LOVE, FRIENDSHIP AND IMAGES: 
CITIZENSHIP AND NECESSITY IN THUCYDIDES AND PLATO

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“Love, Friendship and Images: Citizenship and Necessity in Thucydides and Plato” concerns the exploration by Thucydides in his History and Plato in the Republic and Symposium of the problem of political motion in the forms of war and civil disturbance as well as technological, intellectual and generational change. In particular it addresses the use of political imaginaries to address political motion. Thucydides’ speakers invoke a range of images of philia (friendship) to call for political cohesion and unity in the face of the centrifugal forces of war and civil conflict (stasis). Plato continues this theme in the Republic but also subjects it to an exploration of aesthetic response and representation that suggests the relation of images to the human psychological and ontological condition. In the Symposium Plato explores a politically dangerous form of imagery through the character of Alcibiades who seeks to deploy images for the sake of political domination. It is the philosopher’s self-conscious deployment of comparative imaginaries that constitutes the appropriate understanding of political imagination.
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Introduction
This dissertation is concerned with the responses of Thucydides and Plato to the phenomenon of motion in the political world which, for both, is understood to be more or less problematic. War and civil disturbances, of course, but also the instability and disruption of technological, intellectual and generational change are, for them, the central challenges of politics. In particular I am concerned here with their exploration of a set of strategies for coping with this movement that involve what might be called political imaginaries. Through readings of Thucydides’ History and Plato’s Republic and Symposium I will suggest that they share a sense of the necessity of political imagination, as well as its potential dangers. By attending to this concern for imagination this exploration suggests the inadequacy of those understandings that see Thucydides as concerned strictly with motion (a politics without philosophy) and Plato as devoted to the pursuit of intellectual rest (a philosophy that dismisses politics.)

Although this dissertation is not primarily concerned with the contemporary significance of these interpretations, it must be acknowledged that these classical authors connect in interesting ways to modern and postmodern human life. While Thucydides and Plato work against the backdrop of one, violent, motion, we ourselves seem increasingly to be in communicative, technological, cultural and political motion.

When Thucydides tells us that his work will record the “greatest movement” to beset the Greek world – and, indeed, including barbarians, the “majority of mankind” –

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1 Several influential interpreters of Thucydides and Plato have put forward this view. Strauss, for example, suggests this division in The City and Man (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1978), as does Romilly in her conclusions to Thucydides and Athenian Imperialism (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963), where Plato and other successors to Thucydides “had to turn away from the city”. More recently Gregory Crane has argued that, for Thucydides, the only stable force is human nature which, remaining unchanged, drives the instability of all other human things, Thucydides and the Ancient Simplicity. (Berkeley & L.A.: University of California Press, 1998), pp299-303. To find stillness otherwise, he argues, the Greeks looked beyond the world through mathematics or philosophy, p325.
he introduces us immediately to a theme that should carry great resonance for political theorists at the start of the Twenty First Century. Thucydides’ world is set in motion by war, ours by commerce and communications, but the possibilities of flux, fragmentation and cultural collapse – and also of the transcendence of old limitations – haunt ours as they do his.

When Thucydides tells us that his world is set in motion by war, we can understand him literally – the Greeks leave their cities and invade each other with more frequency and in greater numbers than before. Even the notoriously home-loving Spartans are drawn away from home on ever-longer campaigns, eventually even displaying some prowess at sea. Indeed, it is this latter kind of motion – the motion of naval warfare and its increasing importance – that particularly underwrites the noteworthy character of the war for Thucydides. The central naval theme of his narrative bears the greatest resemblance, perhaps, to the nature and sources of our own contemporary sense of civilizational movement: sea power is the technological foundation of a new form of improved communication, which brings with it new possibilities for commerce, cultural convergence and, indeed, a new experience of time.

Much as the digital age has overthrown the rigid routines of Fordist industrial temporality (itself a revolution upon the rhythms of agricultural life) in favor of a comparatively undifferentiated experience of work time, the Athenian thallasocracy overthrew the traditional rhythms of Greek warfare. The detachment, through tributary empire, of Athenian naval power from the traditional agricultural economic foundations of military strength, represented a detachment of war and politics from their traditional

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seasons.³ This temporal fluidity of naval warfare – the Athenian ability to dispatch their fleet at any time (7.16) – is one foundation of the great motion of the war Thucydides records. It is this new form of power, further, that underwrites the involvement of so much of the world in the great motion: the border skirmishing of traditional Greek warfare is replaced in the Athenian model by a great accumulation of forces in a permanent imperial coalition of subject “allies”.

The growth of Athenian power, and Greek fear of it, is both the “truest cause” of the outbreak of war and the change that sets in motion (partly through the war itself) great, and relatively rapid, shifts in the experience of Greek life. In their efforts to overcome the Athenians the Spartans find themselves having to adapt to the prevailing conditions and, come, first, to rely upon the un-Spartan temperament and diplomatic and rhetorical skills of Brasidas (4.81-4) and, ultimately, upon the naval leadership of Gyllipos (7.21). The cities in general face upheavals as their internal politics are destabilized by staseis fueled by the interference of the leading powers. The war on the mainland, Thucydides hints further, promises to bring Syracuse to power in Sicily as the Persian War had underwritten the rise of the Athenian empire itself.⁴

Amongst the cultural, military and political adaptations, the war reveals strains in the traditional Greek modes of conceptualizing and maintaining their associations – whether internally through notions of citizenship, or externally through conceptions of alliance. It is these various approaches to association – and their stresses – that form the

³ Pericles, the great promoter of naval power, shows his clear awareness of this fact in his first Thucydidean speech where he lists the Spartan attachment to agricultural rhythms as one of their key limitations as a foe, 1.141.3. For a good account of the Athenian violation of traditional rhythms of seasonal warfare see Ober, “The Rules of War in Classical Greece” in The Athenian Revolution. (Princeton; Princeton UP, 1996), pp53-71.
⁴ See Thucydides, Book 7.
topic of the present work. The general motion set off by the war both requires firm modes of alliance and political cohesion, and poses problematic threats to them. In particular, those modes of association that rest upon a static vision of human life and which do not prepare for radical change face challenges, if not to the survival of their orders, at least to their broader power and military success. The Spartans and Corinthians, for example, conceive of order as a matter of the repetition of past patterns. For the Corinthians, this means the careful maintenance of hegemonic boundaries and for the Spartans, the precise reproduction of cultural patterns. Both the Corinthian view of empire and the Spartan understanding of its own sources of political cohesion rest upon the expectation of continuity, and both face a severe challenge in the innovative form of Athenian power which neither respects traditional boundaries, nor leaves space for undisturbed repetition. For the Spartans especially, the adaptations that the Athenian empire seems to require threaten not only traditional military organization and practices, but the entire political and social order with which these practices are intimately entangled.  

Military adaptation, at least at the level of Spartan self-perception, promises complete cultural disruption because the entirety of Spartan life is premised upon repetition and reproduction rather than responsiveness. The Spartan or Corinthian conceptions of order are subject to implicit Thucydidean criticism for reasons beyond the simply pragmatic, however. It is not simply that they prove sluggish or maladaptive in the face of a radically new military form, it is their denial of what Thucydides sees as fundamental truths of human life and temporality that he questions. These forms of order, resting content in present measures, fail to recognize and seize the potential for the creation of greater and more axiologos orders and, more importantly, accomplishments.

In his civilizational history in the opening chapters of his work, Thucydides argues both that it is great accomplishments in common that are axiologētaton (most worth being spoken of) and that the pursuit of these accomplishments is the foundation of ever-greater orders, as well as of all of the cultural, economic and political achievements of Greek life. The Spartan and Corinthian outlooks, as well as resting on false historical premises that give primordial authority to what are, for Thucydides, late developments, are also parasitic upon the achievements of those who, like the Athenians, have dared to challenge old orders for the sake of pursuing great accomplishments, and, along the way, creating Greek civilization. For Thucydides, then, there is greater nobility and insight – as well as greater promise – in a concept of order that rests on an openness to change rather than a repetition of the past.

It is in this temporal orientation and the insistence on openness to change and the contestation of past settlements that one might find some common ground between Thucydides and those contemporary political theorists who view democratic politics in the context of our plural societies as a matter of permanent contestation and openness. Drawing on insights of post-Nietzschean thought, these theorists are perhaps the most sanguine of contemporary thinkers about the phenomenon of constant change, even rapid change. Where, for others, the constant change and movement threatens to destroy the foundations of all solidarity and unity, whether cultural, national or political, for some agonistic democrats it is in its very transcendence of these structures that the contemporary condition of flux offers hope of liberation from sources of domination and injustice. These theorists stand closest to Thucydides in this embrace of the

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6 William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed.* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2002), pp141-175 is, perhaps, the most radical of these thinkers in his embrace of rapid change.
transgression of limitations and the unsettling of the given because they ground these evaluations in a vision of human life as inevitably prone to change, contestation and unpredictable events, and counsel an approach to politics that is reconciled to these facts. For both, attempts to establish permanent settlements bump up against these fundamental facts of human life in ways that close off important possibilities. For Thucydides, however, these possibilities are not those inherent to democratic participation, rather they involve noteworthy accomplishments and the civilizational achievements that such accomplishments both require and further.

This is the theme of the “Archaeology” that begins his work, and which is the subject of Chapter One of this dissertation. Viewed through the image of an interplay of movement and rest, this history connects the first standard of the axiologos (what is worth speaking of) asserted at 1.1 to the recognition at 1.23 at the destruction and suffering this notable war caused. The standard of 1.1 asserts that the measure of events worthy of being spoken about is whether they are great accomplishments in common – the destructive adventures that are capable of setting the whole world in motion. In defending his initial claim that this present war is the greatest ever human motion he presents an account of the foundations of great movements which turn out to be economic and technological, but also, importantly, cultural. It is only because the Greeks pursued great accomplishments in the past (the Trojan campaign, the defense against the Persians) that they became Greeks and to adopt a distinctively Hellenic style of life. The apparently purely destructive quality of the initial claim of noteworthiness is thus modified by its

Nonetheless other agonistic theorists of democracy (construing the term broadly) are in agreement that democracy requires openness to change – though great speed may be undesirable. For openness to change see, for example, Wolin’s opposition to all political “institutionalization” in “Fugitive Democracy” in Benhabib (ed.) *Democracy and Difference*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp31-44.
connection to the civilizational order which would not have existed without great and ambitious campaigns and which, in turn, is necessary to the pursuit of larger goals. For Thucydides, human associations are the *product* of change and movement.

As well as setting out a thesis about the nature and foundations of human accomplishments, then, the Archaeology also presents a history for Hellas that rejects the mythic roots of claims to primordial group identities. There is no original “rest” and unity from which movement and change suddenly emerged and which is fundamentally threatened by that movement. This stance reveals immediately the historian’s opposition to those modes of understanding and marshalling group cohesion that are central to the internal organization of the Spartans, Corinthians and other subjects of his writing. Chapter 2 of the present work, however, deals in detail with the self-understanding of these cities in their adherence to traditional forms of organization.

As well as the product of change, however, human associations are also *subject* to change and, sometimes, dissolved by it completely. Alongside his history of the gradual formation of Hellenic identity, patterns of life and the possibility of large orders capable of great actions in common, the Archaeology presents an account of the disordering forces against which these actions stand out as great achievements. More than marking out the difficulty of such accomplishments, though, the tendency of human orders to fall or be torn apart presents the issue of order as a central political problem. On the one hand human groups have no primordial status and authority, nor should loyalty to existing orders stand in the way of the formation of more powerful and sophisticated orders that are capable of great achievements and productive of civilization itself. On the other, such achievements require that orders find some means of maintaining internal
cohesion – all the more since Thucydides is insistent that the factional conflict of *stasis* is an eternal human problem, afflicting the earliest communities as much as those engaged in the war he records. In short, his view of the ontological situation of human beings as one of eternal movement presents itself as a political problem in the following way: how can human orders maintain themselves while acknowledging the truth of our situation?

To phrase Thucydides’ question in this way is to challenge the scholarly view that he views order primarily as a product of domination.\(^7\) Such a view holds the historian’s own view to be reflected in those statements of the Athenians concerning their own imperial power in their speech at Sparta at 1.76, and in the Melian dialogue of Book 5. These speakers take as natural law the submission of the weak to the strong and that human orders are forged through the application of force. The challenge I issue to this view is that as well as ignoring all of the ways in which modern realist interpretations, in their alliance with this Athenian view, miss the culturally contextual claims to rationality or adherence to nature of their opponents, it ignores the fundamental puzzle of political ontology that Thucydides presents in his Archaeology.\(^8\) In arguing for the historicity of Hellenic identity and giving his account of its slow formation Thucydides presents the view that human orders, though they may indeed begin in forceful domination, are overlaid with and ultimately held together by common identities forged through shared experience. This tendency to convergence is summed up in the theme of *synoikism* which I discuss at the end of Chapter 1, and it stands as a counterforce to the widely

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\(^7\) The classic realist interpretation of Thucydides is that of Romilly, (1963). Ahrendorf gives a useful summary of realist interpretations of the Thucydides (especially from within the discipline of international relations) in “Thucydides’ Realist Critique of Realism” in *Polity* Vol. 30, No. 2 (Winter, 1997), pp. 231-265.

discussed theme of *stasis* which, of course, is always a danger in cities and, indeed, within any order – as the pan-Hellenic war of which Thucydides writes attests.  

If every *synoikism*, which is to say, every formation of a larger order from the shared experiences of smaller ones, begins in force and ends in cultural unity and identity, where does force end and unity begin? How is difference replaced, to any degree, with identity? It seems to me that we find the answer to this question in the invocation of the language of *philia* by many of Thucydides’ speakers, who frequently turn to this vocabulary when the unity of groups is threatened by factionalism. These invocations, almost always invoked metaphorically, are meant to constitute an imaginative bridge between felt difference and effective unity.

In the sections of this dissertation devoted to Thucydides’ work I examine two broad kinds of invocations of *philia*: ascriptive and achieved. This division reflects the fact that the Greek term is poorly described by the English translation “friendship” which falls quite clearly on the “achieved” side of the divide. For the Greeks, the term included personal friendship, kinship, guest-friendship, military alliance, and even erotic relationships. My division of these possibilities into those that are ascribed (kinship, traditional military alliances, inherited *xenia* relationships) and those that are achieved (personal friendship, erotic relationships, new military alliances) is, I believe, helpful in pointing to the role these invocations play in terms of the human ontological situation that forms the basis of Thucydides’ puzzle of order. The divide between ascriptive and

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9 Jonathan Price is particularly illuminating on the view that the Peloponnesian War is, in fact, a *stasis* (civil conflict) rather than a war. *Thucydides and Internal War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp67-72.


achieved relationships reflects two orientations towards the mutability of all things, and two ways of attempting to form and sustain human orders in its face. Of the two, only achieved *philia* presents a possibility of reconciliation to the facts and possibilities of the human situation as Thucydides sees it – that is, it contains a recognition of the fact of change and an openness to the formation of new, possibly larger, orders.

I do, however, give extended attention in Chapter Two to the model of ascriptive *philia* since it stands very much as the background of tradition that Thucydides’ insight rejects and which the war itself interrogates. It is important, moreover, for highlighting the temporal aspect of the whole set of political imaginaries that draw on *philia*. In this chapter I deal with two invocations of *philia* as kinship: the Corinthian description of her claim to imperial authority over her colonies in terms of maternal *philia*, and the Spartan understanding of citizenship as the relationship between generations of shared fathers to the present generations of sons. These claims of political *philia* stand at odds with the vision contained in the Archaeology in the first place because of their reliance on mythic history and notions of primordial group identity. They do, however, provide a powerful device for generating and sustaining a unifying political imaginary that acts as an anchor, resisting the movement of nature by essentially denying its existence.

These political imaginaries of ascriptive *philia* stand at odds with Thucydides’ description of the fluidity of the human situation, but also constitute a misunderstanding of the nature and foundation of human orders. Their greatest offence viewed in light of the Archaeology is that they are merely parasitic upon the energy and dynamism of earlier times and, in their devotion to foundational moments, obscure that dynamism,
viewing order as something to be preserved and reproduced rather than built. The war itself shows that movement will ultimately interrogate and disrupt such attempts.

The alternative mode of imaginative ordering rests on the notion of achieved *philìa*. Chapter Three deals with two manifestations of this possibility – that of the Corcyreans and that imagined for the Athenians by Pericles in his funeral speech. The Corcyreans are insistent in their conflict with Corinth that *philìa* between cities is a conditional and thus, ultimately, achieved relationship. The colonial *philìa* between Corinth and Corcyra is voided, in their account, by the over-reaching claims to authority on the part of the mother city. In this they reject the fundamentally ascriptive nature of the Corinthian claims which hold, precisely, that parental enormities do not alter the permanent debt of the offspring. Setting themselves free of these claims involves an embrace of the authority of foresight and strategic calculation – a path they adopt in their approach to Athens for alliance and a stance they recommend to the Athenians in the face of incipient war. Their speech to the Athenians is revelatory of many of the problems introduced by this approach to *philìa* as strategic alliance. In particular the question of trust takes the central place reserved for authority in the Corinthian argument. Achieved friendship, in the Corcyrean argument, takes the form of an exchange of benefits which presents the Hobbesian problem of how to found the trust of the first-performer. Connecting the present to the future, in this way, requires some reference to past instances of trustworthiness – in particular of gratitude. Achieved *philìa* in this way rests on a series of calculations linking the past to the present and future, in terms both of the capacity to bestow benefits and of the likelihood of delivering them. The Corcyrean vision, however, provides little reassurance that the calculating stance will not deliver,
rather than resolute commitment, further strategic calculations that may undo promises. Unlike other invocations of *philia* in the work, the strategic friendship outlined by the Corcyreans lacks a robust narrative to outline its temporal horizons. It does not, like the Corinthian and Spartan visions, root itself in a commitment to the past, nor, as we shall see, does it identify a future moment as a point of orientation. The point at which the commitments undertaken in strategic *philia* may be recalculated is never specified. The foresight they endorse does not contain a vision to be realized so much as a stance of readiness to abandon past commitments for the sake of future strategies.

