

## SWILLSBURG CITY LIMITS (THE 'CITY OF PIGS': *REPUBLIC* 370C–372D)

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**Abstract:** At *Republic* 370c–372d, Plato presents us with an early *polis* that is self-sufficient, peaceful, cooperative, and which provides a comfortable life for its inhabitants. While Glaucon derides this *polis* as a 'city for pigs', Socrates is quick to defend its virtues characterizing it as a city which is not only 'complete' (*telea*), but a 'true' (*alêthinê polis*) and 'healthy' city (*hugiês tis*) (371e–372e). Is Plato sincere when he lauds the city of pigs? If so, why does the city of pigs degenerate so precipitously into the luxurious city (*truphōsa polis*)? Some commentators have been unable to find any place for the 'city of pigs' in the substantive argument of the *Republic*. Other commentators have supposed that the source of instability in the city of pigs is the nature of human desire. I argue that these interpretations miss what is most deeply interesting about the city of pigs. On my reading, the city of pigs is healthy and true in that it is a unified community. However, this unity depends on good fortune, is highly contingent, and thus unstable.

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### Introduction

At *Republic* 370c–372d, Plato presents us with a *polis* that is self-sufficient, peaceful, cooperative, and which provides a comfortable life for its inhabitants. While Glaucon derides this *polis* as a 'city for pigs', Socrates is quick to defend its virtues characterizing it as a city which is not only 'complete' (*telea*), but is a 'true' (*alêthinê polis*) and 'healthy' city (*hugiês tis*) (371e–372e).<sup>2</sup> Thoughtful readers have had difficulty placing the city of pigs into the main argument of the *Republic*. If we are meant to agree with Socrates' approving assessment of the city, then it is unclear why the city should degenerate into the fevered *truphōsa polis* ('appetitive city') which follows at 372d–375a. If the city of pigs is already defective, then it is unclear why Plato should describe it in such positive terms. Certainly the city of pigs (Swillsburg) is limited and inferior to the fully developed *kallipolis*, but

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<sup>2</sup> Translations are mine, based on John Burnet's edition, *Platonis Opera* (Oxford, 1902), vol. IV. One concern here might be that the '*tis*' is being used as a qualifier. So instead of understanding the *huopolis* as healthy full stop, we are meant to understand this *polis* as 'somewhat healthy' or 'healthy in a way'. While I do defend the healthiness of the city of pigs in this essay, a qualified assessment of the health of the *huopolis* does not conflict with my interpretation. I hold that the city of pigs is healthy and more healthy than the *micropolis* and *truphōsa polis*, but is not as unified (so not as healthy) as the *kallipolis*. Thus, even if we grant the qualification, there are still questions as to what the healthiness of the *huopolis* consists in, and in what does its falling short of full healthiness consist in.

exactly how is it limited and inferior?<sup>3</sup> In this paper, I will be surveying the limits of Swillsburg.

Commentators such as J. Wallach and C.D.C. Reeve have placed the fault in Swillsburg with human nature, particularly in the nature of human desire. On this interpretation, Swillsburg fails because it does not provide limits on human desires. Without these limits, it is argued, the city of pigs must go wrong. There are two main problems with this interpretation. For one, desires are in fact controlled in the *huopolis* so it is simply not true that the change to the *truphōsa polis* is inevitable in the way this line suggests. Second, even if the city of pigs must inevitably fail this is not sufficient reason to think that the *huopolis* is inferior to the *kallipolis*. All *poleis*, including the *kallipolis*, have limited lifespans (as do all sublunary entities on Plato's view). On my view, then, the main questions about the city of pigs must concern the *reasons* why the *huopolis* fails, in contrast to the *reasons* why the *kallipolis* fails. Seriously defective communities may not be capable of lasting very long, but even among long-lasting communities (such as, presumably, the *huopolis* and *kallipolis*) there will be differences in quality. The *huopolis* is inferior to the *kallipolis*, but is superior to other communities discussed in the *Republic*. The long-lastingness of the *huopolis* is perhaps a clue to some of the features which make it superior to those other communities, but long-lastingness is by no means the whole story.

Thus, in this paper, I wish to defend the virtues of the city of pigs but also find the source of its inferiority. I develop an interpretation first intimated (but not developed) by R.C. Cross and A.D. Woozley.<sup>4</sup> On this view, the fault in the city of pigs is a structural problem in the construction of the city itself. The Swillsburg community, in effect, is a mutual benefit society unified by individuals operating from considerations of enlightened self-interest. As such, the *huopolis* is able to achieve a fair degree of unification and stability. To the extent that the *huopolis* is unified, this community is healthy, true, and good. However, this unity is highly contingent. Unity in the *huopolis* depends overly on lucky circumstances which allow individual self-interests to coincide. But there is no mechanism in the *huopolis* to guard against changing fortunes, accidents and circumstances which would lead individual interests to diverge. To the extent that the *huopolis* depends on luck, it is unstable and insufficiently unified, and thus, is inferior to the *kallipolis*. The *huopolis*, in short, does not achieve the right kind of unity. Unity in the *kallipolis* will involve more than the coincidence of individual self-interest — or, at any rate,

<sup>3</sup> I do not agree with those who doubt Plato's commitment to the *kallipolis*. That is, I think the best interpretation is one which understands the *Republic* as, at least in part, a genuine work of social and political philosophy and which takes Plato at his word in identifying the *kallipolis* as the society which is maximally unified and maximally just.

<sup>4</sup> R.C. Cross and A.D. Woozley, *Plato's Republic: A Philosophical Commentary* (London and New York, 1971). See particularly, p. 88.

unity in the *kallipolis* will involve a radical re-understanding of individual self-interest.

## I

### Welcome to Swillsburg

Life in the city of pigs is summed up nicely at 372a–c:

[Inhabitants of this community] will produce bread, wine, clothes, and shoes. They will build houses. In the summer they will work barefoot and unclothed for the most part, but in the winter they will be adequately clothed and shod. To sustain themselves they will prepare barley meal and wheat flour. Kneading and baking these, they will lay authentic barley and wheat cakes beside one another on clean branches. Then, spreading out beds of yew and myrtle, they will recline to eat, feasting sumptuously with their children. After eating well they will drink wine, and wreathed they will hymn their gods, being with one another gladly. And cautious of poverty and war, they will not produce children beyond their means.

In addition to the provisions mentioned above, Socrates supposes that these inhabitants will enjoy some simple savouries — salt, olive oil, cheeses, exotic vegetables, figs, peas, and beans. They will drink wine in moderation and ‘roast myrtle berries and acorns as they recline by the fire’ (372d). Their way of life is temperate, so these inhabitants live long, healthy lives (372d). They are not racked by the diseases which plague those in immoderate cities. They do not covet their neighbours’ possessions, so their lives are peaceful. This is a stable kind of existence, so that they ‘pass a similar way of life to their children’ (372d).

