to affirm that despite it she made a significant contribution to the Athenian commonwealth by delaying for ten years the plague of 430.[47]

The other foreign woman who appears at second hand in the Platonic dialogues is Aspasia. It is not her authenticity, but that of the dialogue in which she appears which is called into question. The contemporary consensus seems to be that the Menexenus is indeed genuine. Its authenticity had been doubted for at least two reasons: one is the apparent inconsistency between the attitudes revealed in it and the contempt for rhetoric which Plato expressed in the Gorgias[48] and the

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[44]Berry, p. 174.

[45]Rosen, p. 225.

[46]Ibid., p. xxxi.

[47]Ibid., p. 225.

[48]Plato, Gorgias 480 B-481 B.

Phaedrus.[49] Another is the many anachronisms it contains: Toward the end of the harangue Socrates refers to events which transpired between 304 and 387 B.C., most of which occurred after his death in 399.[50] Ast, for example, regards it as spurious, as Suckow, Steinhart, and Ueberweg are inclined to do.[51] Groen van Prinster, however, attributes the anachronisms to Plato's carelessness,[52] while Grote offers a somewhat more elaborate explanation of them. Plato's motive in writing the dialogue, Grote suggests, was to prove himself a master of the art he had despised in the earlier dialogues: to show that his dismissal of rhetoric was not merely "sour grapes." As a means of doing so, Grote goes on, Plato chose to write a funeral harangue in direct competition with one, still extant, of Lysias. His content, therefore, was determined for him.[53] In order to find a tutor of the right age to be giving Socrates his alleged elocution lessons, Grote suggests, Plato is forced to go back to the days of Pericles and Aspasia. In so doing he avoids the anachronism of having Socrates taught by a rhetor younger than he. But, since the content of the speech was determined by that of Lysias, with which it was allegedly in competition, Plato was unable to avoid the anachronism of having Socrates speak of events which

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[49]Plato, Phaedrus 268 A ff.

[50]George Grote, Plato and the Other Companions of Socrates, (London: John Murray, 1865), III, 6.

[51]Ibid., p. 12 n.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Ibid., pp. 7-9.

transpired after his death.[54]

Grote's conviction of the authenticity of the dialogue is grounded largely in an apparent reference to it in Aristotle's Rhetoric: ". . . as Socrates used to say, it is not difficult to praise the Athenians to an Athenian audience."[55] Most recent and contemporary scholars seem to follow him in this matter: Jowett,[56] Gomperz,[57] Shorey,[58] Randall,[59] Friedländer,[60] et al.

As for Aspasia herself, there is no question of her authenticity. She was a Milesian, the daughter of Axiochus;[61] she came to Athens to study rhetoric, and remained to consort with Pericles and to become one of the best known figures on the Athenian horizon. Xenophon represents her as an authority on matchmaking[62] and on housewifery.[63] Aristophanes

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[54]Ibid., pp. 11-12.

[55]Ibid., p. 12 n.

[56]Benjamin Jowett, ed., The Dialogues of Plato, trans. from the Greek by Benjamin Jowett, third edition (New York: Random House, 1937), II, pp. 709-710.

[57]Theodor Gomperz, Greek Thinkers: A History of Ancient Philosophy (London: John Murray, 1905), III, 48-50.

[58]Paul Shorey, What Plato Said (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), pp. 185-188.

[59]John Herman Randall, Jr., Plato: Dramatist of the Life of Reason (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 46.

[60]Friedländer, pp. 157, 200, 202.

[61]Plutarch, The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans, trans. from the Greek by Arthur Hugh Clough (New York: Random House, 1932), p. 200.

[62]Xenophon, Memorabilia II, vi, 36.

[63]Xenophon, The Economist iii, 14.

calls her the cause of the Peloponnesian War;[64] Cratinus refers to her as a whore;[65] Eupolis depicts her as the mother of Pericles' bastard son;[66] Plato portrays her as Socrates' tutor in rhetoric.[67] In the Menexenus the further suggestion is made that Aspasia tutored Pericles in oratory as well, and that she even went so far as to write some of his speeches for him.[68] Upon hearing Socrates recite a funeral oration allegedly composed by this person, Menexenus first pretends to "marvel that Aspasia, who is only a woman, should be able to compose such a speech," and then proceeds to impute the veracity of Socrates, who keeps protesting that the speech is indeed hers.[69]

While Plato's portrayal of Socrates' claiming to have learned anything from anyone, male or female, would appear to be antithetical to his very dialectical method, his claim to have learned from a woman is of peculiar significance. And it is no accident that Plato chooses a foreign-born woman, for not only did Athenian women know no rhetoric to impart, they would have been unable to impart it had they known it, for they were not permitted to associate with an Athenian man long enough to do so.

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[64]Aristophanes, Acharniaus 526-534.

[65]Plutarch, p. 201.

[66]Ibid.

[67]Plato, Menexenus, passim.

[68]Ibid., 236 B.

[69]Ibid., 249 C-E.

Despite the difference in the status of women from society to society, Plato seems to imply that as a sex they share a number of common characteristics which serve to bind them together and distinguish them from men.[70] This distinction, not to mince words, amounts to the decided inferiority of the female sex to the male in virtually every respect.[71] Women are not only weaker than men,[72] they are morally inferior as well.[73] They are fond of complaining[74] and they are prone to secrecy.[75] These qualities and others make them poor educators of children.[76] In the myth in the Timaeus the suggestion is even made that unrighteous, cowardly, or unjust men may in some future existence be reincarnated as women by way of punishment for their sins.[77] And in the Republic, when Socrates suggests that watching a drama involves imitation and we become what we imitate, it is certain activities of women (along with those of slaves, bad men, madmen, artisans, animals, and natural forces), which he cites as being inappropriate for potential guardians to be exposed to:

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[70]Plato, Republic 453 B-C.

[71]Ibid., 455 D.

[72]Ibid., 456 A, 457 B.

[73]Plato, Laws 781 B.

[74]Plato, Republic 549 D.

[75]Plato, Laws 781 A.

[76]Ibid., 694 E.

[77]Plato, Timaeus 42 B, 90 E.

> . . . we will not allow those for whom we profess a care and of whom we say that they ought to be good men, to imitate a woman, whether young or old, quarrelling with her husband, or striving and vaunting against the gods in conceit of her happiness, or when she is in affliction, or sorrow, or weeping; and certainly not one who is in sickness, love, or labour.[78]

The distinctions which Plato finds between men and women extend even so far as the difference in the type of music which should be assigned to each sex, courageous music being more appropriate to men, while a more moderate and temperate type is more suitable for women.[79]

It is noteworthy that the sexual characteristics to which Plato refers are probably acquired characteristics. Moreover, they are characteristics which would almost inevitably be acquired during the normal course of fourth-century Athenian life. Women were, generally speaking, inferior to men in virtually every walk of life in fourth-century Athens. The Athenian matron actually did very little: she spun, she wove, she cooked, she supervised the household slaves.[80] She was virtually uneducated.[81] Even in traditionally female activities men excelled. When distinguished guests were invited to dine in the Athenian house, the women of the household were relieved of their usual chores: professional cooks were hired, and these professionals were invariably

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[78]Plato, Republic 395 D-E.

[79]Plato, Laws 802 E.

[80]Sarch Pomeroy, Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity (New York: Schocken, 1975), pp. 71-72.

[81]Ibid., p. 74.

male.[82] And although dancing girls and flute girls performed at banquets, the male acrobats were expected to perform with more daring, and every Athenian youth received instruction of the flute--at least until Alcibiades made the instrument unpopular by declining to learn to play it on the grounds that it made its player look ridiculous.[83]

In these apparently sexist remarks, then, Plato was merely describing the conditions which he knew as he knew them. Yet, although these descriptions may be invaluable to the historian, to the biographer, to the sociologist, it is Plato's prescriptions which are of philosophical interest. They are based not upon the characteristics common to the sex, but upon the individual differences within it. "One woman has a gift of healing," Socrates observes to Claucon, another not; one is

> a musician, and another has no music in her nature?
> Very true.
> And one woman has a turn for gymnastic and military exercises, and another is unwarlike and hates gymnastics?
> Certainly.
> And one woman is a philosopher, and another is an enemy of philosophy; one has spirit, and another is without spirit?
> That is also true.
> Then one woman will have the temper of a guardian, and another not. Was not the selection of the male guardians determined by differences of this sort?
> Yes.
> Men and women alike possess the qualities which make a guardian; they differ only in their comparative strength or weakness.[84]

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[82]Durant, p. 309.

[83]Plutarch, p. 235.

[84]Plato, Republic 456 A-B.

It must be noted that the characteristics which vary from woman to woman are not acquired, but innate--that Plato speaks of "a gift of healing," "a turn for gymnastics," etc. It is on the basis of these inherent characteristics that women share with like-natured men that the prescriptions for women in the Republic are made. Having agreed with Glaucon that if the sexes have different aptitudes they should have different pursuits, and if not,[85] they should be educated and employed in the same manner, Socrates concludes that "there is nothing peculiar in the constitution of women which would affect them in the administration of a state."[86] Therefore in an ideal state, he insists:

> . . . men and women are to have a common way of life . . . --common education, common children; and they are to watch over the citizens in common whether abiding in the city or going out to war; they are to keep watch together, and to hunt together like dogs; and always and in all things, as far as they are able, women are to share with the men. . . .[87]

In the Laws the Athenian stranger states much the same case even more strongly:

> . . . nothing can be more absurd than the practice which prevails in our own country, of men and women not following the same pursuits with all their strength and with one mind, for thus the state, instead of being a whole, is reduced to a half . . . .[88]

And again:

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[85]Ibid., 454 E.

[86]Ibid., 455 B.

[87]Ibid., 466 C-D.

[88]Plato, Laws 805 A.

> The legislator ought to be whole and perfect, and not half a man only; he ought not to let the female sex live softly and waste money and have no order of life, while he takes the utmost care of the male sex, and leaves half of life only blest with happiness, when he might have made the whole state happy.[89]

It is apparent, then, that the Platonic dialogues are rich in their allusion to women. There are descriptions, individual and collective, of fifth- and fourth-century women, native and foreign. And there are prescriptions for them. The descriptions seem to be fairly accurate, judging from corroborating contemporary sources. But it is the prescriptions that have earned Plato his reputation as the world's first feminist. To what extent this reputation is justified remains to be seen.

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[89]Ibid., 806 C.

CHAPTER II

HOW IT IS SAID

Language

Closely related to and substantially affecting what Plato says is the language in which he says it. The linguistic aspect of the Republic is particularly troublesome to Sarah Pomeroy, who offers detailed evidence in support of her thesis that Plato's language betrays his sexism.[1] Gregory Vlastos excuses it much as W. C. K. Guthrie excuses the materialism of Anaxagoras, by explaining that long after ideas change, verbal habits hang on.[2] But a close examination of Plato's language, even the very phrases that are most disturbing to Pomeroy, reveals that there is, after all, very little to excuse. In order to facilitate such an examination, it will be convenient to divide Plato's sins, as Pomeroy views them, into sins of commission and sins of omission.

The sins of commission, as Pomeroy sees them, add up to what she believes to be Plato's conviction that in an ideal state, as in the actual Athenian one, women are to be possessed by men. This conviction

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[1]Pomeroy, "Feminism," pp. 33-34.

[2]Gregory Vlastos, "The Status of Persons in Platonic Justice: Women," the second of three Carus Lectures delivered at the annual meeting of the Western Division of the American Philosophical Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, May 1976; W. C. K. Guthrie, The Greek Philosophers from Thales to Plato (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 55.

she finds revealed in Plato's word choice, in his word order, and in certain of his grammatical constructions. She focuses upon an eight-page discussion of the role of woman in the ideal state which opens near the beginning of Book V of the Republic. It is introduced on what Pomeroy regards as a sexist note. The entire problem of woman's role in an ideal society is launched by Polemarchus and Adeimantus, who are holding a whispered conversation upon the subject which, attracting the attention of Socrates, becomes audible.[3] Socrates has suggested earlier that wives and children are among those things which the guardians should have in common.[4] Adeimantus wants to know more about this "sharing" of wives and children.[5] The repeated use of the word κοινός and its derivative κοινωνία in the passage in question upsets Pomeroy, who counts the number of times each word appears. They total five: two for the abstract noun, three for the collective one.[6] κοινά, she claims, means "common property," and κοινωνία she identifies as a word used in Athenian legal documents to refer to property jointly owned.[7] As a matter of actual fact, κοινα means simply "shared in common,"[8] and the word normally appearing in Attic statutes concerning the joint ownership of heirs, was usually ἀνέμητος, not distributed, an adjective

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[3]Plato, Republic 449 A ff.

[4]Ibid., 423 D-424 A.

[5]Ibid., 449 E.

[6]Pomeroy, "Feminism," p. 33.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Berry, p. 384.

used to modify the noun οὐσία, property.[9] To be sure, οὐσία, property, might be κοινά, shared, but the hypotheses that ideally property is shared and wives are shared scarcely add up to the implication that wives are therefore property. The noun ἀγαθόν, the good, is modified by the adjective κοινόν in a popular idiom τὸ κοινὸν ἀγαθόν, the common good, yet Pomeroy refrains from adducing this as evidence that wives are good or that the good is property. A great deal has been said, too, especially by Bonitz, Jackson, and Zeller, about the κοινωνία of εἴδη in Platonic philosophy, particularly in the Sophist,[10] yet the suggestion has never been made that the Forms are therefore property.

Not only does the use of the words κοινά and κοινονία rankle Pomeroy, she bristles at κτῆσις in such phrases as . . . τε . . . γυναικῶν, κτῆσις and περὶ τὴν τῶν γυναικῶν . . . κτῆσιν as well. She translates κτῆσις "possession."[11] Actually, "possession" is the second of the two definitions of κτῆσις listed by George Ricker Berry in The Classical Greek Dictionary.[12] In the first sense κτῆσις is derived from the present tense of the Greek verb κτάομαι; "to get for oneself, gain," and means simply "an acquiring, getting."[13] In its second meaning κτῆσις is derived from κέκτημαι the perfect tense of the same verb, which has

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[9]A. R. W. Harrison, The Law of Athens (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), I, 239.

[10]Adam, I, 363.

[11]Pomeroy, "Feminism," p. 33.

[12]Berry, p. 396.

[13]Ibid., p. 395.

a meaning slightly different from that of the present: "to have acquired or got, and so, to possess, to have, or to hold."[14] It is in the second sense that the word has connotations of property, for indeed as a collective noun it may mean "possessions, property."[15] Pomeroy, then, has chosen to translate the Greek with an English word which has decided proprietary connotations, reinforcing the thesis she has introduced in connection with κοινά and κοινωνία, that Plato regards women guardians as the property of the male guardians. The question is whether she is any more justified in this rendition than she was in her strange assumptions concerning the meaning of κοινά and κοινωνία. Inasmuch as there are enormous connotative differences between the phrase "acquiring wives" and the expression "possessing women" (Greek, of course, has no separate word for the married woman, presumably because virtually all Greek women were in fact married), it is important to ascertain precisely what Plato was discussing in Republic V.

There is no question that he does discuss the acquisition of wives. The matters which are mentioned but left uninvestigated in Republic IV and which prompt the request of Adeimantus in Book V are τὴν τε τῶν γυναικῶν κτῆσιν καὶ γαμῶν καὶ παιδοποιίας: the κτῆσιν of wives (or women), and marriage, and the begetting of children.[16] Although in this context κτῆσιν is rendered "possession" in most standard

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[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid., p. 396.

[16]Plato, Republic 423 E-424 A.

translations of the Republic,[17] if Plato's sequence is at all temporal, "acquiring" would appear to be a more appropriate choice.

As Socrates, in compliance with the request of Adeimantus, proceeds with the discussion of these hitherto neglected matters, he makes two basic recommendations concerning the guardian class: first, that its women be educated and employed just as its men are,[18] and second, that both sexes live communally and that temporary "marriages," which are to exist primarily for the procreation of children, be arranged according to the principles of eugenics.[19] Clearly, then, Plato does treat the matter of the acquisition of wives. The question remains whether he also treats the possession of them. Certainly not in any ordinary sense of the word "possession." The very nature of the commune would appear to preclude all possibility of his doing so. In Book III, before the possibility of having women guardians has been explored, Socrates has made the following suggestions concerning the life style of the guardian class:

> In the first place, none must possess any private property save the indispensable. Secondly, none must have any habitation or treasurehouse which is not open for all to enter at will. Their food, in such quantities as are needful for athletes of war sober and brave, they must receive as an agreed stipend as the wages of their guardianship, so measured that there shall be neither superfluity at the end of the year

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[17]Jowett, I, 686; Cornford, p. 114; Allan Bloom, The Republic of Plato (New York and London: Basic Books, 1968), p. 101; Plato, The Republic, with an English translation by Paul Shorey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), I, 331.

[18]Plato, Republic 451 E-452 A et passim.

[19]Ibid., 458 C-459 E.

> nor any lack. And resorting to a common mess like soldiers on campaign they will live together.[20]

Since one of the chief features of the ideal state, then, is that its guardians are not permitted to own anything, it seems rather pointless to ask whether women are among the things which they are not permitted to own.

In her discussion of κτησις Pomeroy is extremely selective in her use of quotation. The first passage she quotes, for example, she concludes in mid-phrase, even in mid-idiom. It is taken from the following statement:

> Ἀνθρώποις γὰρ φύσει καὶ παιδευθεῖσιν ὡς ἡμεῖς διήλθομεν, κατ' ἐμὴν δόξαν οὐκ ἔστ' ἄλλη ὀρθὴ παίδων τε καὶ γυναικῶν κτῆσίς τε καὶ χρεία ἢ κατ' ἐκείνην τὴν ὁρμήν, ἰοῦσιν ἥνπερ τὸ πρῶτον ὡρνήσαμεν . . . .[21]

By quoting only παίδων τε καὶ γυναικῶν κτῆσις and omitting the three following words, τε καὶ χρεία,[22] Pomeroy reveals her insensitivity to the idiom κτῆσις καὶ χρεία. In this idiom κτησις is normally rendered "having,"[23] a word which is much more neutral in connotation than "possession." Certainly the phrase "having wives" is inoffensive in tone, in sharp contrast to the chauvinistic implications of the "possession of women."

In her other example of Plato's use of κτῆσις, Pomeroy also stops

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[20]Ibid., 416 D-E.

[21]Ibid., 451 C.

[22]Pomeroy, "Feminism," p. 33.

[23]Berry, p. 788.

in mid-phrase.[24] Here the words omitted are καὶ τροφήν so that the complete phrase reads περὶ τὴν τῶν γυναικῶν καὶ παιδων κτῆσιν καὶ τροφήν.[25] Fortunately in this instance Pomeroy does not leave the reader with an incomplete idiom. She does object, however, not only to Plato's use of κτῆσιν but also to his reference to women and children in a single phrase. This juxtaposition she finds not in one isolated case, but in a total of seven passages in the eight pages she has scrutinized. These passages provide evidence, Pomeroy asserts, that "Plato could not conceive of women living without male tutelage." "Clearly," she urges, "Plato could not, or did not wish to, free himself from the Athenian prejudice which treated women legally as perpetual minors."[26] Pomeroy is referring, of course, to a system of guardianship practiced in ancient Athens which provided that a male minor live under the tutelage of a guardian, normally his father, until he reached his majority, but that a female remain under the aegis of a guardian all her life. It is unclear to what extent, if any, the guardianship of a female changed in nature upon her attainment of puberty or after her marriage. It would seem that some, if not all, of the duties of her original guardian were transferred to her husband at the time of her marriage. Guardians, whether of boys or girls or women, were charged with such matters as determining the domiciles of their wards, providing their maintenance (food, clothing, shoes, haircuts, education if any),

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[24]Pomeroy, "Feminism," p. 33.