This potential of the Corcyrean position is powerfully played out in the *stasis* which besets the city and which Thucydides takes as his signal example of the havoc wrought by the war on the domestic politics of the Greeks. The political institutions of the Corcyreans are rapidly destroyed by the betrayals of trust by factional leaders so that the strategic calculations of self-interested individuals can no longer be channeled through the edifices produced by political compromise. Instead, the warring factions approach each other and, increasingly, their own sub-factions on the basis of ever-shorter strategic horizons. The Corcyreans destroy all of the political and cultural resources capable of binding them together over time – political institutions and practices, kinship and, finally, oaths sworn to the gods – to the point that those who calculate least and act with the most haste are the ones best equipped to survive. The *stasis* at Corcyra proves the necessity of some resource for binding together even those who recognize the truth of Thucydides’ analysis of the mutability of human orders – indeed, perhaps especially those. The *stasis* at Corcyra reflects a view articulated by the Corcyrean speech in Book 1 that effectively denies the existence of human orders in any form other than the
aggregation of individuals. Ultimately, no imaginative device exists at Corcyra to create any effective (because lasting) unity out of radical diversity.

It is Pericles who, of Thucydides’ characters, comes up with the most sophisticated solution to the problem of order in the context of movement. In his funeral speech he puts forth a vision of citizenship as an erotic relationship between citizen and city that represents at once the rejection of the oikos and the robust attachment to the past that it represents, and the recognition of the subjection to change and even of the impermanence of all orders. By connecting erotic citizenship to the vision of imperial glory Pericles sets out a form of political philia that connects the present commitments of the citizens to a distant goal not via the mechanism of strategic foresight, but through the enchanting anankē (necessity) of an overwhelming emotional attachment. The device promises the continuation of the Athenian order even as it detaches them from the past that may unite them, but which limits them to the repetition of past forms – and to the territorial, political and familial context in which those forms are contained. Pericles posits an imperial, sea-faring people in a vision that abstracts the Athenians from all of these attachments and yet promises to keep them united, cohesive and, importantly, open to certain kinds of growth and change of their own order. That the Periclean imperial vision does not suggest a radical openness to all possible orderings, to the unforeseeable future, does not, ultimately imply a failure in the task Thucydides has set. Pericles countenances the possibility that the imperial path will see the Athenians succumb to the disordering forces of nature – that defeat and destruction may lie ahead. It is, nonetheless, the best path for a city that recognizes the mutability of all things, however, because the goal it pursues and which it unites is one that takes refuge from the tides of change in the
permanence of memory. For Pericles it is immortal renown that should orient and bind the Athenians, not the perpetuation of a living city.

If Pericles does not, in fact, fail in the task recognized by Thucydides of constructing a political order that is both cohesive and open to change, we can say with more certainty that he fails that envisioned by Plato. If Thucydides could be imagined to rest satisfied with a political solution that produced a stable and effective order that was capable of movement, change and growth, we should not imagine Plato, I will argue, so satisfied unless that order stood in some self-conscious recognition of the truth of the human situation. It is not recognizing and harnessing movement for the sake of greatness that concerns Plato, but the task of living well and justly in a world in flux. The dialogues of Plato are a useful adjunct for considering the History because Plato recognizes in the human situation the same ontological challenge, yet delves beyond the political to explain its political consequences, and to imagine its political possibilities.

Like Thucydides, Plato takes as central the question of how we are to live – in particular, how we are to live together – in a world of movement and change. Plato’s Republic and Symposium are used in the final chapter of this work to illuminate the nature of the political imaginaries that Thucydides’ narrative presents as attempted solutions to this problem. I begin by suggesting that the Republic provides a reflection on the role that images play in managing the tasks of politics. This reflection suggests the appeal, necessity and dangers of imagination in the context the human ontological situation and the inevitable movement of politics. By situating imagery in his ontological analysis as well as in his account of the human soul, Plato suggests that images are deeply problematic in just the ways Thucydides’ rejection of primordial identities
suggested the imaginaries of ascriptive \textit{philia} were. Devotion to, and replication of, an image which is treated as a full description of reality is a retreat from truth and an inadequate way of attempting to make judgments in the realm of action. Negotiating the realm of change and movement by means of a static image – as the Spartans, for example, do – is inadequate to even the tasks of mundane, let alone just, politics.

In this light the lengthy imagining of Kallipolis by Socrates in the \textit{Republic} and the dialogue form itself are images that must be accounted for. Kallipolis is an exploration of the possibility of a politics conducted entirely through reverence for images as a solution to the problem of movement. In this Socrates goes far further than even the Spartans in creating a city not only devoted to the replication of remembered patterns, but utterly unaware that they are patterns, images. The reason for the lengths to which he goes to prevent this awareness become apparent when we explore his understanding of our relationship to images as tools for creating meaning and coherence out of our otherwise disorderly experience of becoming. The meaning, coherence and hierarchies built into these images are made possible only through the omission and exclusion of complicating events, people and possibilities. The critic who reveals these exclusions and complications stands as the greatest threat to an order devoted to reverence for an image – whether he is Thucydides’ contesting the historicity of primordial group identities or Socrates complicating Polemarchus’ view of justice in \textit{Republic} I. Such critiques reveal images as images and threaten to throw a person or city back upon direct experience of becoming and, thus, to fragment what appeared to be unitary.
In this understanding of representative images, Plato diagnoses and explains the capacity of political imaginaries to render apparently unitary what is actually multiple – the task of synoikism as Thucydides sees it. This ability is the source of their political power, and also, I shall argue, of their strange resemblance to the forms glimpsed by the philosopher. As with so many things for Plato, imagery appears to be a sword with two edges. The reverence for and reproduction of the political images of the guardians or Spartans, or the creation and deployment of new images for the sake of self-glorification by an Alcibiades or Pericles represent only one deployment of images to negotiate the world of movement. Such uses prove politically problematic in the ways Thucydides recognized, especially in the case of the Spartans: eventually movement renders them inadequate in practice. Or, as he may be less aware, they force unjust and self-destructive compromises for the sake of coherence, as we see in the Athenian preparedness to sacrifice their regime for the sake of its everlasting image.

The other edge of this sword, however, is that represented by the philosopher who, after all, while he might manage glimpses of being, must nonetheless must reside in the realm of multiplicity and communicate with those he finds there. It is in this light that we find that images and even political imaginaries are indispensable to philosophic life. While, in the world of becoming, there may be no escape from the need to create and deploy images to make sense of that world and to act within it, there is a vast difference between a reverential and a self-conscious approach to doing so.

It is in this light, I think, that we should see Kallipolis and, indeed, the dialogues themselves. The significance of Kallipolis as a political imaginary is not, after all, its role for the guardians – who are elaborately prevented from understanding its imaginative
nature. Rather, it is as an image for Glaucon that it is created – with the intention of setting it alongside the images of human beings and their ethical possibilities that he created in his thought experiment in book 1. There Socrates praised his depiction of the just and unjust men of opposite reputations as being like the work of a sculptor. Kallipolis, from this perspective, stands as a greatly *enlarged* depiction of human possibilities against which Glaucon should compare his, supposedly comprehensive, images.

In the repeated reminders from Socrates to his interlocutors that Kallipolis is an imagining, a shared exploration, we see perhaps, an admonition to treat images *as images*. This is to say, perhaps, to treat them as necessary devices for negotiating the world of becoming, but also necessary in order to communicate philosophical insight. Imagination – the simplification of the contradictory multiplicity of experience into a coherent vision – is a necessity of simply living in the world as we find it. This necessary device may be rendered truly useful, however, if we remain, as Socrates does, self-conscious about its status. It is when, like the guardians, we imagine it to be an accurate and comprehensive depiction of reality that we may use imagination for those political purposes that – through exclusion or omission – produce the injustices associated by contemporary political theorists with political imagination.

It is in this Platonic light that Thucydides’ understanding of the role of political imagination in the formation of effective and powerful orders should be taken seriously as a helpful insight for the formation of political associations, movements and coalitions. Plato, through the exploration of the character of Alcibiades in the *Symposium*, shows that he is well aware of the potential for political images to be developed and deployed
for purposes of domination. His recognition of the capacity of critique to uncover and dissolve the illusion produced by images has been more commented upon, but should not be considered without recognizing the equal concern for the danger of the Alcibiadean strategy. Images may also be tools of domination. Neither critique nor contemplation of images is sufficient without the accompanying self-consciousness that it is inevitably images – of greater or lesser complexity – that will be the result of the exercise. This conclusion pushes in two directions, as far as our own contemporary situation may be concerned. On the one hand, it suggests that the concern for “heterogeneous coalitions” to avoid replicating patterns of domination within their movements should recognize the extent to which they, nonetheless, engage in comprehensive visions of their political projects.  

On the other hand, it suggests that those who view political visions as tools in the organization of strong movements pursuing political hegemony, are arguing the case of domination. The insights of Thucydides and Plato suggests that the organization of political orders of whatever size and complexity must take place between stagnation and stasis, eros and philia, and, ultimately rely upon comparative imaginings. 

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Chapter 1: The Archaeology of Thucydides

Perhaps nowhere does it seem odder to talk about Thucydides and friendship than it does in reference to the “Archaeology” – the opening chapters of his work where he seems to speak in the most “realist” and “materialist” ways about the nature of human life, actively disparaging all traditional explanations for the events of human history that rely on such qualities as loyalty, honor or affection. He does, however, in these passages firmly set out the problem that the speakers and actors of his narrative will attempt to solve precisely through the language of philia: the reality of the centrifugal forces that characterize group life paired with the absolute need to maintain group cohesion if anything worthy or civilized is to be accomplished.

Taking the “Archaeology” only secondarily as an account of early Greek history, I argue that it is primarily a reflection upon the kinetic nature of things as revealed through the case of human history. Unlike other “archai-ologies” of his time, it is not a discussion of a mythic Golden Age from which everything of the present day derives, so much as the revelation of a past stretching back to utterly obscure beginnings. Thucydides is careful to accord no groups of people – Hellenes, Dorians, Ionians – any primordial identity, except in the very special case of the Athenians. Rather, they have been formed (and may be destroyed) in the ongoing movement of history.

This aspect of the Archaeology forms the bedrock of my analysis of Thucydides for two reasons. First, it stakes out his position on the identity of groups: identity is an historically contingent factor in politics. Secondly, this claim of historical contingency is inherently problematic for it makes mysterious the phenomenon of order. It is a core paradox of history as Thucydides describes it that even the disordering forces of human
history require the establishment of effective, if transient, human orders (political, sub-political, super-political and so on.) In keeping with his first position – the contingency of identity – any particular order is inevitably destroyed in time or else subsumed within larger orders, which are themselves merely transient. The merely transient, however, holds within itself a paradoxical core of stillness if only because, in order to act, a human group must maintain itself as a group, not a transient moment of order. Thucydides’ history suggests that the fragility of defensive alliances, of even perpetual alliances, speaks of the need for a longer sense of group identity than is typically provided by this institution, which we see is fraught with dangers of betrayal, recalculation and conflicting obligations.

This fact reveals a problem in the conventional “realist” reading of Thucydides which holds that he sees all order as founded upon naked force.\(^\text{14}\) It is true, indeed, that his demystification of the Trojan myth in the “Archaeology” is striking for founding the Greek alliance on the fear on the part of the other kings of Agamemnon’s power. Nonetheless, it has to be noted that this power politics pertains to the relations between cities and, while it is often true, for example, of Athens’ handling of its empire, it is not true of Athenian domestic politics, nor of the Spartan. One can certainly note the weakness of the realist argument as applied to domestic politics within Corcyra if one remembers that the civil war could not have been as vicious or devastating as it proved to be if only oligarchs and democrats had remained true to their factions instead of pursuing power each on his own wits and strength.

\(^{14}\) A characteristic example is Jacqueline de Romilly in *Thucydides and Athenian Imperialism*. More recently Gregory Crane has made a much more limited argument for evidence of realism in *The Ancient Simplicity*. 
My interest in Thucydides for this project is in uncovering and exploring this central paradox through the many rich examples he provides of the following phenomena: first, the formation and disintegration of some human orders, and secondly, the apparent persistence of others. Each of these, furthermore, reveals a different intellectual relation to the truth that Thucydides thinks he has discovered in history. Great orders can be built and set in motion only with some kind of “rest” at their core. This “rest”, this basic cohesion of the central group, is conceived of in very different ways by different cities and individuals, and results in different styles of movement. Spartans do not “move” in the same way as Athenians, and their understanding of the source of their own cohesion is quite different. Indeed, some cities try to found their cohesion upon an almost literal sense of “rest”: on the unchanging nature of their civic or ethnic character, or of unbreakable obligations. Motion for cities attempting to ground their order in this way is difficult, and gives their politics a peculiar flavor of denied agency. For other cities motion is embraced too readily with the result that all cohesion and coordination is made impossible. The difficulty of lighting upon a form of group cohesion that makes coordinated action possible without undermining that action is one of the key problems of Thucydides’ narrative, one that is debated through the language of *philia*.
a) The “kinetic” view of history: the paradox of order

To speak of a kinetic view of history in Thucydides Archaeology is necessarily to invoke the shade of Leo Strauss and his essay on the *Peloponnesian War* with its concern for the interplay between motion and rest. It is worth quoting from Strauss’s analysis at some length:

Thucydides sees human nature as the stable ground of all its effects – of war and peace, barbarism and Greekness… The nature of man cannot be understood without some understanding of nature as a whole. War being a kind of motion and peace being a kind of rest, they are only particular forms of the universal, all-pervasive interplay of motion and rest.  

Thucydides begins his work with the contention that the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians was the “greatest motion” (*kinēsis… megîste*) to affect the Greeks and many of the Barbarians so that war is indeed a kind of motion. According to Strauss Thucydides seeks to explain the size and scale of this great motion by reference to the long rest that preceded it because it is during periods of rest (i.e. peace) that “power and wealth were built up”.  

Strauss’s insight is valuable but leaves open several questions that I wish to explore here, in particular the question of what I am calling the “paradox of order”. While the direction of human motion is often towards disorder, motion itself requires the generation and persistence of order. Motion – especially of the magnitude Thucydides

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16 *Ibid* p156.
invokes when he speaks of accomplishments in common\textsuperscript{17} – requires some kind of resistance to motion on the part of the movers. What moves the world must not be in motion within itself. Some of this relation is uncovered by Strauss, but at the level of the intellect rather than of politics. War is motion in a physical sense – the Greeks leave their cities and engage with one another all over their territories, on land and sea. It is motion also in the sense of destruction: it is a disordering force that brings physical destruction, but also the destruction of cities and peoples. As well as disorder, however, war also brings power and wealth, thus the reader “reconsider[s] the relation of motion and rest to progress and decline on the one hand, to Sparta and Athens on the other.”\textsuperscript{18} Spartan conservatism and opposition to cultural motion is a source of stagnation whereas Athenian kineticism is a fillip to “craft and knowledge” and the highest products of Athenian culture (Pericles and Thucydides himself) owe their greatness to finding rest in the midst of frenetic movement.\textsuperscript{19}

Strauss emphasizes the intellectual importance of rest: thought relies on a certain stillness and, in its highest form, is itself a kind of stillness, but also requires a background of movement as a source of stimulation. Hence it is in dynamic Athens, rather than stagnant Sparta that thought flourishes. For Strauss Pericles represents rest against the background of the “fickle multitude” of the Athenian \textit{demos} which is in perpetual motion. It is not clear to me, however, that this picture of the \textit{demos} is a correct one. My contention is that it is at the level of the polis that the interplay of rest and motion is at its most interesting and most problematic. After looking at rest and motion

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\item[\textsuperscript{17}] The phrase first occurs at 1.3.1 when Thucydides notes that before the Trojan War the Greeks “accomplished nothing in common” (\textit{koinē ergasamenē}).
\item[\textsuperscript{18}] Strauss, p159.
\item[\textsuperscript{19}] \textit{Ibid}, p160
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in their universal aspect, that is, their manifestation in the larger Greek world through war and peace, Strauss turns to their role in individual and intellectual life, and in politics only via this level. A layer of possibilities is missed with this strategy – the persistence or disintegration of the orders that make motion itself possible. The interplay of rest and motion needs to be examined in terms of the nature of this interplay, the characteristic dynamics that make cohesion and coordination possible.

Rest is not simply a lack of movement, but, as cohesion and coordination, the necessary core of motion, the basis of its possibility. Strauss implies this, perhaps, by invoking Pericles as an ordering force for Athens, without which the city’s essential dynamism threatened self-destruction. The notion, however, is central also to Thucydides’ Archaeology. Rest makes motion possible not just sequentially (by allowing power and wealth to be built up), but also contemporaneously: groups in motion must remain groups to be effective agents of movement. It is for this reason that Thucydides’ account of the development of power and wealth from earliest times leading up to the present war links this development at every stage to the development of group identity.

Opening with his contention that the present war is “a major and notable one beyond all previous wars” Thucydides must defend his claim against those of previous great motions: the Persian and Trojan Wars. It is this need that provokes his account of early Greek history. The ultimate point of the Archaeology is not clear without some understanding of the standard of noteworthiness Thucydides invokes in describing the present war as the one most worth talking about. He sets out to defend the claim that this is the most major and notable motion, but it is not immediately clear what measure of greatness he invokes. My view is that the standard of noteworthiness he invokes
throughout this account is the possibility of great accomplishments in common because this standard is able to accommodate the other possibility – sheer destructive power – if we explore what he says about the foundations of common action. That the standard encompasses both great actions in common and destructive force is evident if we consider the course of his concerns in the Archaeology. His initial statement about the noteworthiness of the war refers to the numbers of troops engaged and the degree of their preparedness. His digression into the early history of Hellas, while initially a survey designed to defend his claim of present martial greatness, seems to go beyond this task to reflect upon the value of Greekness in itself as a unique cultural achievement, beyond any military actions it might facilitate.\(^{20}\) Finally, there is a shift in emphasis between his initial contention of the impressive nature of the war to an emphasis on its destructive outcomes at the end of the Archaeology.\(^{21}\)

Determining the standard of noteworthiness at work here depends, ultimately, on how we understand Thucydides’ valuation of war itself. Is war noteworthy because it is good or impressive in itself, or as the culmination and demonstration of human development and power? Or is it to be abhorred as a catastrophe? It seems to me that these questions all point to threads visible in Thucydides account and that they need not be teased apart too far, but rather illustrate the rather paradoxical relationship between destruction and the construction of powerful human orders. Order and motion are intertwined in such a way that the greatest destruction is also a sign of the greatest order, but it is also, and most importantly, only in the course of conducting destructive adventures that great orders are built at all. The standard of noteworthiness that solves


this problem is that of accomplishments in common. I invoke it not just for hermeneutic
c convenience, however, but because it is the recurrent phrase that best ties together the
various concerns of the Archaeology. The possibility of great accomplishments in
common is a standard that links the greatest destructive motions of Greek history to the
development of its greatest orders because it shows how the latter facilitated the former.
The development of Hellas and Hellenic identity are an integral part of this standard
because identity is a marker of the order that makes great accomplishments possible, in
fact, it is the foundation of what is *koine* (common). The nature of a specifically Hellenic
order points, then, to the way in which, though its origins are contingent and even
arbitrary, a large order is, not just one of coordination, but of shared meanings. The
standard is linked to war, however, because what ultimately builds order is the pursuit of
*strateia* (expeditions), which is the way Thucydides always characterizes these “great
accomplishments in common”. The great topic of the Archaeology, then, and one
which haunts the rest of Thucydides’ narrative is the central problem of all human
groups: how can we establish and maintain groups large enough to accomplish anything
noteworthy (including civilization itself) in the face of the centrifugal forces that
characterize internal group dynamics and the external threats constituted by other groups?
In the Archaeology he gives his an answer that must be considered in light of alternative
strategies proposed or enacted by the speakers and actors of the main narrative. In this
first answer Thucydides gives an analysis of the foundations of great accomplishments in
common through an untraditional account of Greek history.