Besides the laudatory language Plato uses throughout this section to describe the *huopolis*, this passage is particularly rich with allusion to the pleasant and wholesome way of life enjoyed by those in the city of pigs. The barley and wheat cakes the inhabitants eat are described as ‘*gennaias*’ (372b 2). This word suggests something that is true to its birth, authentic, genuine, and even well-born. Plato makes a point of describing the mats on which the cakes are laid out as ‘*kathara*’, as clean or spotless (372b 5). One might compare Plato’s attitude towards the food of those in the city of pigs to contemporary movements for ‘clean’, unprocessed, or organic foods. There are allusions at 372b 5 as well to what is pure in the sense not just of being sanitary, but as what is free from religious pollution. The inhabitants ‘*euôchêsontai*’, feast well or entertain sumptuously (though not extravagantly) (372b 6). They are wreathed like Olympic victors, ‘*estephanômenoi*’ (372b 7). And they enjoy the pleasure of each others’ company: ‘*hedeôs xunontes allêlois*’ (372b 8).

The *huopolis* is clearly different from the *kallipolis* constructed through Books III–V. No mention is made of the distinctive three-class structure of the

*kallipolis*. Swillsburg lacks both a professional military class and a cadre of philosopher-rulers.<sup>5</sup> We see no hint of the rigorous programme of formal education and state censorship characteristic of the *kallipolis*. This community is rooted in private family life.<sup>6</sup> In lieu of formal education, community *mores* are transmitted through families. Parents and grandparents feast with their children. Procreation is presumably a private or family matter, not subject to the eugenic control of a highly-organized state. In fact, life in this less-regulated *polis* seems preferable in many respects to that of the *kallipolis*. One enjoys the simple pleasures of life, manages one's own affairs, and relaxes with one's family.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the refined Glaucon finds life too rustic in the community described (370c–372d). Inhabitants lack such civilized comforts as couches and tables for eating, and the fare is too plain. But Socrates and Adeimantus do not agree. For one, the *huopolis* is 'fully-grown to completion' (*euxetai telea*) (371e). This stands in contrast, it seems, to the embryonic *micropolis* which precedes at 369c–d. Secondly, Socrates defends Swillsburg as 'true' (*alêthinê polis*) and 'healthy' (*hugiês tis*) (372e and 373b). This stands in contrast to the luxurious city which follows and which is unhealthy and fevered (372e–375a). In the *truphōsa polis* appetites run wild. Among other desires, inhabitants develop tastes for meat, fish, cosmetics, perfumes, fashion, confections, and prostitutes (373a).<sup>7</sup> The result is a city in which all kinds of luxury goods are readily available, professions multiply, and the population explodes. The rapid population growth fuels the need for increased territory. And these territorial aspirations drive the luxurious city to make war on its neighbours. Because war is a business like any other, a professional military class is established (374a–b).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Swillsburg, in part, lacks a professional military because it does not have expansionist tendencies. Since the city is moderate, there is no need to acquire more territory. I do not think we can conclude from this, however, that Swillsburg would lack any defensive military capability. While Plato does not mention a dedicated military force, the *huopolis* might well have (in effect) a citizen militia which might be mobilized for military defence. Professional soldiers would have been the exception rather than the rule, after all. One question is how a non-professional citizen fighting force might square with the Principle of Specialization.

<sup>6</sup> As many commentators have noted, there is no reason to suppose that Plato thinks that the communities described in Book II exist or have ever existed.

<sup>7</sup> The addition of prostitutes to the luxurious city seems the very mark of degeneracy. Prostitutes allow sex for pleasure where, according to Plato, the sole natural purpose of sex is towards procreation. See, for example, his discussion against sex for pleasure, including against homosexual sodomy, in the *Laws* VIII, 836c–837a, 838e–839b.

<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, it is in this ignoble imperialism that the Guardians of the *kallipolis* have their beginning. (I use 'Guardians' throughout this paper to talk about the military and ruling class in the *kallipolis*. When it is necessary to distinguish these two occupa-

The *huopolis*, then, seems to stand as a happy medium between the minimal *polis* and the luxurious *polis*. In the minimal city, we can expect that life will be fairly hardscrabble. While in the luxurious city, life is riotous, disordered and unbalanced by excess. The city of pigs, in contrast, is both well-provisioned and moderate. So, what is wrong with Swillsburg? Once the luxurious city is purged of its excessive appetites, why don't we end up back in the *huopolis* instead of in the *kallipolis*? These questions are only worth answering if some serious moral is to be read in Plato's characterization of the city of pigs. Some have doubted that this is the case. I.M. Crombie regards the city of pigs as a 'false start' on the way to the *kallipolis*.<sup>9</sup> And, more recently, Julia Annas has concurred with this assessment. Annas thinks we must reject a 'utopian' interpretation of the *huopolis*.

The utopian interpretation understands the city of pigs as a reference to a Golden Age community where inhabitants live simply but happily. The question that then arises is, if this is the correct characterization of the *huopolis*, what is Plato's purpose in presenting such a utopian community? And how is such a utopian community supposed to relate to the *kallipolis* yet to be achieved in the *Republic*? Annas urges two main arguments against this utopian interpretation: (1) inhabitants in the city of pigs are not supposed to be perfectly altruistic, but rather act primarily from enlightened self-interest; (2) the interlocutors assume that they will find both justice and injustice in the city of pigs (369a). Thus, the city of pigs seems a mixed city, not one that is perfectly just as the *kallipolis* is.<sup>10</sup> I agree with (1) and (2) but disagree with Annas that the city of pigs 'adds nothing'. In fact, I think there are deep morals to be read concerning civic unity in the city of pigs.<sup>11</sup>

But, if we reject the utopian interpretation, Annas holds,

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tional classes, I refer to the military class as the 'Auxiliaries' and the law- and policy-makers as the 'philosopher-rulers'.)

<sup>9</sup> I.M. Crombie, *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines* (London, 1964), vol. I, pp. 89–90.

<sup>10</sup> J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford, 1981), p. 78.

<sup>11</sup> Another line of interpretation should be mentioned here. Some have thought that the city of pigs is only a *satirical* reference to a Golden Age community. Bernard Bosanquet, for example, denies that the *huopolis* is 'Plato's first ideal'. The city of pigs 'has rather the appearance of a satire on contemporary cynicism, perhaps that of Antisthenes, of which the point was to "simplify"'. Bosanquet, *A Companion to Plato's Republic* (London, 1895), p. 84. Such a line of interpretation should be familiar to readers of Plato. The proposals that women may rule, that procreation and child-rearing should be under the control of the state, and that philosophers should rule have often been dismissed on the grounds that these too are intended satirically. But the burden of proof rests with those who wish to argue that Plato is not sincere here or elsewhere. I discuss Plato's proposals regarding women and procreation elsewhere ('Women, Occupational Specialization and Social Justice in the *Republic*' and 'Procreation Management in the *Republic* and *Laws*', not yet published).

we have to conclude, though reluctantly, that Plato has not given the first city a clear place in the *Republic*'s moral argument. The real argument starts from facts about human nature and co-operation which we see at work in the luxurious city — needs which lead to a specialized army which becomes the Guardians. The first city adds nothing, except a context in which the Principle of Specialization is introduced in a plausible way.<sup>12</sup>

On this interpretation, then, the city of pigs adds nothing substantive to our philosophical understanding of the *Republic*.

But the interpretive choices here are not exhausted between the utopian reading of the city of pigs and thinking that the *huopolis* has no point at all in the main argument of the *Republic*. Some commentators have held that the city of pigs is meant to illustrate how cities inevitably degenerate if measures are not taken to control human desires. And Reeve further argues that the city of pigs is meant to illustrate the limitations of a city that only aims to make those with appetitive natures maximally happy. Making some such point about human desires is clearly important to the main argument of the *Republic* since it will help to motivate the stringent controls placed on desires in the *kallipolis*. Thus, if the purpose of the city of pigs were to illustrate this point about desire, we would have found a clear place for it in the main argument of the *Republic*. However, I do not think interpretation along these lines ultimately explains the full meaning of the *huopolis*. In what follows I hope to show why.