[25]Plato, Republic 453 D.

[26]Pomeroy, "Feminism," p. 33.

controlling their property, and representing them in all kinds of legal transactions.[27] It is obvious that Plato could and did conceive of women living without that sort of male tutelage, for the domiciles of both male and female guardians were determined by the state, they ate at common tables food provided by the lower classes, they had no property to be controlled,[28] and they were expected to have little need for a lawyer or a judge.[29]

Perhaps, then, there is an alternative explanation for Plato's frequent use of the phrase "women and children." In Books II, III, and IV the guardians, who at this point are probably presumed to be male, have been considered, both as a class and as individuals. Their temperament, their education, their manner of living, their duties, their virtue have all been carefully prescribed. In Book V Socrates turns his attention to their familial life. And of what, besides adult males, does a family consist, be that family nuclear, stem, or communal? Of women and children.

A penultimate linguistic sin of commission of which Pomeroy finds Plato guilty is twice using the "possessive genitive" to refer to female guardians as "the property of the male guardians."[30] Once he uses the phrase ταῖς τῶν φυλάκων γυναιξί.[31] Clearly τῶν φυλάκων is

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[27]Harrison, I, 30-32, 97-121.

[28]Plato, Republic 416 E-417 A.

[29]Ibid., 405 A-C.

[30]Pomeroy, "Feminism," p. 33.

[31]Plato, Republic 457 A.

genitive, but is the conclusion warranted that it is therefore possessive? Indication of possession is but one of four major functions of the Greek genitive case. Another function which the case may serve is partitive. Had the phrase instead read τῷ μερῷ τῶν φυλάκων, part of the guardians, there would have been no question: the guardians clearly do not possess part of their numbers. But is the situation not analogous here? The genitive, according to a standard Greek grammar, is used with "any word that expresses or implies a part."[32] Do not women in fact constitute part of the guardian class? And is it not more consistent for Plato to speak of the female part of the guardians or the women guardians than for him to say, as both Jowett and Cornford would have him do, the wives of the guardians? For, as has been mentioned, the guardians had no wives--nor husbands--but lived communally with occasional two-month periods of cohabitation for the purpose of the production of offspring. Indeed the very introduction of the word "wife," used apparently as a consequence of first an interpretation of the genitive τῶν φυλάκων as a possessive and second a desire to produce idiomatic English, is not really warranted by the Greek, since, as has been noted, that language makes no linguistic distinction between a woman who is married and one who is not.

Against the hypothesis that the second genitive which Sarah Pomeroy cites, τοὺς τε φυλάκας ἡμῖν καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας αὐτῶν,[33] is used

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[32]Henry Lamar Crosby and John Nevin Schaeffer, An Introduction to Greek (Boston, New York, Chicago, Atlanta, San Francisco, Dallas: Allyn and Bacon, 1949), p. 145.

[33]Pomeroy, "Feminism," p. 33.

to indicate possession much the same sort of argument may be used. And in this context "our guardians, male and female," would seem preferable to "our guardians and their wives" in a society devoid of marriages.

Regardless of the function served by the genitive in these two passages, however, Sarah Pomeroy seems to grossly exaggerate the possible implications of a grammatical construction. English nouns and pronouns come in three cases, not four or five. The case corresponding to the Greek genitive is unequivocally known as the possessive case. Yet to suggest that such phrases as "the dog's master" or "the car's owner" indicate that the man is possessed by the dog or the driver by the car (in any but the most figurative sense) would be sheer madness. Let Professor Pomeroy make of the phrase "the woman's husband" what she will.

Finally, Pomeroy even finds misogyny in Plato's proposal that all guardians, male and female alike, exercise together unclad. Twice, she notes, Plato suggests that the sight of this activity might provoke laughter.[34] Indeed he does. But it is not the appearance of the women themselves, according to Socrates, but the unfamiliarity of the custom, which would make the practice appear ludicrous: "Perhaps . . .," Socrates cautions immediately prior to the introduction of the example alluded to above, ". . . the contrast with present custom would make much in our proposals look ridiculous if our words are to be realized in fact [italics mine]." "Yes . . .," Glaucon agrees after the example

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[34]Ibid., p. 34.

has been given, "it would seem ridiculous under present conditions [italics again mine]."[35]

Spartan maidens, to be sure, not only exercised unclad, but appeared naked in public processions and dances as well. The practice was motivated, apparently, by a desire among the Lacedaemonians to stimulate young women to care for their bodies, to uncover any defects they might possess and eliminate them.[36] But Athenian women did not even unveil their faces in public.[37] They were padded, they were tightly laced, and they wore brassieres.[38] Not only would the thought of their appearing naked in public have been amusing to men, it would have been most distressing to the women themselves. In that respect Athens seems much like Miletus. Plutarch tells of an outbreak of suicide among Milesian women which had reached epidemic proportions before it was stopped by an edict stipulating that all those who died by their own hand would be carried unclad through the marketplace to their graves.[39]

Custom varies, of course, not only from place to place, but from time to time, and Socrates and Glaucon recall an earlier period of Athenian history when the sight of nude men would have been just as amusing as that of nude women was in their own time: "it is not long

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[35]Plato, Republic 452 A-B.

[36]Durant, p. 83.

[37]Wright, p. 61.

[38]Durant, p. 291.

[39]Plutarch, Moralia 249 B, cited in Ibid., p. 291 fn.

since the Greeks thought it disgraceful and ridiculous, as most of the barbarians do now, for men to be seen naked."[40] And so, enemies of relativism that they are, they adhere to their principle.

Nevertheless, Plato "reveals his distaste for the unclothed female body," Pomeroy charges, "by comparing the appearance of all women, both young and old exercising in the nude, to the unattractive appearance of wrinkled old men appearing unclad."[41] Does he indeed make such a comparison? Yes, in a sense he does, but not in the sense in which Pomeroy's statement would lead one to believe. For the similarity between the woman and the old men lies not in the way that the two appear, but in the fact that they both will appear unclad in the palaestra. The aged men look ridiculous, presumably, because they are wrinkled. The women, as has been stated, above, look ridiculous because the sight of them is, to say the least, unusual. The unfamiliar frequently provokes laughter. Elsewhere in the Republic the philosopher, who is attempting to steer the ship of state by the stars, is mistaken by the incompetent crew for an idle star-gazer.[42] He too appears ridiculous. A bit later the philosopher, returning from the bright world of knowledge to the cave of ignorance, appears ridiculous to the prisoners still in the cave.[43] Yet these two episodes by no means reveal Plato's distaste for philosophy.

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[40]Plato, Republic 452 C.

[41]Pomeroy, "Feminism," p. 34.

[42]Plato, Republic, 488 E.

[43]Ibid., 517 A.

In the eighteenth century Samuel Johnson is said to have expressed his reaction to another feminist innovation in a simile: "Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."[44] Is Dr. Johnson revealing a distaste for the black-robed female body by comparing it with that of a dog? No. He is merely expressing his conviction that preaching comes no more naturally to women than upright ambulation comes to dogs. And Plato is merely saying that the sight of women in the gymnasium is no more usual than that of wrinkled old men--even less so, as a matter of fact.

It should be remembered, too, that it is not Plato himself who finds the proposal ridiculous. He is simply predicting popular reaction. He does not have Socrates or Glaucon desist from urging that women strip. Plato's own views on women's bodies are unknown and probably unknowable. Diogenes Laërtius claims that Plato had a mistress, Archeanassa the fair, to whom he addressed love lyrics.[45] If the Archaeanassa story is true, presumably Plato did not find the female body so distasteful as Pomeroy suggests. But Diogenes Laërtius is gossipy and unreliable. The story may just as easily be false, in which case nothing may be concluded about Plato's appreciation for the female body or the lack thereof. Even in the event that he was homosexual, as many contemporary scholars surmise, little can be inferred about his

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[44]James Boswell, The Life of Samuel Johnson, selected and abridged by Edmund Fuller (New York: Dell, 1960), p. 121.

[45]Diogenes Laërtius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers, III, 32.

relationship with women, for clearly among the ancient Greeks pederasty did not preclude heterosexual relationships.

But whatever Plato may or may not have thought about the human female body is beside the point. What is pertinent is that, ridiculous or not, his Socrates says, "Let [women] strip . . . and let them share in the toils of war and the defence of their country . . . ."[46] Yet even this exhortation does not lead Pomeroy to question Plato's alleged misogyny, for, she claims, "he states unequivocally that the natural capacities of men far exceed those of women."[47] There is nothing whatever in the Plato text to warrant the insertion of Pomeroy's adverb "far," and one might easily question her use of the word "unequivocally" as well. The passage she cites to support her statement, concludes with the clause ἐπὶ πᾶσι δὲ ἀσθενέστερον γυνὴ ἀνδρός.[48] Although the word may be used in a non-physical sense as well, the primary meaning of the noun ἀσθένια, from which the verb ἀσθενέω is derived, is sickness or feebleness.[49] Could Plato possibly have merely been implying that woman's weaker physical nature would, to an extent, curtail her activities?

In any case, if women are to participate in all pursuits according to their nature, then those with "a gift of healing" are to

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[46]Plato, Republic 457 A-B.

[47]Pomeroy, "Feminism," p. 34.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, rev. by Henry Stuart Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), I, 256.

participate in medical activities, but with the expectation of enjoying less success than Hippocrates; those who are "warlike" and have a "turn for gymnastics" participate in warfare and physical exercise, with no hope of attaining the eminence of, say, Nicias; anyone with "music in her soul" will play the flute or the lyre, although not so well as Alcaeus; the lover of wisdom will philosophize, but less well than Pythagoras. Yet where does Plato imply that Phaenarete was inferior to Hippocrates in natural capacity, or Lysistrata to Nicias, or Sappho to Alcaeus or Theano to Pythagoras? Was woman's inferiority, in other words, natural or acquired? Or, more accurately, was the superiority of each of the foregoing men to his female counterpart natural or acquired? For whereas the natural capacities of men have always been developed through whatever measure of education a given era had to offer, in ancient Athens those of women were normally unrecognized and unused, creating a waste which the Athenian stranger laments at length in the Laws.[50] Yet, according to Plato, the "gifts of nature" are distributed alike in men and women. It is in the "pursuits" that women are inferior to men.

Pomeroy appends to her linguistic analysis a concession that "on the 'woman question' as on many other issues Plato's tenets differ from the conventions of the Athenian intellectual tradition. Nevertheless," she concludes, "not even Plato was capable of considering women as the true equals of men."[51] Indeed not. Plato was not blind, nor was he

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[50]Plato, Laws.

[51]Pomeroy, "Feminism," p. 34.

stupid. Athenian women were not the true equals of men. But he was proposing measures which, if taken, might have resulted in true equality.

Pomeroy finds in the Republic not only sins of commission, but sins of omission as well. She takes Plato to task, for instance, for speaking consistently of wife-sharing, never of husband-sharing. Yet there are any number of obvious reasons for his doing so. For one thing, not only Plato, but Socrates too was male, and it would seem only natural for the one to write and the other to speak from a male point of view. Furthermore, Socrates' audience was male. Were Aspasia depicted giving advice to Athenian matrons, as she is said to have done, she would doubtless have spoken not of, say, wife-pleasing, but of husband-pleasing.[52] Lysistrata speaks to the women of Greece about husbands; Socrates, to the men about wives.

But Plato's use of "wife-sharing" and avoidance of "husband-sharing" is not only natural, but logical as well, for what sort of things are shared? Things which are relatively scarce. Students are asked to share textbooks not when there are more texts than students, but when there are more students than texts. There were, as a matter of fact, significantly fewer women than men in fourth-century Athens. The chief reason for this phenomenon, as has been suggested, seems to lie in the Athenian practice of exposure. Within ten days of the birth of an infant, its father apparently had the right to decide whether to rear it or not. Malformed or sickly babies were regularly exposed.

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[52]Aristophanes, Lysistrata, passim.

Significantly more female than male infants were exposed. The reasons have been noted above: For one thing, girls had to be provided with dowries; thus economic factors had to be taken into consideration. For another, frequent wars regularly decimated the male population of the state, and whereas unmarried males could easily be absorbed into the population, there was virtually nothing for a woman of the middle or upper classes to do but marry. Thus there seems to have been a conscious effort to keep the male-female ratio high. It was a rare Athenian father that chose to rear more than one daughter and many Greek families consisted only of sons.[53] Plato never suggests refraining from the practice of the exposure of infants in an ideal state. As a matter of fact, in a number of passages he appears to endorse the practice, particularly as it may serve the purpose of eugenics. He advocates "disposing of" the offspring of the worst of the citizenry,[54] for example, and of the progeny of parents who are either too old or too young,[55] and of babies with birth defects.[56] Although being born female would presumably not constitute a birth defect, even by Athenian standards, Plato does specify that the guardians of the Republic will wish to keep the number of its citizens constant,[57] and it might

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[53]Zimmern, pp. 330-334.

[54]Plato, Republic 459 D-E.

[55]Ibid., 461 B-C.

[56]Ibid., 460 C.

[57]Ibid., 460 A.

reasonably be expected that he would wish them to keep the number of each sex constant as well.

Moreover, if women are generally inferior to men, as is unquestionably implied in Socrates' rhetorical question to Glaucon and the young man's immediate assent, the guardian class will inevitably contain far fewer female than male members. Thus the plan for communal living within the ideal state would be described far more accurately as wife-sharing than as husband-sharing.

Appeal to the same statistics might also be made by way of answer to the question concerning the distribution of prizes for valor in Plato's Republic. Pomeroy finds the suggestion that men be rewarded for valor by being permitted more frequent cohabitation with females to be blatantly sexist. Similar prizes are not proposed for valiant women, she points out.[58] Yet in view of the predominantly male population of the state as a whole, and especially of the guardian class, each woman might reasonably be expected to cohabit with a man more frequently than each man with a woman in the normal course of affairs--perhaps as often as each time lots are cast, or at least each time lots are cast when she is not pregnant or lactating. In this event such prizes for women would be not only unnecessary, but impossible.

Not only does Pomeroy find the concept of the sex prize offensive, she sees in it evidence that Plato subscribed to what Caroline Whitbeck calls the "flower pot theory of pregnancy": the

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[58]Pomeroy, "Feminism," pp. 33-34.

theory that the female parent serves as nothing more than a place for the male to deposit his seed, which alone contains the potency to form a fully developed embryo.[59] Pomeroy's conclusion that Plato "appears ignorant of the contribution made by the female in the formation of the embryo"[60] would appear to be corroborated by the imagery which he uses in the Timaeus to explain the origin of the universe: The source of the universe, the Forms, he likens to a father; the receiving principle, space, to a mother; and the universe itself, the copy of the Forms, to a child produced by the union of the two.[61] And yet in the Republic, on the page immediately preceding the sex-prize suggestion, in the wake of a discussion of the practices of the breeders of hunting-dogs, pedigreed cocks, and thoroughbred horses, Socrates insists that "the best men must cohabit with the best women in as many cases as possible and the worst with the worst in the fewest . . . if the flock is to be as perfect as possible [italics mine]."[62] And he is just as careful to determine the optimum age for bearing children as for begetting them.

After careful consideration of what he says and what he does not say, then, one can come to no other conclusion than that Plato is innocent of the charge of linguistic sexism. He is guilty, to be sure,

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[59]Ibid., p. 34; Caroline Whitbeck, "Theories of Sex Difference," The Philosophical Forum, 5 (Fall-Winter, 1973-1974), 55.

[60]Pomeroy, "Feminism," p. 34.

[61]Plato, Timaeus 50 D-E.

[62]Plato, Republic 459 D-E.

of certain syntactical conventions which have recently come to be regarded as sexist: the use of "man" in the generic sense, for example, and a marked preference for the masculine definite article. But no word count has been made of Plato's use of ανθρδπος or of the relative number of occurrences of οι and αι in his works, for such a catalogue would prove nothing more than the fact that Plato was writing some time prior to the second half of the twentieth century. Every feminist from Mary Wollstonecraft to Simone de Beauvoir has used "man" in the generic sense and the masculine pronoun when gender was in question. And to place Plato in such company is scarcely to substantiate Pomeroy's charge of misogyny.

Arguments

A consideration of how Plato makes his controversial proposal would include not only the language in which it is expressed, but also the arguments used in support of it. Assessment must be made of their soundness and their consistency. But before they may be assessed, they must first be identified. The proposal for women guardians opens with an animal analogy. The guardians of the Republic have been referred to earlier as the watchdogs of the state.[63] Male and female watchdogs, it has been noted, share the responsibility for guarding the flocks. Bitches are not exempted from performing this service because they must bear and suckle puppies. Similarly human females may be expected to share with the males the chores of the guardianship

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[63]Plato, Republic 375 A.

of the state. But equal service entails equal training. Therefore female guardians must be educated just as male guardians are.[64]

The earliest extant criticism of this passage may be found in the second book of the Politics, where the context makes clear that Aristotle considers it an analogical argument.[65] Benjamin Jowett indicates his agreement with Aristotle by using such words as "conclusion" and "inference" in the translation of the passage in which it appears.[66] Julia Annas, on the other hand, stoutly denies that Plato intends the analogy as argument and dismisses it as mere metaphor.[67] Paul Shorey entertains yet another view: that here and elsewhere Plato pretends to argue analogically, taking his premises from animal nature, but never actually does so.[68]

Perhaps an inquiry into the nature of analogy would be illuminating. Analogy, of course, may serve one or more of a number of different functions. It may be used in prose and poetry, in exposition and argumentation, in eulogy and invective. But basically its aim is either to elucidate or to convince. The poet, of course, may put analogy to a figurative rather than a literal use in such images as the simile and the metaphor, which may appear to be used primarily to beautify his poem. In perhaps the best known simile in the English

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[64]Ibid., 451 D-452 A.

[65]Aristotle, Politics 1264b 4-6.

[66]Jowett, pp. 712-713.

[67]Annas, p. 308.

[68]Shorey, I, 433, fn. c.

language, for example, Robert Burns compares his love to a "red, red rose."[69] There is no question that the rose imagery adds a touch of beauty to the poem. But were this the only purpose of the figurative language, Burns might just as well have said ". . . my luve is like an antique vase. . . ." His beloved is not like an antique vase, of course, for she is a young girl, not an old woman. Thus the function of the image must be to enlighten as well as to beautify. One might even say to enlighten rather than to beautify, for frequently contemporary poets select as images objects which are anything but beautiful. Consider, for example, the opening lines of T. S. Eliot's "Love-Song of J. Alfred Prufrock":

> Let us go then, you and I
> When the evening is spread out against the sky
> Like a patient etherized upon a table.[70]

It is certain that there is little which is beautiful about a patient anesthetized upon an operating table. The question is, Does the image inform? Does it tell the reader anything about the sunset? Not immediately, perhaps, but it eventually becomes clear that night has fallen upon a sick society. Thus even in poetry, enlightenment may be more important than adornment.