22 Hunter has noted that “the concept of collective achievement is at the heart of his thesis” in the
23 Ibid., p21.
The course of Greek history as Thucydides gives it in the Archaeology is as follows: at first the Greeks accomplish nothing in common; their first great action was the Trojan War in which they acted in common, but not as Hellenes; Hellenic identity followed and Greece acted as a whole in repelling the Persian invasions; the present war is the greatest, yet is not an accomplishment of Greeks in common. This last phase is interesting because it points to the fact that the war is at once the greatest motion and one that fractures rather than builds Hellas. It is the greatest motion nonetheless because Hellas has developed and grown in strength to the point that the parties arrayed against each other, while sub-Hellenic, are still the greatest orders yet seen.

A more detailed examination of the Archaeology is necessary to explain the process by which order is generated through movement to result in the growth of these larger, more powerful orders. In the earliest times Hellas was populated by weak and shifting groups of people (1.2). As Strauss puts it, Greece suffered from “the unlimited rule… of unrest, of motion.” The result was that the people of this time lacked all “the indices of a civilized state” and Chapter 2 of Book I is devoted to establishing these indices negatively by describing the uncivilized state of these early times. One of these indices is the endurance of groups in a single location. At this time the land was not “securely settled”, instead a group did not stand and fight for the best land, but “readily abandoned its territory under pressure from anyone more numerous at the time” (1.2.2). This points to two important Thucydidean themes: larger groups are usually able to dominate smaller ones, and territorial attachment is one possible foundation of group identity and cohesion.

24 Strauss (1964), p156.
In these early times, not only peoples but also identities were in motion because the constant movement of groups is coupled with motion internal to groups: “factional strife” ruined the people living in the most fertile lands (I.2.4). Ober has observed that *stasis* strikes those dominant groups who are not under external threat, and that it does so through the economic inequalities born of the very fertility of their territories. It is “individual gains” that cause the factional strife that “ruined the people” (I.2.4) by fracturing them into smaller, opposing groups and setting them in motion against each other. This “ruin” may involve economic collapse, or political disunity itself – both of which would make a group weaker in the face of hostile outsiders. Thucydides makes it clear that these *staseis* were followed by invasion when he offers it as an explanation for the fact that it was “the finest land that constantly changed populations.” This is the first instance of a phenomenon that is repeated throughout the Archaeology where the pursuit of individual gain is one of the things that causes disorder and stands in the way of achievements in common. Thucydides makes this point explicitly in his account of the *stasis* in Corcyra – which he says stands as a model for all the civil conflicts that characterized the Peloponnesian War – when he identifies greed and ambition (*pelonexia* and *philotimia*) as the true motives of the factional leaders (3.82).

It is not simply this perpetual movement that signifies the weakness of early Hellas for Thucydides, however, when he links identity and nomenclature with strength and achievements by emphasizing that “the following also shows me clearly the

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27 See Hunter (1982), p39: “Thucydides’ theory of human nature, wherein the cupidty and ambition motivating individuals often become disruptive of the common good.” Hunter suggests that this description of the *staseis* in the fertile lands, coupled with that of the poverty of Attica implies that this area avoided *staseis* in its early history because of its very poverty. In this way it is implied that wealth provides the temptation for individual pursuit of gain that undermines achievement in common. Hunter, p23
weakness of early societies: before the Trojan War, the Hellenes are not known to have achieved anything in common. Nor, it seems to me, did they share the name Hellas yet” (1.3.2). The inability of groups to stay together, as well as to stay in place, underwrites their inability to achieve anything in common and is an indicator of weakness while the possession and continuity of an identity indicated by a name is a sign of strength and the potential for accomplishment. Nothing noteworthy could be accomplished by people themselves in constant flux. A group as large as the Hellenes, on the other hand, becomes a formidable power when and if such unity is achievable. Now that he has explained the causes of early weakness and established some of the indices of civilization in negative, Thucydides next sets out to explain the first foundations of a large-scale order in the Hellenic world during the Trojan War. As he gives this account he begins to set out the positive hallmarks of civilization which map closely onto the foundations of Athenian imperial power as they are repeatedly articulated in the main narrative.28 The first of these hallmarks to emerge is sea power.

Whereas early Greece was unable to achieve anything due to “weakness and lack of contact with one another”, it was growth in strength and communication that underwrote later actions in common. The Trojan campaign, the first action in common, was undertaken “only when [the Hellenes] were becoming more experienced in seafaring” (1.3.6). With the growth of sea power flowed commerce, prosperity and secure settlement. Accomplishments in common might require military strength, but this, in turn, rested on economic and technological might. Minos and his, the first, navy developed a context in which it began to be possible to accumulate this strength.

28 For accounts of the elements of Athenian power see the “Pentekontetia” (1.89-117), and the first speeches of Archidamnos (1.80-86) and of Pericles (1.140-144).
This increase of commerce, wealth and security is the first positive statement of indices of civilization which had been stated negatively in Chapter 2. With the first development of seapower we also see the first chance for certain groups to achieve significantly greater and more lasting power than others and the first of these appear to be pirates. The first result of this new accumulation of strength, however, is that the basic physical insecurity of earliest times is amplified. Whereas smaller groups were previously threatened by any group slightly larger than themselves, the advent of the technological advantage of sea power meant that their fragile settlements fell victim also to the piracy of early sea-farers (1.5.1), merely exacerbating territorial insecurity and impermanence. Asymmetry of size was matched, as a threat, by asymmetry of technological development.

The walled polis was the solution to the problem of piracy, but in Thucydides’ view, it could not be embraced by those cities which had not previously embraced seafaring and, through commerce, been able to generate surplus funds for their construction. Walled cities appear only “later in a time of increased seafaring and with more abundant wealth” (1.8.3) built on the coast for purposes of both defense and trade. This is made possible when Minos clears the seas of piracy with his navy (1.4.1). His motive for pursuing the pirates is “to direct revenues toward himself instead” which suggests, perhaps, that he was simply the greatest of the pirates, since pirates “raided both one another and the non-seafaring populations of the coast” (1.5.1). By raiding (other) pirates Minos builds a navy that allows him to dominate and finally pacify the Hellenic seas. At this point lawful commerce can commence and greater wealth flow to the cities who engage in it so that “coastal populations now increasingly proceeded to acquire wealth
and live more securely, some even building city walls as a reflection of their new prosperity” (1.8.2). To understand why Thucydides insists that seafaring must precede the construction of walls, we need to consider his analysis of the problems of unwalled cities. In his view, in order to build walls a city must possess surplus wealth, which cannot be acquired without seafaring. Early communities lacked fortified territory and were thus not, as we have seen, “securely settled” lands. It is understandable, then, that people living instead in “unwalled cities consisting of villages” limited themselves to a living of bare subsistence because of the insecurity of their tenure on land that was under the threat of other groups and, ultimately, of pirates. For Thucydides it is clear that insecurity and poverty go together and the situation can only be changed by the embrace of seafaring and, with it, commerce.

While sea power and economic strength stand as the first foundations of civilization, it is walls that emerge as the central symbol of the kind of permanence and strength that Thucydides claims was missing from the life of early groups of Hellenes. As products of seafaring and commerce, they symbolize both military and economic power, but these could be said to characterize the lives of bands of pirates also. What is significant about fortifications is that they stand also for the continuity and cohesion of the largest group of people thus far gathered together: the polis. It is a companion symbol to the power and permanence suggested by the emergence of names for groups, although stable nomenclature seems to be a result of fortification itself. In creating a very real physical permanence, walls contribute to the development of the kind of cohesion that goes along with group identities: it is a way of creating a kind of rest in place of the constant motion of the unfortified groups who are so easily scattered. When Thucydides
notes that without walls they live in cities composed of scattered villages he points to the fact that they don’t even share the geographic closeness that can create unity. It should be noted here, however, that Sparta, as an unwalled polis composed of villages, violates the pattern of development Thucydides lays down here and, in the great cohesion of its citizen class, stands as an exception that will have to be explained in due course.

Thucydides is explicit to note that all of this had occurred before the first great action in common: the Trojan War. This is because of the fact that before any powerful military alliance could be entered, the allies need economic power behind them. More fundamentally, however, as well as the economic strength that built walls, the allies needed the existential security they provided: they needed to persist as stable, unified groups, which they could only do behind fortifications. Thucydides is explicit to note that all of this had occurred before the first great action in common: the Trojan War. This is because of the fact that before any powerful military alliance could be entered, the allies need economic power behind them. More fundamentally, however, as well as the economic strength that built walls, the allies needed the existential security they provided: they needed to persist as stable, unified groups, which they could only do behind fortifications. This is suggested by the fact that the first time Thucydides mentions sub-Hellenic (or rather, pre-Hellenic) groups by name is in reference to the Trojan War when he names “Danaans, Argives, and Achaians” as well as the Phthiotian Hellenes (1.3.3). No groups are named from the period before walls were built suggesting that group identity is something that requires the permanence and security provided by economic strength and city walls, and is also something necessary to larger collective actions. “Rest” behind walls is made possible by the successful “motion” of piracy, and later, trade. It is not clear that the rest the Greeks enjoy prior to Troy is the rest of peaceful trade so much as the rest of secure identity. What I mean here is not personal identity, or even psychological identification with the polis by its citizens, but a more literal kind of identity: that is, sameness over time. The


30 This period of rest adheres more closely to Strauss’s initial understanding of the term, as a period of peace in which resources were built up that were ultimately expended in the Persian War. Contrasted with the earlier period of piracy and developing sea power, however, we see that this sense of “rest” is derivative from another: social continuity underwritten by physical security – identity.
constant disruption due to migrations and invasions makes persistence impossible; now a kind of identity is available that leads to the possibility of stable appellations.\(^{31}\)

This account of the advent of seapower and the commerce, wealth and secure settlement that flowed from it allows us to understand Thucydides’ earlier comments about the Trojan alliance and the birth of the term “Hellas”. When growing wealth provides cities with existential security the possibility of accomplishment in common finally emerges, and it is through such projects that larger group identity becomes possible and with it even larger accomplishments. The Hellenes as a group emerge from the military alliance of the Trojan War. War requires economic strength (lack of money makes the Trojan expedition less impressive than it might have been – 1.11.2), but it also requires forces that are grouped together with some stability. The Trojan War is the first adventure that joins Pthiotian Hellenes, Danaans, Argives and Achaians because these groups had not existed previously in the robust and numerous forms they did in Agamemnon’s time. These cities have “rested” for a time and are able to carry their unity into great motions.

The story Thucydides gives us about the foundations of the technological, economic and political conditions that made the great alliance of the Trojan campaign possible begins, it should be remembered, with the aggressive self-assertion of a single individual: Minos. In this figure of what Thucydides presents as, essentially, a pirate king we can see enacted one of the variants of the human tendency towards greed and ambition, but this time with a productive outcome: by clearing the seas of pirates with his

\(^{31}\) Ober (1998) emphasizes the importance of (feigned) equality to the internal stability of poleis (p65) and yet Thucydides does not discuss stasis as a problem for these early walled cities. Perhaps they have discovered the Spartan trick? Or perhaps the external tensions between cities – those who dominate and exploit and those who submit out of passivity and greed – are enough to ensure some degree of internal order.
navy, he makes possible the commerce that leads to wall building and, ultimately, makes possible the Trojan alliance. This means that we must reconsider the observation, noted above, that Thucydides habitually views the pursuit of individual gain as an impediment to the common good.\textsuperscript{32} This thesis needs some adjustment, because Minos, wishing to seize the revenues of the pirates for himself, is ultimately the cause of the first real peak of civilization and order amongst the Greeks – surely a great boon to the common good. It stands in contrast to another of his observations about early Greek life: external aggression here results (ultimately) in more secure and permanent settlement, rather than perpetuating the cycle of invasion and migration of the earliest times. The difference in the case of Minos is that through the advent and proper use of sea power the same human tendency (the greed and ambition that drives the appropriation of the possessions of others) inadvertently produces quite new results.

The surprising nature of this observation could only have been compounded for Athenian readers by the fact that the name which symbolizes the foundation of Greek civilization is regarded, by Athenians in particular, “as one of the most savage in Greek history”\textsuperscript{33}. As subjects of Minos’s domination, the Athenians relied ultimately on the efforts of Theseus to free and unify them. Indeed this inextricable mythic connection of Minos to Theseus suggests exactly the kind of process Thucydides is describing: the foundation of group unity in response to external aggression (coupled with the technological and economic preconditions already discussed). It was the synoikismos orchestrated by Theseus that created Athenians out of contentious villagers of Attica.\textsuperscript{34} Although, as we shall see, Theseus did not accomplish a complete physical synoikism

\textsuperscript{32} Cf Hunter (1982).
\textsuperscript{33} Connor (1984), p24.
\textsuperscript{34} See Price (2001), p341.
that brought all of the Atticans together within city walls, he did accomplish a political unification that made Athens the physical and political center to which the outlying Atticans could retreat for safety (as they do under Pericles.)

Since external aggression has, with the right technological context, produced new results, we must ask whether the creation of unified, fortified and permanent settlements sees the transformation of the other manifestation of basic human aggression: internal faction. Ober, apparently in agreement with Hunter, notes that “Thucydides establishes a key distinction between the selfish personal interest of the powerful individual and the powerfulness of the state as a whole. He suggests that a state dominated by self-interested individuals will never become truly great.” As we see in the case of Minos, however, powerful and self-interested individuals directing their aggression outwards, away from their own city, do no apparent damage to them and may even set in motion important developments.

As Ober recognizes, however, this same tendency towards greed and ambition on the part of powerful individuals holds the potential for great civic disruption. The fragile settlements of the days before sea power fell into staseis wherever there were sources of wealth and hence inequality. It seems plausible that the newly wealthy and powerful commercial cities must have faced a great increase in this danger: the prizes at stake were so much greater than they were when it was only fertile land at stake. Similarly cities lacking fertile land, such as Athens (which, Thucydides tells us had for this reason remained free of faction and forced migrations from earliest times), must now face the danger of stasis for the first time. The advent of walls, permanent settlement and the beginnings of political identity (formed perhaps through individual territorial attachment

or nascent political loyalty to the city itself, but in any case symbolized in the emergence of civic nomenclature) seems to suggest that *staseis* should begin to take different forms. On the one hand, the period of the tyrannies (1.13) suggests that powerful and self-interested individuals may now be able to profit from exploiting a “captive”, that is settled, population. On the other hand, the savagery of the *staseis* that afflict the Greeks during the Peloponnesian War suggests that city walls do not simply make for stable orders, but may also make it possible for internal disunity to be combined longer with safety from outsiders. Where *staseis* quickly made unwalled cities vulnerable to invaders, by reducing this external threat, walls it seems now make it easier for internal aggressors to exploit, or attempt to exploit, the city. The savagery of the *staseis* of the Peloponnesian War is not, it seems, even approached by those of early Hellas. Walls are, in this way, a symbol of stability and, consequently, of the polis as a “real” place from which one cannot, or is loathe to, exit as a consequence of the rootedness that grows up there. The costs of abandoning one’s place, citizenship, belonging in a *polis* are much greater than those of abandoning a penurious, temporary settlement in a world of other such, of the kind that characterized early Hellas.

That these kinds of tensions are simply exacerbated by the advent of walled cities suggests that great accomplishments involving the extension of the power of great cities or individuals is not simply made possible by this course of development, but is in some sense *made necessary*. Ober explains this as the solution embraced by sea-powers to a choice facing all powerful cities: “once a state has become powerful, it has only two choices. It may attempt to extend its power through conquest …Or the internal inequalities in wealth generated by the failure to deploy power externally will eventually
lead to the self-destructive trauma of stasis.”

A coastal position coupled with sea power allows the pursuit of wealth and for selfish interests to be directed outwards. Before turning to the second possible choice, that Ober says is embraced by land-powers like Sparta, we should pursue further the logic of the strategy of naval domination.

Just after he has described the growth of civilization in what would become Hellas, Thucydides notes that “love of profit caused the weaker to submit to the domination of the strong and the more powerful, with their abundant wealth, to make the smaller cities subject to them.” (I.8.4) This is a statement of one of the basic observations of his history and the key to the possibility of achievement in common because it explains how larger groups are formed from smaller. It is for this reason that he ends the statement with an introduction to his next topic: “It was after they had already entered this stage that they later campaigned against Troy.”

While Thucydides suggests the possibility (1.15.4) of expeditions entered into on an equal basis, the chance is expressed negatively, that is, the cities did not pursue it. What is illustrated repeatedly in the Archaeology, however, is the domination by larger groups of smaller ones. The link between “abundant wealth” and the domination of smaller cities by larger is illustrated by the Trojan alliance which was assembled by Agamemnon “more by surpassing his contemporaries in power that by leading suitors bound by oaths to Tyndareus” (1.9.1). Agamemnon turned his inherited abundant wealth to the right end, that of securing “greater naval strength than anyone else” with the result that he was “feared” (1.9.3). He also, like Minos (1.4.1) had turned his naval strength to

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36 Ober (1998), p65. Ober is clear that stasis is the primary of“the negative effects of power that is not projected outward in imperial expansion”, p63.