## II Appetitive Desires

On the Wallach-Reeve interpretation mentioned above, the transition of the *huopolis* into the luxurious city is inevitable since Swillsburg lacks controls on the potentially destructive effects of human desires. The lack of these controls also explains in what way the *huopolis* is supposed to be inferior to the *kallipolis*.<sup>13</sup> This suggestion is made recently by Wallach. 'Indeed, nothing in the healthy city [the *huopolis*]', he writes, 'would prevent the developments that Socrates subsequently describes . . . [T]here [is] nothing to stop this city from becoming inflamed, greedy, or imperialistic, and eventually stumbling

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<sup>12</sup> Annas, *Introduction to Plato's Republic*, pp. 78–9. Robin Waterfield echoes the thought that the main purpose of the city of pigs is to 'introduce PS [the Principle of Specialization] in a plausible context'; Waterfield, trans. and introduction, *Plato, Republic* (Oxford, 1993), p. xxii.

<sup>13</sup> The main issue here is not the temporal duration of the communities Plato discusses in the *Republic*. As I discuss below, even the *kallipolis* must eventually decline and fall.

into war'.<sup>14</sup> Reeve develops this line more fully in his *Philosopher-Kings*. On his view, 'the First Polis [the *huopolis*] . . . is not a real possibility because it includes nothing to counteract the destabilizing effects of unnecessary appetites and the *pleonexia* to which they give rise. For this the guardians are required'.<sup>15</sup> On Reeve's view, the city of pigs degenerates into the luxurious city when the necessary appetites of the *huopolis* give way to the unnecessary appetites of the *truphōsa polis*.<sup>16</sup> And this transition is psychologically necessary given a lack of controls on appetites in general in the *huopolis*. In order to see if this view is correct we need to say more about the *Republic* view of human desire.

Plato holds that there are three main faculties at work in human psychology — reason (both practical and theoretical), *thumos* (often translated: 'spirit'),<sup>17</sup> and desire (435b–441c). Each of these faculties has, as occupational classes in the *polis* do, some distinctive function and some distinctive virtue that is evident when that psychic part is doing its work well (435b, 441c–d, 442b–c, 443b).<sup>18</sup> Justice and moderation in the person overall will involve the proper relation *among* these psychic parts (430e, 441c–441e, 433c–e, 434c). Desire has as its natural function to pursue what seems good for the purpose of securing goods needed for survival. But because desire attracts a person to what *appears* good, desire should be brought under the control of *thumos* and reason. *Thumos* is capable, as it were, of admonishing desire so that it will not impel a person in harmful directions (439e–440b). Reason is necessary to render appropriate judgments about what is in fact beneficial and harmful for the entire person (431c–d).

Plato suggests that desire has no internal limit but, taken on its own, that desire is insatiable (*phusei aplēstotaton*, 442a). Plato imagines that the

<sup>14</sup> J. Wallach, *The Platonic Political Art: A Study of Critical Reason and Democracy* (University Park, Pa., 2001).

<sup>15</sup> C.D.C. Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings: The Argument of Plato's Republic* (Princeton, 1988), p. 171.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 176–7.

<sup>17</sup> *Thumos* is the faculty which is responsible for some of the emotive features of a person, particularly the emotions of indignation, anger, self-respect, and shame. A person who is *thumodic* will be courageous, steadfast in the face of pain, pleasure, or trouble. Such a person will be jealous of his or her honour and will seek to win recognition of his or her accomplishments through contests. A *thumodic* person will often be described as 'energetic'. So, Plato holds that children are full of *thumos* (are 'spirited' like wild animals).

<sup>18</sup> One question I have left largely unaddressed in this paper is that of the isomorphism between the *polis* and *psuchê*. I happen to think that it is a mistake to think that the correspondence between the city and the soul licenses, in all cases, a perfect one-to-one mapping. But even if the analogy between the city and the soul is a very close one, the analogy alone does not help to *explain* why the *huopolis* is inferior to the *kallipolis*.



appetitive faculty encompasses various desires, such as for food, drink, sleep, and sex. But these desires merely push in a certain direction. First, Plato holds, these desires are 'unqualified' (*haplôs*, as of knowledge which is unqualified at 438e). Thirst, for instance, is the desire for drink without qualification. On Plato's account, when one thirsts, one does not thirst for hot nor cold drink, for intoxicating nor non-intoxicating drink, for much drink or little drink, nor for any particular qualified sort of drink, but simply for any drink that will slake one's thirst (437d–438a). A desire for a cold drink would, on this view, represent two distinct desires — an unqualified desire for drink, and a desire for something cold (437d–e). One may form a particular desire based on the kind of drink that is available, but

thirst itself is not of much nor little, nor of good nor bad, but in a word, is not for any *kind* (*poion ti*) of drink, but thirst naturally is for drink itself alone (*autou pômatos monon*) (439a).

Second, the desiring faculty does not distinguish between good and bad objects of desire. When one is thirsty, one will desire to drink even unhealthy water, provided it satisfies one's thirst. Desire is incapable of making judgments which distinguish between what appears good and what really is good. Desires, in this way, are blind.

Plato appears to infer that since appetitive desires are 'blind' in this way, they must only be qualified or limited by something which is not itself an appetitive desire. Hunger inexorably impels an individual towards food. If it is the function of desire to push or impel towards a natural object, then any drive *away* from that natural object must come from some other source than desire. The limit on hunger, then, must come from some aspect of one's *psuchê* which does not itself find its source in appetitive desire (439c–d). Desires, as it were, have no internal limits but are only controlled by the external limits provided by the actions of *thumos* and reason (439c–d, 440a–b).

We have been discussing the faculty of desire in general terms, but in Book VIII Plato also distinguishes among three main types of desires: (1) those that are strictly necessary; (2) those that are necessary in that they are beneficial; and (3) unnecessary desires. Desires that are necessary are those which are 'unavoidable' and needed for survival, or 'whose satisfaction benefits us' (558e; also 581e). The desire for bread is a necessary desire since carbohydrates are necessary for survival. Other necessary desires include the desire for *opson* (relishes) which are not strictly necessary for survival, but are healthful (559b).<sup>19</sup> A desire for a more varied and delicate diet would be an

<sup>19</sup> An *opsos* is, roughly, something to eat with or on bread. These may include seafood, fish, meat, cheeses, olives, etc. The central place of *opsos* in Athenian culture (particularly seafood and fish) are discussed engagingly in James Davidson's *Courtesans and Fishcakes: the Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (London, 1997), esp. pp. 20–6.



example of an unnecessary desire. Unnecessary desires are those that do no positive good and may be harmful. In the first instance, they appear to be elaborations on the necessary desires — for example, the desire for fancy foods rather than for just food. In addition, unnecessary desires can be trained away, they are not essential to one's *psuchê* in the way that necessary desires are (559a–c). So, one can learn to eat a healthful diet rather than one consisting mainly of beef and baklava. Unnecessary desires may also expand to include the desire for luxury goods of all kinds, as is the case in the *truphōsa polis*.