A more obvious type of elucidation occurs when analogy is used more literally and an author attempts to explain the unfamiliar in

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[69]Robert Burns, "A Red, Red Rose," in George Benjamin Woods, ed., English Poetry and Prose of the Romantic Period (Chicago, Atlanta, Dallas, New York: Scott Foresman and Co., 1929), p. 203.

[70]T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," in Louis Untermeyer, ed., Modern American Poetry, 6th rev. ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1942), p. 425.

terms of the familiar. In the early fifties, for example, when the notion of space travel was new, the editors of Time relied upon analogy to make the concept comprehensible to their readers:

> The best way to think of space as a navigable medium is to imagine the frictionless surface of a calm glassy pond. Small objects drift across it easily, propelled by feeble forces. Scattered at wide intervals over the mirror surfaces are deep, sucking whirlpools. If a floating leaf drifts close to one of them, it plunges down to the bottom. A self-powered object, say a water insect, that gets sucked into a whirlpool has a terrible time getting back to the surface.
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> Deep space, far from stars or planets, is like the pond's smooth surface. An object becalmed in its emptiness floats like a galleon in the doldrums. If the object is a spaceship with propulsive power, it can cruise in any direction, meeting practically no resistance. But it must keep away from the whirlpools: the gravitational fields that surround stars and planets. If it plunges into one of them, it may end as a puff of gas in a star or a brief streak of fire in a planet's atmosphere.[71]

The use of analogy in argumentation is completely different from its use in exposition. Here too, however, it may serve either of two slightly different purposes, depending upon whether it lies in the form or the content of the material in which it resides. In the former case it may aid in the refutation of an argument which is unsound; in the latter it may be used to reveal the unknown or to make a prediction about the future.

Irving Copi makes very effective use of analogy of the former type to show the fallaciousness of a kind of thinking that was popular during the McCarthy era: "Communists are proponents of socialized

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[71]"Push Into Space," Time (1959) reprinted in Kenneth L. Knickerbocker and Bain Tate Stewart, eds., Readings and Assignments: A Practical Approach to College Writing (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), p. 137.

medicine," people were saying. "Some members of the administration are proponents of socialized medicine. Therefore some members of the administration are Communists." "You might as well argue," Copi suggests, that "All rabbits are very fast runners. Some horses are very fast runners. Therefore some horses are rabbits."[72] You perhaps used the latter type of analogy as you sat down to read this very manuscript: "The last paper on Plato's feminism which I read was woefully pedantic. I am not looking forward to this one!"

The question, of course, is what purpose is served by the dog analogy of Republic V. When the watchdog imagery is first introduced in Book II, within lines of the first use of the term "guardians," there is little doubt that it does serve an explanatory function. The concept of the guardian was somewhat foreign to Socrates' hearers; far more familiar to them was the watchdog guarding sheep. Through the analogy Socrates was able to reveal a number of qualities which would be invaluable in a guardian: keenness of perception; quickness of pursuit; strength; courage; spirit; gentleness. But by three books later the guardian has become a familiar figure to the group conversing at the house of Cephalus and to the reader of the dialogue in which it is recorded. His characteristics, mental as well as physical; his education; his manner of living have all been discussed. What further information could be conveyed through a comparison between the bitch, however familiar, and the female guardian, however unfamiliar she

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[72]Irving Copi, Introduction to Logic, 4th ed. (New York: Macmillan; London: Collier Macmillan, 1972), p. 186.

might be? The fact that common to the two is a single animal function, parturition? Surely that was at least as obvious to the fourth-century Greek as to the twentieth-century American. Plato makes frequent use of animal imagery, both in the Republic[73] and elsewhere. He certainly does appear to be arguing from it. This was not an unusual practice. Even as late as Plutarch's day, it was generally held that the lower animals followed nature more closely than human beings did, especially in matters of mating and producing offspring, and were therefore to be emulated.[74] The simplest and the most sensible explanation of the whole matter would seem to be to take Plato at his word.

Aristotle, as has been noted, never doubted that Plato was arguing analogically here, although he did think the argument a weak one.[75] Like any other inductive argument, the argument by analogy is neither valid nor invalid; its conclusion is at worst most unlikely and at best highly probable. An analogical argument is normally judged by a number of criteria which facilitate its evaluation. In the first place the number of entities in its premises and the degree of dissimilarity among them must be considered. The more entities included among the premises, the better; the fewer, the worse. Plato, confining himself to the analogy he had drawn in Book II, mentions here only one

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[73]Plato, Republic 375-6, 422 D, 466 D, 467 B, 491 D-E, 537 A, 546 A-B, 564 A, etc.

[74]Plutarch, de Amore Prolis c. I, cited in W. I. Newman, The Politics of Aristotle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1887), p. 262 fn. 4.

[75]Aristotle, Politics 1264b 4-7.

specific kind of animal, the dog. Had he been able to argue from other animals as well, his argument would in this respect have been so much the better, for not only would the number of entities in the premises have been augmented, the dissimilarity among them would have been increased. As it is, however, there were a number of breeds of dogs known to the ancient Greeks--hounds and terriers and hunting dogs[76]--and, of course, any number of individual members of those breeds. So it would seem that the number of entities in his premises is quite adequate to Plato's purposes. It is quite comparable to the number of entities in his conclusion.

Another consideration which must be made, one of even more importance perhaps, is the number of respects in which the entity in the conclusion is like those in the premises, and conversely, the number of respects in which the two are different. Obviously dogs and people are alike in being animals and unlike in being non-human and human, respectively. It is here that Aristotle takes Plato to task, asserting that the broad-browed Athenian has ignored a basic difference between people and dogs: that animals, unlike human beings, have no houses to keep.

Perhaps the most important criterion for the evaluation of the analogical argument, and undoubtedly the most difficult to apply, is relevance. Is the difference which Aristotle observes between dogs and humans relevant? To Aristotle's system, yes, highly so. Inorganic

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[76]Ben Markland and an anonymous co-author, "Dogs," Encyclopaedia Britannica (1955), 7, 495; Aristotle, Problemata 892a 20.

entities, plants, animals, and human beings are differentiated from one another by increasing degrees of complexity. The plant possesses all those characteristics of inorganic items plus one differentiating property, the soul. To be sure, the soul of a plant is a simple soul, with only nutritive and reproductive functions. It is what enables the plant to receive nourishment, to grow, to reproduce.[77] It is what might be called the life of the plant. It is mortal and dies when the body of the plant dies. The animal possesses everything which characterizes the plant plus one differentiating property, a sensitive dimension to the soul. Unlike the plant, the animal is not rooted to the ground and cannot merely absorb its food through its roots. It must seek out its own food supply, and to do so it needs locomotion and senses. To be sure, it does not need all five senses: A blind animal can survive, although not so well and generally not so long as a sighted animal. A deaf animal can survive, although not so well and generally not so long as one with hearing. But the one essential sense is touch. Without the sense of touch an animal cannot survive at all.[78] Finally, the human being possesses all those characteristics of the animal, plus the uniquely human property, reason.[79] But the human being is more than a rational animal. According to Aristotle, human beings are also social animals, binding together into families, clans, city-states.[80]

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[77]Aristotle, De Anima 414a 31, 416a 18.

[78]Ibid., 434b 10-14.

[79]Ibid., 414b 19-20.

[80]Aristotle, Politica 1252b 12-32.

Thus while he leaves the female animal, with her weaker body and her weaker soul, to participate in most of the activities pursued by her larger, stronger mate, he treats the human female differently. Sexual differentiation among human beings is such as to foster what Aristotle calls the "good life." Man is naturally active and suited to going out to procure the goods and chattels for an entire household. Woman is naturally sedentary and suited to staying at home to preserve what man has acquired. And so Aristotle prescribes a division of labor along sexual lines.[81] But in Plato's ideal state there are no private households--at least not among the guardian class. Living is communal; there are no houses to keep. The guardians own no private property and eat what is provided for them by the lower classes. Thus to Plato's society Aristotle's criticism is simply not relevant.

A final criterion for the evaluation of the analogical argument is the strength of the statement of the conclusion compared with that of the premises. The more strongly the premises are stated and the relatively more weakly the conclusion, the better the argument. In this argument, as is generally the case in Plato's early and middle works, both premises and conclusions are very weakly stated in the form of questions which Socrates' interlocutor answers affirmatively. In general, then, the argument from analogy with watchdogs is a fairly sound one.

A second analogy in the extended Republic passage on women guardians is quite obviously used as an argument--as an argument that

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[81]Aristotle, Oeconomica 1343b 8-1344a 8.

a fictitious argument, supplied by Socrates on behalf of imaginary opponents, is unsound. The principle invoked by the alleged opponents originated with Socrates:

P_1 People with different natures should have different pursuits.

P_2 Men and women have different natures.

∴ Men and women should have different pursuits.[82]

This is a version of what has come to be known as the "separate spheres" argument. The first premise adopted by the imaginary opponents is the cornerstone upon which the ideal state was erected. The second would appear to be truism, and readily receives the assent of Socrates speaking on behalf of himself and his friends. The conclusion would appear to follow without question. But the argument of analogous construction which Socrates offers by way of rebuttal calls it into considerable question:

P_1 People with different natures should have different pursuits.

P_2 Bald and hairy-headed men have different natures.

∴ Bald and hairy-headed men should have different pursuits.[83]

The implication is that the argument of the fictional opponents commits what has come to be known as the fallacy of four terms: that "nature" as intended in the major premise is essential nature, whereas sex,

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[82]Plato, Republic 453 C.

[83]Ibid., 454 C.

like hirsuteness, is accidental. The question is whether sex is as irrelevant to government as hair on the head is to cobbling. This matter of the relevance of sexual differences is given further consideration in another argument, this time a deductive one.

In view of the fact that it is the validity of Plato's arguments which Julia Annas criticizes, it cannot be the analogies which she has in mind, for analogical arguments are as incapable of validity as they are of invalidity. It is Plato's second refutation of the "separate spheres" argument, then, which Annas, like many others, finds invalid. The gist of the argument is that, inasmuch as women are, generally speaking, inferior to men in every sphere of activity, there is nothing which is peculiarly woman's province, and therefore men and women should participate in the same activities with the expectation that in all of them--or at least virtually all of them--women will be inferior.[84] Much has been said about the "pancakes and preserves" passage in Republic V, in which there is some ambiguity. Socrates puts the question to Glaucon:

> And can you mention any pursuit of mankind in which the male sex has not all . . . gifts and qualities in a higher degree than the female? Need I waste time in speaking of the art of weaving, and the management of pancakes and preserves, in which womankind does really appear to be great, and in which for her to be beaten by a man is of all things the most absurd?[85]

Christine Pierce compares various English translations of the passage in a futile attempt to ascertain whether Plato is granting women textile

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[84]Ibid., 455 D-E.

[85]Ibid., 455 C.

and culinary superiority and then dismissing it as important, or denying it to them altogether.[86] Inasmuch as professional Athenian cooks were invariably male and inasmuch as it was they who were called in on state occasions when distinguished guests were present,[87] the second of the two alternatives seems by far the more likely.

Julia Annas points out that to deny separate spheres on the grounds that women are in all things inferior to men is scarcely a feminist argument.[88] Furthermore, she charges Plato with incompleteness.

P: Women are inferior to men in every sphere of activity.

∴ They have no peculiar competences.

∴ They should participate in all activities along with men.

Annas believes that the proposition that women have no special competencies would have to be complemented by the proposition that men have no peculiar competencies before the abolition of separate spheres can be validly derived from it.[89] Further analysis of the argument serves to prove the supplementary premise unnecessary, however, when one keeps in mind the level of education attained by women in ancient Greece. Socrates has elicited the assent of Glaucon to the propositions that some women, like some men, are by nature gifted at healing, or

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[86]Christine Pierce, "Equality: Republic V," Monist, 57 (January, 1973), 2.

[87]Durant, p. 309.

[88]Annas, p. 309.

[89]Ibid.

musically inclined, or athletic, or philosophical.[90] Yet obviously there were no women in ancient Greece who like Acumenus and Eryximachus were celebrated physicians, or who like Connus and Damon were skilled musicians, or who like Nicias and Laches were eminent generals, or who like Protagoras and Gorgias were renowned philosophers. Why not? Because no women were trained for medicine as Eryximachus was, or for music as Damon was, or for war as Laches was, or for philosophy like Protagoras. In other words, it takes more than a natural predilection to produce competence: it takes training; it takes education. Annas wonders where the argument is that there are no peculiarly male competences. Where indeed? In fourth-century Athens all competencies were peculiarly male.

It is not Plato's validity, but his consistency which concerns Brian Calvert. In arguing against separate spheres on the basis of men's general superiority, Calvert suggests, Plato appears to be denying that women possess the very qualities which characterize the guardian class: facility in the acquisition of knowledge, retention of what has been learned, subordination of the body to the mind, etc.[91] In an attempt to review the scholarship on this matter, Calvert has focused on a single school which he finds represented by Allan Bloom, who claims that, according to Plato, ". . . the best women are always inferior in capacity to the best men,"[92] and by Sir Ernest Barker, who

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[90]Plato, Republic 456 A-B.

[91]Ibid., 455 B-C.

[92]Calvert, p. 235.

allows that Plato concedes that ". . . there are some women who, in their inferior degree, have a capacity for discharging the same function of guardianship which some men possess . . . ."[93] Grote's statement of the situation is more explicit: ". . . the best women will be on a level only with the second-best men, but they will be superior to all men lower than the second-best."[94] Calvert represents these arguments with the following schema, where A, B, C, D represent capacities in descending order:

MEN	WOMEN
A	
B	B
C	C
D	D[95]

Calvert's own analysis of Plato's argument is somewhat similar to John Stuart Mill's answer to the prevailing Victorian arguments against women entering the job market or becoming involved in politics. Mill makes no mention of Plato in this context, and thus Calvert makes no mention of Mill. But he argues in much the same way. Sex could logically be used as a basis for the exclusion from politics or from competition for jobs only if the best qualified woman for a certain position were less well qualified than the worst qualified man--an unlikely state of affairs by anyone's admission. Otherwise other factors turn out to be more relevant than sexual ones.[96]

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[93]Ibid.

[94]Ibid.

[95]Ibid.

[96]John Stuart Mill, The Subjection of Women, ed. Wendell Robert Carr (Cambridge, Mass., and London, England: MIT Press, 1970), p. 51.

Calvert accuses Grote and his confreres of the fallacy of division,[97] a charge which Mill might have levied on his opponents. Even if women are generally speaking inferior to men, Calvert argues, the best woman is not necessarily inferior to the best man. There may simply be fewer well qualified women.

Upon either interpretation, however, there is no question that Plato's generalization constitutes an accurate picture of contemporary Athens. There were fewer gifted women than gifted men. And certainly those few women who did make an impact on society (as Aspasia did) made less of an impact upon it than did their male counterparts (compare Aspasia with Pericles, for example). Yet while Calvert considers the possibility that Plato is describing rather than prescribing,[98] he is by no means committed to that possibility.

It is not consistency within the Republic, but that between it and the Laws and, to a lesser extent, that within the Laws itself which concerns Anne Dickason. The Republic she finds more liberal, more egalitarian; the Laws, more conservative, stricter.[99] In the Republic women are to be given training in music and gymnastics and to participate in warfare just as men do.[100] In the city of the Magnates, the education of children begins at the age of six, the age at which the sexes are separated. Although it is specified that the two sexes

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[97]Calvert, p. 236.

[98]Ibid., p. 240.

[99]Dickason, p. 46.

[100]Ibid., p. 50.

are to be trained alike, that both are to be engaged in competition among themselves, that members of each are eligible for the priesthood, and that the punishment for assault and adultery is to be meted out without regard to sex, Dickason finds a great deal of sexism in Magnates society: in education, in music appreciation, in qualification for office, in marriage and the family.[101] To be more specific, Dickason finds sexist the provision that women regulate children's nutrition and play, while men supervise their instruction; that men listen to majestic, martial music, while women enjoy a more pure and orderly variety; that women are betrothed in their late teens by male guardians, while men marry in their late thirties and act as their own agents in the procurement of wives; that men are eligible for public office at thirty, but women not until forty; that husbands are considered superior to their wives, just as parents are to their children; and that women are punished differently (Dickason says more severely) for disrespect to their parents.[102]

The main question raised by Anne Dickason, then, is this: To what extent does the role of woman in the city of the Magnetes differ from that assigned her in the Republic, and to what may one ascribe that difference? There are actually many points of similarity between the two states: in each woman is held to be man's inferior,[103] yet in each

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[101]Ibid., pp. 50-51.

[102]Ibid.

[103]Plato, Republic 465 A, 457 A, 455 D-E; Plato, Laws 780 E-781 B, 917 A.

she is given an education equal to that of a man[104] and is permitted to participate in virtually every activity that a man may engage in, even to the extent of serving as guardian,[105] magistrate,[106] and priest.[107] To facilitate her extensive participation in community life, the earlier work proposed communal living, complete with a system of state nurseries.[108] Yet in the Republic the suggestion is made that "the lighter [labours] are to be assigned to the women, who are the weaker natures,"[109] and similarly some few distinctions appear in the legislation proposed in the Laws, as Dickason has pointed out.

Some of the differences between the treatment of women suggested in the Republic and that proposed in the Laws, of course, stem from the fact that the latter, as its title suggests, is far more detailed in the legislation it prescribes. What the Republic leaves to the discretion of a philosopher-king, the Laws spells out in minute particular.

But a far more important reason for the discrepancy between the two works lies in the difference in the nature of the two states described. The Republic depicts an ideal society, initially conceived

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[104]Plato, Republic 451 E; Laws 804 E.

[105]Plato, Republic 456-457.

[106]Plato, Laws 795 D.

[107]Ibid., 759 B.

[108]Plato, Republic 457 D-467 C.

[109]Ibid., 457 A.

as an actual Greek city.[110] But Socrates is questioned from time to time concerning the likelihood of realizing this ideal. In Book V he suggests that the possibility of doing so would depend upon effecting a union of philosophy with political power.[111] In Book VI he admits that such a union could be brought about only by "some happy circumstance," "some chance," "some divine inspiration."[112] By Book IX he suggests that the ideal is very likely laid away in heaven, to serve merely as an inspiration to man, not as an earthly residence.[113]

The Laws, on the other hand, dismisses the ideal state in a few brief lines and focuses on a "second-best" one--one which resembles the ideal in some respects and to some degree, but which differs from it insofar as the possibility of its realization is concerned.[114] Cleinias has been asked to serve on a committee of ten charged with the task of drawing up legislation for a new Cretan colony. Megillus and the Athenian stranger agree to assist him in the construction of a framework for the constitution of such a state by discussing with him an imaginary city based to some degree on Cretan law, liberally supplemented with a foreign model (generally Athenian) wherever it seems superior to the Cretan one.[115] First and foremost of their

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[110]Ibid., 470 E.

[111]Ibid., 473 D-E.

[112]Ibid., 499 C.

[113]Ibid., 592 A-B.

[114]Plato, Laws 739.

[115]Ibid., 702 C-E.

concerns, of course, is the practicability of the state they are describing. Some of the chief features of the ideal republic have been cast aside as infeasible--its communism, for example.[116] Others have been modified. The state ultimately depicted does not purport to be ideal; it is a realistic compromise with the ideal.