37 Price (2001) notes that, in stating this possibility, Thucydides raises doubts about his endorsement of the pattern of domination he is describing (and hence, cannot be said to provide a straight forward apologia for the Athenian empire.)
more permanent domination than the Trojan alliance, and ruled an empire of “many islands” (1.9.5). 

It is important to note the shift in the patterns of aggression, domination and exploitation between the earliest times and Thucydides’ own – although the human tendency to pursue it remains apparently constant. The earliest times were characterized by relentless shifting of small populations unable to secure their land. Larger groups could disperse them with relative ease, but were not themselves ultimately secure, especially in the face of internal disunity. The later period of naval power and settled populations, however, sees a radical shift in the pattern. With their walls and powers intact, the strength of subject cities can be put to best use by the dominant powers. This phenomenon opens the question of the degree to which this domination produced, or even required, cultural domination and, perhaps, the production of new identities. Whether complete cultural domination is desirable for the task of great accomplishments in common is not answered, but if we extrapolate from Thucydides’ writings we should say that perhaps he might think so. We have seen something of how the process of *synoikismos* brought the scattered but loosely associated groups of Attica behind city walls had the effect of creating a homogenization and identity that is useful when put in motion. The contrast is apparent in the account, related later, of the difficulty the outlying Atticans had in accepting the necessity to abandon their lands and ancestral “cities” to which they felt loyal, despite the fact that they had lacked real political standing since the time of Theseus (2.14). The Athenians living behind the walls of the *astu* appear to have a unity that the residents of Attica lack.

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Nicholas Jones has noted that the experience of these extramural refugees in the war provides evidence for just this phenomenon of homogenization. He points out that in the Aristotelean Constitution of the Athenians it is noted that this because of this experience “‘the People, having been shut up inside the asty and grown accustomed to drawing pay on campaigns, partly intentionally, partly unintentionally began to prefer to administer public affairs themselves.’ (27.2)” Jones interprets this as evidence that

the confinement of the extramural population within the asty during the annual invasions of the initial stages of the war as bringing about a substantial acceptance of urban ways by the once extramural population. The implication is that, prior to the confinement, Athenians in the country had resisted involvement with the town and their institutions.39

This confinement behind walls is merely the extreme pole of a process of unification that begins with the domination that underwrites enforced cooperation. Certainly Thucydides sees the domination of the sons of Hellen over their neighbors as the beginning of a cultural and linguistic unity, or commonality which allows them to pursue the Trojan campaign (1.3.4).

The path towards civilization that begins with the development of sea power leads towards growth in trade and the accumulation of wealth and cultural unity behind city walls. This new local permanence and identity, however, breeds also a pattern of domination and the extension of power and culture beyond city walls to create wider, more diffuse, identities and the capacity for large-scale actions in common. By directing the tendency towards self-assertion (motivated by greed and ambition) outwards, powerful cities are able to do more than destroy and plunder other groups, but also,

taking advantage of the greed of these lesser cities, to dominate them and employ their strength towards the end of accumulating further power to dominate.

This account, of course, maps closely onto the tale Thucydides later tells about the rise of the Athenian empire (1.89-117). Here the naval strength of the Athenians after the Persian War, coupled with the perception of the importance of rebuilding their walls allows them to step into the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the Spartans after the disastrous leadership of Pausanias alienated the allies. The behavior of these allies in their reluctance to contribute ships rather than monetary contributions to the alliance suggests the kind of greed and lack of ambition of the weaker cities who allow themselves to be dominated in the Archaeology. To cast this pattern of domination back into the earliest beginnings of Hellenic civilization is, of course, to naturalize the Athenian course of action between the wars and to attribute to it everything that is great and noteworthy about Greek life. Having cast the Athenians (or those like them) in this starring role of Greek history, the attentive reader can only wonder how Thucydides views the very different kind of development and power displayed by the Spartans. His only mention of this difference is, on the surface, made in apparent praise of the Lacedaemonians. He notes that, if the dominant powers were to fall (as had ancient Mycenae), the Spartans would appear by far the less powerful city since it “is not unified nor furnished with elaborate shrines or public buildings but settled in villages in the old Hellenic way” (1.10.2). Lacking a walled city, Sparta should, under the developmental rules Thucydides lays down, be only a minor power.

To explain the apparent paradox of Spartan power, then, we have to consider how it may be fitted into the schema Thucydides has given us. Do land powers like Sparta,
built away from the coast and hence never having had to face down the threat of pirate raids with fortifications (1.5.1), represent a different, parallel course of development? Or did these cities somehow benefit from the civilizational peaks raised by coastal powers? Ober offers an important observation regarding the alternative solution reached by the Spartans to the problems of life in early Hellas. Rather than dealing with the potential for civic discord raised by growing wealth and inequality in the cities by channeling it outward into domination and empire, the Spartans chose to address the problem of inequality itself. In their simple manner of dress and in other ways “their wealthier men took up a style of life that brought them as far as possible into equality (isodiatoi) with the masses” (1.6.3). Ober observes that in these strict tokens of equality, the Spartans attempt to diffuse the potential for civic discord without pursuing extensive external aggression. The Spartans, Ober suggests maintained their remarkable social and political stability “by apperances (a moderate style of life), rather than by realities. Inequalities of wealth persist in fact, but they are rendered less noxious by a strict code of social behavior.”

Several things should be noted about the Spartan strategy. In the first place, their aggression against their neighbors was well-known and encompassed by Thucydides’ observation that as well as pursuing piracy, Greeks “also raided each other on land” (1.5.2). As one noted scholar of Spartan history has said, “Sparta was in origins and essence a ‘conquest’ state.” Rather than sending out settlers to new colonies, as had other Greek cities (and which Thucydides notes as a stage in the development of Hellenic

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40 I use the translation of C.F. Smith here because it takes account of the important reference to equality present in the Greek in a way that Lattimore’s does not.  
civilization (1.12.4), “the Spartans preferred to satisfy their land-hunger at the expense of their immediate neighbours, initially in Lakonia, then... in Messenia.”

In this pattern of domination the Spartans fit neatly into neither of the possibilities outlined so far by Thucydides: the synoikistic incorporation or domination from afar of other groups. Rather, the Lakonians and Messenians were brought inside the Spartan world of Lacedaemonia, but, at least in the case of the helots, neither remained citizens of subject cities nor became Spartan citizens themselves. Ober’s contention that the Spartan emphasis on equality between citizens as the key to their avoidance of stasis needs, then, to be viewed in the context of the broader inequalities of the Lacedaemonian polis. It could be argued that rather than opting to continue to pursue external conquest indefinitely the Spartans spent much of their attention after the conquest of Messenia, while continuing to nibble at the territory of their neighbors, on conducting a low-level stasis against the helots. The equality that is maintained between the Spartiates which prevents them from turning their greed and ambition against each other should, perhaps, be viewed as the kind of factional loyalty necessary to prevent the absolute disintegration seen in the large-scale staseis seen during the Peloponnesian war. Rather than destroying the city, as the stasis on Corcyra comes close to doing, this Lacedaemonian conflict actually gives the city its characteristic form of civilization, and its formidable military preparedness. The helots both made possible (by freeing Spartan citizens from work on

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44 The Spartan relationship with the Periokoikoi seems to come closer to the pattern of domination of weaker cities by stronger that Thucydides lays out in the Archaeology: they enjoyed “personal freedom but political subservience.” (Cartledge, 2001, p15.) Shipley, G. “Perioikos: the discovery of classical Laconia” in J.M. Sanders (ed.) Philolakōn: Lakonian Studies in honour of Hector Catling. (London: British School at Athens, 1992), pp211-226., agrees with the suggestion of Perioikic complicity with Spartan rule, noting that the Perioikoi “were never in a position seriously to challenge Spartan power. On the contrary, they had a stake in that power; it was all that they were offered.”, p225.
45 While the Spartans conquered no more large territories after Messenia, they did continue in the attempt, trying and failing, for example, to take Arkadia repeatedly in the seventh century. Cartledge (2001), p178.
their distant estates) and necessary (through their permanent hostility and periodic uprisings) the state of permanent military mobilization in which the Spartans lived.\textsuperscript{46} Indeed, it is only after the conquest of Messenia that the Spartans adopted their peculiar institutions and rigid conception of citizenship with the reforms of Lykourgos.\textsuperscript{47} Strict codes of apparent equality serve to prevent conflict only \textit{within} the dominant faction at Sparta, and, indeed, seem to be necessitated by the larger inequalities upon which the city is built and which prevent it from pursuing further the normal path of outwardly expressed aggression. This characteristic of Spartan life is praised openly by the Spartan general Brasidas in book 4 to an audience of Peloponnesian allies (despite the fact that they live under several different types of government) after they are abandoned by their Peloponnesian allies and face large numbers of opponents. He emphasizes the link between Spartan military prowess and their oligarchic form of government: “bravery in war is characteristic of you, … because of native courage, just as it is characteristic for you to fear no one’s numbers, any more than you have come here from states where the many rule the few, but instead small groups rule the majority, acquiring domination purely through fighting and conquering” (4.126.2).

Two precarious solutions to the problem of human greed and ambition in the context of unequal wealth build the foundations of two kinds of power to pursue “great accomplishments”. While Ober’s interpretation of the two possible solutions – a culture of internal equality, or external expansion – is based strictly on the evidence of the

\textsuperscript{46} Cartledge, (2001), p15.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., pp28-29, 50, 88-89. Indeed, the evidence of archaeology suggests that sophisticated Spartan trade and commercial production continued until increasingly severe problems with the helots either curtailed them by increasing the demand for military man-power in the fifth century – a period reflected in the literary traditions concerning Sparta. Cf Cartledge (2001), Ch. 12 “The Mirage of Lykourgan Sparta: Some Brazen Reflections.”
Archaeology, we have seen already in the case of Sparta, that examining events and speeches from the rest of the text gives us a more complex picture. The Spartan culture of equality turns out to underwrite a politics of internal conquest, of domination by a minority. Similarly, the ways in which Athens follows the alternative solution are more nuanced than at first appears to be the case. One immediate objection to Ober’s suggestion that, absent internal equality cities must become expansionist or face stasis is the greater political equality enjoyed by Athenian citizens than the majority of Lacedaemonians. Indeed, examining the staseis and betrayals of the main narrative, it often seems that those cities which have given most in the way of political equality to the demos are the ones that experience the most violent staseis when oligarchs begin to resist its encroachments. It seems that it is in this context of agitation for political settlements of material inequality by a strong demos against comparatively weak oligarchs that stasis is most likely. The Athenian expansionist solution should be viewed in this context, it seems to me. Where Pericles, as we shall see, attempts to channel the philotimia (ambition) of the Athenians into imperial adventures, where it can be satisfied in war and recognized as the meritocratic opportunity offered by the city to all its citizens alike, his successors increasingly seek to satisfy the pleonexia (greed) of themselves and the citizens. The Sicilian campaign, in reference to which Thucydides makes the second of only two references to erōs in the History, was a project with which the Athenians were in love on the grounds of greed. This echoes the demand of Pericles that the citizens fall in love with the imperial city on the grounds of ambition. In both cases one of the signal passions of humanity, and those which most threaten the internal stability of cities, are
dealt with by making other poleis bear the cost of them and without solving the issue of
inequalites of honor or wealth within the city.

Both *stasis* and external domination are transformed by powerful enough groups
into orders that grow to sizes that allow the accomplishment of something truly
noteworthy: the Peloponnesian war. Since the present war, the greatest motion, is
*between* Greek factions rather than a unified Hellenic action, we can see that
accomplishment in common as *Greeks* is not the final standard by which Thucydides
measures noteworthiness. This war is great in terms of its destructive power; it is the
ultimate motion in that sense, although as the Spartan case suggests, we need not assume
too quickly that *stasis* amongst the Greeks (if this is, as Price suggests, how we should
view the conflict)\(^\text{48}\) may seem to lead to the destruction rather than the formation of
greater order. Viewed in the light of a refinement of the basic story of aggressive
domination in the Archaeology, that I term “synoikistic imperialism”, we might identify
an optimistic strain in these early passages that suggest the hope that a larger, more
cohesive Hellenic order could emerge from the conflict. As we shall see, however, these
hopes are overcome by problems facing even the most successful exemplars of the two
forms of order-building.

In any case, in this war the Greeks turn upon each other and, divided, unleash
greater destructive power than could be marshaled even as a unified Greek force in past
conflicts. This war, then, is more purely destructive than previous wars which had the
effect of forging larger orders out of smaller ones – and is, thus, more purely a case of
motion. Historically, it is through motion, the need to accomplish things in common that
the Greeks have forged their identites, first as members of cities, and finally as Hellenes.

It is this identity, however, that makes possible greater actions. We must make a modification, then, and remember that the present war is the greatest not simply in terms of its destructive power, but also the greatest in terms of the numbers of people arrayed on each side, that is, the amount of order, of rest, that it employs in generating its motion.

Order is a paradoxical phenomenon as it appears in Thucydides’ Archaeology because of the way in which it not only facilitates destruction, but also because it is formed from destruction. It is through aggressive exploitation coupled with technological developments that the economic foundation of social permanence is laid in the polis. It is only once social groups become permanent in this way, however, that a truly great destructive force can be mustered – one great enough to destroy the city of Troy – and later, two great enough to create “the greatest disturbance (κίνησις) to affect the Hellenes and a considerable number of barbarians – one might say the majority of mankind” (1.1.2). Order, then, is both paradoxical and precarious. The history of these orders shows us, however, that they are also the products contingency and disruption, rather than continuity and heroic order as the poets had alleged, to which topic I turn now. It is important to examine this topic because it deals with the strategy used by several of the cities who seek to found cohesion and coordinate action on the basis of compelling claims about original unity.
b) **Contingent identities, false histories**

The attack on the poets and storytellers is one of the best known parts of Thucydides’ work, and rightly so, for it constitutes a wholesale revision of the sources of historical authority. Whereas the poets are prone to embellishment, prose writers (*logographoi*) to “patriotic fiction” (1.21.1) and to compose “competition piece[s] (*agōnisma*) to be heard for the moment”, Thucydides writes his account to be a “possession for eternity” using as sources the accounts of witnesses (1.22.4) or, in uncovering the truth about early times, “the clearest possible evidence” (1.21.1). This approach to historical evidence is significant for our investigation of identity because one of its clear implications is an attack on the traditional understanding of the origins and histories of the peoples involved in the Peloponnesian conflict. This will become important when we begin to address *philia* because when it is invoked in Thucydides’ history it often involves genealogical claims or historical obligations.

Thucydides combines unique innovations in his approach to early Greek history with a questioning attitude common to his contemporaries. Discerning what is unique to Thucydides is helpful for understanding what it is he is trying to undo or overturn. What is clear is that Thucydides has no more sources to work from than any of his contemporaries and that the “evidence” he cites of the earliest periods comes from Homer and other poetic or oral accounts. In dealing with these sources, however, he takes steps unthought-of by others. The period was one in which the poetic and oral inheritance was raked over in a questioning spirit, so that inconsistencies in the Greek traditions concerning their earliest past were to some degree revealed and had to be

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49 See, for example, Hunter (1982), p19.
addressed. In this regard Thucydides is a creature of his age and takes this scrutiny to some lengths. Unlike his near contemporary Hellenikos, or predecessors like Hekataios, he does not seek to fill the gaps in this history in a mytho-poetic manner – with fresh inventions. Rather, he reads backwards upon the myths his own understanding of the nature of human motivation and the predictable qualities of human interactions. Indeed, it has been suggested that even the “facts” he reports cannot have been based on unique or “new” evidence but are extensions built upon a small number of facts using his understanding of modern events. His “history” of early Hellas, is, in fact, a speculative interpretation of the evidence available through myth.

This is not to say that Thucydides doubts the existence, in general terms, of the persons and events recounted in myths, indeed, he takes this existence and the speculative chronologies produced by mythographers as authoritative markers in his story. It is in his treatment of a pre-heroic period, and in his interpretations of the motives of heroes and other legendary figures as well as his account of the reasons for historical events, that he strays very far indeed from the poetic world view. Indeed, he applies his understanding of human motivations to the poets and logographoi themselves when he asserts that their accounts cannot be trusted because they are guided by the tastes and conceit of their listeners. Thus story tellers make up “patriotic fiction” when dealing with historical uncertainty and poets create performance pieces designed to please rather than inform.

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50 T.W. Brown suggesting that Thucydides continued in the tradition of Herodotus who “was a pioneer of Homeric ‘higher criticism’” Both historians attempt to rationalize myth and bring it under the standards of the developing historiography, cf Hunter (1982), p18.


52 See Hunter (1982), p38. Thucydides thus cannot know that Minos controlled the Kyklades, but extrapolates the claim from the mythic information that he had the first navy, and the fact that the Athenians used their own navy to dominate the islands of the Aegean.
In his “kinetic” account of early Greek history Thucydides contends, as we have seen, that the constant displacement and scattering of peoples was the earliest norm and that no group names appeared before cities were walled and, hence, more securely settled. This was followed by periods of relative continuity, subject to repeated disruptions before the ethnē and cities of his own time were finally settled. Even though his sources for this account are largely poetic, his interpretation and extrapolation from them are quite radical in ways we may not fully apprehend because his assumptions are closer to our own in some ways than they were to those of his contemporaries. In particular he overturns what modern ethnography calls “primordialist” accounts of ethnicity. Primordialist views hold ethnicity to be an innate category constituted of discrete pre-political groups and sites of coherence and permanence. Primordialist accounts of ethnicity are threatened by attributions of the fluidity and contingency of ethnic groupings because, for primordialists, the longevity and clear lineage of the group are primary sources of whatever value is attributed to the ethnē. Thus in the Greek context where ethnē was equated with kinship group and was defined by shared lineage and cult, a primordialist account of an ethnē defines its boundaries in terms of descent from a hero or other mythic origin.

It is just such accounts of the origins of cities or larger ethnic groups (for example, the Dorians) that Thucydides overturns in his Archaeology. While he invokes myths about the earliest times (as the only available evidence) he applies to them his understanding of the nature and sources of human actions and his view of history as a

53 This view is one not only employed by ethnic groups themselves, but one accepted by many, especially early, scholars of ethnicity. See McInerney’s review of the issue. Jeremy McInerney, “Ethnos and Ethnicity in Early Greece” in Irad Malkin (ed.) Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity. (WashingtonDC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2001.)
54 Ibid. pp51-73, p54.
process of improvement driven by sea power, growing wealth and the push to domination. In his reinterpretation, Thucydides follows several strategies which include: an evolutionary view of history, a rejection of the significance of the heroic, contextualization and lineal ordering of myth, and emphasis upon ignoble or non-heroic motives.