### III

#### Desires in Swillsburg

This brings us back to the charge under consideration against the *huopolis*. There 'seem to be no limits on the activities and goods that may satisfy citizen's needs' in Swillsburg.<sup>20</sup> And while the desires which citizens have in this *polis* are originally modest, there are no structural controls to guarantee that desires will remain modest. Thus, the *huopolis* is, as Reeve has it 'stable only in a fantasy world in which people never pursue pleonectic satisfaction'.<sup>21</sup> The *huopolis*, on this view, will inevitably degenerate into the luxurious city because the *huopolis* lacks the rational philosopher-kings and the *thumodic* professional military class who can provide the right sorts of external limits on appetitive desires. Trouble, on this view, appears to enter Swillsburg as soon as foreign trade is allowed. Inhabitants come into contact with *poleis* that have couches, pastries, dancing girls and other luxury goods. Human nature is covetous. Thus, if those who travel and trade observe or partake in foreign pleasures, they will come to desire these luxuries in their own city. When they return to Swillsburg, they are no longer content with barley cakes, wine in moderation, and the lack of furniture, utensils, professional entertainment and other niceties. Necessary desires no longer seem to suffice, and unnecessary desires begin to take hold. The luxurious city cannot be far behind.

There are several difficulties with this interpretation. First, it relies on an inference — the one from 'appetitive desires are unqualified' to 'appetitive desires are not intrinsically limited' — which is far from clear. The former claim is perhaps defensible. The latter does not seem even psychologically plausible. Even if we grant that hunger is for food *simpliciter* and not for a particular type of food, there seems to be no reason to conclude from this that hunger is intrinsically unlimited. Hunger, thirst, lust, and desire for sleep all seem to have natural satiation points. It may be the case that I would need to employ my reason or *thumos* to help me to resist the push from hunger to eat (439c). But I do not require the help of reason or *thumos* to tell me when to stop eating. I simply feel full, and stop.

<sup>20</sup> Wallach, *Platonic Political Art*, p. 251.

<sup>21</sup> Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings*, p. 178.

Certainly, hunger and other appetitive desires re-occur some time after satiation. But this fact is not at odds with the claim that appetitive desires are intrinsically limited. Nor is the claim that appetitive desires are intrinsically limited at odds with the fact that human beings may have different natural satiation points, nor that some may stretch the limits of their desires to become 'over-reachers' (343e–344c; 579e). If the picture Plato gives at 434a–443b were correct, every human being would be subject to on-going, unrelenting hunger, thirst, lust and desire for sleep driving towards their respective objects. (I'll admit there are times that it *seems* this way.) Appetitive desires would only be limited as a matter of control by reason or *thumos*. But this is clearly false. Human desire just is not insatiable or unlimited in this way.

We need not here settle the question of whether or not Plato endorses this questionable inference. If it is the case that a distinct faculty is required to limit appetitive desire, it would seem to follow that the inhabitants of the *huopolis* have this distinctive faculty since they are well able to limit their appetitive desires, as I document below. (Whether or not the distinctive faculty is identical with *thumos* or *nous* is yet a separate question.) If we reject the inference and hold that appetitive desires are, normally, intrinsically limited, all the better for Swillsburg. That is, if appetitive desires have natural satiation points these may plausibly be recognized by practical wisdom or enlightened self-interest. Thus, desires may be controlled in the city of pigs even if this *polis* lacks a professional military and Guardian class.

Moreover, it is simply not the case that desires are without any control in the *huopolis*. On the contrary, inhabitants of Swillsburg are capable of calculating their self-interest in ways that limits appetitive desire. Plato notes that because citizens of Swillsburg wish to avoid war and poverty, they self-consciously limit the size of their families (372c). Rational self-interest not only acts as a check on lust and as a form of birth-control, but appears to help limit other appetitive desires as well. If residents of Swillsburg are capable of limiting their appetitive desire for sex, there is every reason to think they are just as capable of limiting the reach of their desires for food, drink, and sleep. In addition, residents of the city of pigs are capable of preventing their necessary desires from changing into unnecessary desires. Unlike citizens of the luxurious city, denizens of the city of pigs eat a healthful and simple diet, drink only in moderation, and do not appear to have any great love of fashion (since they go largely unclothed and unshod in the warmer months) (372a–d).

While Swillsburg does eventually decline, it is significant that Plato characterizes the city as lasting for *generations* — for decades, perhaps centuries (372d). (Here the long-lastingness of a city is a sign of health, but a city may be long-lasting and still fall short of being perfectly healthy, unified or good.) If the nature of appetitive desire were the main cause of Swillsburg's decline, we would expect that the city could not continue long after trade was introduced. In fact, if intrinsically unlimited appetitive desire were the main cause

of decline, trade wouldn't even matter. Citizens of Swillsburg would not need exotic luxury goods to over-indulge their appetites. But this is just not the picture of the city of pigs that Plato gives us at 370c–372d. Thus the claim that nothing in Swillsburg limits the potentially destabilizing effects of desire is simply not true. *Contra* Wallach and Reeve, citizens of the city of pigs are able to keep their appetitive desires in check through calculations of their self-interest based on considerations of the likely effects of uncontrolled desires.<sup>22</sup>

One might raise several issues at this juncture. For one, there is the question of the effectiveness of the calculations of rational self-interest in controlling appetitive desires. If human beings may misapprehend their own self-interest, as Plato clearly thinks they may, mistakes in the calculations of self-interest may cause the decline of Swillsburg. Citizens may, for example, wrongly judge concerning the effects of unnecessary desires and may subsequently allow appetitive desires to become too strong or too varied. Unnecessary desires may not always appear to the agent as unnecessary, as potentially harmful and eliminable. For this reason, one may argue, philosopher-rulers are needed to provide knowledgeable assessments of which appetitive desires are in fact beneficial and which are potentially or actually harmful. Again, however, the city of pigs has a fair degree of long-term stability since it is represented as lasting for several generations. Thus, Plato seems to regard enlightened self-interest as effective enough to provide this sort of long-term stability.

And it appears to me that there is a deeper question at issue here. The success of the *kallipolis* relies on those in the Producer and Auxiliary classes being willing to conform their behaviour and desires to the dictates of the philosopher-rulers. It may further require producers and guardians to radically reorient their self-interest — for example, to *believe* that conforming their behaviour and desires in the recommended ways is in their self-interest. And this goes directly to the issue of the unity of the *kallipolis*. All the knowledgeable assessments of the philosopher-rulers will be of no use if those in the Producer and Auxiliary classes prove unwilling to take these recommendations to heart. To put the point another way, barring coercion, external limits on

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<sup>22</sup> If the tripartite division of the soul is meant to be exhaustive, then I don't know what faculty will be responsible for limiting one's appetitive desires through considerations of self-interest. Plato seems to resist thinking that this ability could rest with the appetitive faculty itself. In Aristotle, this ability would seem to rest with the faculty of practical reason. It may be that the tripartite division is a first pass for Plato, and that *nous* will subsequently be distinguished into a philosophical faculty (which aims at truth) and a practical faculty (which handles calculations regarding action). But the issue need not be settled for the purposes of this paper.

appetitive desires will be toothless unless the agents to which they are directed internalize and thereby conform themselves to those limits.<sup>23</sup>

External controls on appetitive desires, that is, are not sufficient alone to show that the *huopolis* is inferior to the *kallipolis*. The introduction of the philosopher-rulers alone or philosopher-rulers plus Auxiliaries will do nothing to counteract the destabilizing effects of appetitive desires unless the right sort of unity accompanies the change. As it happens, appetitive desires are limited in the *huopolis*. But the true difference between the *huopolis* and the *kallipolis* is the kind of civic unity which each exhibits. The *huopolis* in fact achieves a fair degree of civic unity, but it is not yet the sort of civic unity which characterizes the *kallipolis*.