Many of the stipulations in the Laws which strike one as less than egalitarian may be explained by the fact of that compromise. That Plato was acutely aware of the highly controversial nature of his discussion of the status of women in the Republic is indicated by the admonition voiced by Socrates that in questioning him about this matter his interlocutors are stirring up a "hornet's nest of words."[117] Many of his proposals, he warns, "being unusual, may appear ridiculous."[118] Cleinias has no wish to stir up a hornet's nest, and he cannot afford to appear ridiculous, yet to neglect the place of woman in his state would be to legislate for half the population only.[119] Many of the sexist features of the proposed legislation concerning women--their being deferred from military service until they have passed the child-bearing years, for instance, and their qualifying for public office at the relatively advanced age of forty--would appear to be a result of the abandonment of the plan for communal living which had freed the women of the Republic from the household responsibilities

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[116]Ibid., 739.

[117]Plato, Republic 450 B.

[118]Ibid., 452 A.

[119]Plato, Laws 806 C.

which would have prevented their full participation in community life.

Cleinias and his advisors make other bows to convention as well: In the absence of state nurseries, the education of young children, like that of older ones, falls under the auspices of a magistry of education. Custom would suggest that it be female magistrates who supervise the children's early education, including their games, and that the responsibility for their later studies fall to men. With the production of offspring no longer controlled by a system of eugenics (ostensibly by lot),[120] betrothals must be arranged. Again it would be convention which would dictate that a male relative of the prospective bride assume this responsibility.

The ages for bearing and begetting children, incidentally, do not change from work to work: The Republic specifies that women bear between twenty and forty, that men beget from twenty-five to fifty-five,[121] while in the city of the Magnetes women marry between sixteen and twenty; men, between twenty-five and thirty[122] or between thirty and thirty-five.[123] The birth of children would presumably take place shortly thereafter.

As for the last piece of discriminatory legislation which Dickason notes, punishment for disrespect to parents, it is debatable whether the law is more severe for women than for men, as she

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[120]Plato, Republic 459 E-460 B.

[121]Ibid., 460 E.

[122]Plato, Laws 772 D-E.

[123]Ibid., 721 B, 785 B.

suggests,[124] or less so. Men under thirty and women under forty are punished with stripes and bonds, while an unspecified penalty is set by a court in the case of older offenders.[125] The discrepancy in age is similar to that for military service and the holding of public office and may be similarly explained.

There is no indication, then, that Plato's concept of the place of women in an ideal society changed in the slightest during the years between the writing of the Republic and the composition of the Laws. In the latter work he was simply addressing himself to a different question: What would be the status of women in a "second-best" state, in an actual society striving toward the admittedly unattainable ideal? What is remarkable about the city of the Magnetes is not how far short of the ideal it falls, but how close it comes.

Apparent inconsistencies between what Socrates prescribes in the Republic and what the Athenian stranger says in the Laws, then, may be readily explained away. But how about the Timaeus? Even though the ideal state may be egalitarian and one approaching the ideal may be so to some degree, the suggestion in the Timaeus that cowardly men might be reincarnated as women by way of punishment for their cowardice[126] would appear to be blatantly and incontrovertibly sexist. Christine Garside Allen certainly finds it so.[127] But upon closer examination

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[124]Dickason, p. 51.

[125]Plato, Laws 932 C.

[126]Plato, Timaeus 42 B.

[127]Christine Garside Allen, "Plato on Women," Feminist Studies, 2, 2-3 (1975), 131.

Allen's charge too turns out to be groundless, for threatening to punish men by turning them into women reflects not upon woman's nature, but upon her condition. Telling a child that if he misbehaves, he will be put to bed without supper does not imply that hungry, sleeping children are innately inferior to well-fed, awake children. The punishment in this case--indeed, in both these cases--is somewhat like the fate of the protagonist in a classical tragedy: he is brought from a happy state to a miserable one through a flaw in his own character.

There is little doubt that any free man would have considered the lot of Athenian woman a miserable one indeed. Plato himself did so according to a probably apocryphal anecdote to the effect that he gave thanks to the gods for four blessings: having been born a human, not an animal; a Greek, not a barbarian; a man, not a woman; and a contemporary of Socrates.[128] Not only would being reborn a woman have been considered adequate punishment for cowardice in the fourth century, Plato let the punishment fit the crime in a most remarkable way, for not only were Athenian women secluded in a manner befitting a coward, they were protected physically by bars and bolts on their doors,[129] and economically and socially by being under the aegis of a male relative--normally a father or a husband.[130] A widow was returned to her original guardian or his descendants,[131] and an heiress was

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[128]Diogenes Laërtius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers I, 33.

[129]Kitto, pp. 219, 230.

[130]Harrison, pp. 108-115.

[131]Pomeroy, Goddesses, p. 62.

required by law to marry her closest male kinsman, not only to acquire male protection, but to keep the wealth within the family.[132] In short, in ancient Athens a woman led a life fit for a coward.

The arguments concerning the status of woman advanced in Plato's works, then, are probably no better but certainly no worse than the arguments for immortality or for the transmigration of souls or for the unity of virtue or for any other Platonic--or Socratic--doctrine. There is heavy reliance on analogical reasoning. There is a fair amount of internal consistency. And there is an amazing amount of consistency from work to work.

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[132]Harrison, pp. 132-138.

CHAPTER III

WHY IT IS SAID

Having determined what is said about woman in the Platonic dialogues and how it is said, having considered both the language into which it is expressed and the arguments offered to support it, one must proceed to examine the reasons for saying what has been said. Ingenious explanations are offered. Anne Dickason believes that Plato's views on the proper role of women in society are grounded in his beliefs concerning their physical nature.[1] Susan Okin thinks that they are determined by the structure of the society he envisions.[2] While Ernest Barker is convinced that Plato proposes the "emancipation" of women in the ideal state because justice demands his doing so,[3] Julia Annas complains that he ignores the principles of justice in assigning women their place in his utopian community.[4] And Arlene Saxonhouse, dubious that Plato wants to emancipate women at all, argues that throughout the Republic woman serves merely as a symbol for philosophy.[5]

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[1]Dickason, pp. 45-53.

[2]Okin, p. 346 et passim.

[3]Barker, p. 256.

[4]Annas, pp. 313-317.

[5]Arlene Saxonhouse, "The Philosopher and the Female in the Political Thought of Plato," Political Theory, 4 (May, 1976), 195-212.

Biology

Perhaps the most bizarre attempt to account for the sexual egalitarianism expressed in Plato's Republic comes from Anne Dickason, who finds its explanation in the myth of the creation of the sexes told by Aristophanes in the Symposium, generally thought to be a slightly earlier work. Aristophanes, it will be remembered, imagines that human beings were once great, round, jolly beings with two heads and two sets of limbs and organs. Some had two sets of male organs, some two sets of female organs, and some a set of each. These beings were so happy that they aroused the fear and jealousy of the gods, who split them in two to weaken them. And now human beings are incomplete and unhappy--at least until each finds its other half.[6] While Dickason by no means implies that Plato intends this myth to be taken literally, she does seem to believe that the essential features of it reflect its author's views on sexual differentiation--specifically on the basic equality of the sexes. This kind of thinking, she implies, serves as a premise for the egalitarian proposals in the Republic: if men and women are created equal, then it is only meet and right that they be given equal privileges and responsibilities within the state.[7]

The significant features of the Aristophanic myth as Dickason reads it are:

(1) That "woman [double females] are created directly by the gods, the same as men and hermaphrodites." To be sure, they are made

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[6]Plato, Symposium 190 A-193 C.

[7]Dickason, p. 46.

from earth, while men come from the sun, but it is apparently agency of creation and temporal factor, not the material component which Dickason considers important.

(2) That "women are a whole being [sic] in themselves, just as men are: they are not inferior or secondary in importance, but equal."

(3) They are no less complete than men after the split is made.[8]

This essentially egalitarian theory of creation results, according to Dickason, in an essentially egalitarian theory of woman's role in society: the view expressed in the Republic that men and women "should receive equal education and treatment before the law."[9]

There are several important matters which Dickason fails to consider, however. One is the use which Plato makes of myth. His own most important consideration of its nature may be found in the Phaedo where Socrates suggests that it is an attempt to provide insights into what lies outside the scope of human knowledge.[10] While the creation of the sexes obviously lies outside the scope of human knowledge, the basic equality between them does not. Investigations into this matter, therefore, would be better approached directly through dialectic than indirectly through myth. And indeed this is the approach of the Republic.

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[8]Ibid., p. 48.

[9]Ibid., p. 49.

[10]Plato, Phaedo 107 B-108 E.

In an examination of the uses Plato makes of myth, Paul Friedländer distinguishes three levels of myths in the Platonic dialogues: (1) prereflective myth, which is obviously false and plays an unimportant role in the dialogue of which it is a part; (2) post-dialectic myth, which follows argument and supplements it; and (3) myth which substitutes for dialectic and is central to the dialogue.[11] The tale of Aristophanes he calls an example of the first of the three varieties.[12] Thus in the view of at least one eminent critic it is unimportant and clearly false, and Dickason neglects to make a case for its importance and its truth.

But not only does she fail to consider the nature of the myth in the story of Aristophanes, Dickason completely ignores the dramatic structure of the dialogue and does not address the question of whether the views implied by the account are Plato's own. The wide variety in the style as well as the content of the first five speeches of the Symposium would appear to suggest that in the first half of the dialogue Plato was presenting the reader with a medley of contemporary views of love, somewhat like those of justice in Republic I. In a sixth speech Socrates proceeds to repudiate all of those views, complaining that the previous speakers have not told the truth.[13] The account he gives of heterosexual love, allegedly taught him by Diotima of Mantineia, is at variance with the one which Aristophanes gives.

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[11]Friedländer, pp. 171-210.

[12]Ibid., pp. 178-179.

[13]Plato, Symposium 198 D.

Man's love for woman Socrates explains not in terms of "seeking the other half," but as an effort to satisfy an innate desire for immortality by begetting offspring.[14] The views expressed in Socrates' speech are frequently thought to be Plato's own. If they are, any conflict between them and the ideas voiced by Aristophanes would tend to render suspect the theory that Plato was putting into the mouth of the comic playwright his own theories concerning the equality of the sexes. It would seem more likely that he was poking fun at the author of the Ecclesiazusae by satirizing the substance as well as the style of some of his burlesques.

A third ingredient of Dickason's account which cries out for explanation is the importance she attaches to Plato's view of woman's physical body. The very title of her article, "Anatomy and Destiny," bespeaks this emphasis. A suggestion that biology determines the place of woman in Aristotle's political scheme could scarcely be challenged. Aristotle was the son of a physician and may well have received a medical education himself. His entire philosophy suggests a biological orientation. But Plato was an idealist. The dialogues teem with passages in which the soul is celebrated at the expense of the body. In the Cratylus,[15] in the Phaedrus,[16] in the Gorgias,[17] the body is

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[14]Ibid., 207 D.

[15]Plato, Cratylus 400 C.

[16]Plato, Phaedrus 250 C.

[17]Plato, Gorgias 493 A.

spoken of as the tomb of the soul; in the Phaedo[18] and the Cratylus,[19] it is called the prison of the soul. In the Republic the assertion is made that body has less "truth and essence" than soul.[20] In the Phaedo,[21] the Timaeus,[22] and the Laws,[23] the claim is made that the soul is the natural ruler of the body. Such statements come almost invariably from the lips of personae frequently thought to express Plato's own views, Socrates and the Athenian stranger. One would expect, then, that in utopia as Plato conceived it, the destiny of woman, like that of man, would be determined by her sovereign soul, not by its bodily subject.

Dickason goes on to make speculations concerning the source of Plato's alleged views on woman's physical nature. She suggests that they may have originated with Hippocrates, the eminent Greek physician mentioned by Plato in the Phaedrus, who found the male and female parent equally essential to the formation of the embryo.[24] Her suggestion, of course, is based on sheer speculation, for Plato, unlike the presocratics before him and Aristotle after, advanced no theory of generation, no theory of sexual differentiation, no theory of physical development. The soul is his sole concern.

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[18]Plato, Phaedo 81, 82, 83.

[19]Plato, Cratylus 400 C.

[20]Plato, Republic 585 D.

[21]Plato, Phaedo 80 A, 94 B-C.

[22]Plato, Timaeus 34 E.

[23]Plato, Laws 726, 892 A, 896 C, 959 A, 966 E, 967 B.

[24]Dickason, p. 51.

Communal Living

While Anne Dickason may be unique in attempting to tie Plato's feminism, or the lack thereof, to his biological theories, there is no dearth of critics who are convinced that there is some sort of relationship between his sexual egalitarianism and his more general political theories. There has been a great deal of discussion about the precise nature of that relationship. There seems to be almost universal agreement that the proposal to admit women to the guardian class and the proposal that that class live communally are somehow related, and the general consensus seems to be that the former entails the latter. The position of A. E. Taylor is perhaps typical:

> The thought that the duties of statesmanship and warfare should be extended to women must be regarded as strictly Socratic, and the rest of the proposals of Republic V are no more than necessary consequences of this position. If they are to be rejected, we must refute the assumption on which they are based, that the distinction of sex is one which only affects the individual in respect to the part to be played in contribution to procreation and the rearing of a new generation; we must be prepared to hold that the difference goes deeper and modifies the whole spiritual life profoundly.[25]

Julia Annas, however, in sharp disagreement with Taylor, denies that there is any relationship between the women guardians and the communal living in Plato's Republic:

> Plato justifies the abolition of the nuclear family solely on the grounds of eugenics and of the unity of the state . . ., and there seems no reason why these grounds should not hold even if women were not full Guardians and had a subordinate status; Plato's second proposal is thus in principle independent of his first.[26]

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[25]Taylor, Plato, p. 278.

[26]Annas, p. 308.

Yet the denial of Annas that the admission of women to the guardian class entails communal life by no means warrants the conclusion that there is no relationship between these two proposals. In a curious passage in Emile Rousseau suggests that the causal relationship is just the opposite from what Taylor has suggested: that the abolition of the family, in other words entails the emancipation of women:

> Plato, I know, in his Republic, prescribes to women the same exercise as the men. Having deprived his government of particular families, and being ignorant how to form women, he was reduced to the necessity of making them men.[27]

In "Philosopher Queens and Private Wives: Plato on Women and the Family," Susan Moller Okin more or less echoes the strange sentiments of Rousseau. The Athenian matron, she reminds the reader, traditionally supervised the household slaves, who were engaged in such activities as cooking, spinning, weaving, and the rearing of small children. Okin argues that by abolishing private homes to keep and private families to care for, Plato was depriving the women of their customary activity and that he therefore "had no alternative but to consider them persons in their own right."[28] And as persons they had the privilege of admission to the guardian class and the obligation to perform duties similar to those of the male guardians.

It appears that Okin makes a very low assessment of Plato's ingenuity. Of course there were alternatives to the proposals he made concerning women in the fifth book of the Republic. Let us consider

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[27]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emile, trans. from the French by Barbara Foxley (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, 1969), p. 326.

[28]Okin, p. 357.

a few: In the absence of private families, Plato could have provided that a community of guardian wives minister to the needs of the community of guardians, cooking, spinning, weaving, and rearing children communally. These were functions which in Plato's actual plan were to be absorbed by the lower classes, by whom the guardians were to be supplied with food and raiment in lieu of wages.[29] Had he wished women to remain in their traditional role, Plato could easily have provided that these services be performed communally within the guardian class.

Or women need not have been admitted to the guardian class at all. If the male-female ratio in the Republic was to be anything like it was in Athens itself, and if the guardian class was to be as relatively small as the reader is led to believe, there would have been more than a sufficient number of lower-class men to provide each women with a husband without recourse to the guardian population at all. And the lower classes could then have served a procreative function as well as a nutritive and an accoutretive one. There was certainly no dearth of Athenian models for men being borne children by women other than their wives. Consider the hetaerae, who were prevented by law from marrying Athenian citizens, but not from bearing them sons. And consider the institution of concubinage. The prizes awarded to guardians for valor would by no means have had to be provided within their own class.

While the liberation of women may have been made possible by communal living, then, with unexpected pregnancies being precluded by having fixed periods for cohabitation and with child care being

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[29]Plato, Republic 416 D-E.

facilitated by state nurseries, it is by no means entailed by that institution. Nor, of course, is the liberation of women the only reason for the guardians to live communally. The proposal that they do so was made for entirely different reasons at the end of Book III, long before woman's nature and function became an issue.

Plato had options, then. The proposal to liberate women was not unwillingly thrust upon him. It was a choice he made, however unlikely a choice it may have appeared to the fourth-century Athenian or to the contemporary American.

Justice

Yet another attempt to account for Plato's resolution that women be guardians bases it neither in biological nor in political, but in ethical theory. Relatively weak as they are, women must be afforded a place among the guardians of the Republic because, according to Ernest Barker, denying them a place there would amount to a miscarriage of justice,[30] for they would not be doing what nature had qualified them to do. Julia Annas, by contrast, insists that the manner in which Plato assigns women their role in the ideal republic violates the principles of justice.[31]

The objection of Julia Annas that Plato does not consider the injustice of sexual inequality is part of a larger argument that Plato is by no means accurately described as a feminist.[32] Although Annas

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[30]Barker, p. 219.

[31]Annas, pp. 313 ff.

[32]Ibid., pp. 307 ff.

fails to explore the matter of the meaning of that term, it would seem that definition of feminism might be the most appropriate place to begin a consideration of her position. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines the word as "the theory, cult, or practice of those who advocate such legal and social changes as will establish political, economic, and social equality of the sexes."[33] The American College Dictionary calls it "the doctrine advocating extension of the activities of women in social and political life."[34] Funk and Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary finds it to be "A doctrine advocating the granting of the same social, political, and economic rights to women as the ones granted to men."[35] The Random House Dictionary of the English Language considers it "the doctrine advocating social and political rights of women equal to those of men."[36] The consensus, then, would seem to be that sexual egalitarianism is the essential feature of feminism. If so, it would be hard to deny Plato the epithet. But the Oxford English Dictionary dates from 1895 a meaning of feminism as "Advocacy of the claims and rights of women."[37] Obviously Plato is not a feminist in this

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[33]Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, ed. John P. Bethel (Springfield, Mass.: G. and C. Meriam Co., 1951), p. 305.

[34]The American College Dictionary, ed. C. L. Barnhart (New York: Random House; Syracuse, The L. W. Singer Co., 1967), p. 444.

[35]Funk and Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary, ed. Ramona Michaelis, et al. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), p. 489.

[36]The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, The Unabridged Edition, ed. Jess Stein, Laurence Urdang, et al. (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 523.

[37]The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles, ed. C. T. Onions (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), I, 688.

newer, more narrow sense of the word, for as Annas aptly points out, he ignores the desires and the rights of the women for whom he prescribes in the ideal state. But presumably this fact would not affect his feminism in the standard, egalitarian sense of the word inasmuch as he also ignores the desires and rights of men.