The most encompassing strategy is his evolutionary view of the history of human orders, which has been discussed above. What needs to be emphasized, however, is the degree to which this was a view of the past that was new to the Fifth Century, though not unique to Thucydides – even though his version of it was novel in many respects. Whereas the poetic tradition viewed the sources of improvement in human life as either divine or the restoration of a better past Thucydides emphasizes the penury and danger of the earliest times and compares them negatively to the relative security and power of the present. He asserts, in short, that there has been progress in the history of the Greek world, though it is important to note that he stops well short of suggesting that progress is the only, inevitable direction of human movement, as the events of the Peloponnesian War may seem to illustrate. This security and power, however, has been hard won through human efforts and these efforts have often been ruthless and dishonourable rather than heroic. This is a thoroughgoing rejection of the view, which

55 See, for example, Price (2001) p334. Price notes, of Thucydides’ treatment of the myths and oral or poetic history available to him that he “records personal observations of phenomena in his contemporary Hellas and applies rational processes – extrapolation, deduction to that same material.”
56 See, for example, Crane, The Ancient Simplicity. (Berkeley, LA & London; University of California Press, 1998), p127-128.
58 Although the negative comparison is not explicitly stated, it is, I would argue, implied at least in the context of the Archaeology and its task – the defense of his initial statement concerning the greatness of the present war. The signal difference between the earliest and most recent times is the ability to accomplish things in common. If we take Thucydides to be an advocate of accomplishment in common, then the earliest times show up negatively.
derives from the work of Hesiod, of the early past as a Golden Age of “heroic accomplishment”.\textsuperscript{59}

One of the important tasks of the hero, and one of his signal accomplishments, was the unification of peoples and the founding of continuous dynasties or political settlements.\textsuperscript{60} Such stories are in the background when Thucydides recounts the mythic history of Agamemnon’s descent from Pelops. It is not through heroic feats that Pelops gives his name to the Peloponnesos when he comes from Asia, however, but through the wealth that he brought with him amongst a poor population (1.9.2). This is typical of Thucydides’ treatment of myth and poetic history because, while he does not refute the authenticity of Greek beliefs about their descent from local heroes, he reinterprets the stories in the light of mundane sources of power rather than the semi-divinity or divine favor of the heroes.

Crane has astutely noticed that in his discussion of the Trojan war itself – primarily a quantitative survey of the Catalogue of Ships – Thucydides scarcely mentions the role of the heroes. His emphasis upon action in common is, in fact, a dismissal of the role of the heroic altogether since what is significant, under his thesis, is the coordination of vast numbers in actions in common, rather than the extraordinary feats of individuals.\textsuperscript{61} A caveat must be entered into such statements, however: perhaps it is the residue of his mythic source material, but this emphasis upon the collective and dismissal of the individualism of heroic discourse, is not quite consistent. Rather than a complete rejection of the heroic, perhaps we should see him as an exponent of a revised heroism –

\textsuperscript{59} Connor (1984), p22.
\textsuperscript{60} Connor gives as an example the stories of Theseus and his liberation of Attica from Minos and unification and integration of the state in a time of violence and dissension, p22.
\textsuperscript{61} Crane (1998), p133.
the difference lying in his concept of the heroic – or the praiseworthy. Rather than the aretē of the warrior skilled in individual combat, heroism for Thucydides has more to do with boldness in seizing an opportunity and making the proper use of one’s material resources. Those individuals he singles out from the mythic sources – Pelops, Minos and Agamemnon – are all significant for using their surplus wealth to achieve regional dominance. Minos and Agamemnon are further elevated in the Thucydidean pantheon by using their abundant wealth to establish naval empires. All of these heroes use their resources wisely in order to accomplish things in common with those they dominate. Once this mythic history is complete, however, he shifts his attention to the role of cities rather than individuals so that Corinth is the first city he mentions as taking the proper advantage of sea power (1.13.2).

Similarly, by placing their myths in the context of earlier events, including a pre-heroic era of shifting migrations and invasions from which no names survive, he emphasizes the progressive nature of history – within the limits of the standards of progress he has laid out, which do not include improvements in the nature of human beings, but rather stress growing complexity, power and civilization. The age of the heroes was built upon the foundations of earlier times that were poor and violent and from which the Greeks only emerged with much struggle. It is human ingenuity that produces the technology of sea power that underwrites the economic and military foundation of the more secure and powerful position of contemporary Hellas. The real source of greater stability and political unity is not a hero, but the inventors of the technologies of sea power – although the earliest of these remain anonymous. Crane observes that while it was usual for writers of speculative histories of the earliest times to

name the inventors of significant technologies Thucydides names only the inventor of the Trireme (Ameinocles of Corinth, 1.13.3) and of the navy (Minos of Crete, 1.4.1). This is a dismissal of the significance of, for example, agricultural technologies and a statement that the only kind of technology worth noting in the context of human history is that of sea power.\(^6\) I would simply add that the earliest inventors of naval technology – including the simple ships of the Homeric era of which Thucydides is somewhat disparaging – are still significant to the story. Considerable security and wealth had already been gained by the time of Troy and this had been done with the ships that he dismisses elsewhere – the inventors of which remain anonymous. As he did with the heroes of myth Thucydides applies his own standard of noteworthiness in his account of the invention of sea technology.

Another kind of contextualization is to sift poetic accounts for consistency and coherent lineal order, so that, for example, it is revealed that the Hellenes did not exist before or during the Trojan War. That Homer does not mention the Hellenes (except as followers of Achilles from Pthiotis) points out the historicity of Hellenic identity. Similarly, Thucydides’ history of early times deals with a long period in which he can name no groups. With one exception the account of the pre-Hellenic groups who allied for the Trojan campaign is the first time he names any groups. This exception is the story of Pelops’ arrival from Asia which is significant, because he finds a population when he arrives there to whom he ultimately gives his name. By stressing the poverty of the population over which the rich Pelops comes to dominate, Thucydides points to a fact that is common to myths of the heroic age – the existence of populations, often poor,

\(^6\) Crane (1998), p138. This constitutes a further suggestion of the inferiority of the agricultural base of Spartan power.
violent and divided, before the arrival of the heroes. While poetic history makes little of this, it points for Thucydides to the correctness of his account of the earliest times as, not a Golden Age, but a time of poverty and strife. Thucydides was not the first to acknowledge the existence of a pre-heroic period by examining the evidence of the myths and other available sources. He was the first to argue, however, that it suggested an “undefined period of near-anonymity, aimlessness and disunity.”

The heroic lineage that is stressed by a primordialist poetic account is revealed as contingent and historical and merely part of a longer story in which human beings remained the same while their powers grew – but only through their own technological, economic and political efforts.

Even if such an account of early times did not affect the authority of a primordialist identity, Thucydides strips the poetic gloss from mythic accounts of the way in which larger groups were formed from smaller. When group lineage goes back, not to primordial times, but to some later point when the group was formed by the joining together of multiple smaller groups – and that, often, through violent domination – shared lineage loses some of its aura because of its contingency and historicity. Group identity is not the result of long term continuity and cohesion. Groups have always been subject to domination, dispersal and internal fracture. Furthermore, as his account of the formation of Hellas suggests, the process by which larger groups are formed from smaller involves the linguistic and cultural domination of the smaller that is productive of eventual unity. The name of Hellas was only applied to the Greeks in general after “Hellen and his sons became powerful in Phthiotis and were called in to help other cities” with the result that “each tended now to be called Hellenes through the association”

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64 Price (2001), p336. Herodotus, for example, had gone some way to working out the implications of a pre-Hellenic and pre-heroic era.
(1.3.1). As Thucydides explains at I.8 the wealthier, more powerful cities dominate the weaker who, out of “love of profit” submit to their domination. The cost of this domination, however, appears to be cultural and linguistic identity. As the previously independent cities and groups come to be known as Hellenes through repeated action together and domination and protection by the powerful sons of Hellen, they come to speak the same language. Cultural uniformity also grows (I.6). This account of the growth of linguistic and cultural unity amongst the Greeks points certainly to the early lack of such unity, but also to the loss of the diverse languages and cultures of primordial times. Cities and groups cannot point to language and culture, then, as authentic markers of continuity from earliest times. The differences that remain are small compared to what has been lost or discarded.

This stripping is nowhere so stark as when he retells the story of the founding of the Hellenic alliance for the Trojan expedition. The account begins with the provocative claim, which we have already examined but which bears reconsideration, that “Agamemnon, as I see it, assembled his force more by surpassing his contemporaries in power than by leading suitors bound by the oaths to Tyndareus” (1.9.1). As the wealthiest of the Greek kings, and “with greater naval strength than anyone else, [Agamemnon] assembled and launched the expedition less because of good will than because he was feared” (1.9.3). The first great action in common of the Greek world, and the one that eventually gave birth to Hellenic identity was founded not in heroic aretē (virtue), but

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Hunter (1982) notices that Agamemnon, in Thucydides’ account of him, has a lot in common with Minos of the Archaelogy in that both have great naval strength which gives them control of islands – and hence empire (arche). Hunter, p22-23.
heroic weakness. The autonomy and self-sufficiency\textsuperscript{66} so important to the hero is undermined in this account and, as such, his authority as a hero. Similarly, Greekness, on this view, is due to a combination of coercion and weakness, rather than cultural or moral affinity.

Thucydides does, however, apparently allow one exception to his general emphasis on the contingency of group identity and its foundation in violence when he quietly endorses the Athenian civic ideology of autochthony. This exception illustrates the distinctive moral power of primordialism and its peculiar style of group organization. He allows this exception without making a departure from his basic understanding of the kinds of events that characterized early Greek history, merely suggesting instead a different outcome arising from a different context. Similarly, from this exceptional primordialist beginning, the Athenians arrive at a style of building larger orders which, while perhaps distinct in terms of its justifiability, is still subject to the same basic conditions as other large orders.

The Athenian exception is built upon a geographic difference: unlike other Greek territories, the Attic soil’s poverty made it an undesirable target of invasions and migrations so that it “was without faction from remotest times … and the same people always occupied it” (1.2.5). While his emphasis on the poverty of the Attic soil denies any sense of literal autochthony, the lack of any invasion, conquest or domination has, in the context of his wider story of Greek origins, a similar effect to mythical versions of the story in that it stresses Athenian uniqueness in its origins, as well as its possession of

specific qualities like ethnic identity and political unity. Arlene Saxonhouse has argued that claims of Athenian autochthony need to be viewed in light of alternative mythological accounts of the origins of not just the Athenians, but all Ionian peoples. The alternative to autochthony was the story that Ion was descended from those who fled the Peleponnesos in the wake of Dorian invasion. This version of Athenian origins proves inconvenient for the Athenians facing Spartan hostility to their empire by highlighting first, a mythic defeat of Ionians by Dorians and, secondly, reducing Athenians to a level of equality with the other Ionians. Autochthony instead makes Athens the center and origin of the Ionian world, and distinguishes it from the Dorian cities which, with their fertile soil, were the sites of repeated invasions and migrations.

The Thucydidean version of Athenian autochthony is particularly ingenious in, by being integrated into the larger developmental narrative, claiming for Attica the advantage of having become the refuge for “the most capable” people (oi dunamatatoi) “driven from the rest of Hellas by war or faction” (1.2.6). Rather than an undesirable territory to which the vanquished were unwillingly driven, Attica is cast as a magnet for all that is brilliant and powerful in the Hellenic world. It’s willingness to absorb other groups contrasts the Spartan preference for permanent, low-level stasis between themselves and those they conquer and a rigidly closed conception of citizenship. Thucydides claims that this was all to the advantage of the Athenians, explaining that it “is not the worst evidence for arguing that the failure of other parts of Hellas to grow in

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69 Loraux (2001) notes that this is a traditional trope of Athenian orators who use Athenian autochthony “as a weapon against the inhabitants of the Peloponnesus, who are presented as immigrants on their own soil.”, p128.
the same way as Attica was due to migrations” (1.2.6). It is to set out a contrast particularly to the Spartans that he tells us that the Athenians sent out colonies to Ionia.70

By juxtaposing his reference to inward migration with the suggestion of Athenian autochthony Thucydides is making a bold claim about the compatibility of a myth of original unity with a synoikistic model of growth. Synoikism implies an order which grows by gathering people into itself, rather than aggressively expanding outwards to dominate, rather than include, alien groups. The apparent contradiction between autochthony and synoikism is worth exploring in detail because it helps elucidate Thucydides’ understanding of Athenian imperial policy. By exploring the intersection of autochthony and synoikism we can see a distinction emerge between a brute version of development that proceeds through domination of strangers (symbolized by Agamemnon), and an inclusive and benign version meant to characterize Athenian imperialism (symbolized by Theseus). The two do not stand in absolutely stark opposition, however, because the “Thesean” version may encompass the technological, economic and military means employed by Agamemnon: it simply enjoys the possibility of voluntary affiliation or of a legitimate and discriminating form of force.

The possibility of voluntary affiliation is represented by the immigration of the Hellenic dunamatatoi, and can be grouped with the synoikistic form because it shares the quality of “gathering-in”. The literal story of the Thesean synoikism of Athens, however, has a more violent character, so we will begin by considering its similarities to the account of Agamemnon’s alliance. Rather than voluntary integration into a group on the basis of the affinity it points to the reality of the need sometimes for forceful integration.

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70 Thucydides does not mention here that the Spartans solved their land-hunger by appropriating neighboring territories. Indeed, they possessed by far the greatest territory in Hellas, (Cartledge, 2001, pp14-15.)
of reluctant smaller orders into larger ones for the accomplishment of great things in common. Thucydides’ basic insistence in the Archaeology is that powerful orders, able to achieve things “worthy of being talked about” grow up only when smaller orders are drawn together, and that this is accomplished by force. When we look at Thucydides’ account of the synoikism of Athens in Book II we see a similar pattern: Theseus took the disparate, and sometimes fractious cities of Attica and “compelled them, even while they managed their own affairs just as before to treat this as a single city” with Athenian greatness emerging as a result of the fact that “everyone was now contributing”(2.15.6). In this light the Athenian empire appears as an extension of a process necessary to accomplish greatness generally, and which formed Athens itself. Through the use of force, previously separate groups are bound together under the aegis of a dominant one, ultimately forming a new and more powerful group.

Considered in the light, however, of first the voluntary inward migration of the best of the Hellenes and, secondly, the myth of Athenian autochthony, it seems that something distinctive is being claimed about Athenian synoikistic imperialism that separates it from the brute domination of an Agamemnon. To consider autochthony first, viewed in the light of the story of the synoikism one must ask why, if the Athenians shared a unique unity because of their shared birth from the Attic soil, did Theseus need to unite them? The Atticans “in the time of Kekrops and the first kings down to Theseus” Thucydides tells us, “Attica always had its population distributed among cities (kata poleis) with their own town halls (prutaneia) and magistrates (archontas)” (1.15.1).71 We see, then, that even if the Athenians had emerged from the same soil at the time of Kekrops, as myth insisted, they were instantly scattered into separate cities which,

71 Kekrops is a king associated with the Athenian mythical autochthony.
furthermore, did not live in unity and peace, but “even went to war at times”. Thucydides’ basic thesis about the centrifugal forces that characterize human life seems reinforced by this story which suggests that, in the absence of a powerful unifying agent, human beings are scattered, and claims to original unity are powerless to stop this phenomenon. Unity is, instead, a political artifact, requiring not just the economic and military strength symbolized here by kingship, but that this power should be wielded with intelligence (tou xunetou).

This does not, however, deny the authority of the original unity represented mythologically by autochthony and, by Thucydides, as the perpetual possession of the same territory by the same people. The key distinction to be drawn between Theseus and Agamemnon lies in this authority: unlike the previously autonomous and unrelated heroes assembled by Agamemnon, the citizens gathered into Athens by Theseus had been detached from an original center represented by kingship. His act of domination was an act of restoration, an assertion of his legitimate kingship over the local political institutions which, while they might always have existed, reduced the power and authority of the king since they left him unconsulted. Since the original unity of the Athenians, symbolized by autochthony extends, as we have seen, to the Ionians generally through colonization, we can now see how, rather than presenting a contradiction, autochthony and synoikism fit neatly together as imperial justifications. Having sent out colonies to Ionia the Athenians now stand to them in something like the relationship of Theseus to the Atticans: they legitimately seek to gather back together a group of cities sharing an original source. This strategy suggests powerfully the strength of claims of
original unity and the reason for its invocation by so many of the speakers in the main narrative. The reasons have been nicely articulated by Saxonhouse:

A city of autochthonous origins gives the appearance of peaceful origins. The violence at the beginning of cities is glossed over if a people inhabit a land from which their ancestors sprang. There need never have been any conquest. The inherent injustice, the taking from others of what is theirs, entailed in the founding of cities is ignored…. States founded in violence, conquest, or revolution are always subject to claims against them who would conquer and those who would revolt. If one group’s legitimacy is based on conquest, why should another eager for conquest exercise restraint?\textsuperscript{72}

By integrating the apparently contradictory tropes of synoikism and autochthony Thucydides is able to extend the legitimacy and justice implied by autochthonous civic origins to the Athenian claims over the Ionian world.

With the account of the inward migration of the best Hellenes Thucydides adds to this justification something of a promise of inclusion, that is repeated in his prologue to the funeral speech of Pericles when he stresses that “any man who wishes, citizen or foreigner, joins the procession” for the public funeral (2.34.4). It points similarly to the repeated Athenian claims to be benign and worthy rulers of the subject cities, and their emphasis on the fact that the allies originally came to them and requested their leadership which points again to the aspect of the synoikistic model that involves voluntary affiliation.\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{72} Saxonhouse (1986), p256.

\textsuperscript{73} See, in particular, the speech of the Athenian speakers at Sparta, Book 1.73-38, especially chapter 77. For the allies’ request of Athenian leadership see 1.75.
It is, though, a somewhat spurious promise in that the Athenian empire fails to be truly synoikistic: not only were citizenship laws tightened under the rule of Pericles in this period, but the Athenian imperial project, unlike the synoikism of Theseus, does not pursue the full political incorporation of subject groups into the centre of power. These problems may be ameliorated somewhat by placing them in the context of the larger narrative in the Archaeology concerning the path of development taken by Hellenic civilization. In this light we might expect the gradual growth of cultural and even political unity within the Athenian empire. Written, as he tells us, at the beginning of the war with Lacedaemon, in a time of fullest optimism in Athens about its empire, perhaps we can attribute to Thucydides the justifications for imperialism and the hope for its development that seem to be implied by synoikism.