Finally, the fact that the *huopolis* is a city that will fail is not sufficient grounds for thinking that the *huopolis* is inferior to the *kallipolis*. Every *polis*, Plato holds, is a human creation and all creations must inevitably decay (546a). So, at 546a–547d, Plato describes the decline of the *kallipolis* into the timocratic city and then to the other forms of degenerate communities (*kakas* . . . *kai hēmartēmenas poleis*, 449a). The decline of the *kallipolis* is due to civic disunity caused by errors in the management of procreation. In Plato's account of the decline of the *kallipolis*, mistakes are made in the mathematical calculations which govern procreation (546b–d). The resulting children will be 'neither gifted nor lucky' (*ouk euphueis oud' eutucheis*), and so will be unworthy of the important offices they must hold (546d). The result will be philosopher-rulers who cannot truly distinguish the natural materials needed to produce further children of good character (546d–e). These rulers will, in turn, mate incompatible characters to produce other inferior mixed characters (547a). These mistakes are, Plato holds, the breeding-ground for war and hostilities as these inferior characters will be drawn to material possessions and will be suspicious of intelligent rulers (547a–548c). This gives rise to the strife among the Guardians and Auxiliaries which accelerates the downward progression from *kallipolis* to degenerate city (545d–e).

Plato's remarks here are noteworthy for two reasons: For one, the description of the decline of the *kallipolis* shows that no human city, not even the best or most just, is incorruptible or immortal. For two, the description further suggests that the decline of cities is due to the fact that no human city can be a

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<sup>23</sup> Plato is unwilling to make too much in the *kallipolis* reliant on coercive state power. And even coercion, it seems, must be founded on right reason in the *kallipolis*. Coercive state power in the *kallipolis* will be exercised by the Auxiliaries who will make up the police and defensive force. It will be necessary in the first instance that the Auxiliaries prove agreeable to the controls imposed by the philosopher-rulers. In addition, Plato believes that the *kallipolis* will not truly be the just city unless it wins the 'hearts and minds' of its citizenry. See e.g. 464d, where Plato praises the *kallipolis* for its 'one-mindedness'. And see 548b where Plato criticizes the timocratic *polis* for 'educating by force rather than persuasion'.

perfect unity, but all *poleis* involve the combination of distinct elements.<sup>24</sup> As in material bodies, the disparate elements in communities may be subject to dissolution as well as to combination. In Plato's view, cities are better or worse according to the degree and kind of unity they achieve. Thus, we should further examine the question of civic unity.

#### IV Unity in Communities

Unity is necessary for the existence of a *polis*. A group of individuals who cannot form any sort of unity will not even qualify in the first instance for being a *polis* (351c–d). For this reason, Plato continually warns against division and faction in the *Republic*. Groups divided by quarrels and divergent interests will be unable to undertake any common projects (351d–352d). *Poleis* which allow great disparities in wealth and income will, in effect, degenerate into two separate cities (421c–423b). Thus, Plato judges that nothing is worse for a *polis* than to be disunified (462b). A complete breakdown of civic unity will mean death for a *polis*. Civic unity, however, is not simply an all or nothing matter as communities may exhibit different degrees and types of unity.

But any sort of civic unity poses a particular problem. Human communities are necessarily plural. Communities join many individuals with potentially many divergent interests. In addition, any working human community must provide for a diversity of tasks, so that inhabitants will be pursuing a plurality of occupational ends. Socrates and Adeimantus suggest that the purpose of a community is to fulfil wants (*pollôn endeês*) which cannot be met by an individual on his or her own (369b). But we are not, I think, to take this as denying the possibility of a Robinson Crusoe, a self-sufficient individual living outside a community. The point, rather, is that a community has the potential to provide for a better sort of life than the minimum fulfilment of basic needs. A community's purpose, then, is not just to meet human needs, but to do so well.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The account here is analogous to the account Plato and Aristotle give for the physical decline and death of animals and plants. (Plato appears to make clear reference to this sort of account at 547b.) Sublunary creatures must decay and die because their bodies are composed of material elements which have different natural motions. These motions pull the elements in different directions and thus cause the breakdown of the creature's material body.

<sup>25</sup> This is indicated at 370c–d where Socrates states that 'the farmer, it seems, will not make a plough for himself, if it is going to be a good one, nor a hoe, or any other farm implements'. Similarly, other specialists will require tool-makers — not to exercise their trade at all — but if they are to have well-made tools that allow them to do their jobs well.

The minimal *polis* described at 369c–370c is designed to provide food and protection from the elements (shelter, footwear and clothing). But since communities aim for something better than bare subsistence, considerations of efficiency and quality will be relevant to providing these basic needs. These considerations will lead Plato to introduce a principle of specialization — a principle that will be centrally important throughout the *Republic*. According to the Principle of Specialization [PS], each member of a community should specialize in the one job for which he or she is best suited by nature (369e–370c). Three considerations are offered in support of PS. Individuals will produce *more* and *better* food, shelter, shoes and clothing if they specialize (370b–c). Further, specialization will also allow for more *efficiency* in the production of goods. Specialization allows practitioners to capitalize on the 'right moment' (*ergou kairon*) which is so critical in the exercise of a *technê* (370c). Distractions can ruin the products of good labour. The farmer who must weave her own cloth, for example, may fail to collect the harvest before it is destroyed by rain.

The *micropolis* is necessarily plural in two ways — not only are there distinct individuals, but different occupational specialties are practised by these individuals. Some degree of unity is achieved, however, through PS. The community is unified insofar as individuals specialize in their *technai*, and insofar as these *technai* provide for some efficient meeting of human needs. The minimal *polis*, then, models to some degree the functional unity of a living organism where the parts work together for the good of the whole organism.

Since considerations of efficiency, quantity and quality are held to be relevant to the practice of occupational specialties, new occupations are introduced as the *micropolis* develops into the *huopolis*.<sup>26</sup> The farmer will do her work more effectively if she is provided with ploughs and draughts-animals. Other specialists as well will benefit in their work from appropriate tools (370d). Thus, the interlocutors agree that tool-makers, smiths, cow-herds and shepherds are desirable additions to the community. The interlocutors judge that efficient specialization will also result in surpluses (371a). And, since 'to settle this city in a place that does not need imports is nearly impossible', trade with other communities is established (370e). Imports and trade require merchants, navigators, retailers, and labourers so these specialties are admitted

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This sentiment is echoed in Aristotle's *Politics* (I.2, 1252b 27–33) where he notes that the *polis* arises due to human needs, but exists for the sake of the good life.

<sup>26</sup> The movement from the minimal *polis* to *huopolis* to *truphōsa polis* to *kallipolis* is presented as a historical development. But commentators are right, I think, to caution against taking this historical presentation too literally. There is no reason to think that Plato is concerned with the historical development of cities *per se*. His interest is always in what makes communities possible and what would make them better or worse.