It is apparently his failure to consider women's rights which leads to the complaint Annas makes that Plato fails to call sexism unjust. Thus even though he may do the right thing in assigning men and women the same jobs in his ideal state, he does so, she believes, for the wrong reasons. But since, as Annas is quick to concede, Plato ignores men's rights as well as women's--since, indeed, he has no word for "right" in that sense of the term[38]--she shifts her ground to the matter of justice,[39] suggesting that it is utility rather than justice which dictates Plato's plan. It might strike one as odd that a proposal made and defended in the middle of a ten-book work expounding justice should be denigrated as unjust. Book I, of course, is devoted largely to a survey of contemporary theories of justice and a refutation of them: first the notion put into the mouth of Cephalus that justice is truthtelling and repaying debts,[40] then the suggestion of Polemarchus that justice is "giving to each man what is proper to him,"[41] and finally the definition offered by Thrasymachus that justice is "the

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[38]Annas, p. 333.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Plato, Republic 331 B-D.

[41]Ibid., 332 C.

interest of the stronger."[42] But in Book II Socrates, responding belatedly to the demand of Thrasymachus, endeavors to answer his own question and offer his own definition of justice, an answer which is not complete until the end of Book IX. Distinguishing between justice in the individual and justice in the state, Socrates proposes to begin with the latter since it is larger, assuming that justice will be easier to identify on a grand scale, and only then to proceed to the individual, relying heavily on a microcosm-macrocosm analogy. It is in the description of the just state, of course, that the suggestion is made that women as well as men serve as Guardians.

Oddly enough, Julia Annas, charging that "it is rather unclear how the proposals of Book V relate to justice at all,"[43] begins her examination with the soul of the individual woman guardian. Perhaps she, in contrast to Socrates, feels that justice in the individual is easier to miss and that having failed to detect it in Plato's female guardian, she may proceed with a macrocosm-microcosm analogy and assume that it also is missing from the state which that guardian heads. And, to be sure, Annas fails to find justice in the soul of the philosopher-queen.

Beginning with a recapitulation of pertinent parts of Book IV, Annas describes the just soul as one in which the principles of reason (λογιστικόν), of high spirit (θυμοειδές), and of appetite (ἐπιθυμητικόν), are properly balanced. But she expresses serious doubts as to whether

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[42]Ibid., 338 C.

[43]Annas, p. 314.

the soul of woman as Plato conceives her boasts a spirited part. To be sure, in Book V Socrates is quite explicit in his suggestion to Glaucon that some women are spirited and some spiritless, as is presumably the case with men, but Annas finds this statement inconsistent with the twentieth-century picture of the fourth-century Athenian woman, as well as with Plato's implication in the Laws that men are proud and courageous, while women are restrained and modest.[44]

There is much truth in what Professor Annas says. Plato's female contemporaries were indeed restrained, physically so. As has been observed, they were normally sequestered inside their own homes. Within those homes they were more often than not confined to the women's quarters, which were equipped with bars and bolts.[45] Modesty was forced upon them by tradition and by custom, which forbade their going out without a male escort. But does that indicate that they were spiritless? Not necessarily.

Julia Annas is by no means the first twentieth-century scholar to draw inferences from what is known about the life style of the Athenian woman and apply them to her character, concluding that any living being so protected, so sequestered, must be spiritless. F. A. Wright, basing his reasoning on the extant speeches of the leading orators, characterizes Athenian women as for the most part "mere passive animals"[46] and blames the decline of Athens in large measure

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[44]Ibid.

[45]Kitto, p. 219.

[46]Wright, p. 20.

upon its "lack of good women."[47] Three questions occur to the critical reader: (1) were Athenian women actually as spiritless as has been held? (2) if they were, were they the ruin of Athens or was Athens the ruin of them? and (3) if the latter, would a change in the status of women in ancient Attica, such as the one proposed by Socrates in the Republic, have produced a change in the character of these women and possibly have effected the salvation of both themselves and their state?

The strong heroines in Greek tragedy have frequently been cited as evidence that Athenian women were not devoid of spirit after all. Clytemnestra is depicted as the murderer of her husband. In Homer's epic, to be sure, it is Clytemnestra's lover, Aegisthus, who does the deed, but in the play of Aeschylus it is she herself who wields the axe.[48] Electra is depicted as the murderer of her mother. In this case it is Orestes who draws the knife, but he is prompted to do so by his sister, who, in contrast to her brother, feels no remorse.[49] Medea is depicted as the murderer of her children. If Jason has provided her with a motive, it is only insofar as she has chosen to do the deed which she knows would be most devastating to him.[50] Antigone is depicted

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[47]Ibid., p. 21.

[48]Aeschylus, Agamemnon, in Fifteen Greek Plays, trans. from the Greek by Gilbert Murray, Benjamin Bickley Rogers, et al., ed. Lane Cooper (New York: Oxford University Press, 1943), pp. 76-77.

[49]Sophocles, Electra, in Ibid., pp. 342-344; Euripides, Electra, in Ibid., pp. 391-393.

[50]Euripides, Medea, in Ibid., pp. 488-489.

as traitor to the state. No male motivation whatsoever is involved in her deed--either direct or indirect.[51]

Of course, these women are figures, historical or mythological, taken from earlier centuries. And these women are foreign: Clytemnestra was Spartan;[52] Electra, Mycenean;[53] Medea, Colchian;[54] Antigone, Theban.[55] Who was Athenian? Actually there were a few Athenian women portrayed on the tragic stage, generally minor characters in lesser-known works: Macaria, in Euripides' Children of Heracles, one of his political plays, was an Athenian maiden who chose to die rather than become "friendless," therefore unmarriageable, therefore incapable of fulfilling her function, procreation.[56] And Evadne, a childless widow in his Suppliant Women, a play written for the greater glory of Athens, prefers death to life without either husband or son.[57] In another context Sarah Pomeroy calls suicide a "feminine and somewhat cowardly mode of death."[58] Yet the purpose of this drama is not to reveal the

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[51]Sophocles, Antigone in Ibid., pp. 236-237.

[52]E. H. Blakeney, A Smaller Classical Dictionary (London: J. M. Dent and Sons; New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1949), p. 156.

[53]Ibid., p. 201.

[54]Ibid., p. 323.

[55]Ibid., p. 6.

[56]David Grene and Richmond Lattimore, eds., The Complete Greek Tragedies, Euripides (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1955), I, 133-137.

[57]Ibid., Euripides IV, 94-97.

[58]Pomeroy, p. 101.

weakness of women, but to trace the effects of war upon human life, male as well as female. Its effects, Euripides seems to imply, are particularly devastating to a woman.

One must exercise extreme caution, of course, in basing conclusions about a society upon its fiction, be it dramatic or any other kind. Otherwise the foreign viewer of contemporary television drama might legitimately conclude that in twentieth-century America cars talk, witches take up housewifery, and harried school-masters turn into twelve-year-old boys at the blink of an eye. Yet one thing is certain: A Clytemnestra, an Electra, a Medea, an Antigone were not too far-fetched to be portrayed upon an Athenian stage and were believable enough to appeal to an Athenian audience.

But real life is undoubtedly a better source of information about a civilization, however cautiously its dramatic literature might be interpreted. The Athenian orators drew from real life. It was real women whom their clients were suing or bringing suit on behalf of (for normally it was a woman's guardian who represented her in court).[59] Wright classifies the women mentioned in Attic oratory into two categories: passive and profligate. Exemplary of the former are the womenfolk of the unfortunate bachelor in Demosthenes' "Against Conon." Victim of foul play at the "Fighting Cocks' Club," the gentleman in question was taken home, where his mother and his other female relatives could only weep and wail. It was left to the men who brought him to take him to the baths, summon a doctor, and eventually remove him to the

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[59]Harrison, I, 114.

house of a friend[60] (where no doubt he received better care at the hands of the women of another household). Of much the same ilk are the women of the household of another bachelor, a profligate described in Lysias' speech "Against Simon" as enjoying an "abominable relationship," although the women of his own family are described as so modest that they are embarrassed to be seen, even by the men of their own household.[61] At the other extreme Wright finds women who are completely wanton and degenerate: In a speech entitled "On the Crown" Demosthenes accuses the mother of Aeschines of having "practiced daylight nuptials in an outhouse."[62] In another speech attributed to Demosthenes, a woman known as Neaera is not only described as being utterly wanton and degenerate in her own right, but is further identified as the mother of Phano, a woman of equally bad character, who nevertheless manages to marry the King-Archon.[63] And Hyperides' speech "Against Athenogenes" presents a vivid picture of a highly successful courtesan-broker, Antigona.[64]

From the fact that women who are both capable and virtuous are seldom mentioned by the orators, Wright concludes that they had virtually ceased to exist.[65] He fails to consider two things: One is that even

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[60]Wright, p. 199.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Durant, p. 484.

[63]Ibid., p. 200.

[64]Ibid.

[65]Ibid.

today women who are both capable and virtuous rarely appear in courts of law--except, of course, as lawyers or judges. Unless falsely accused--or falsely accusing--women, like men, generally appear in court as either wrongdoers or victims of wrong doing. If they are clever, they are not apt to be detected and thus are rarely defendants; if they are virtuous, they are not apt to be litigous and thus are rarely plaintiffs. It would certainly be misleading to draw a generalization about the women living in Knoxville, Tennessee, in the eighth decade of the twentieth century from the array of women appearing in the Knox County Criminal Court during the summer of 1977. They ranged from an adoring wife who described her embezzling husband as "the most wonderful man who ever lived" to a confessed prostitute. Like the women described by the Athenian orators, they were passive or profligate. They were seldom both capable and virtuous.

But they were perhaps like their Attic predecessors in another respect as well. They were not always accurately described by the attorneys representing them or prosecuting them. Athenian orators, like perhaps Tennessee lawyers, were very likely less interested in presenting an accurate picture of contemporary life than they were in winning cases. To whose advantage would it be to describe a woman as capable and virtuous? Her own attorney would doubtless make every attempt to depict her as virtuous. But the more capable she appears, the less successful an ad misericordiam argument is apt to be--and that form of appeal was at least as familiar to the Attic orator as to the American defense attorney.[66] Her prosecutor would scarcely be interested

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[66]Plato, Apology 34 E-35 B.

in portraying her as virtuous. Mud-slinging has by no means been restricted to twentieth-century political campaigns.

Perhaps in their own way, then, the Attic orators presented just as distorted a picture of the Athenian woman as the tragic poets had. What other sources are there? There is comedy, which must be regarded as a source with even more caution than tragedy, for the situations presented by the comedian are intentionally absurd. To be sure, most of the female characters in such works as Lysistrata and the Ecclesiazusae are passive; the protagonist of each, on the other hand, not only acts in her own person, but organizes and manipulates the other women and eventually the male characters in the play as well.

Perhaps, subjective as they were, the historians are our most reliable source of information on fifth- and fourth-century Athenian life. Unfortunately, they say very little about women. Yet there are exceptions. Just as Xanthippe managed to intrude into a Platonic dialogue, albeit briefly, so does she manage to appear on the pages of some of Xenophon's works. And the portrait of her drawn by Xenophon is anything but that of a spiritless woman. In the Memorabilia he represents her own son Lamprocles insisting that "no soul on earth could endure my mother's cross-grained temper"[67] and upon being asked, "Which, think you, would be harder to bear--a wild beast's savagery or a mother's?" immediately answering, "To my mind, a mother's--at least if she be such as mine."[68] Lamprocles continues that "she uses words which any one

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[67]Xenophon, Memorabilia II, ii, 7.

[68]Ibid.

would sooner sell his life than listen to"[69] and gives an affirmative answer when asked, "Do you suppose it is harder for you to listen to your mother's speeches than for actor to listen to actor on the tragic stage, when the floodgates of abuse are opened?"[70]

In Xenophon's Symposium it is Antisthenes, founder of the Cynic school, who speaks of Xanthippe, characterizing her as "of all the wives that are, indeed that ever will be, I imagine, the most shrewish."[71] Scarcely a "mere passive animal," and yet by the same token, scarcely profligate.

For further confirmation of her thesis that Platonic women are incapable of virtue, Julia Annas turns to the Meno, a dialogue which might be used far more effectively in the rebuttal of it. In that dialogue, she contends:

> Plato seems to endorse . . . the idea that the scope of men's and women's virtue is different--that of a man is to manage his own and the city's affairs capably, that of a woman is to be a good and thrifty housewife and to obey her husband. This makes it hard to see how women can possess the thumeoidic part of the soul necessary for the complete justice of a Guardian.[72]

This reference to the Meno is puzzling for a number of reasons. In the first place, the notion that men and women have different virtues is introduced by Meno, a disciple of Gorgias, not by Socrates. "Let us take first the virtue of a man," says Meno in response to

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[69]Ibid., II, ii, 8.

[70]Ibid., II, ii, 9.

[71]Xenophon, Symposium ii, 10.

[72]Annas, p. 314, n. 16.

Socrates' question concerning the nature of virtue:

> . . . he should know how to administer the state, and in the administration of it how to benefit his friends and harm his enemies; and he must also be careful not to suffer harm himself. A woman's virtue, if you wish to know about that, may also be easily described: her duty is to order her house, and keep what is indoors, and obey her husband.[73]

Socrates then proceeds to a very effective refutation of Meno's relativistic view by showing that the virtuous woman runs a house just as the virtuous man runs a state--with temperance and justice.[74] Thus precisely what Annas finds Plato endorsing and how he endorses it is far from clear. If she means simply that Plato realizes that Athenian women practiced virtue while engaging in different activities from those in which Attic men engaged, her statement is unquestionably true, but trivial. If she means that Plato favored these separate spheres of activity, it is unquestionably interesting but false. But neither interpretation throws light upon why it is difficult to see "how women can possess the thumoeidic part of the soul necessary for the complete justice of a Guardian." Do being confined to the house and being obedient prevent the development of high spirit? In that case a change in environment and a change in behavior might be expected to produce a change in the soul. And in the Republic Plato is proposing just such a change. However that may be, clearly in the Meno Socrates unequivocally asserts that women as well as men may be just, a fact which Annas chooses to ignore.

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[73]Plato, Meno 71 E.

[74]Ibid., 73 A-B.

As Annas turns her attention from justice in the individual to justice in the state, she fares no better. She begins upon a curious note:

> . . . It is important that the state in question is the ideal state. As far as I can see, there is nothing in Republic V which would commit Plato to the view that it was unjust for fourth-century Athenian women to be treated as they were. The proposals for women arise when the just constitution of the ideal state has been determined. There seems no reason why analogous proposals should be made in an unreformed state.[75]

Annas seems oblivious to the fact that Athens--or any other actual state--is unjust precisely insofar as it falls short of the ideal. Justice in the state parallels that in the individual. It prevails when the lovers of wisdom, with the aid of persons of high spirit, rule the masses. And in Book V Socrates not only commits himself to a belief that some women have high spirit, he asserts the existence of female lovers of wisdom as well.[76] Insofar as these philosophers remain uneducated, as Athenian women did, insofar as they do not rule but are ruled, as Athenian women were, to that extent will the state in which they dwell remain unjust. Certainly no one can doubt that Plato was sensitive to other injustices of the Athenian state, as the events of 399 and his subsequent self-imposed twelve-year exile will attest. There seems no good reason to suppose that he was blind to this one either.

A second curious criticism which Annas makes of sex-linked

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[75]Annas, p. 315.

[76]Plato, Republic 456 A-B.

justice in the ideal state is that "Plato limits his proposals for women to the Guardian class."[77] Not only does this procedure parallel Plato's proposals for men, it parallels the needs which existed in Athenian society as well. Actually Plato says very little about the lower classes of his ideal state. Presumably he leaves their affairs in the hands of the guardians who by nature and by education are best equipped to handle them. It would be foolish, he seems to feel, to select the wisest of the citizenry and give them training and experience to enhance that wisdom only to tie their hands by enforcing laws which might oppose what wisdom dictates. And wisdom, it would appear, would provide for women as well as men.

Moreover, Annas seems to have curious misconceptions about the lives of women in the lower echelons of Athenian society. "There is nothing," she remarks, "to suggest that the worker class do not live like fourth-century Greeks, with the women at home doing the cooking and weaving."[78] Presumably Annas means like fourth-century Athenians, for the life of the Greek woman varied considerably from city-state to city-state. In Sparta, for example, she did not weave.[79] But even about Athens Annas does not seem to have her facts straight. The Athenians observed a class distinction which appears to have escaped her. Women in the lower walks of Athenian life were by no means as restricted as was the wealthy Athenian matron--nor could they be.

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[77]Annas, p. 315.

[78]Ibid.

[79]Plato, Laws 806 A.

Aristotle complains in the Politics that it is impossible to keep a poor man's wife indoors,[80] as she must double as the servant he cannot afford to hire. Wives of the poor, then, apparently did the shopping which the wealthy man did with the aid of his slave.[81] Widows who were not well provided for had to supplement a meagre income by their own labor. And freedwomen had little option but to earn their own livelihood by whatever means was at hand: wool-working, retailing, even cobbling.[82]

A final attack on the justice of sexual equality in the ideal state is made on the grounds of the utility of the emancipation of women. Annas, inspired perhaps by the quotation with which Socrates turns from the first to the second "wave" of anticipated criticism, "the useful is the noble and the hurtful is the base," expresses her conviction that it is utility, not justice, which motivates the inclusion of women among the guardians of the ideal state.[83] Obviously Annas is writing from a non-utilitarian point of view. There is conflicting evidence concerning Plato's own utilitarianism. The passage in question, other portions of the Republic (chiefly Book IX), the Protagoras,[84] and the Laws[85] seem to indicate that the doctrine held

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[80]Aristotle, Politics 1300a 5.

[81]Kitto, pp. 229-230.

[82]Zimmern, pp. 340-341.

[83]Annas, p. 315.

[84]Plato, Protagoras 353-358.

[85]Plato, Laws 733, 734.

appeal for him; the Gorgias[86] and the Philebus[87] seem to indicate that it did not. Annas fails to pursue this interesting matter, merely maintaining that Plato regarded the female half of the population as "a huge pool of untapped resources"[88] which might be mined for the development of the state. But here Annas, in addition to making a distinction which she fails to defend, blurs a distinction which she ought to observe: that between the Republic and the Laws. It is in the latter, not the former, that failing to make provision for the female citizenry is considered wasteful.[89] The arguments in the Republic are based on the nature of women; it is those in the Laws which are concerned with the needs of the state. In Republic V Socrates has asked, "Is [woman] capable of sharing either wholly or partially in the actions of men, or not?"[90] and, finding her capable, has concluded that by and large "their duties are to be the same."[91] This approach, he suggests, "will be the best way of commencing the inquiry, and will probably lead to the fairest conclusion."[92] The approach proposed by Socrates is far more characteristic of perfectionism or self-realization ethics than of utilitarianism. And the conclusion at which it is aimed, described by Socrates as fair, might quite as easily be termed just.

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[86]Plato, Gorgias 492 D-E, 495 A.

[87]Plato, Philebus 12 A, D; 27 E.

[88]Annas, p. 316.

[89]Plato, Laws 805 A, 806 C-D.

[90]Plato, Republic 453 A.

[91]Ibid., 457 B.

[92]Ibid., 453 A.