There is a deeper problem with the synoikistic model of imperialism, however. Keeping in mind the basic rules laid down in the Archaeology we can see that, even if the Athenian empire had gradually included its subjects in some kind of political entity rather than simply dominating and exploiting them, it would not have found a stable limit at which to rest. The image of a “gathering in” implied by synoikism stands in some contradiction to the fundamental explanation for the necessity of outward expansion: the danger of internal faction and stasis. This imperative of internal stability is not obedient to the limits that must eventually be reached by a synoikistic imperialism of what can plausibly be claimed as the diasporal spread from the center.

These theoretical limits are never reached, however, because the mythic or ideological justifications of synoikism inevitably meet resistance from those who are claimed by them. We see these even within the Athenian center itself when Thucydides
reveals to us the weakness of the Thesean accomplishment when the outlying Atticans feel more loyalty towards their extra-mural “cities” where they feel rooted, than they do towards the astu. We see similar feelings articulated by the Corcyreans in opposition to similarly synoikistic claims made upon them by the Corinthians in book 1. Where the Corinthians, as we shall see, have reached the limits of their power to expand outwards (and even to gather in those colonies they claim authority over), the story of Thucydides’ History is in some ways the story of the Athenians approaching and reaching their own limits. Like the Spartans the Athenians cannot hold their territories firmly enough with claims of legitimacy, but must muster and maintain enough military and economic power, and political resolve, to hold down internal rebellions which, at a certain point, are no longer compatible with further expansion. The wisdom of Pericles’ warning to the Athenians at the outset of the war that they should resist the temptation to add to their empire while the conflict is underway is related to these necessary limitations (1.144.1).

Viewed in the light of the strategies by which cities can avoid stasis outlined in the Archaeology, however, it appears that the Athenian adventure in Sicily was not merely an irresistible folly, but a necessary continuation of a practice without which internal stability was threatened. The core of “rest” of the Athenians, that is, of internal group cohesion and the ability to coordinate action, relies it seems, upon perpetual motion. It is only this motion that prevents a city from disintegrating that has not otherwise dealt with the problems of pleonexia and philotimia through institutional gestures towards material equality and the cultural suppression of individual honor claims.
Accepting the fundamental measure of “great achievements in common” simply to mean gathering and employing a great force, this ultimately self-defeating strategy of the Athenians need not be viewed as a complete failure simply because it must end. If, however, we take the measure to be the development of ever-greater and more civilized human orders of the kind the Archaeology tells us have been gradually built by the Hellenes, the solution appears inadequate. Thucydides’ account of the war offers us nothing hopeful if we are to take the latter as the important measure. It does, however, in offering a range of variations on the basic solutions to the problems that greed and ambition pose for the development of cohesive, coordinated orders, insight into what social, political and cultural arrangements can persuade us to put these passions aside, for how long, and to what cost.

The following two chapters explore four attempted solutions to this problem, each one being articulated by reference to the language or practices of a different aspect of philia, each with a different temporal orientation. (Fig.1) What these explorations reveal is that the ability of cities to avoid the pitfalls of both domination by outsiders or internal collapse depends on more than their ability to deal with the problem of inequality institutionally and structurally, but on their ability to focus the attention and commitment of their citizens on practices or courses of action that extend beyond, and may even stand in contradiction to, their narrow personal interests in wealth and honor.
### Fig. 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Internal Rest</th>
<th>Motion</th>
<th>Temporal Orientation</th>
<th>Form of Philia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corcyra</td>
<td>No rest, no cohesion</td>
<td><em>Stasis</em>-destructive internal motion</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Strategic alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corinth</td>
<td>Original Unity</td>
<td>Synoikism- limited empires</td>
<td>Past</td>
<td>Maternal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparta</td>
<td>Repetition of custom</td>
<td>Limited boundaries, inertia, low-level <em>stasis</em></td>
<td>Past</td>
<td>Paternal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>Achievement of undying fame</td>
<td>Unlimited empire - future demise accepted</td>
<td>Future</td>
<td>Erōs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The table outlines the internal rest, motion, temporal orientation, and form of philia for various cities, highlighting different historical and cultural contexts.
Chapter Two: The Politics of Ascribed Philia
In his Archaeology Thucydides presents a vision of human life and Greek history that is primarily characterized by the interplay of movement and rest and suggests that the life and success of human groups, including cities, depends on their ability to marshall a powerful enough kind of internal “rest” to maintain cohesion and coordination in the face of the powerful movements that surround them. This rest may be used to stave off the threats thrown up by the maelstrom of events, or it may allow them to launch large scale coordinated movements of their own. In this chapter we will look at those cities which tend towards the former: the maintenance of internal rest as a bulwark against the movements of the times. To various degrees these cities try to resist the disintegrative forces of movement by attempting to step outside of any temporal orientation that might acknowledge and embrace change. Both Corinth and Sparta try to ground stable orders by stressing forms of philia that would best be called “ascriptive” since they are those kinship relationships that are least chosen – the filial relationship of children to parents.

The Corinthians, in asserting their imperial claims over their colony Corcyra draw out the implications of the metropolis’s maternal relationship to the newer city. In a speech that draws upon the implications of the unchosen nature of our birth they depict an order characterized by permanent, involuntary and assymmetrical obligation. It is a vision of order that stands, perhaps, in starkest contrast to that of Thucydides himself as expressed in the Archaeology, because it stresses the authority and certainty of political and ethnic beginnings – something Thucydides was at pains to deny. At the same time, in introducing metaphors of philia to talk about belonging and obligation the Corinthians reinforce one implication of Thucydides’ developmental history, the fact of what Hannah Arendt calls the “plurality” of human life. Metaphors of philia draw upon that
dependency that resides in our very existence, the fact that we are always already connected to and dependent on others, to make the point that we are similarly dependent in our relations to groups of others, including cities. This dependence that points to human plurality was visible in Thucydides’ Archaeology in the fact that Greeks were dependent for the economic, political and cultural goods, even their sense of “Greekness”, on the long historical development of their cities, customs and technology. For the Corinthians this dependence is expressed through a metaphor of maternal generation, not as reflecting a long and process involving the anonymous contributions of many generations, but a one-sided bestowal of great gifts that produce great debts of obligation. Where the notion of maternal *philia*, then, expresses a fundamental plurality that is in keeping with Thucydides’ view of the sources of power and political goods, it is fundamentally at odds with his sense of the anonymity and contingency of these developments. Its temporal stance is quite at odds with that of the Archaeology.

The Spartans too conceive of politics in terms of *philia*, but in their case it is a living practice of *philia* towards the Spartan fathers. They do not, unlike the Corinthians, do not trace their obligations as citizens to the beginnings of their city or people, but to the nature of the customs and institutions built by their historical legislator Lykourgos. That their laws came to them from a foreigner contributes to a basic equality and unity within the ruling caste of Spartiates that extends even to a kind of equality between the living and the dead. In the debate between the Spartan king Archidamos and the ephor Sthenelaïdes we see that the equality and, indeed, even the identity, between Spartans and their forefathers is a carefully nurtured and protected part of Spartan politics. One might even say that a kind of temporal collapse exists at Sparta whereby the living generation
considers itself in some ways the contemporaries of the dead. Rather than a politics of maternal generation that was devoted to domination that we saw in the Corinthian speech, the Spartans invoke paternal-filial *philia* to produce robust internal cohesion based on the suppression of differentiating qualities between citizens. Where the Corinthians in their vision of maternal *philia* merely denied historical contingency cast backwards by tracing the authority that they derive from interdependence back to a certain and knowable moment, they do not deny the possibility of newness in the way the Spartans do. Where the Corinthians preserve for themselves the privilege of generation, of creating bonds of dependence and obligation, the paternal *philia* of the Spartans are devoted to such precise replication of past generations that they seek almost to embody them. Both cities, however, in relying on metaphors of ascriptive *philia* to ground obligation and establish cohesion, adopt orientations towards the past that are fundamentally at odds with the vision of human interdependence that Thucydidides develops, because for Thucydidides this interdependence is necessarily contingent and both the source of and subject to change.

**a) The Corinthian Speech**

The Corinthian speech at Athens is the second of the first pair of speeches in Thucydidides work, the first coming from speakers on behalf of her enemy and colony Corcyra. Scholars interested in politics have usually centered their interpretation of these speeches on the observation that they signal a concern with the dual concepts of justice (*dikē*) and necessity (*anankē*). It is worth attending to this issue because *anankē* will turn out to be an important concept for understanding ascriptive *philia* and, indeed, those views of

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political life that deny its relevance. It will remain an important concept as we proceed to consider other kinds of *philia* as well because, as we will see soon, it can be divided into several main kinds of necessity that reflect different aspects of the lives of *poleis* and the dangers that beset them.

The Corinthian speech begins with an invocation of necessity ("*anankaion*” – “it is necessary”) while the Corcyrean with one of justice ("*dikaion*” – it is just/it is right).\(^{75}\) It is hard to dismiss the importance of this pair as organizing features of the speeches, and, indeed, as organizing features of the commentary on them. In looking at the Corinthian speech one can, indeed, divide the scholarship broadly into that which views it from the perspective of necessity (and finds it puzzling),\(^{76}\) and that which views it from the perspective of justice (and finds it unconvincing).\(^{77}\) These perspectives may betray, though an overly strict separation of justice and necessity that leads scholars to search for either clear strategic vision or a concern for justice that is isolated from concern for

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75 For some scholars this signals simply a concern for the tension between justice and necessity that pertains more to the surrounding narrative than to the speeches themselves: the tension between the two cities signaling the opposition of these concerns. (Strauss, (1969), p38.) Others, however, have considered the speeches themselves in light of these opening words, often finding that the concerns of the speeches contradict the words – finding, for example, that the Corinthians, despite beginning with necessity, speak more about justice. (E.g. Orwin (1992), pp38-41; Ober (1998), *Political Dissent and Democratic Athens*, p76, Crane (1998), pp106-107, Price (2001), p87.)

76 Modern commentators who have emphasized necessity have tended to view the speech in light of the strategic positions of actors who are assumed to be formally equal – or rather, issues of formal status are pushed aside as irrelevant to strategy. This approach finds the Corinthians to be bad judges of strategy or blinded by rage. The Corinthian speech at Athens has been something of a puzzle for these scholars because, for so many of them, it seems so utterly unconvincing. “Scarcely an argument in the whole Corinthian speech carries conviction,” exclaims one. Their actions, like their words, seem, from this perspective largely irrational and strategically ill-advised. They have the problem, however, of failing to approach the speech with much imaginative sympathy or with the assumption that the Corinthians speak from anything other than unthinking rage. This body of commentary focuses too exclusively on the perceived strategic situation from which the Corinthians speak, in particular, calculations upon the strategic perspective of Athens from which, it is supposed, the Corinthian case is utterly untenable. For examples of these views see de Ste. Croix (1972), Salmon (1984) and, to some extent, Kagan (1969).

77 Those scholars who have emphasized justice in their analyses of the speech have found both the Corinthians and Corcyreans wanting in their commitment to justice. While both speakers at least find the invocation of justice a rhetorical necessity, neither speech reveals a city motivated primarily by it. (Orwin, p39. White (1984), p63-64. J.H. Finley sees both speeches as arguments for “personal advantage clothed in the terms of justice.” p12.)
interest – believing that the terms are already essentially understood. Where the organizing features of the speeches are said to begin with dikē and anankē, many interpreters quickly elide anankē and sumpheron (expediency). I wish to avoid this easy and, I think, too quick assumption that necessity implies expediency and explore the sense of anankē itself, because it will ultimately help give a more definite content to our sense of how “justice” is being used in Thucydides’ work. If we step away from these assumptions about necessity and justice we can begin to see that both terms operate with several senses in the speeches, sometimes in opposition and sometimes intertwined.

While anankē may, indeed, sometimes mean the force that what appears expedient seems to exert and to seem to be at odds with justice, it is also closely tied to justice at other points. By attending to the various senses of anankē we begin to see emerge a pair of visions of the relations between cities that are both concerned with justice and aware of necessity, but which take different views of the ways in which they are connected.

It is my contention that this complexity can be unraveled by attending to the language of philia (friendship) and the ways it structures further pairs of concepts such as autonomy and autarchy; slavery and filial piety; anankē as cooperative necessity and anankē as bia (violent force); equality of power and of status; and citizen and city. These concepts structure the mutual critiques of Corcyra and Corinth and reveal distinct understandings of the possibility of justice between cities that come to have relevance for the question of justice within cities as well. In particular they present two conceptions of

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78 See especially Price (2001), p82-89, and (although he does not use the Greek sumpheron) Orwin, pp38-41, who also quickly begins talking about anankē as expediency.

79 Ibid., p87, where Price notes that the Corinthians use several conventional sense of justice, including moral and legal senses, and that of equal exchange. Crane and Orwin argue that justice and expediency are intertwined (with the assumption, however, that they can and should be extricated from each other in order to be meaningful.)
just order in the Hellenic world, both of which rest upon a demand for the recognition of equality. For Corinth the recognition of equality of ascribed status buttresses a just order that involves *philia* conceived of exclusively in terms of kinship. For Corcyra the equality inherent in the category of citizenship should, in justice, structure Hellenic interactions. Against the assertions of just order, however, lies the looming threat of another principle of relation between cities that is characterized by violent force, slavery rather than citizenship and where *philia* is a matter only of temporary strategic alliance.

To understand the need for such an interpretation it is worth considering further, for a moment, those views of the speeches that have concerned themselves with the perspective of justice. Orwin exemplifies those interpreters who demand of the speeches that they take justice seriously with his view that the opening words tell us that “either justice is necessary or necessity threatens to eclipse it.” 80 In Orwin’s view, though, both speakers attempt to deny this very tension in the substance of their speeches. The substance of Orwin’s concern is that the attempt to elide the tension between necessity and justice leads to the view that “necessity justifies.” 81 On this view “justice” is simply a label given to the greatest necessity, a “necessity” that implies “expediency”.

This tendency to see *anankē* in Thucydides as simple expediency is perhaps due to the most striking and explicit use of it, that of the Athenian speakers at Sparta at 1.73-78. 82 These Athenians attempt to justify the way Athens transformed the Delian League into an empire by pointing to the overlap of opportunity and *anankē*,

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80 Orwin (1994), p41
81 Orwin uses this phrase to characterize the grounds of the final Athenian decision to ally with Corcyra, p41.
82 Orwin, p56, argues that the Athenian point is generalized: “The Athenian speech that treats explicitly that problem of the relationship between the just and the necessary which is implicit throughout book one”.
We were compelled from the first by the situation itself to expand the empire to its present state, especially out of fear, then prestige as well, and later out of self-interest. And it no longer seemed safe to risk letting it go when we were detested by most, some had already revolted and been reduced, and you were by then not our friends as you once were but a source of suspicion and contention (and allies who left us would have gone over to you) (1.75.2).

The Athenian position holds that it is human nature to feel these compulsions and that if one has the opportunity – that is, the power – to submit to them by pursuing our desires for honor and other forms of self-interest, one is within the bounds of ordinary human behavior. Further, because their empire has become hated, they are “beyond reproach in managing their interests well when great dangers are involved” (1.75.5), so that the compulsion of fear too is said to compel and excuse.

The Athenians here conflate several of the senses of *anankē* at work even in their own list of compulsions and this elision, I think, flows into some scholarly interpretations of the debate between the Corcyreans and Corinthians, even when scholars notice the problems with the Athenian articulation of *anankē*. The fear of the Athenians for their survival that justifies keeping the empire now that they worry about the consequences of giving it up blurs into the prestige and self-interest that motivated their expansion of it. In listing those compulsions they are arguing not just that trying to survive is beyond reproach, but that self-interest and the desire for honor are also irresistible compulsions

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83 While Orwin notices this problem of conflation in the case of the Athenian speech, where he objects that the Athenians do not distinguish between necessity and “mere expediency”, p47, he does not make this concession for the Corinthians since, in his analysis of their speech, expediency and advantage stand in for *anankē* much of the time.
and that, when one has the power to pursue them, these are understandable and even legitimate actions.

In light of this chilling Athenian speech it is tempting to take all references to \textit{anankē} as implying the compelling force of self-interested desires and, thus, as always in great tension with the concern for justice. In light of their conflation of several \textit{anankai} however, we might split Orwin’s question about whether “necessity justifies” into two which ask: “does the necessity of survival (fear) justify?” and “Does the compulsion of desire justify?” Of course even the Athenian account of the origins of their empire shows clearly that had they not submitted to the compulsions of desire and taken the empire further than fear originally dictated, they would not now feel the compulsion of fear because of their correct recognition that it is a necessity of survival to keep it to avoid suffering the revenge of those they have injured.\textsuperscript{84} The question of the justice of their empire then must certainly hinge on whether it was just to give in to the compulsion of desire, and at this point the Athenian case is indeed rather weak. Compulsion in this sense of desire, then, does indeed seem set quite starkly against justice.