(370e–371e).<sup>27</sup> Currency is introduced to facilitate exchange. No mention is made yet of a military or ruling class. Occupational specialties in the *huopolis* work together well, so the economy runs like a finely-tuned engine. Piety, strong family ties, and a vibrant cultural tradition supplement the economic health of Swillsburg.<sup>28</sup>

As an aside, note that Plato's allowance that the city should provide not just for bare subsistence but for a decent human life saves him from implausibility in the case of imports. When Plato holds that it is 'nearly impossible' to found a city that will not need imports, we need not think that he is making the dubious claim that it is nearly impossible that a city exist *at all* without imports, or that no city could exist without imports. Rather, he should be understood as making the weaker, but far more plausible, claim that it is nearly impossible to have a community which is able to provide for a decent human life without imports.

The city of pigs is able to provide a decent life for its inhabitants because the interests of members of the *polis* coincide. In part, this is due to the fact that the *technê*-interests of the inhabitants coincide. In the *huopolis* occupational specialties complement other occupational specialties to a greater degree than in the minimal community.<sup>29</sup> For this reason, the *huopolis* represents a greater degree of functional unity than the minimal city. More occupational specialties are practised in Swillsburg, and there is a closer fit among these specialties. Farmers rely on labourers to help produce surpluses for market, and retailers to sell their crops. Retailers rely on farmers to provide the crops that they sell. Labourers rely on farmers for a wage. Weaker members of the community are provided for and employed — those who are physically weaker find work as retailers, those mentally weaker find work as labourers (371b). There will be few, if any, non-functional groups in the city of pigs.

Providing for needs better also enables the city of pigs to achieve a higher degree of unity than the *micropolis* (and the *truphōsa polis*) in another way. Members of the community will be more likely to stick to 'their own work' if

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<sup>27</sup> Plato does not explicitly say why labourers are needed. However, I think there are two reasons that are likely: (1) the need to create a surplus for trade which will be done more effectively if day-labourers assist farmers and the like; and (2) to provide rowers and other 'able-bodied seamen' for ships used to transport goods for trade.

<sup>28</sup> It is likely that the tradition is primarily an oral one. Witness the fact that the inhabitants hymn the gods. Also, 'imitators' only seem to come in once we are in the luxurious city. The fact that citizens hymn the gods also goes to the goodness of the city of pigs. In Book X, hymns to the gods and paeans to heroes are the only sorts of poetry allowed in the *kallipolis* (607a).

<sup>29</sup> As we know from Socrates' conversation with Thrasymachus, the interests of a particular technical expert are at least partly determined by the interests of the specialty he or she practises (342d–e). In Swillsburg, then, the interests of inhabitants will mesh in part because the specialties they practise fit together so well.



the occupations in Swillsburg make good provision for its inhabitants.<sup>30</sup> Conversely, if the occupational specialties practised in the city did not provide well for its inhabitants, individuals would be tempted to go outside their natural specialty and do these jobs for themselves. Occupational specialists will also be able to specialize to a greater degree in the *huopolis* and do their work better.

In part, then, the city of pigs achieves a higher degree of unity than the *micropolis* because the Principle of Specialization is more faithfully adhered to in the city of pigs. This allows for a greater coincidence in the technical interests associated with each specialty. In addition, it seems, there is a coincidence in private interests among inhabitants of the city of pigs. All transactions among inhabitants are made on the assumption of mutual advantage (369c). Citizens trade and exchange their labour because they think it will personally benefit them, not out of altruistic concern for the good of the whole community. Citizens, however, seem to be quite long-sighted in their assessment of their self-interest. The *huopolis* is a thriving community with good craft and agricultural production, a lively marketplace, and a nice trade in overseas goods. None of this would be possible if inhabitants were short-sighted in their self-interest. It seems accurate, then, to characterize inhabitants of Swillsburg as acting from enlightened self-interest.

Two key points should be emphasized here:

(1) Citizens of Swillsburg are capable of limiting their appetitive desires, and seem to do so out of considerations of self-interest.

(2) Citizens of Swillsburg cooperate with one another and engage in activities that are for the benefit of the entire community, but also act in these ways out of considerations of self-interest.

In addition, size is relevant to the degree of unity provided for in the community. The minimal community may be quite small, as few as four or five individuals (369e). But new specialties will require new specialists.<sup>31</sup> And if the community is to provide for human needs better, the *micropolis* will be too small. Thus, at 370e, Adeimantus notes that the *huopolis* will 'no longer be a small city' (*smikra polis*, 370e). During this short discussion, it is noteworthy

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<sup>30</sup> Plato emphasizes the importance of PS for civic justice at, among other places 433e–434a and 443b–d. By Book IV in the *Republic*, all the elements of the *kallipolis* are in place, and the interlocutors are summing up with some conclusions about civic and individual justice. Socrates refers to PS as a 'representation' (*eidôlon*) of justice (443c). And, at 433e–434a, Plato goes so far as to hold that civic justice *just is* a matter of adhering to PS.

<sup>31</sup> Sometimes Plato appears to assume that population growth must track a growth in occupational specialties. But it is not clear that this is good assumption. If individuals were to become more skilled and efficient at performing their tasks, and if the complementarity of occupations increased efficiency, there might not be any need for more practitioners even if more *technai* were introduced into the community.

that the interlocutors remark twice more on the city's size (at 370d and 371a). And at 371e, they conclude that with the addition of wage-labourers the *huopolis* is 'euxetai . . . host' einai telea' — has grown to completion. The language in this passage reinforces the parallel between the *huopolis* (as a functional unity) and an organic unity, such as a living organism. A healthy organism of a certain species will be of an intermediate size, neither puny nor gigantic.

In contrast to the *huopolis*, the *truphōsa polis* will be too large. This city is bloated and diseased. The addition of frivolous occupations will cause this *polis* to become over-populated and to out-grow its territorial boundaries (373b–c). The luxurious city is also rife with the unnecessary, artificial desires that accompany the access to a greater number and variety of luxury goods. Socrates describes the luxurious city as 'fevered' or 'inflamed' (*phlegmainousan*, 372e), and 'swelled and crowded' (*ogkou emplēstea kai plēthous*, 373b). To cure the disease of the *truphōsa polis*, Socrates will institute strong measures — a rigorous programme of education and the tight controls on music, art and literature detailed in Books II and III.<sup>32</sup> These measures will act as a medicinal purge on the *truphōsa polis*. The effect will be to largely eliminate the desires for luxury goods, and restore the city to health. Hence, in Book III Socrates announces, 'Without knowing it, we have been thoroughly purging (*diakathairontes*) the city we called luxurious just now' (399e).

For a *polis* to be properly unified, then, it will be necessary that it be of the right size. It should not be too populous, include too many diverse occupations, and its territory should be sufficient for its legitimate needs. We add, then, a second principle to the Principle of Specialization. A *polis* should only be allowed to grow such that it is a unity, and no further (Right Size Principle) (423b–c, 460a). The philosopher-rulers of the *kallipolis* are charged with regulating the correct size of the *kallipolis* (423c). But even though there are no philosopher-rulers in the *huopolis*, this community also meets this condition since it is neither too small nor too large. The *huopolis* is able to meet human needs well and provide for some niceties without excessive luxuries. Its territory is sufficient to its necessary desires, both those that are strictly necessary for survival and those that are beneficial.