Symbolism

Arlene Saxonhouse is not concerned with what motivates Plato to include women in his guardian class, for she doubts that his proposal to do so is intended seriously. A number of the suggestions made in the Republic lead to her skepticism, many of them paradoxical in nature. She lists half a dozen:

(1) "While Socrates allows women to enter the ruling class, he affirms that they will always be weaker than men (455e; 456a; 457a)"

(2) "While he argues that they are not by nature necessarily different from men, he calls the plundering of a corpse the work of a small and 'womanish' mind (469d)"

(3) ". . . the presence of women in the guardian class is sometimes forgotten (460ab; 465ab; 467)"

(4) ". . . they succumb easily to grief while men remain strong (388a, 605e)"

(5) ". . . they are like children in their enjoyment of the multifarious and multicolored (431c; 557c)"

(6) ". . . they bring about the degeneration of various political systems. . . ."[93]

A careful consideration of the list presented by Saxonhouse serves to shorten it considerably. First, nowhere does Socrates affirm that women "will always be weaker than men," as Saxonhouse claims he does. She refers to three passages in an attempt to support her contention. First she cites Republic 455e, although actually the passage

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[93]Saxonhouse, pp. 195-196.

to which she refers begins at 455d with an exchange between Socrates and Glaucon:

> You are quite right, he replied, in maintaining the general inferiority of the female sex: although women are in many things superior to many men, yet on the whole what you say is true.
>
> And if so, my friend, I said, there is no special faculty of administration in a state which a woman has because she is a woman, or which a man has by virtue of his sex, but the gifts of nature are alike diffused in both; all the pursuits of men are the pursuits of women also, but in all of them a woman is inferior to a man.[94]

There has been much disagreement over the precise meaning of this passage, as has been indicated above. But whatever it may mean, it does not mean that women will always be weaker than men. In contrast to the future tense employed by Saxonhouse, both of Plato's personae use the present. It has been argued above that the female inferiority of which Socrates and Glaucon speak was a matter of historical fact. Far from implying that this fact is eternal and immutable, Socrates appears to be proposing measures which will lead to its modification. Moreover, Glaucon's phrase "the general inferiority of the female sex [italics mine]" and his concessive "although many women are in many things superior to many men" by no means warrant the glib generalization that Saxonhouse offers. If many women are many times superior to many men, then clearly men will not always be superior to women.

The second passage to which Saxonhouse refers the reader is also written in the present tense:

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[94]Plato, Republic 455 D-E.

> Men and women alike possess the qualities which make a guardian; they differ only in their comparative strength or weakness.[95]

As a matter of fact, this sentence does not even state in so many words that it is the men that possess the strength and the women that exhibit the weakness, although that implication is unmistakably obvious.

The implication is made explicit in the third passage, which nevertheless still employs the present tense in the clause concerning women's weakness:

> . . . in the distribution of labours the lighter are to be assigned to the women, who are the weaker natures . . . .[96]

Here again Socrates is basing a proposal on the state of affairs in contemporary Athens. But an important aspect of his proposal is the education of women in music and gymnastics, and the end result of that education may reasonably be expected to greatly reduce the weakness of women if not eliminate it altogether.

The second point made by Saxonhouse is perhaps even more questionable than the first, for this time it is her precise meaning which is unclear. To the layman the statement that women "are not by nature necessarily different from men" may be taken to mean that while women may be different from men, they may just as easily not be different from men. Clearly this is not Plato's meaning, for time and time again Socrates concedes that the nature of women is vastly different from that of men. In his conversation with his imaginary opponents, for

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[95]Ibid., 456 A.

[96]Ibid., 457 A.

example, he and his friends are asked, ". . . do not the natures of men and women differ very much indeed?" and they answer, "Of course they do."[97] Never does Socrates, by word or by implication, deny his opponents' assessment that men's and women's natures "are . . . entirely different." He simply contends that the differences which undeniably do exist are not of such nature as to affect women's capacity for the administration of the state.[98]

To the logician, on the other hand, the statement that women "are not by nature necessarily different from men" might rather mean that although women are obviously different in nature from men, this difference is not a necessary, but a contingent one. Upon this reading, however, the inconsistency noted by Saxonhouse disappears altogether. If there is any difference between men and women, regardless of whether it is necessary or contingent, there undoubtedly exists at least a logical possibility that this difference might include a certain proclivity which is present in the one sex and absent in the other--a proclivity for plundering corpses.

The third matter which inspires the skepticism of Saxonhouse is both clear and undeniable. The presence of women among the guardians is frequently forgotten. At Republic 540, for example, Glaucon has to be reminded of it. But why this should be taken as an indication of Plato's lack of seriousness is beyond comprehension. It would seem far more easily ascribed to the unprecedented nature of the proposition.

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[97]Ibid., 453 B-C.

[98]Ibid., 455 B.

The remainder of the list drawn up by Saxonhouse, women's alleged tearfulness, their supposed childlike qualities, their presumed potential for effecting the destruction of society, merely documents the charge of their supposed weakness. Thus Saxonhouse is led to doubt Plato's seriousness on very slim and shaky grounds. Furthermore, having arrived at this skeptical state, she is faced with the difficult task of explaining the proposal to include women among the guardians. Why would Plato suggest taking measures he is not serious about taking? Unlike the Ecclesiazusae, the Republic is a philosophical dialogue, not a satire. Unlike Aristophanes, Plato is attempting to instruct his readers, not to amuse them. He is seeking reform through reason, not ridicule. Saxonhouse offers a solution to the puzzle which she has posed: it lies, she asserts, in Plato's use of symbols. Throughout the Republic, she argues, Plato uses woman as a symbol of philosophy, man of politics. Her theory seems to have been formulated as an extension of an analogy drawn by Allan Bloom between men and the warrior class, women and the guardians.[99] Bloom too seems to doubt the seriousness of Plato's proposals concerning women, but he regards the prominent features of Republic V as comic rather than symbolic. Plato, he contends, is responding not only to the Ecclesiazusae, but to the Clouds as well, by suggesting that the philosopher can do what the poet has failed to do: show the proper relationship between the individual and the state.

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[99]Bloom, p. 461 fn.

One must preface any serious attempt to pass judgment on the view of Saxonhouse, with a consideration of the nature of symbolism. The word symbol comes from the Greek συμβολον mark, token, ticket, which is in turn derived from a root, βολη, a throw, and a prefix συν, together.[100] Thus the symbol and what it stands for are thrown together in such a manner that the presence of the former brings to mind the latter, which is nevertheless absent from it. Inasmuch as symbols are used somewhat differently in different contexts, it is important to ascertain precisely what Saxonhouse has in mind when she speaks of the symbolism of Plato's dialogue. Perhaps the simplest and probably the oldest type of symbol is the spoken word, which when thought or uttered brings to mind the idea it names. Almost equally ancient is the musical tone, which Suzanne Langer conceives as a symbol of emotion.[101] Another would be the religious symbol, the cross or the fish in the Christian tradition, which had its roots in the totem of prehistoric tribes. On a different level are the written word and the notation for the musical note or rest, both symbols of a symbol. Here belong the logician's symbols and the mathematician's signs. But the Republic is not a tone poem, nor is it a religious creed or a logical proof or a mathematical equation. It is a work of literature, and as such the symbols it employs must be literary symbols. That being the case, it would be well to examine the suggestion of Saxonhouse in the context of Plato's literary theory.

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[100]The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, II, 2108.

[101]Suzanne K. Langer, Philosophy in a New Key (New York: Penguin, 1948), pp. 176-199.

Like most of his contemporaries and immediate predecessors, Plato tends to focus his discussions on Homer. To the casual reader Homer's epics appear to be basically realistic. His world is a "real" world, inhabited by "real" people.[102] When Odysseus returns home and is identified by a scar, the result of a cut on his thigh acquired during the course of a hunting accident, it is a real scar by which he is identified. Unlike the tiny hand on Georgiana's cheek in Hawthorne's short story "The Birthmark" it is not a symbol of his mortality or of anything else. It is quite literally a scar.

To be sure, Homer embellishes his narratives with tales of the gods, but his deities are carefully differentiated from his human (and semi-human) characters and appear quite realistic in their own way. Homer introduces them apparently for the entertainment of his readers, and he tends to treat them in a lighthearted way. The attitude of Hesiod, who writes a couple of centuries later, provides a vivid contrast to that of Homer. Hesiod begins to brood over these tales, feeling, apparently, that such acts as patricide and infanticide and castration and cannibalism are not really very nice, and that when the gods are depicted engaging in such activity, it needs justification. This Hesiod takes upon himself to do. The Theogony is, as it were, an apology for the gods. In the eyes of Xenophanes, however, it is not a successful one: "Homer and Hesiod," he complains, "have attributed to the gods all sorts of actions which when done by men are disreputable

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[102]See, e.g., Eric Auerbach, Mimesis: A Representation of Reality in Western Literature, trans. from the German by Willard Trask (New York: Doubleday, 1957), pp. 10-11.

and deserving of blame--theft, adultery, and mutual deception."[103]

In an apparent attempt to defend Homer and Hesiod from the charges of immorality levied by Xenophanes and some of his contemporaries, Theagenes of Rhegium began the attempt to interpret their works allegorically. By the fifth century Anaxagoras, following the lead of Theagenes, had developed the idea that the mythological characters in the epics were personifications of abstract ideas and that the myths had morals; and shortly afterward Metrodorus had managed to interpret the actions of the human characters in the epics allegorically as well. By Plato's day such practice had become widespread. Empedocles, Prodicus, Antisthenes, Parmenides, and Heracleides had all regarded the gods allegorically. Chrysippus was soon to do so.[104]

Plato, however, did not follow in this tradition. He was distressed at the immorality of the Homeric myths, to be sure, but the answer, he believed--or Socrates believed--lay not in allegorization, but in a shift of focus. When Socrates is questioned by Phaedrus concerning a myth wherein Orithyia is allegedly transported by Boreas from the banks of the Ilissus to Thrace, where she is to bear Cleopatra, Chione, Zetes, and Calais, he gives the following answer:

> The wise are doubtful, and I should not be singular if, like them, I too doubted. I might have a rational explanation that Orithyia was playing with Pharmacia, when a northern gust carried her over the neighboring

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[103]Philip Wheelwright, ed., The Presocratics (New York: Odyssey Press, 1966), p. 33.

[104]George Grote, History of Greece (London: John Murray, 1862), I, 344.

> rocks; and this being the manner of her death, she was said to have been carried away by Boreas. There is a discrepancy, however, about the locality; according to another version of the story she was taken from Areopagus, and not from this place. Now I quite acknowledge that these allegories are very nice, but he is not to be envied who has to invent them; much labour and ingenuity will be required of him; and when he has once begun, he must go on and rehabilitate Hippocentaurs and chimeras dire. Gorgons and winged steeds flow in space, and numberless other inconceivable and portentous natures. And if he is sceptical about them, and would fain reduce them one after another to the rules of probability, this sort of crude philosophy will take up a great deal of time. Now I have no leisure for such enquiries; shall I tell you why? I must first know myself, as the Delphian inscription says; to be curious about that which is not my concern, while I am still in ignorance of my own self, would be ridiculous. And therefore I bid farewell to all this; the common opinion is enough for me.[105]

It would seem unlikely, in view of the preceding, that Plato would spend valuable time inventing an allegory such as the one which Saxonhouse finds in the Republic. And yet he is known to have used allegory, not only alone, but in the context of a number of myths. What are the distinctive features of the Platonic myth or allegory that set it apart from Homer's mythology, and how may the Platonic myth or allegory be identified in the dialogue in which it occurs?

First, Plato uses myth as a supplement to dialectic.[106] Socratic dialectic proceeds empirically. One of Socrates' interlocutors makes a statement which he regards as true. It is examined in the light of experience. If such examination reveals a basic contradiction, the statement is abandoned as untrue and another is tried in its place.

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[105]Plato, Phaedrus 229 D-230 A.

[106]See J. A. Stewart, The Myths of Plato (Great Britain: Centaur Press; United States: Southern Illinois University Press, 1960), p. 1.

But about such matters as the origin of the soul or life after death there is no experience in the light of which to examine a statement. In such a case a myth is told. These myths may or may not contain allegories, and, more rarely, an allegory may be used alone. The myths and the allegories differ from the dialectic in a number of significant respects. In the first place, they are presented by a single speaker in an uninterrupted, or virtually uninterrupted speech. The myths in the Phaedo,[107] the Gorgias,[108] the Republic,[109] and the Phaedrus[110] are all narrated by Socrates. Those in the Statesman,[111] the Laws,[112] the Protagoras,[113] and the Timaeus[114] are narrated by the Eleatic Stranger, the Athenian Stranger, and Critias and Timaeus, respectively. And one of the Symposium myths is told by Aristophanes, while the other is recounted by Socrates as told to him by Diotima of Mantineia.[115] While the myths themselves frequently include allegories as parts of them, Plato uses in the dialogues at least two extended allegories which are not included in larger myths: the allegory

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[107]Plato, Phaedo 107 C-114 C.

[108]Plato, Gorgias 523 A-527 C.

[109]Plato, Republic 414 B-415 B and 613 E-621 D.

[110]Plato, Phaedrus 246 A-257 A.

[111]Plato, Statesman 268 E-274 E.

[112]Plato, Laws 712 E-714 A.

[113]Plato, Protagoras 320 C-323 A.

[114]Plato, Timaeus 29 D-92 C.

[115]Plato, Symposium 189 C-193 D and 202 D-212 A.

of the cave[116] and the allegory of the disorderly crew,[117] both narrated by Socrates.

A second feature which sets the Platonic myth or allegory apart from the remainder of the dialogue is that it is almost invariably announced. In the Phaedo, for example, Socrates says, ". . . I can tell you a charming tale, Simmias, which is well worth hearing," and, after Simmias has agreed to listen, begins, "The tale, my friend, is as follows:-- . . . ."[118] The introduction to the Gorgias myth follows precisely the same pattern. Socrates informs Callicles, ". . . I should like to tell you a story," and, receiving Callicles' assent, commences with the words, "Listen, then, . . . to a very pretty tale . . . ."[119] In Republic III Socrates refers to the Myth of the Earth-Born as an "audacious fiction,"[120] and in Book X he introduces the Vision of Er by promising Glaucon, ". . . I will tell you a tale . . . ."[121] In the Phaedrus he proposed, "Let me speak briefly and in a figure . . . ."[122] And in the Symposium he tells the guests at the banquet, ". . . I will rehearse a tale . . . which I heard from Diotima of Mantineia . . . ."[123]

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[116]Plato, Republic 514 ff.

[117]Ibid., 488 A ff.

[118]Plato, Phaedo 110 A.

[119]Plato, Gorgias 523 A.

[120]Plato, Republic 414 D.

[121]Ibid., 614 B.

[122]Plato, Phaedrus 246 A.

[123]Plato, Symposium 201 D.

The other myth-tellers in the Platonic dialogues follow much the same practice: In the Statesman the Eleatic Stranger invites Socrates to "[l]isten . . . to a tale which a child would love to hear . . . ."[124] In the Laws the Athenian Stranger asks, "May I still make use of fable, to some extent, in the hope that I may be better able to answer your question: shall I?"[125] In the dialogue named for him, Protagoras asks Socrates and his friends, "Shall I, as an elder, speak to you as younger men in an apologue or myth, or shall I argue out the question?" and when the choice is left to him, opts for the former: "I think that the myth will be more interesting."[126] In the Timaeus Critias informs Socrates that he "will tell an old-world story which [he] heard from an aged man . . . ."[127] And a bit later in the same dialogue the Pythagorean narrator, by way of "prelude" to his story, refers to his myth of creation as a "tale."[128] The single exception to this practice of clearly identifying a myth as a myth before telling it occurs in the Symposium, where Aristophanes embarks upon his outrageous tale as if it were history. Yet he clearly does not expect it to be taken seriously, for he anticipates the laughter of his fellow banqueteers, and he makes reference to Thalia, the muse of comedy, before he begins.[129]

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[124]Plato, Statesman 268 E.

[125]Plato, Laws 613 A.

[126]Plato, Protagoras 320 C.

[127]Plato, Timaeus 21 B.

[128]Ibid., 29 B.

[129]Plato, Symposium 189 B.

The allegories, too, are announced. The Allegory of the Cave, perhaps the most elaborate of those not included in a myth, begins, "And now . . . let me show you in a figure how far our nature is enlightened or unenlightened . . . ."[130] The introduction to the Allegory of the Disorderly Crew is more contrived: "Imagine," says Socrates, ". . . a fleet or a ship . . . ."[131]

Not only are the myths and allegories of Plato set off from the preceding dialectic by an introduction, they are generally formally concluded as well. In the Phaedo Socrates cautions his listeners that "A man of sense ought not to say, nor will I be very confident, that the description which I have given of the soul and her mansions is exactly true. But," he hastens to add, "I do say that, inasmuch as the soul is shown to be immortal, he may venture to think, not improperly or unworthily, that something of the kind is true."[132] The Gorgias concludes on a similar note: "Perhaps this may appear to you to be only an old wife's tale, which you will contemn. And there might be reason in your contemning such tales, if by searching we could find out anything better or truer."[133] But Socrates appears convinced that all attempts to arrive at something better or truer are doomed to failure. In the Republic he concludes the Myth of the Earth-Born with a simple, "Such is the tale . . ."[134] and proceeds to assess its

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[130]Plato, Republic 514 A.

[131]Ibid., 488 A.

[132]Plato, Phaedo 114 D.

[133]Plato, Gorgias 527 A.

[134]Plato, Republic 415 C.

plausibility, but he ends the Vision of Er on the same note of faith in myth that has been struck in the Phaedo and the Gorgias: "And thus, Glaucon, the tale has been saved and has not perished and will save us if we are obedient to the word spoken . . . ."[135] Although at the end of the Phaedrus myth (which is of another type, to be sure), Socrates laments the "poetical figures which he was compelled to use,"[136] in the Symposium, after recounting the words of Diotima, he announces that he is "persuaded of their truth."[137]

The Eleatic Stranger, too, expresses faith in myth: "Enough of the story, which may be of use in showing us how greatly we erred in the delineation of the king and the statesman in our previous discourse."[138] But the Athenian stranger is non-commital: "And now, Cleinias, we have to consider whether you will or will not accept this tale of mine."[139] And the decision comes, of course, at the end of extended dialogue. Critias ends the Atlantis myth in the Timaeus simply: "I have told you briefly, Socrates, what the aged Critias heard from Solon and related to us."[140]

Of the myths with announced beginnings, then, only two lack formal conclusions: that of Protagoras and that of Timaeus himself.

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[135]Ibid., 621 C.

[136]Plato, Phaedrus 257 A.

[137]Plato, Symposium 212 A.

[138]Plato, Statesman 274 E.

[139]Plato, Laws 714 A.

[140]Plato, Timaeus 25 E.

In the latter case, it might be noted, virtually the entire dialogue is myth, which ends only with the end of the dialogue. The allegories end with references, albeit brief ones, to "[t]his entire allegory"[141] in the case of the Allegory of the Cave and to "the figure" and again to "the parable" in the case of the Allegory of the Disorderly Crew.[142]

But the sexual allegory which Saxonhouse finds in the Republic has none of these features. Politics was well within the immediate experience of every Athenian citizen. Her "allegory" is not the tale of a single speaker, and it consists of dialectic rather than being set apart from it at beginning and end.

Plato, then, not only deplores the type of symbolization which Saxonhouse finds in the Republic, the allegory which she accuses him of employing has few of the features of Plato's own recognized myths and allegories. All external evidence, therefore, seems to point against her theory. How about the internal evidence? What basis is there in the dialogue itself for thinking that women symbolize philosophy; men, politics? Saxonhouse runs her interpretation through the entire ten books of the Republic--or at least through the first six or eight. She begins by noting at great length that the women in the first four books of the Republic are for the most part courtesans and seductresses.[143] In Book V, she claims, they became desexed and unnatural.[144] Then in

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[141]Plato, Republic 517 B.