\textit{Anankē} is a more complex concept in Thucydides work than this Athenian thesis suggests, however. Ostwald, for example, has divided the sense of \textit{anankē} into eight

\textsuperscript{84} The Athenian account of the order in which these various \textit{anankai} compelled them suggests that there was a moment where a just choice to abandon it would have been possible. On the one hand, it appears that the initial attempt to seize control of the alliance was prompted by fear of the Persians in the face of a Spartan abandonment of the allies and for this reason “fear” appears first in their list of \textit{anankai}. They admit that later they were motivated by prestige and self-interest. It appears that there was a time when it \textit{would} have been safe to step down from the empire, to withstand the \textit{anankai} of prestige and self-interest, because when they come to think about it later it “no longer seemed safe to do so.” This stands in contrast to Orwin’s interpretation of the envoys’ view that it holds that “the Athenians were never therefore free of compulsions to maintain the empire”, p52.
categories covering the different circumstances of its use.\textsuperscript{85} This thematic approach throws up difficulties, however, that limits its usefulness in looking at the question of its relation to justice.\textsuperscript{86} Developing an alternative typology of \textit{anankai} by using its relation to justice as a structuring feature will be more helpful in understanding the broader role of \textit{anankē} in the work insofar as it is concerned with politics and not historical determination. In this chapter I will lay out this typology by examining \textit{anankē} in the Corcyrean speech. I believe it can usefully be divided into three senses. First there is that psychological compulsion named by the Athenians that is the compulsion of fear for survival or of simple desire which we will call “the \textit{anankē of desire}”. The second is that developed by a second set of interpreters. These suggest that even if the language of justice may not be entirely sincere at the level of motivation, it provides evidence for cultural resources that, while not resolving the tension between \textit{anankē} and justice, at least address some of its effects.\textsuperscript{87} “Justice” here is a matter of justification: the need to justify self-interested actions necessarily puts some limits on those actions – some actions cannot be justified at all – and one’s record of past actions determines to some extent one’s ability to gain the assistance of others in the future.\textsuperscript{88} In this way an invocation of justice itself becomes a necessity for the speakers – a necessity of rhetoric, as Orwin himself recognizes\textsuperscript{89} – and also restrains the invocation of necessity as an excuse for injustice. Justice has some compulsive force that is derived from its cultural place and

\textsuperscript{85} He cites external factors, minimum requirements, the need to respond to an earlier speaker, military anankai, treaty obligations, \textit{anankai} manipulated by others, strategems, the concatenation of circumstances. Martin Ostwald, \textit{Anankē in Thucydides}. (Atlanta, G.A.: Scholars Press, 1988)

\textsuperscript{86} For example Ostwald lists the \textit{anankē} that underlies the actions of mercenaries and of citizens under “military anankai” where, in Hellenic terms, their relationship to justice is quite distinct, indeed, Ostwald himself notes that Thucydides distinguishes the kind of compulsion they face as social pressure in the one case against the brute discipline of military service on the other.

\textsuperscript{87} E.g. White (1984), Crane (1998).

\textsuperscript{88} White (1984), pp64-65.

\textsuperscript{89} As Orwin (1994) notes, p39; also Ostwald (1984), pp10-11.
must take a place within any strategic calculations concerning necessities (in the sense of the pursuit of desires.)  

This is an important distinction and will reoccur throughout this work. Since it points to those limits that are placed on our direct pursuit of interests by the need to secure the cooperation of others both now and in the future, this anankē of justification I will call “cooperative necessity”.

This concern for justification in cooperative necessity, however, merely highlights Orwin’s concern: either justice compels us to act in certain ways (whatever the cost to our own interests), or else we are compelled by our pursuit of desires and survival to ignore justice whenever we can or pay it lip service. Orwin’s fear is that the end-point of the Corinthian and Corcyrean views is the assertion that “necessity justifies” and that the choice-worthiness of justice “is contingent on its necessity for achieving [certain] results.”

Reframing anankē as the “cooperative necessity” that requires us to justify our self-interested actions (those motivated, perhaps, by our subjection to the anankē of desire) does not help us to address Orwin’s basic concern. Orwin’s demand is that we should choose justice for its own sake (or for rewards inherent in it) and not for rewards that may or may not be attached to it as we do if we embrace justice only out of cooperative necessity. Orwin’s complaint, then, is that the speakers seem to be saying that not only does interest justify, but that justice itself does not compel.

A re-reading of the speeches, however, suggests that – at least for the Corinthians – there are ways in which justice compels. While this view is neither a successful

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90 In considering strategic necessities this culturally derived necessity must be acknowledged. Ober rightly emphasizes the notion that justice may be a strategic necessity and sees in the Corinthian speech a view of “interest and power as grounded less on gaining secure access to material necessities (ships, walls, capital) than on abstract notions of justice.” Ober (1998), p76. We should not be too hasty, however, to paint the Corinthian notions of justice as “abstract”, for reasons that should soon become apparent.

argument or policy on their part, nor the dominant view of the speakers in Thucydides’ work, it is important to suggest ways in which it is, at least, a coherent position. To understand how, however, we need to consider a third sense of “necessity” – one that is attached to what Williams called “necessary identity.” In approaching this sense of necessity, however, it is important to keep in view the language of *philia* invoked in the speeches.

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**i) Metropolis and colony: a metaphor of *philia***

It sounds odd to the modern ear to speak of “maternal friendship” and yet, for the Greeks, the relationship with one’s parents was a key, if not the key form of *philia*. This *philia* stood with other forms of kinship at the center of concentric circles of friendships which encompassed the *homonoia* of shared citizenship and sub-political associations as well as degrees of personal friendship surrounding it. Indeed, the Greeks included under the aegis of *philia* “every relationship from sexual passion to guest-friendship, relationships whose differences we [moderns] should emphasize much more than their resemblances.” Of parental-filial relationships those between mothers and sons stands in stark contrast to that between mothers and daughters, at least as reflected in Greek literature and myth where it appears to be a particularly fraught one, reflecting the fact that, while relationships within the *oikos* (household) generate the deepest bonds and

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93 Mary Blundell, (1992), pp40-45. See also Paul Millett (1991), Pat Easterling (1989) and A.W.H. Adkins (1963) who share this view of the breadth of application of the word *philia*. A recent notable dissenter to this view is David Konstan (1997) who disputes the translation of *philia* as “friendship”, asserting that friendship was limited for the Greeks, as for us, to achieved bonds based in affection, although he agrees that the term referred to the same broad range of relationships as other scholars.
94 Adkins (1963), p36.
most taxing obligations, they may also be the source and origin of the greatest conflicts.\footnote{See Garland (1990), p149. For a survey of the literary relationships between Greek mothers and children see Slater (1968).} On the other hand, in the bloody canon of Greek myths of parenthood, the myth of Demeter and Persephone is “unique in having parental affection as its primary theme” and points to the fact that “the mother-daughter bond seems … to have been the closest, most affectionate, and least conflicted of all familial dyadic relationships.”\footnote{Slater (1968), p29.} I point to this myth of the mother-daughter relationship because it suggests nicely the idealized relationship between mother cities (\textit{metropoleis}) and colonies (\textit{apoikia})\footnote{“The term \textit{apoikia} most often translated as ‘colony’ but literally meaning something like ‘home away from home’”, p28 John-Paul Wilson, “Ideologies’ of Greek Colonization’ in Bradley & Wilson (eds) \textit{Greek and Roman Colonization}. (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2006).} which was one of special closeness and affection.\footnote{The classic work on this subject is A.J. Graham’s \textit{Colony and Mother City}. Also influential is Irad Malkin’s \textit{Religion and Colonization in Ancient Greece}.} Indeed, it is tempting to connect the prevalence of the Demeter and Kore cult in the colonies of Western Greece to its appropriateness for symbolizing the ideal of an ongoing relationship and affection between mother city and colony.\footnote{See A.J. Graham, “Religion, Women and Greek Colonization,” in \textit{Collected Papers on Greek Colonization}. (Leiden: Brill, 2001) the importance of the Demeter and Kore cult in the West. The speculation here is mine, however.} The historical worth of such speculation aside it does point to Greek habits of thought about the relationships between cities generally which were often conceptualized on the model of relationships (\textit{philia}) between individuals.\footnote{See Crane (1998), p108-109, “Greeks depict an alliance between poleis, a \textit{summachia}, in much the same way as an alliance between individual citizens or families of different poleis.” Further, this habit is one particularly belonging to Thucydides who “in particular tends to treat aggregate groups of people as if they were individuals, and thus projects individual psychology onto what we would now call sociology.”} The relationship between Corinth and its colony Corcyra, however, illustrated maternal-filial friendship in a thoroughly defective mode and their violent enmity forms the subject of the first pair of speeches in Thucydides’ narrative of the Peloponnesian War. The deficiency of the relationship, though, means that we see a clear expression, from Corinth, of a
conventional version of the maternal-filial relation as a model for colonial ties and an exploration of the ethical roots of its obligations.

The Corinthian and Corcyrean speeches seek to resolve the logical and practical tensions within *philia* by regimenting its terms towards what we might call ascribed or achieved *philia* respectively.¹⁰¹ The Corinthians, in their attachment to ascriptive status, assert a politics oriented towards perpetual order that rests upon a strong attachment to mythical views of history which trace to the beginning their own sets of practices and identities. Political order of this kind is dependent upon a continual reference to and reproduction of a revered past moment. For the Corinthians it is the foundation of colonies, more even than ongoing ties, that grounds their authority as a *metropolis*.

The conflict between Corinth and Corcyra centers on a second colonial relationship – and the claim of a third. The Corcyrean colony, Epidamnos, was founded with a Corinthian *oikistēs* (official founder) “in full accordance with ancient custom,” (1.24.2) and when the city is divided by *stasis* (civil conflict) the expelled *dunatoi* (powerful men) appeal to Corcyra as the metropolis for help. When refused, they “give the city over to the Corinthians as its founders and try to find some sort of aid from them” (1.25.1).

The reasons Thucydides attributes to Corinth in this decision are fascinating for pointing to the norms and difficulties of colonial relations as they are ultimately played out in the debate between Corinth and Corcyra before the Athenian assembly. According to Thucydides their reasons are divided between “obligation” to a colony they regarded

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¹⁰¹ While anthropologists usually speak of achieved and ascribed *relationships* (of which friendship is of the former kind) the breadth of the term *philia* suggests that we use both terms to modify friendship here.
as “as much theirs as the Corcyreans”’ and emotion. The emotional component is explained at length: the Corinthians respond partly

out of hatred (misei) for the Corcyreans because they were colonists of theirs who slighted them neither giving them the customary honors (nominzomena) at the festivals they shared nor offering the first portion of sacrifices to a Corinthian as their other colonies did but looking down on them from a position combining financial power comparable to that of the richest states of the time with stronger military preparedness, also boasting of their marked superiority at sea, sometimes even through Corcyra’s early occupation by the Phaeacians of naval fame” (1.25).

From the Corinthian perspective, the position of metropolis is a lofty one which engenders duties in the colony that can never be trumped by mere material success and power. The mother city is ritually powerful as the source of the religious and cultural identity of the city, as is evinced by the reference to shared festivals. It also expects to be accorded symbolic superiority at those festivals and, indeed, at all sacrifices. It is, in this way, ritually ever-present in the life of the colony. The Corcyreans’ boasts about their wealth and military superiority offer, instead of ritual honors, public humiliations to the mother city. Most significant, perhaps, is the attempt to deny the significance of Corinth’s maternity by conceiving of their identity geographically in connection to the Phaeacians’ mythical occupation of the island, rather than by kinship to the Corinthians.

By emphasizing their own material power the Corcyrean humiliations of the mother city are intended to ridicule the whole scheme of colonial power which, in their

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102 As Kagan (1969) notes, this emphasis upon emotional and symbolic motivations is extremely unusual for Thucydides, pp218-219. Similarly, Crane has noted that the Corinthian claim in their speech to be “greatly beloved of their colonies” is the sole occurrence of the word “stergō” in the History. For a good discussion of storgē as the affection parents and children for each other (and of dog for master!) see Craig’s The War Lover, p47.

103 Crane (1998) sees this as a reference to festivals shared by the Greeks generally (i.e. Pan-Hellenic festivals) and thus sees the significance of this reference as the humiliation of Corinth in front of the Greek world. P97. However, scholars of Greek colonialism stress the importance of festivals and cults shared between colony and mother city as a source and symbol of ongoing closeness. See, e.g., Graham (2001), Hornblower (1992).

view, is a matter of force dressed up as ascriptive superiority, the hollowness of which is revealed when its power to compel is inadequate. The Corinthian task in this context is to show how the ascriptive superiority they assert is fundamentally different from material power and, indeed, to show how it is just.

**ii) Justice and the Aphilos**

The Corcyrean speech is the first of the pair and yet it is not the one we will examine first here. The Corcyrean speech, by focussing on the contingent, historical and voluntarist nature of alliances and relationships between groups in general is treated in the next chapter where I will discuss the forms of “achieved” *philia* that share these characteristics. Ascriptive *philia* is a better place to start in many ways because it is the view of the history and nature of human associations that stands in starkest contrast to that which Thucydides develops in his Archaeology. It is also that which characterizes the most traditional cities in the history which, in many ways, appear least prepared to understand and respond to the rise of Athenian naval power that is in the background of the war and its narrative. Since it comes first, however, and since the Corinthian speech is made in answer to it, some very brief and preliminary things need to be mentioned here about the Corcyrean speech.

The Corcyreans approach the Athenians seeking an alliance against the mother city in their conflict over Epidamnos since Corinth, skilled in diplomacy, has been able to assemble an alliance that threatens to overwhelm the impressive force of the colony. Their appeal to the Athenians is couched much more as the offer of a great deal than as an entreaty for assistance, however. Asserting (ludicrously) their equality to the

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105 For the Corinthian skill in traditional diplomacy see Kagan (1969), p236.
Athenians in power they present themselves as suitable allies who, because of their position and naval strength will contribute as much to the Athenians as they receive (1.33.2). An alliance is, on this view, very much a matter of the exchange of benefits between equals. Alliances, then, are entered voluntarily and for strategic reasons. The Corcyreans, anticipating the Corinthian objections to both their specific propositions and the view of the nature of alliances that underlies them, develop justifications for this view which we will leave until the next chapter, since they come more as a response in anticipation than as an independent argument. It is enough to say here that the Corcyreans argue emphatically for the autonomy of cities and their consequent freedom to enter into alliances with whomever they choose. They deny the authority of the metropolis to maintain control over the foreign policy of her colonies.

The Corinthian response begins with a focus on alliances of the kind that Corcyra is requesting from Athens, their grounds, demands and costs. The kind of alliance the colonists have proposed is very much an “achieved” relationship – a chosen friendship. Once they have shown the costs of accepting this understanding of alliances, however, the Corinthians begin to outline an alternative vision of the relationships between *poleis* that concerns ascriptive *philia* instead.

The initial Corinthian complaint is about Corcyrean *autarkeia* (self-sufficiency) which they say underwrites the colony’s lack of allies. The Corcyreans have been able to adopt a stance of *autarkeia* because of a policy of avoiding both cooperative necessity and justice itself, while at the same time taking advantage of the necessities of others concerning trade and travel and its accompanying needs for shelter and supplies. This

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106 This view of alliance is supported by the observation of the Mytilenes at 3.11.2 that “only a mutual balance of fear guarantees an alliance; the party that wants to overstep is deterred by not having the advantage if it attacks.”
The accusation of autarkeia stands as a refutation of the Corcyrean demand for autonomy: it is not a just autonomy but an aggressive and exploitative stance taken to all and sundry. Self-sufficiency allows them to leave all of their obligations to friend and stranger alike unfulfilled while at the same time strengthening the natural self-sufficiency of isolation and natural wealth with the profits of the outright exploitation of visitors. By avoiding alliances with others they have made use of “their state’s self-sufficiency” (autarkē) through its location” (and the moral isolation of being without allies) “to be the sole judges of injuries they inflict rather than being controlled by agreements (to euprepes aspondon), since they make very few voyages to their neighbors while very frequently encountering others obliged (anankei) to put into their ports” (1.37.3). Travel and mutual need are, then, the basis of the exchange of favors that constitutes one kind of just interaction.

This is an example of what I have called “cooperative necessity”, and which is absent because it is ultimately grounded in necessity as interest: without either the economic or military need for allies the Corcyreans have avoided the social necessity of justifying their actions before anyone. Their autarkeia is at the root of their lack of allies because it puts them out of reach of two important kinds of anankē that usually serve to support a kind of justice, or at least constrain injustice: basic economic and defensive

— I stray here from Lattimore’s translation. He translates autarkē as “autonomy” which seems quite inappropriate here because it refers to a distinctive political relationship between, for example, a hegemonic city and those it claims authority over.

— We see now that the injustices of the Corcyreans involve their exploitation of their position on trade, or perhaps military routes. Cf Thucydides 1.44.3 “the island’s favorable location on the coastal route to Italy and Sicily was clear to them.” Owald includes this anankē of sailors to put into Corcyra’s ports as an example of the anankē of external factors where “uncontrollable sources bring about the compulsion”, weather, lack of food, need of repair, p9. However, this is compounded by the compulsion to which they are subjected by the Corcyreans once they get there which is, say the Corinthians, exerted unjustly. Debnar (2001) notes that the uniqueness of the location of Corinth on a vital isthmus with a large fleet made them able to “hold the Peloponnesse hostage”. The Corinthians, as we will see in their speech to Sparta are, indeed, not afraid to wag the Spartan dog and it is striking to see that they enjoy a similar capacity to the Corcyreans to impose anankē on others because of geography.
needs (the *anankē* of survival or fear) and the cooperative necessity that is unavoidable if one needs to enlist the help of others to secure these goods. The Corinthians stress this connection between *autarkeia* and the avoidance of cooperative necessity when they claim that the Coreyleans have failed to secure allies because, without economic or military need of one until now, “they did not want to have an ally as witness to their crimes (*adikēmata*) nor to face disgrace by calling one in” (1.37.2). The shame of having such witnesses might have constrained their behavior, and since they had no need for allies in terms of interest, they had good reason to avoid alliances. The condition of the *aphilos* (the person without friends), then, rather than, as one classicist put it, a “desperate plight, as bad as being *apolis*”, when combined with *autarkeia* is an indicator of a person or city who stands outside the cooperative necessities that tend to suppress or reduce the naked pursuit of interest through unjust acts.\(^{108}\) Such a person or city can, on this account, more easily submit to the *anankai* of prestige and self-interest cited by the Athenians as the force behind ordinary human behavior in the absence of other constraints.

The Corinthians acknowledge, however, that the relationship between cooperative necessity and greater justice (or at least, lesser injustice) is not a straightforward one, since cooperative necessity may be used to compel us to act against our otherwise just inclinations. The Corinthians point to this possibility with the suggestion (that they rapidly dismiss) that the Corcyreans might have abstained from alliances out of “virtue” (*aretē*) (1.37.2). They indicate the possibility again in their account of possible motives for non-alliance: either “to avoid involvement in the wrongdoing of others (*sunadikōsin*

\(^{108}\) The notion that being *aphilos* is a desperate plight like being *apolis* comes from Pat Easterling “Friendship and the Greeks” in Porter & Tomaselli (eds) *The Dialectics of Friendship.* (London: Routledge, 1989) p11.
heterois)” or “to commit wrongs unaided (kata monas adikōsi)” (1.37.4) (the latter being the motive they ascribe to the colony). The self-sufficiency that underwrites independence allows one to “commit wrongs unaided”, but also provides the opportunity for greatness through the display of unforced justice. If the Corcyreans were really honorable “the more unaccountable they are to others, the more opportunity they would then have to give their high character (aretēn) the greatest visibility by offering and accepting just settlements (ta dikaia)” (1.37.5). It is possible to win a reputation for justice by treating strangers fairly; indeed, not being compelled by positive legal obligations or the considerations of cooperative necessity makes such justice more impressive because it suggests generosity.