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<sup>32</sup> Literature and the arts are held to (1) promote conflict and struggle (603d); (2) encourage individuals become psychologically divided by pitting the appetitive, *thumodic*, and intellectual elements against one another; (3) encourage individuals to become psychologically divided by having them play multiple different roles; (4) fail to consistently model the person of steady and good character (604a–b, 605c, 606d); (5) allow people to imaginatively identify with bad people (395c–d; 396d–e) (6) promote innovation and faddishness to the detriment of well-established virtue norms (424b–d).

Plato is intent that the *kallipolis* exhibit the greatest degree of unity it is possible for a community composed of distinct human beings to have.<sup>33</sup> The *huopolis* meets two of the primary conditions for such unity, its inhabitants specialize and it is of a correct size. If unity thus conduces to goodness, we can see how Socrates is justified in describing the *huopolis* as healthy, true and complete (371e–372e). However, we still need a fuller explanation of how Swillsburg falls short of the kind of unity which characterizes the *kallipolis*.

## V

### Swillsburg and the Oligarchic *Polis*

These points about unity allow us to correct a misapprehension. Some have thought that the *huopolis* is equivalent to the oligarchic city, one of the 'degenerate cities' (*kakas kai hêmartêmenas poleis*) described in Book IX. I have represented appetitive desires as being controlled by rational calculation of self-interest in the *huopolis*. This interpretation is supported by two key passages in Book II 369c where Plato holds that 'all mutual exchanges in the community [*huopolis*] are made on the assumption that the parties to them stand to gain',<sup>34</sup> and 372c: 'And fear of poverty and want will make them keep their numbers of their families within their means.' One might hold that the second passage implies that appetitive desires are not controlled by rational calculation of self-interest in Swillsburg at all, but are only controlled by fear or anxiety. In effect, such an interpretation assimilates Swillsburg to the oligarchic *polis* described in Book VIII at 550c–553a.<sup>35</sup> And since Plato is quite critical of the oligarchic *polis*, one might hope to find the source of the inferiority of the *huopolis* in the description of the oligarchic *polis*.

The oligarchic *polis* is one in which political power is held by the rich. Money-lovers are the dominant force in this city, and this city is stamped with their character. This city becomes unable to wage war (552d–e), and appears to lack a professional military. This city explicitly lacks the philosopher-rulers of the *kallipolis*. The money-lovers who dominate in this *polis* are not consumed by unnecessary desires, but their whole way of life is directed at security in their necessary desires (554a). The oligarchic person is stingy and conservative. Desires in this sort of *polis* are kept in check by fear. This person cares nothing for the sorts of honours sought by the timarchic person (555a), so *thumos* is not effective in limiting his appetitive desires. He

<sup>33</sup> In my view, Plato holds that maximal unity (rightly understood) is at least a sufficient condition for civic justice. I cannot fully defend this claim in this paper, but the rudiments of the argument for this interpretation are present here.

<sup>34</sup> While this stipulation occurs strictly in the discussion of the *micropolis*, we have every reason to think that this condition extends to the *huopolis* which follows.

<sup>35</sup> Reeve assimilates the *huopolis* to the oligarchic *polis* in this way. See *Philosopher-Kings*, pp. 48–9, 170, 176–8, and note 2, p. 285.

also cares nothing for philosophy or higher education, regarding these as trivial luxuries (554b–c), so reason is also largely inert in limiting his appetitive desires.

Finally, this sort of *polis* becomes highly disunified in three distinctive ways. First, factionalism between the rich and poor divide the oligarchic city. In effect, this city becomes two cities — a city of the rich and a city of the poor. Second, oligarchy encourages citizens to dabble in many different occupations. Since Plato regards specialization as necessary to securing civic unity, the oligarchic city is defective in that it fails to meet this requirement for unity. Third, in the oligarchic city there is a large class of citizens who have no gainful employment, the class of ‘stingless and stinging drones’. The Principle of Specialization requires that all or most citizens specialize in some distinctive occupational specialty. Non-functional classes such as the drones in the oligarchic city violate PS and are detrimental to civic and functional unity.

It is a mistake to think that the oligarchic *polis* and the *huopolis* are the same or even relevantly similar. Inhabitants of the *huopolis* do not dabble in the work of others but specialize in occupations that mesh together well. There is no idle class to speak of in the city of pigs. As far as we are told, all or most of the inhabitants of Swillsburg have gainful employment in some suitable specialty. Furthermore, there is no reason to think that life in the *huopolis* is completely directed towards security in the necessary desires of those who might be characterized as money-lovers. Life in Swillsburg seems vastly more rich and interesting than life in the oligarchic city. Life in Swillsburg also seems less fractious and more secure. It is not accurate, then, to think that the *huopolis* is a city merely of money-lovers and is stamped with the character of money-lovers, as Reeve suggests.

## VI Unity in Swillsburg

Swillsburg has a greater degree of unity than the *micropolis*, the *truphōsa polis*, the oligarchic *polis*, and, I would argue, any of the other degenerate *poleis* discussed in Book IX. In fact, of all the cities Plato presents in the *Republic*, the *huopolis* stands second only in unity to the *kallipolis*. The *huopolis* meets two key conditions for civic unity. It is organized according to the Principle of Specialization and conforms to the Right Size Principle. Furthermore, while inhabitants of Swillsburg are motivated by self-interest, they have the benefit of enlightened self-interest. They can be expected to know, with a fair degree of acumen, that the goodness of their common life together relies on making some trade-offs against short-term self-interest. So, self-regardingness need not be a source of division. Thus, in the city of pigs appetitive desires are adequately regulated through the exercise of rational self-interest. In these ways, Swillsburg solves some of the problems about

civic unity that confront any community. Most notably, in the *huopolis*, the potentially divergent interests of citizens coincide by means of occupational specialization and considerations of mutual advantage.

The unity secured in the city of pigs is also highly contingent. To see how this is so, we should go back to the discussion on the Ring of Gyges which immediately precedes the section on 'city construction' in Book II. At 357a ff., where Glaucon and Adeimantus challenge Socrates to give a more full-blooded defence of virtue than he has provided in his argument against Thrasymachus. They pose this challenge by launching a stringent attack against the virtue that has been identified as justice (*dikaïosunê*). Because everyone judges that it better to do harm rather than to suffer it, Glaucon imagines that in a pre-social state human beings might contract with one another to avoid injury and, thereby, impose limits on their own behaviour (358e–359a). Laws and regulations are made to enforce these limits, and the behaviour that respects these limits is subsequently called 'just' (359a).

But if this is all that justice consists in, Glaucon argues that it is of only middling value. Certainly, one wants to avoid being harmed by others without any hope of redress. On the other hand, the best course of action would be to act in a completely self-interested way without the threat of punishment or concern for the interests of others (359a–b). To act justly, on this view, requires that one limit one's behaviour where convention dictates that it is appropriate to limit one's behaviour (even where this may conflict with what one really wants). Justice, then, seems to be the sort of weak tea favoured by milquetoasts, not the strong brew which befits the powerful and intelligent.