[142]Ibid., 489 A.

[143]Saxonhouse, p. 196.

[144]Ibid.

Book VI they are resexed and revitalized.[145] The very passages which Saxonhouse uses in support of her theory translate most strangely into the symbolism which she suggests. Women are introduced into the Republic, she points out, by Cephalus, who in the first book expresses enormous relief that the decrepitude of his body has rendered women no longer either necessary or desirable, as they had appeared to him in his youth. He claims to feel as if he has been released from "a raging and wild master."[146] Is philosophy both necessary and desirable to the youthful politician? Does some sort of decrepitude set in reducing the necessity and desirability of the queen of the sciences? Is the love of wisdom a "raging and wild master"?

In Book II, Saxonhouse reminds the reader, after the description of what comes to be known as the "city of pigs," Glaucon complains that he wants "the ordinary conveniences of life": sofas, tables, dainties, perfumes, incense, courtesans, and cakes.[147] Is philosophy a luxury rather than a necessity on the political scene?

In Book III, as the educational program for the guardians is outlined, Corinthian girls are eliminated from their lives, along with Syracusan feasts and Sicilian cuisine.[148] Must the politician forego philosophy along with culinary intemperance?

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[145]Ibid.

[146]Ibid., pp. 196-197.

[147]Ibid., p. 197.

[148]Ibid.

Finally in Book VIII, Saxonhouse claims, the suggestion is made that women may contribute to the degeneration of a state.[149] May the love of wisdom?

It would seem, then, that the internal evidence lends no more support to the thesis of Saxonhouse than the external does. But the theory itself should not be dismissed without an examination of what Saxonhouse conceives to be Plato's purpose in concocting this strange and unsupported symbol. Various of the proposals concerning women made in Republic V, she notes, are met with laughter: their exercising naked in the public gymnasium, for example.[150] Also in Book VII various activities of the philosopher are thought ridiculous: his attempting to steer the ship of state by the stars, for instance,[151] and his inability to see in the darkness of the cave of ignorance.[152] Neither the woman nor the philosopher, then, fits naturally into the political life of the city-state. To participate in politics, Saxonhouse thinks Plato is saying, the one must sacrifice her body, the other his soul.[153] Neither sacrifice is viable, she feels: "The female with her particular characteristics must not be turned into a male. The philosopher similarly cannot be made into a politician."[154] Thus the ideal state is an impossibility.

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[149]Ibid., p. 196.

[150]Ibid., p. 205.

[151]Plato, Republic 489 A. Saxonhouse misses this one.

[152]Saxonhouse, p. 205.

[153]Ibid., p. 202.

[154]Ibid., p. 211.

Socrates himself indicates some real doubt as to the possibility of actualizing the ideal, as the reader will remember. But his reasons are not quite those which Saxonhouse ascribes to him, and his emphasis is certainly different. The Republic, of course, is initially conceived of as an actual Greek city.[155] But each time Socrates is questioned about the possibility of actualizing such an ideal, he indicates more and more pessimism. Midway through the dialogue he suggests that the possibility of doing so would depend upon the likelihood of uniting philosophy and political power.[156] A book later he indicates his conviction that this combination lies beyond the scope of human agency and suggests chance and divine intervention as its only possible sources.[157] Finally he concedes that the ideal may never be actualized, but only approached.[158] Nevertheless, the ideal is vital to Platonic philosophy. It is by no means to be dismissed as absurd. And when Saxonhouse states, "That Socrates must so pervert the natural in order to create the best political system must raise doubts about its value,"[159] she possibly exaggerates Socrates' pessimism.

But to return to the matter of the symbolism in the Republic, or the lack thereof, one more consideration must be made. Even if both external and internal evidence supporting it were compelling, as

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[155]Plato, Republic 470 E.

[156]Ibid., 473 D-E.

[157]Ibid., 488 C.

[158]Ibid., 592 A-B.

[159]Saxonhouse, p. 211.

obviously they are not, one question would still remain. According to Wellek and Warren, and their view may be regarded as typical, a literary symbol is "an object which refers to another object but which demands attention also in its own right, as a presentation [italics mine]."[160] In other words, the symbolic meaning of a work of literature is a reinforcement of the literal meaning, not a substitute for it. In Hawthorne's "The Birthmark," the recognition of the tiny hand on Georgiana's cheek as a symbol of her mortality does not eradicate it. She has a birthmark, which is physical as well as symbolic. Otherwise there would be no story. Similarly, Plato has proposed that women be guardians, and Saxonhouse must come to grips with that proposal, whatever she may think its symbolic content may be. This she declines to do. And insofar as she fails to take the literal proposal into account, she fails in her assessment of that portion of the Republic, despite whatever her figurative interpretation may boast or lack.

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[160]René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1949), p. 193.

CHAPTER IV

BY WHOM IT IS SAID

Not only is there controversy over what is said in the Platonic dialogues and how it is said and why it is said, there is a great deal of disagreement over who said it as well. Most contemporary critics tacitly assume that the views expressed, at least in the Republic, are those of the author himself. For an article entitled "Philosopher Queens and Private Wives" Susan Okin uses the subtitle "Plato on Women and the Family."[1] Brian Calvert comments on "Plato and the Equality of Women."[2] Christine Garside Allen writes about "Plato on Women."[3] Arlene Saxonhouse addresses the question of "The Philosopher and the Female in the Political Thought of Plato."[4] But among Plato's earlier critics there is less certainty. A. E. Taylor, for example, believes that the suggestion that women serve as guardians of the ideal state is Socratic rather than Platonic.[5] And James Adam believes that the ideas expressed in the Republic are part of an integrated attempt made by the entire Socratic school to improve the status of women in ancient

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[1]Okin, p. 345.

[2]Calvert, p. 231.

[3]Allen, p. 131.

[4]Saxonhouse, p. 195.

[5]Taylor, Plato, p. 278.

Athens.[6] Perhaps it would be well to consider the entire matter of the extent to which the Platonic dialogues reflect the attitudes and beliefs of the historical Socrates.

Socrates appears as a character in the extant works of four of his contemporaries: Aeschines, Aristophanes, and Xenophon, as well as Plato. There are difficulties with all four as sources of information about the real Socrates. The chief difficulty with Aeschines is that very few pages of his works have been preserved. Yet, as A. E. Taylor points out, among the extant fragments of the Aspasia is a paragraph suggesting that Socrates held that women, like men, have a capacity for war and politics.[7]

The chief difficulty with Aristophanes is that he is a comic playwright. The Clouds is a burlesque. The Aristophanic Socrates is not a portrait, then, but a caricature of Socrates himself. And just as the political cartoonist exaggerates, say, the nose of Richard Nixon, so does Aristophanes exaggerate the features of his subject. In The Clouds, for instance, Socrates is depicted as a Sophist. Of course any reader of Plato or of Isocrates is aware that Socrates was not a Sophist. Yet he had enough in common with the Sophists (a vast array of knowledge, an interest in enlightening the young, etc.) to serve as a basis for the characterization. Aristophanes goes on to confuse Socrates with Thales (his allegedly falling into a ditch or a well because he kept his eyes

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[6]Adam I, 280 fn.

[7]A. E. Taylor, "Socrates," Encyclopaedia Britannica (1955), 20, 919.

fixed on the heavens as he walked on the ground),[8] with Anaximander (his theory of vortices),[9] with Anaximenes (his thesis that air is the basic substance),[10] with Anaxagoras (his alleged impiety),[11] with Gorgias (his interest in grammar),[12] and with others. Yet of course Socrates too was interested in grammar, was eventually accused of impiety, and so forth, just as Nixon does have a prominent nose. It is important, then, and not always easy, to ascertain just where the real nose ends and the artificial proboscis begins.

So far as any feminism in The Clouds is concerned, the closest Socrates comes to making remarks on a sexual topic is in a discussion of the gender of Greek nouns. It is illogical, he convinces Strepsiades, to refer to the male fowl and the female fowl alike with a masculine noun. One should be called a fowl; the other a fowless.[13] He goes on to point out that in certain cases a feminine noun will take an ending which in other contexts would indicate that it was masculine (he exemplifies with "trough") and vice versa (witness certain proper nouns).[14] But this sort of satire is clearly not sexual, but grammatical.

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[8]Andrew Chiappe, ed., Five Comedies of Aristophanes, trans. from the Greek by Benjamin Bickley Rogers (New York: Doubleday, 1955), p. 159.

[9]Ibid., p. 167.

[10]Ibid., p. 177.

[11]Ibid., p. 161, et passim.

[12]Ibid., pp. 178, 179.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid., p. 179.

There are fewer difficulties with Xenophon as a source of information about Socrates. Three or four Xenophonic works on Socrates have been preserved in their entirety: the Memorabilia, the Oeconomicus, the Symposium, and the Apology, although the last may be spurious and is in any case very closely connected to the Memorabilia.[15] And Xenophon is serious, not comic, in his purpose, which seems to have been to defend a man who he was convinced had been unjustly executed. The chief problem with Xenophon as a source, then, seems to be much the same as that with Plato: ascertaining which of the ideas expressed by the personage Socrates are those of the historical Socrates and which are those of the author of the work in which they are voiced. For much as many scholars have pondered over the extent to which Plato may have put his own views into the mouth of the Platonic Socrates, so does Dakyns, for one, consider the possibility that the Xenophonic Socrates is a mouthpiece for Xenophon himself.[16]

Actually, the Socratic works of Xenophon and the early dialogues of Plato are remarkably similar in content. The two authors depict Socrates talking about the same topics with many of the same people. The subject of the discussion in Plato's Euthyphro, for example, is piety. Piety is also one of the main themes of the Memorabilia, inasmuch as one of the charges against which Xenophon is trying to defend Socrates is impiety. Not only does the latter work begin with

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[15] The Works of Xenophon, trans. from the Greek by H. G. Dakyns (London: Macmillan, 1897), III, vi.

[16] Ibid., pp. xvii-xviii.

an account of Socrates' pious practices,[17] there are theoretical discussions of that virtue as well: two of them between Socrates and Euthydemus,[18] in one of which the two pursue a definition of that virtue in much the manner of the Socrates and Euthyphro of Plato's dialogue.[19] The similarity in the names of the two interlocutors may be noteworthy as well.

In the Laches Plato records a conversation involving the gentleman for whom the dialogue is named, Socrates, and Nicias on the subject of courage and whether it may be taught. Not only does the Memorabilia include a discussion of courage, in the Symposium Xenophon shows Socrates, in the presence of Niceratus, son of the Nicias of the Platonic dialogue, affirming that courage may indeed be taught.[20]

In the Charmides Plato depicts his own uncle discussing with Socrates the nature of modesty. In the Memorabilia the same two speakers, Charmides and Socrates, discuss at length the same character trait.[21]

Plato's Lysis presents a discussion of friendship. Xenophon's Memorabilia includes no fewer than six Socratic conversations on the same subject: one addressed to an unidentified listener (or unidentified listeners: Xenophon fails to specify the number in Socrates'

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[17]Xenophon, Memorabilia 1.1.

[18]Ibid., 4.3,6.

[19]Ibid., 4.6.

[20]Xenophon, Symposium 2.12-14.

[21]Xenophon, Memorabilia 3.7.

audience);[22] one a discussion with Antisthenes for the benefit of an unnamed companion;[23] and four separate pieces of rather specific advice addressed to Critobulus,[24] Crito,[25] Diodorus,[26] and the courtesan Theodote.[27]

The assessment of the profession of the rhapsode in Plato's Ion[28] is in essential agreement with those of Euthydemus in the Memorabilia[29] and of Niceratus in Xenophon's Symposium.[30]

And the matter of the relationship among the various virtues, treated by Plato in the Protagoras, is recorded by Xenophon as a conversation between Socrates and Euthydemus in the Memorabilia.[31] Plato's own dialogue between Socrates and Euthydemus also includes discussions of the very virtues which Xenophon shows the same two friends discussing.

Finally, the etymological discussions in Plato's Cratylus have their parallels in Xenophon's Memorabilia[32] and in his Symposium as well.[33]

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[22]Ibid., 2.4.

[23]Ibid., 2.5.,

[24]Ibid., 2.6.

[25]Ibid., 2.9.

[26]Ibid., 2.10.

[27]Ibid., 2.11.

[28]Plato, Ion 530.

[29]Xenophon, Memorabilia 4.2.10-11.

[30]Xenophon, Symposium 3.6.

[31]Xenophon, Memorabilia 4.6.1-15.

[32]Ibid., 3.14.1-7.

[33]Xenophon, Symposium 6.7.

The high degree of corroboration between Xenophon's Socratic works and Plato's early dialogues, then, would seem to indicate that both were attempting, each in his own way, a more or less accurate description of a historical figure. But in the Meno Plato introduces a doctrine which is absent from Xenophon's works: the notion of knowledge as recollection, which involves the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls. And in the Phaedo he introduces the Theory of Forms or Ideas. Inasmuch as there is no mention of any of these theories in any of Xenophon's Socratic writings, there have been many conjectures about whether and to what extent each belief, and particularly the last, was held by the historical Socrates. Since it is in the Republic that the Theory of Forms receives its fullest development, and since it is in the Republic that the equality of men and women is treated most fully as well, and since the Theory of Forms is inconsistent with any form of sexism, the question of whether that theory is Platonic or Socratic is highly pertinent to a study of Plato's feminism.

The fact that Xenophon fails to mention a Theory of Forms should by no means be construed as anything like conclusive evidence that the theory was not Socratic in origin. There are any number of reasons why, even if Socrates had evolved such a theory, Xenophon might not have mentioned it. First, he might not have known about it. Xenophon was not as intimately acquainted with Socrates and his teaching as Plato was. The two were closely associated for only about a year and a half, between 403 and 401, when Xenophon, aged twenty-four, left Athens for

the court of Cyrus the Younger, a Persian prince in Sardis, Asia Minor.[34] Furthermore, Xenophon had not the deep interest in metaphysics which Plato had and might not have fully understood the theory or appreciated it even if he had been acquainted with it. Finally, it might not have suited his purpose to use it even if he had been sympathetic with it. Xenophon wished above all else to vindicate Socrates against the charges brought against him by Anytus and his associates. In order to do so he depicted him as much more commonplace and much less eccentric than he actually was. The man Xenophon describes, as A. E. Taylor points out, would never have been indicted in the first place.[35] Thus had the theory been Socratic, it is quite possible that Xenophon would have been unaware of its existence, so unaffected by it as to neglect any mention of it, or deliberately trying to suppress it. Accordingly, from the Memorabilia we can derive little more than negative evidence concerning the origin of the doctrine.

But Aristophanes! How could such a bizarre theory have escaped his satiric eye? How could he have resisted using it in The Clouds, had he been aware that Socrates held it? Why would he have saddled Socrates instead with such anachronistic theses as those involving aether and vortex motion? And how, if the two were on the excellent

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[34] Xenophon, Recollections of Socrates and Socrates' Defense Before the Jury, trans. from the Greek by Anna S. Benjamin (Indianapolis, New York, Kansas City: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. xvii, xix.

[35] A. E. Taylor, Socrates: The Man and His Thought (New York: Doubleday, 1953), p. 24.

terms indicated in the Symposium, could he have been ignorant of such a basic belief?

But it is extremely dangerous to rely too much upon an ad silentio argument, however compelling it may appear. What is said about the Theory of Forms in those ancient sources in which it is discussed? Aristotle always speaks of the doctrine in connection with "Plato and his followers" and never in connection with Socrates. A. E. Taylor, to be sure, makes a great to-do about the fact that Aristotle never specifically ascribes the doctrine to Plato in so many words:

> It is not true, as is sometimes supposed, that Aristotle ever says that the "Theory of Ideas" was unknown to Socrates, though even if he had said this, it would be no more than an inference of his own. What is true is that Aristotle usually connects the theory with the names of Plato and his followers, and that in one passage (Metaphysics 1078 b 11), where he speaks of "those who had first said that there are Forms (or Ideas)," he may be referring to Plato (though this is not certain). Since the theory was certainly introduced into philosophical literature by the Socratic dialogues of Plato, such an expression would in any case be natural. The statement of the Nicomachean Ethics that the theory was introduced by "friends" of Aristotle (E. N., 1096 a 13) proves nothing. A doctrine of Socrates would be one held in a quarter which any disciple of Plato might speak of as "friendly."[36]

And John Burnet even devised an elaborate argument that Aristotle does ascribe the doctrine to Socrates "in his own way."[37] Yet the fact remains that Aristotle says in Book M of the Metaphysics:

> The supporters of the ideal theory were led to it because on the question about the truth of things they accepted the Heraclitean sayings which describe all sensible things as ever passing away, so that if knowledge or thought is to have

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[36]Taylor, Socrates, pp. 31-32 fn.

[37]John Burnet, Early Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato (New York: St. Martin's, 1968), pp. 128-129.

> an object, there must be some other and permanent entities, apart from those which are sensible; for there could be no knowledge of things which were in a state of flux. But when Socrates was occupying himself with the excellences of character, and in connexion with them became the first to raise the problem of universal definition (for of the physicists Democritus only touched on the subject to a small extent, and defined, after a fashion, the hot and the cold; while the Pythagoreans had before this treated of a few things, whose definitions--e.g., those of opportunity, justice, or marriage--they connected with numbers; but it was natural that Socrates should be seeking the essence, for he was seeking to syllogize, and "what a thing is" is the starting-point of syllogisms; for there was as yet none of the dialectical power which enables people even without knowledge of the essence to speculate about contraries and inquire whether the same science deals with contraries; for two things may be fairly ascribed to Socrates--inductive arguments and universal definition, both of which are concerned with the starting-point of science):--but Socrates did not make the universals or the definitions exist apart; they, however, gave them separate existence, and this was the kind of thing they called Ideas.[38]

The sharp contrast which Aristotle draws between Socrates and the "supporters of the ideal theory" seems to speak for itself. The obvious interpretation of the passage remained unquestioned for centuries. I see no reason to question it now. Burnet's attempt to chalk up this "summary and highly ambiguous statement"[39] to Aristotle's ignorance is unconvincing at best. To be sure, Aristotle did not arrive in Athens until over thirty years after Socrates' death.[40] Yet his keen interest in the theories of his predecessors is attested everywhere. It is difficult to conceive that the single departure from this practice would concern a matter which lay so near to his doorstep.

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[38] Aristotle, Metaphysics 1078b 13-30.

[39] Burnet, p. 128 fn.

[40] Ibid.

Surely a man so intent upon discovering the origin of the material, efficient, and final cause as the Metaphysics shows its author to be, would have made thorough inquiry into the origin of the formal cause as well. It is almost unthinkable that his inquiry would have gone unanswered the entire twenty years he spent at Plato's Academy, and it is at least as unthinkable that the answer, once acquired, would have been deliberately withheld from his own students and readers.

But if the Theory of Forms is indeed Platonic, whatever might have moved Plato to express it with the lips of Socrates? The answer is ready at hand. The fact that the Phaedo is generally taken to be the first dialogue in which the theory appears seems to Burnet to constitute good indication that the theory is Socratic, not Platonic. A. E. Taylor agrees. Surely, he argues, Plato could not have got by with anything less than strict adherence to truth in a dialogue set on such an auspicious occasion and circulated in the lifetime of most, if not all, of those present.[41] On the other hand, one must not forget that Plato was not present at Socrates' execution. Phaedo remarks at the beginning of the dialogue which bears his name, "Plato, if I am not mistaken, was ill."[42] Taylor dismisses Plato's absence as unimportant inasmuch as immediately after the execution Plato spent several weeks at Megara in the company of Euclides and other members of the Socratic circle. Thus, Taylor concludes:

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[41]Taylor, Socrates, p. 31.

[42]Plato, Phaedo 59 B.

> there can be no doubt that Plato must have been minutely informed on the events of that memorable day by any number of eye-witnesses.[43]

Yet, as a matter of actual fact, only in the context of something like the Platonic dialogue can one learn "by heart [an] entire discourse," as Socrates credits Phaedrus with having done.[44] Even Euclid, who tells us in the Theaetetus that he "took notes . . . as soon as he got home," adds:

> these I filled up from memory, writing them out at leisure; and whenever I went to Athens, I asked Socrates about any point which I had forgotten, and on my return I made corrections; thus I have nearly the whole conversation written down.[45]

It is Socrates, too, who has to refresh the memory of Apollodorus when the latter is seeking to preserve the speeches of the Symposium.[46] Unfortunately similar consultation would have been impossible after the conclusion of the Phaedo, and it would seem most unlikely that any of the disciples present at Socrates' execution--Apollodorus, "who had been weeping all the time,"[47] or any of the others whom Apollodurus' "loud and passionate cry . . . made cowards of . . ."[48] would have been able to give a detailed account of the conversation which took place.

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[43]Taylor, Socrates, p. 30.

[44]Plato, Phaedrus 228 B.

[45]Plato, Theaetetus 143 A.

[46]Plato, Symposium 173 B.

[47]Plato, Phaedo 117 D.

[48]Ibid.

Phaedo admits, "I and all of us were greatly moved"[49] and adds much later, "in spite of myself my own tears were flowing fast; so that I covered up my face and wept. . . . Nor was I the first; for Crito, when he found himself unable to restrain his tears, had got up. . . ."[50]

Quite possibly, then, Plato was told little more than that "Socrates alone retained his calmness,"[51] comforting his friends with arguments proving the immortality of the soul. What could have been more natural than for Plato to have filled in that sketch with the best arguments he could come up with--if only for the solace of himself and his fellow survivors, who must have wept, with Phaedo, "not for [Socrates], but at the thought of my own calamity in having to part with such a friend"?[52] Thus the mere fact that many of those depicted in the dialogue were still alive when it was circulated (Taylor singles out Euclides and Simmias for especial mention)[53] would by no means indicate that Plato, as Taylor seems to conclude, could have got by with anything less than a detailed and substantially accurate account of the proceedings of the day.

It would seem likely, then, that in the Republic Socrates gives voice to certain sentiments which are essentially Platonic rather than Socratic. The proposal that women be educated and employed as men are

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[49]Ibid., 59 B.

[50]Ibid., 117 D.

[51]Ibid.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Taylor, Socrates, p. 31.

could easily be one of them. But is it? The Socratic writings of Xenophon and, to a lesser extent, the Aspasia of Aeschines indicate that Socrates himself held liberal views on the nature of the sexes. In the latter, as A. E. Taylor points out, Aeschines depicts Socrates maintaining that women, like men, are capable of military and political activity.[54] Xenophon, too, presents Socrates as entertaining more or less liberal views: In the Symposium he is shown claiming that female nature is inferior to male nature only in judgment and strength, and concluding that men should therefore teach their wives whatever might be useful for them to know.[55] In the Oeconomics, too, Socrates takes the position (rather conventional, to be sure) that women should be instructed by their husbands, but he also takes the perhaps more enlightened view that wives contribute just as much to the household as husbands, for while the man provides the income, the woman controls the outgo.[56] And in the Memorabilia Socrates speaks very sympathetically of a mother's care for her child, both before and after giving birth to it.[57]

But Plato also entertained unquestionably liberal views concerning the nature of woman. James Adam cites the Symposium and the Laws as evidence of Plato's feminism.[58] Apparently he takes the attitude

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[54]Taylor, "Socrates," p. 919 D.

[55]Xenophon, Symposium 2.9.

[56]Xenophon, Oeconomicus 3.12-15.

[57]Xenophon, Memorabilia 2.5.

[58]Adam, p. 280 n.

of the Platonic Socrates toward Diotima to be a reflection of Plato's own views. And on the Laws he is on even more solid ground, despite the popular opinion, refuted above, that the position of the Athenian stranger is much more sexist than that of Socrates in the Republic.

Adam's conclusion is that the proposal made in the Republic was Platonic as well as Socratic--that Socrates' entire school was involved in a plan to improve the condition of women in ancient Athens. For evidence of Antisthenes' views he refers to Diogenes Laërtius, although he might just as easily have cited Xenophon's Symposium. Even Euripides, he suggests, might have been part of the movement.[59] He is probably referring, although he does not specify, to a fragment of the Protesitans in which a community of wives is suggested.[60]

But if the views of Plato and Socrates concerning the place of woman in society are so similar as to be virtually indistinguishable, what does it matter whose views are being expressed in the Republic? It matters to the extent that these views are connected with the Theory of Forms and with the doctrine of transmigration, each of which, properly understood, entails sexual egalitarianism. If, as has been maintained, those theories are Platonic, the feminism of Plato becomes a necessary consequent of his metaphysical theory; that of Socrates, by contrast, may be a mere contingency.

The Theory of Forms, of course, provides an explanation for natural objects in terms of the participation in them of Forms or ideas.

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[59]Ibid.

[60]Barker, pp. 144-145.

Each object resembles its participating Form except insofar as the Form is eternal, whereas the objects partaking of it are perishable; the Form is one, while the objects in which it participates are manifold; and the resemblance between the two is imperfect.

The extent of the world of Forms and the precise nature of participation have probably never been satisfactorily explained or completely understood. Plato himself was the first to raise important questions concerning these matters--questions which, to most people's way of thinking, have never received adequate answers. One of the most persistent of these questions is whether there are Forms for objects themselves or only Forms for qualities of those objects.

The question is first introduced in the Parmenides, in which Plato depicts a youthful Socrates referring to Forms in an attempt to answer Zeno's contention that the assumption of the multiplicity of things is self-contradictory because it involves the same thing having opposite characters. The paper in which Zeno presents this paradox to a gathering at the home of Pythodorus is not included in the dialogue, but something of its content may be surmized from the response it elicits from young Socrates:

> What is your meaning, Zeno? Do you maintain that if being is many, it must be both like and unlike, and that this is impossible, for neither can the like be unlike, nor the unlike like--is that your position?[61]

Zeno affirms that it is.

> And if the unlike cannot be like, or the like unlike, then according to you, being could not be many; for this would

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[61]Plato, Parmenides 127 D.

> involve an impossibility. In all that you say have you any other purpose except to disprove the being of the many? and is not each division of your treatise intended to furnish a separate proof of this, there being in all as many proofs of the not-being of the many as you have composed arguments? Is that your meaning, or have I misunderstood you?[62]

Upon being reassured that he has not misunderstood, Socrates proceeds to try to resolve the apparent paradox of Zeno's conclusion by making a distinction between the Forms of Likeness and Unlikeness and the concrete things partaking of them:

> . . . tell me, Zeno, do you not . . . think that there is an idea of likeness in itself, and another idea of unlikeness, which is the opposite of likeness, and that in these two, you and I and all other things to which we apply the term many, participate--things which participate in likeness become in that degree and manner like; and so far as they participate in unlikeness become in that degree unlike, or both like and unlike in the degree in which they participate in both? And may not all things partake of both opposites, and be both like and unlike, by reason of this participation?[63]

It is at this point in the dialogue that Zeno's mentor, Parmenides, enters the discussion and begins to question Socrates:

> . . . do you think that there is an idea of likeness apart from the likeness which we possess, and of the one and many, and of the other things which Zeno mentioned?[64]

It is, of course, a rhetorical question, for Socrates has just indicated that he does. Parmenides' next question carries Socrates into much more familiar territory:

> And would you also make absolute ideas of the just and the beautiful and the good, and of all that class?[65]

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[62]Ibid., 127 E.

[63]Ibid., 128 E-129 A.

[64]Ibid., 130 B.

[65]Ibid.

The extension of the doctrine of the Forms from the realm of mathematics to that of ethics is certainly not a surprising one to the reader of the Platonic dialogues. Indeed it is most likely that this is the area in which the theory was first developed. The order of Parmenides' question so far parallels the order of cognition in the image of the divided line of the Republic. It is at this point that the parallel progress is reversed, as Parmenides' third question concerns not the intelligible, but the sensible world, and he seeks to lead Socrates to construct Forms of the concrete objects therein:

> And would you make an idea of man apart from us and from all other human creatures, or of fire and water?[66]

Here for the first time Socrates voices something other than complete assent:

> I am often undecided, Parmenides, as to whether I ought to include them or not.[67]

And quite rightly so. Man, fire, and water are concrete entities in the world of sense. Knowledge of them is acquired through the senses. They are not abstract qualities which are exemplified in this world only imperfectly and fleetingly, here and there, now and then. They are not concepts which require deep analysis to be understood. Neither do they need Forms to explain them. Individual men are not completely good, nor completely just nor temperate nor courageous, but they are completely men. They do not need to partake of a Form to explain their manhood, nor are they more or less men as they partake more or less of

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[66] Ibid., 130 C.

[67] Ibid.

such a Form. Yet although here Plato has Socrates express grave doubts concerning such an extension of the theory, in later dialogues it was so extended, and such extension seems to lead to Plato's eventual loss of interest in and ultimate abandonment of it. Further pressed by Parmenides

> And would you feel equally undecided, Socrates, about things of which the mention may provoke a smile?--I mean such things as hair, mud, dirt, or anything else which is vile and paltry; would you suppose that each of these has an idea distinct from the actual objects with which we come into contact, or not?[68]

Socrates refuses to extend the doctrine further, at the same time lamenting his inconsistency:

> Certainly not . . .; visible things like these are such as they appear to us, and I am afraid that there would be an absurdity in assuming any idea of them, although I sometimes get disturbed, and begin to think that there is nothing without an idea; but then again, when I have taken up this position, I run away, because I am afraid that I may fall into a bottomless pit of nonsense, and perish; and so I return to the ideas of which I was just now speaking, and occupy myself with them.[69]

Parmenides' rebuke that Socrates is being finicky:

> . . . that is because you are still young; the time will come, if I am not mistaken, when philosophy will have a firmer grasp on you, and then you will not despise even the meanest things; at your age, you are too much disposed to regard the opinions of men.[70]

completely misses the point. His refusal to take Socrates' reluctance seriously, his ascription of the young man's hesitancy to his youth and

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[68]Ibid., 130 C-D.

[69]Ibid., 130 D.

[70]Ibid., 130 E.

sensitivity to public opinion is simplistic. Various alternative explanations, both philosophical and historical, have been offered: Francis MacDonald Cornford's is historical: in Plato and Parmenides Cornford points out that the real Socrates was primarily interested in ethics and politics, and, to a lesser extent, in aesthetics and mathematics, but not in natural science[71] -- a statement which, although indisputably true, also fails to penetrate to the heart of the matter. I. M. Crombie's explanation is metaphysical: he contends that Forms, properly understood, are restricted to simple as opposed to compound entities[72]--an explanation which apparently fails to take into account the fact that fire and water were generally thought by the fourth-century Greek to be elements. Another view, which could be termed epistemological, might center on the dichotomy which Plato draws between the sensible and the intelligible, and involves the proposition that Forms, correctly conceived, are the means whereby man acquires the knowledge with which his senses cannot provide him, or if you prefer, knowledge as opposed to belief, and are thus invariably abstractions of abstractions. Accordingly, the reference to the Form of bed in the tenth book of the Republic (which appears to be a sort of appendix to the rest of the work and may well have been written later than the other nine),[73] of man and ox in the Philebus,[74] of visible animal and the four

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[71]Francis MacDonald Cornford, Plato and Parmenides (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1939), p. 83.

[72]I. M. Crombie, An Examination of Plato's Doctrines: II, Plato on Knowledge and Reality (New York: Humanities Press, 1963), 329-330.

[73]Plato, Republic 597 C.

[74]Plato, Philebus 15 A.

elements in the Timaeus,[75] and above all the suggestions in the Sophist that there may be Forms for negative concepts as well as affirmative ones[76] would have to be dismissed as unviable attempts to extend the theory beyond its proper scope. Such inconsistencies abound in Plato; most of those just mentioned immediately precede and may well account for Plato's apparent loss of interest in and ultimate abandonment of the theory of Forms in the later dialogues.

However this may be, the fact remains that in the dialogues which treat the theory of Forms most fully and most sympathetically it is restricted to abstract concepts such as beauty, goodness, justice, holiness, and equality[77] and there is no mention of any form for man. And if Plato is dubious about the postulation of a Form for man, he would presumably react even more negatively to the suggestion of a separate Form for woman. It would seem wise, therefore, to begin an investigation into the Platonic concept of woman in an area about which there is no question. The virtues constitute such an area. In the Meno, toward the beginning of the dialogue, in the person of Socrates, in the course of an attack upon the Gorgian notion of the relativity of virtue, Plato addresses the question of men's and women's virtues. In answer to Meno's contention that there are separate virtues for men and women (running a state and managing a house, respectively), Socrates replies that virtue is virtue and one and the same wherever it may be found--

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[75]Plato, Timaeus 30 C-31 A.

[76]Plato, Sophist 258 C-D.

[77]Plato, Republic 479 A-E, 508 E ff; Phaedo 74 A-75 D.

in a man, in a woman, in a child. The opposite theory, that of the relativity of virtue, held by Gorgias and propounded by his disciple for whom the dialogue is named, is specifically refuted by Socrates, who shows that the view that virtue takes one shape in a man, ordering a state, and another in a woman, ordering a house, is no more sensible than the notion that health and size and strength differ in nature from sex to sex. Furthermore, the "male" virtue of ordering a state and its female counterpart, ordering a house, both involve the selfsame qualities of temperance and justice, which are exhibited alike by men and women.[78]

An idealist would be compelled to take such a stand if only in the interest of consistency. For how does a woman become virtuous? In precisely the same way in which a man becomes virtuous: by partaking of a Form. So long as the Form is one as opposed to the multiplicity of sensible objects--so long as it is perfect and eternal and unchanging, insofar as a woman partakes of it, she will exhibit the same characteristics as a man partaking of it, insofar as he does so. Therefore if a woman is a lover of wisdom and that Form participates in her, she will be wise in the same sense in which the male guardian is wise. Any inferiority, any weaker nature, in other words, would have to be explained in terms of the quantity of the participation, for the unity of the Form insures the constancy of the quality. If women have weaker natures, then, as Plato asserts toward the end of the Republic passage,[79]

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[78]Plato, Meno 71 C-73 C.

[79]Plato, Republic 457 A.

either he is referring exclusively to their capacity for physical labor or else they have not drunk so deep of the Pierian spring. That he intended to make every effort to preclude the possibility of the latter situation would appear to be indicated by his insistence that men and women have identical education. It would seem, therefore, that in the last analysis any inequality between the sexes would have to be physical rather than spiritual. And in Platonic philosophy the physical is peculiarly unimportant, for Plato regards the union of body and soul as both unequal and temporary. Furthermore, most of the dialogues in which the soul is celebrated at the expense of the body make specific reference to a theory of the transmigration of souls, according to which the same soul may at different times animate the body of a man, a woman, and even an animal.[80] The soul of a woman, then, although temporarily incarcerated or even entombed in a female body, is in no way permanently--or even temporarily--affected by the sex of the body it inhabits. Indeed its function in this life, like that of the soul of a man, is to transcend insofar as possible the body in which it dwells. There are no activities which are peculiarly suited to woman _qua_ woman, then, or to man _qua_ man, but "all the pursuits of men are the pursuits of women also,"[81] for all pursuits are pursuits of sexless souls.

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[80]Plato, _Phaedrus_ 248 D-250 C; _Meno_ 81 C; _Phaedo_ 70 B-D, 81 B-E; _Republic_ 616 B-621 A; _Timaeus_ 41 E-42 E, 91 D ff; _Laws_ 903 E, 904 E.

[81]_Republic_ 455 E.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Not only is there precious little agreement as to what was said in the Platonic diatonic dialogues and how it was said and why it was said and by whom it was said, there is even disagreement over Plato's contemporary reputation. In 1975 Brian Calvert hailed Plato as "something of a hero" among "contemporary women's liberationists."[1] A year later Gregory Vlastos complained that it had become fashionable to brand Plato as a misogynist.[2] Generally speaking, earlier critics have had a tendency to regard Plato as more of a feminist than recent critics have. Very generally speaking, men have found him to be more of a feminist than women have. The reasons are fairly easy to fathom. In past centuries, even in the early part of this century, the general consensus about the nature of woman and her proper place in society differed relatively little from the prevailing attitude among the ancient Athenians. The many remarks that Plato makes about woman's inferiority were readily accepted. What was disconcerting was his proposal for his ideal society. At the turn of the present century, William Cranston Lawton prefaces the Jowett translation of the Republic with the following admonition:

> The fifth book will shock nearly all readers. Here Socrates is forced to explain in detail the plans by which he

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[1]Calvert, p. 231.

[2]Vlastos.

> would destroy the family altogether. . . . Woman, to Plato, is but lesser man. She must share all gymnastic exposure and training, with the tasks of war, to the limit of her powers.[3]

To whatever extent Lawton's reaction was typical of its day, Plato must have appeared leftist, avant garde.

In recent years, as woman has begun to emerge as something more like a full-fledged human being, she has come to bristle--and on her behalf men have come to bristle--at any and all aspersions cast upon her abilities and capabilities. Anyone professing woman's inferiority is quite naturally suspect and quickly branded misogynist. But as recently as 1949 no less of a feminist than Simone de Beauvoir, whose The Second Sex has been labeled "the classic manifesto of the liberated women," not only expressly admitted woman's inferiority, she offered an explanation for it as well:

> . . . when an individual (or a group of individuals) is kept in a situation of inferiority, the fact is that he is inferior. But the significance of the verb to be must be rightly understood here; it is in bad faith to give it a static value when it really has the dynamic Hegelian sense of "to have become." Yes, women on the whole are today inferior to men; that is, their situation affords them fewer possibilities. The question is: should that state of affairs continue?[4]

If, generally speaking, woman was not man's equal in France in the twentieth century, how much more inferior she must have been in Athens in the fourth century.

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[3]Benjamin Jowett, trans., The Republic of Plato: An Ideal Commonwealth, with a special introduction by William Cranston Lawton (New York and London: The Colonial Press, 1901), p. ix.

[4]Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, trans. from the French by H. M. Parshley (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. xxviii.

Plato's answer to a question such as Beauvoir's would have been, of course, negative. And not only did he deny that the state of affairs should continue, he proposed measures which would end it. Today we are somewhat closer to Plato's ideal than we were when Beauvoir wrote The Second Sex. But we still have far to go, for "cities will never have rest from their labors--no nor the human race, as I believe" until philosophers are monarchs--queens as well as kings--and many of the potentates of the world are women.

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