For this reason, Glaucon and Adeimantus imagine that when acting in self-interest and acting justly conflict — as it seems they inevitably will — even the apparently just person will act unjustly. Without the threat of sanction, there seems to be no reason to choose just action over unjust action. Pursuing self-interest seems to have indisputable value. And if one can pursue self-interest without public censure or punishment one should, even to the detriment of justice. This is the moral of the Ring of Gyges story at 359b–360e. If justice *is* only of middling value, then self-interest must win in all cases of conflict between self-interested and just courses of action. Unless one can show that justice is worth pursuing for its own sake, and not merely for the sake of its supposed rewards, Socrates has not adequately defended justice. Unless one can show that it is better to in fact *be* just than merely *appear* just, the moral sceptic has not been defeated (362a, 365c–366d).

Furthermore, only when virtue is valued for its own sake will it be immune to chance. There is an implicit criticism of Cephalus and Polemarchus here. Both the father and son do 'right things' — they tell the truth, pay their debts, offer the appropriate sacrifices to the gods, and follow the other ethical rules

of the society in which they live.<sup>36</sup> They follow these ethical rules, however, primarily because of the benefits acting virtuously secures, not because they value virtue for its own sake. But this sort of virtue will not ensure a happy life. In the background story of the *Republic* we know that during the reign of the Thirty Tyrants, Cephalus' son Polemarchus will be executed and his family's fortune will be lost. The happiness of the truly virtuous person, on the other hand, will be resistant to the vagaries of human life. Virtue in this person consists in the proper ordering of her psychic faculties and in each of these faculties performing its proper function. Such an ordering guarantees the fulfillment of *eudaimonia*, that form of happiness which consists in one's fulfilling one's nature as a human being.

The city of pigs is a mutual benefit society of the type Glaucon characterizes at 358e–359, and Glaucon's mention of this sort of mutual benefit society is the key to determining how the city of pigs is inferior to the *kallipolis*. The unity in the *huopolis*, I suggest, is contingent in the way that happiness is contingent for the person who is only instrumentally virtuous. For Swillsburg, unity is secured as long as, in general, acting in one's self interest conduces to acting in the interest of the community.

But citizens of the *huopolis* do not value civic unity, justice, or even the *polis* itself, for its own sake. Amicability among its citizens is valuable to residents of Swillsburg insofar it provides the benefits they enjoy — security, family life, simple luxuries, economic prosperity, a peaceful way of life. Unity is secured as long as the enlightened, self-regarding interests of individuals coincide. But things might go differently. Circumstances may change and individual interests might thereby diverge. If this happens, there is nothing that will secure the unity of the *huopolis* against these contingencies. And the cases where private interests may diverge need not be cases where appetitive desires run amok. The cool-headed dictates of enlightened self-interest may be just as threatening to the ultimate unity of the *huopolis* as appetitive desires are in the luxurious city.

Similar considerations govern regarding the health of the *huopolis*. This community is healthy, but its health also is luck-dependent. In short, Swillsburg is like the person who is healthy because they live in a good

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<sup>36</sup> Plato thinks these conventional rules are largely correct, as he indicates later in the *Republic*. Both Cephalus and Polemarchus offer accounts in Book I of the *Republic* whereby morality consists in rule-following. (Polemarchus offers a more sophisticated version of this view.) On my view, Plato does not advocate overturning the majority of conventionally-accepted moral rules. However, he does think that there are serious difficulties with understanding morality as *consisting in* following conventionally-accepted moral rules — rules conflict, new situations may arise which are not covered by the rules, rules are subject to interpretation, etc. These difficulties are the substance of the discussion in Book I.

climate, even though their internal constitution is fragile. Were this person to move to a poor climate, it is unlikely that their health would last for very long.

In contrast, unity in the *kallipolis* is secured through the minimization or radical reinterpretation of private interests plus complete state control over education. Interests in the *kallipolis* coincide to a degree that is not seen in the *huopolis* because the self-interests of residents of the *kallipolis* are largely identical to the interests of the *polis* (or as coincident as it is humanly possible to be). Plato hopes to effect the identification of private interest with the public interest among the Auxiliaries and Rulers by eliminating the most common sources of private concern: family and property. Thus, Auxiliaries and Rulers live communally, have no private marriages, and are not allowed to own private property beyond the barest of minimums. They do not raise their own children, or even know who their own biological children are. Plato doesn't institute such drastic measures for the Producers, because he thinks it is less necessary to completely unify the Producer class. Producers, however, will be subject to the demanding control of the state in other areas (for example, in dictating what they may produce, how much and when.)

In addition, Plato details a complete state-controlled programme of education beginning from an early age. Children are to be educated in ways that will best fit them for future service in the appropriate occupational specialty, in accordance with their natural abilities and dispositions. Part and parcel of this programme of education are Plato's recommendations for strict controls over music, art and literature. These are necessary if we think of education as the total development of the child. The *polis* is responsible for producing individuals of good character, well-fitted to their distinctive specialties. This is only possible, in Plato's view, if attention is paid to everything that children might see, read or hear. The production of citizens with healthy characters is too important to be left to chance. So, all representations are fair game for state control.

The object is to produce the sort of 'one-mindedness' that will allow for maximal civic unity. Producers and Auxiliaries have been socialized so that they conform their interests and behaviour to the dictates of the philosopher-rulers. The philosopher-rulers, in turn, are able to apprehend what is really in the public good (since of the good-itself). The result is a community that is as maximally unified as it is possible for a human community to be. Its unity is not the result of the coincidence of individual interests and luck, but a result of being aimed toward the real public good.

I have suggested that we can understand the issue of civic unity by comparison with the conventionally moral individual and the truly virtuous individual to whom we are introduced through the Ring of Gyges case. The alternatives outlined above are, more specifically, as follows:

(1) The conventionally moral individual: This person follows conventional norms of justice/morality because of the benefits such behaviour brings. That



is, this individual largely acts in accordance with moral dictates but out of self-interest. However, where self-interest and justice conflict and where one can get away with bad behaviour, this individual follows self-interest. Such a person cannot be truly just, moral or happy on Plato's view.

(2) The truly virtuous individual: This person follows conventional norms of justice/morality because she believes (rightly) that these are intrinsically valuable and worth pursuing. (Where conventional norms are not clearly right, one will ask further questions, presumably.) Such a person will follow these norms even in cases where calculations of self-interest may conflict with following these norms. Alternatively, such a person may understand her self-interest so that a concern with the intrinsic value of morality is essential to what is conceived as being in one's self-interest.

(3) The imperfectly unified society: Citizens cooperate, limit their behaviour and follow laws out of enlightened self-interest. That is, citizens judge that their long-term self-interest will be best served if they cooperate with one another. I argue that this description, which is analogous to (1), fits the city of pigs.

(4) The perfectly unified (and thus just) society: Citizens cooperate, limit their behaviour and follow laws out of a respect for civic unity *as such*. That is, citizens in some sense recognize the intrinsic value of civic unity and civic unity as it conduces to justice. Self-interest in such a community is reconceived such that private interests become assimilated to the public interest.

In conclusion, then, Swillsburg is unified, healthy, true, and happy — but only to an extent. Socrates is right to praise this city as it is better than any of the other non-*kallipolis* alternatives. But Swillsburg is a unified, healthy, true and happy city only as far as luck permits. Like the person who is only instrumentally virtuous the city of pigs cannot be truly happy. It cannot be the happiest of cities because its happiness depends overly on a unity that is contingent, and this unity depends overly on good fortune. A unity so dependent on circumstances cannot suffice for a truly just or happy *polis*.<sup>37</sup>

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