The simplicity that is attached to this state of independence in the absence of need (which also means the absence of constraint or compulsion) is matched by the complexity of the allied condition. The suggestion that alliance may involve one in the wrong-doing of others is not an extreme claim here, but an ongoing controversy in the speeches and debates of Thucydides’ work. The Corinthian position occupies one extreme in this debate, by holding that just acts performed out of obligation lack the freedom and generosity that characterize those of the unaligned (or powerful) actor who wins honor for justice. On the other hand, the allies who are obliged to commit wrongs honor their alliance, but in doing so act dishonorably overall because they act unjustly. The Corinthians hold at once, then, that obligations are absolutely binding (hence can compel

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109 When the Thebans argue for the destruction of Plataia and its population their case hinges on this point. The Plataians, they say, are guilty of assisting the Athenians in their imperial aggression against Hellenic cities and this should not be excused simply because they were obliged to help as allies of the Athenians. Such a position would misunderstand the limits of obligation: “it is declining to repay favors in kind that is shameful, not declining when favors are just obligations but their repayment leads to injustice” (3.63). While the Theban point opposes the Corinthian claim that obligations to act unjustly are valid, the fact that they make is suggests that the Corinthian argument has some currency.
us to commit injustice) and that there is a kind of justice beyond simply upholding obligations that is both higher and nobler. This higher kind of justice – that abstracted from relationships, the justice that belongs to the *aphilos* – in an apparent paradox does not appear to trump the lesser justice of upholding alliances. To understand why the Corinthians think these paradoxical claims can be plausible, we must look to the their account of the basis of alliances in ascriptive hierarchies.

**iii) Maternal Friendship: the logic of asymmetrical obligation**

So far the speech has explained the Corcyrean manipulation of material and strategic necessities for the sake of *autarkeia* and the avoidance of constraining relationships along with the cooperative necessities they produce. We saw that through cooperative necessity the bonds of alliance may make a necessity of justice – but equally of injustice. The Corinthians turn now to outline a third kind of necessity, one that stands closer to justice: it is the necessity that characterizes relationships grounded in the existential, and in identity rather than in interests. The Corinthians draw upon a sense of *anankē* that connects necessity to blood kinship and, in emphasizing the unchosen nature of the child’s relationship to its mother, suggests that, precisely because of being involuntary, filial obligations are both necessary and just. In doing so they shift the focus away from the kinds of alliances that are chosen for the sake of strategic ends towards those that are permanent and ascriptive. The Corcyrean manipulation of the economic needs of others has produced *autarkeia*, but could not have avoided the demands of “necessary identity”, which is exemplified in a relationship they have had all along: the colonial bond with the mother city Corinth. Corcyrean *autarkeia* has allowed them to shirk the obligations of
friendship, but the city has never been *aphilos* after all because of a fundamental dependency that reveals both human plurality and the obligations of a kind of justice that attends it.

On their own account the Corinthian colonial project is political, military and symbolic, since “they did not found colonies to be insulted by them but to be recognized as leaders (*hegemonēs*) and receive the proper signs of respect” (1.38.2). The Corinthian ability to martial the assistance of several of her colonies – Leukas, Anaktorian and Ambracia – as an escort for her recolonization of Epidamnos – suggests that these demands of leadership are to some extent acquiesced in, though whether because they are really “greatly beloved (*stergometha*) by [their] colonists” (1.38.3) or because of their greater strength we can hardly tell. 110 With this claim of voluntary submission based in love, however, the Corinthians are attempting to point to some ground between the poles of slavery and equality asserted (as we shall see) by the Corcyreans as the only possibilities in the relationships between cities. The Corinthian view of colonial relations is based instead on a vision of affectionate asymmetry drawn from the ethical structure of kinship in the *oikos*.

In this contrast between citizenship and slavery there is an opportunity to see another way of understanding *anankē* and its relationship to justice by considering how it

110 What is interesting in this regard is that Syracuse, the only other Corinthian colony to grow to greater power than the metropolis, readily makes the symbolic gestures of respect demanded by the mother city, though it is certainly not subject to its violent domination. Similarly, the Corinthian claim to be beloved need not be mere specious self-aggrandizement – it is possible that the citizens of many Corinthian colonies viewed themselves as members of a Corinthian diaspora – and as having deep roots in the metropolis. At this point in Thucydides’ narrative we have already seen evidence of these links and their potential authority when the Epidamnian oligarchs appeal successfully to the Corcyreans in their mother city for help: they “pointed to their ancestral tombs and appealed to these and their ties of friendship (*sungeneia* – shared descent) as they begged the Corcyreans to restore them” (1.26.4). A mother city could well expect to be beloved as the site of such ancestral relics and hence personal identity, as well as the source of the “shared cults … dialect and institutions” that underwrote a degree of shared collective identity. A.J. Graham (1982), p156.
is different from *bia* – violent force. While it is possible in some contexts to read “*anankê*” as implying the compulsion of physical force and hence as a synonym for *bia*, we have already seen that it carries other meanings, such as the compulsion of cooperative necessity that informs how we pursue our ends even in the absence of violent force. *Anankê* as *bia*, similarly, is only one way it shows up within the *oikos*, so care must be taken. To return to the opposition asserted by the Corcyreans, however, the distinction of citizenship and slavery rests fundamentally on the question of violent force. Citizens were distinguished as the category of persons who were not permitted to use violence against each other. As the site of slavery, however, the *oikos* was by contrast a realm of necessity as violence. The compulsion characteristic of slavery is, though, only one aspect of the life of the *oikos*, and the *anankê* of *bia* is only one of the *anankai* that exist there.

The *bia* for which slavery was the very symbol underwrote a relationship in which acquiescence could never be expected or demanded. As Bernard Williams has argued, that slavery was based only in violent coercion, or the threat of it, by and large nobody amongst the Greeks argued. That this violence was at the same time economically necessary and unjust was also widely recognized.\(^{111}\) It is against this background that we should understand a secondary meaning of *anankê* that is at first glance separate from the various kinds of external compulsion: the *anankê* of blood kinship.\(^{112}\) This *anankê* speaks to the compulsion of the obligations that come of that kind of relationship and which, if respected, do not beget violence but, properly, affection.

\(^{111}\) Williams (1993), p105.
\(^{112}\) Liddel & Scott, “the tie of blood, relationship, kindred.” The lexicographers distinguish this sense from all of those other sense of *anankê* having to do with necessity, compulsion and force. As Williams’ development of the notion of “necessary identity” suggests, however, the two are still intimately connected – blood relationships are necessary ones, they compel us in the sense that we cannot choose them.
This is not to say that violence is utterly absent from *anankē* as kinship: if its obligations are not fulfilled it may justify violence in response. As distinct from the *bia* of slavery, however, this violence is not the foundation of the relationship. This necessity of blood kinship, especially as experienced in the close relationships of the *oikos*, maps closely onto what Williams called “necessary identity.”¹¹³

Williams uses the term “necessary identity” to adumbrate the Greek understanding of slavery as a matter of economic and cultural necessity on the one hand, and bad luck on the other. It is because it is only a matter of bad luck and violence that slavery can never be a “necessary identity.” Those who were slaves could, had their luck been different, just as well have been free. Those who live with necessary identities, by contrast, could not be imagined otherwise. The example he gives of a necessary identity is that of womanhood. When we distinguish between sex and gender, and thus separate womanhood from gender specific roles assigned to it by culture, he argues, we may still discern a core of unrenouncible identity that we can call womanhood. It is this unrenouncibility, this lack of luck, in the matter of basic identity that constitutes a necessary identity. Blood kinship implies a similar kind of necessity. While one can’t, proverbially, choose one’s relatives in general, the relationship of child to parent seems an example of necessity identity of an extreme kind: whereas becoming a parent is, to some extent, a matter of volition, no one has such a choice about being born. It is a necessity that also bespeaks existential dependence and, as such, can easily be thought to beget obligations – things that we must observe or face just subjection to violent retaliation.

¹¹³ Williams (1993), pp122-123, 126-129.
One effect of the elaboration of the requirements of filial piety in the speech is to highlight what is left silent in the Corcyrean claim that cities can be towards each other either as fellow citizens or as slaves, acting with justice or with violence. By invoking a kind of *anankē* that belongs to the household, but which is nonetheless just and not grounded in violence, the Corinthians have made space for their claim to justice. A firm distinction is implied, then, between *anankē-bia* and other forms of *anankē*, such as cooperative necessity and necessary identity. Where the violence (*bia*) that underwrites slavery is both potent and unjustified, the violence that may come in response to the failure to attend to the obligations grounded in necessary identity is just. Similarly, it is precisely because this *anankē* is not itself based in force that its obligations are valid even when, because of parental age or weakness, the violence necessary to enforce them cannot be mustered. Ideally, then, acquiescence to the obligations of necessary identity is voluntary, while no one would expect someone to remain a slave willingly.

The Corinthians make an even stronger claim, however. Not only is the relationship between parent and child asymmetrical in terms of being chosen or not, and in the just application of violence, but the child must submit even to parental injustice. This injustice might include, for example, the punishment not justified by the violation of just obligations. In contrast to slavery, the maternal relationship specifically demands *voluntary* acquiescence in an unchosen subordinate status, and even in unjust injuries—even when their violent imposition could be resisted. This is what the Corinthians mean when they assert that “Even if we had actually been in error, it would have been noble (*kalon*) on their part to yield to our wrath, and disgraceful (*aischron*) on ours to abuse
their moderation (*metriotês*)” (1.38.4). The asymmetry here is simply emphasized when the Corinthians offer their excuses for violating the inexorability they have been demanding of alliance relationships by asserting that “we would not be taking the abnormal step of going to war with them if we had not also suffered extraordinary wrongs” (1.38.3). Whereas injury must be tolerated by the colony, the patience of a mother city properly has its limits.

The structure of this relationship is drawn upon in the image of parental/filial relationships conjured by the term *metropolis*. In using it the Corinthians summon up cultural expectations of the obligations and behaviors that characterise these ties of the *oikos*. The cultural importance of filial piety is attested to by the frequency with which it arises in the works of orators, which suggests the seriousness with which breaches of this relationship were regarded.

Like a city’s history of alliances, a citizen’s treatment of his parents was an important indicator of character, so that in Athens, “the eponymous archon before assuming his office was required to state whether he treated his parents well”. (In this way treating one’s parent well was part of cooperative necessity as well

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114 Crane notes that this argument is “typical of other strongly hierarchical societies” and points to a weapon used by subordinates “to heap shame upon the dominant” for pushing their advantages too far, pp.111-112. What is apparent from the shift in Crane’s language as he describes this phenomenon between “the dominant” and “the strong” (but which he does not articulate) is that ascriptive superiority and superior power often go together, but do not always – as the Corinthian case illustrates.
115 Sheets (1994) has argued in a similar vein that in the colonial relationship the colony may have lacked “full legal personality in the international community of Greek states” (p69), and the metropolis and colony are thus fundamentally unequal. Ober also notes that refusal to arbitrate is based on Corinth’s sense of inequality between states, but this time sees the inequality as pertaining to their “standing in relation to justice” (p76). There is no reason why these two interpretations should be incompatible – indeed each throws some light on the other. Corinth’s insistence on both inequality and justice invites us to consider what is involved in the kind of justice the Corinthians invoke, and we must conclude that ascriptive status is of central importance to it.
116 “The evidence seems to suggest that while filial devotion was commonly regarded as a fundamental attribute of any decent human being, in practice it was not invariably manifested, inasmuch as ill-treatment of parents came under the heading of impiety as a type of crime which the gods themselves would be minded to punish”, Garland (1990), p157.
as necessary identity). These devotions to parents were connected to gratitude for one’s existence and for specific benefits, so much so that it could be argued to be the primary obligation of life: “it is the greatest impiety not to pass our lives benefiting those from whom we have received the beginning of life and those from whom we have received many benefits.”\textsuperscript{118} Nurture by a parent may, perhaps, be repaid by the care an adult child takes of a parent in old age, but the debt for giving one life is one which can never be repaid.\textsuperscript{119} For this reason “repayment for birth and nurture, was enshrined in Attic law… But the relationship, though reciprocal, was not evenly balanced. If ingratitude against any \textit{philos} was an offence, that against parents was the most heinous.”\textsuperscript{120}

The relationship between parent and child is fundamentally unequal not just at a cultural, however, but at a deep existential level, and the unevenness in the relationship’s culturally understood obligations seems to be grounded in recognition of this fact. For every child its own existence is dependent upon the existence of a parent and this is an unchosen and a permanent feature of its existence. The parent, by contrast, lived a time before the birth of the child and her existence is not dependent upon that of the child. The child, however, is tied from the moment of birth to the parent and would not exist but for this tie. The child’s obligations to the parent are permanent ones and cannot, strictly, be voided, even by some parental enormity because they are grounded in an asymmetry that is an existential characteristic of the child. This existential obligation is not overcome just because the child has grown stronger than the parent and is more than

\textsuperscript{118} Lycourgos, \textit{Against Leokrates} 94, cited by Garland, p157.
\textsuperscript{119} Aristotle notes that “nothing a son may have done [to repay his father] is a worthy return for everything his father has provided for him, and therefore he will always be in his debt.” \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}, 1163b20-23. He continues, though, with a possibility the Corinthians choose not to engage: “a creditor is free to remit the debt, and a father likewise.”
\textsuperscript{120} Mary Blundell, (1989), p42
independent, but thriving: the child’s status in wealth and power does not release it from its subordinate status as a child – parenthood must still be respected and venerated, perhaps more so by a successful offspring. Filial devotion, then, signifies acquiescence to a fact which, in its very necessity, is an important part of justice. Indeed, birth represents the greatest necessity, if by necessity we mean a lack of choice, or even chance, so that we should not be surprised to find the second meaning of anankē as kinship. The role of child in the parent-child relationship is indeed a case of what Williams calls a “necessary identity”, but turns out to be a most powerful variety so that we will from now on distinguish it by the name “existential necessity”\textsuperscript{121}.

In Greek expectations of filial devotion, and the use made of them here by Corinth as a metropolis, we see an attempt to ground justice in necessity by identifying the deepest obligations with the most inescapable necessity. Well might Corinth call itself a “mother city” when the relationship it outlines is a parental one in this sense of existential dependence – the colony exists because of an act of volition on the part of the metropolis, but being itself constituted by this act, had no control over it. Corcyra, however, is like a child who has grown into magnificent youth and fails to respect its parent in her decline. In this the Corinthian position bears a striking resemblance to the political use that was made of myths of autochthony to ground civic identities and the demands of the polis and thus to overthrow the competing demands of actual kinship.\textsuperscript{122}

As well as constituting the simplification of a diverse reality represented by kinship (which is Saxonhouse’s emphasis), presenting the earth as the political mother takes for the polis the necessity of kinship and applies it to the contingent arrangements of the city

\textsuperscript{121} Williams, (1993), pp122-23, 126-29.
\textsuperscript{122} Saxonhouse, (1992) Chapter 3.
that are (at least in the view of Thucydides’ Archaeology) the products of human creation, both deliberate and incidental. Adherence to the demands of filial piety means obedience to a justice that is embedded in nature itself, rather than human agreement or invention. It is just this authority that Corinth seeks to attach to its relationship with its colonies by replicating the uneven structure of obligation in the parental relationship in that between colony and metropolis.

Now we are in a position to understand the earlier claims that the justice of upholding alliances (even in the commission of unjust acts) trumps the justice of just action itself. The purest understanding of just action in the speech concerns the just action performed by the *aphilos* individual precisely because this justice is abstracted from relationships and not the product of cooperative necessity or threats. The *aphilos* who is also *autarkē* is not subject to the forceful constraints of the threat of *bia* in actual domination by allies, the social constraints imposed by alliances (cooperative necessity), or the just constraints imposed by necessary identity (existential necessity). In their *autarkeia* they are free from any necessity to be just and are just out of free generosity only – they alone may be more just than they have to be. When the Athenians tell the Spartans that “all are entitled to praise whenever they follow human nature by ruling others and end up behaving more justly than their actual power dictated” (I.76) they invoke the justice of the self-sufficient *aphilos*. The Corinthians betray a deep anxiety about this autarchic justice, however,

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123 Orwin (1994), also connects justice, strength and nobility: “If Athens wields empire under nature’s duress, she practices justice of her own free will. For all its power natural necessity stops well short of crushing human freedom. To the strongest at least nature permits the possibility of genuine justice, which gains in nobility even as it does in difficulty and rarity”, p63 (see also pp49 & 54). However, the opposition between natural necessity and the freedom to do something noble is greatly complicated by the notion that the necessity of *philia* also limits our freedom.
and when we look at their proposals for their relationship with Athens we can see an attempt to limit its role by grounding even achieved alliances in the structure of what they regard as just colonial and imperial orders.

**iv). The Corinthian Proposal – Upholding Ascriptive Hierarchies**

What the Corinthians have in mind in following the Corcyrean envoys to Athens is not to secure an alliance of their own; rather, they want the Athenians to help them isolate the rebellious colony. In the background of the Corinthian proposals to Athens on this subject, though, is a project of minimizing the role of both achieved friendship as a principle of alliance, and the scope of *autarkeia* and *aphilia*. Both of these threaten a stability that, in this situation, the Corinthians profess to desire. It is not just its stability, however, that commends the Corinthian proposals, in their view, but the fact that they reflect an order that is just, bounded and properly human. Hellas, as the Corinthians describe it in this speech, is a world of *philia* in which everyone is always already tied to somebody else with bonds of unshakeable obligation. Where the choice to enter new friendships exists it is both justified and limited by the concerns of these pre-existing bonds of *philia* both because justice demands it and because cooperative necessity requires it.

If we draw out the implications of the Corinthian speech we see something like the following depiction of Hellas. All *poleis* are involved in parallel hierarchies of kinship (whether they acknowledge them or not) and thus newer cities are always obliged in justice to submit to the leadership of – and, as we have seen, even injury from – the older hegemonic cities.\(^1\)\(^2\)\(^4\) By limiting the role of achieved friendship to the relations

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\(^1\)\(^2\)\(^4\) This implies, it seems a certain transitivity in colonial foundings which allows the Corinthians to claim Epidamnos as their colony even though it is formally a Corcyrean colony. The traditional appointment of a
between these old, hegemonic cities, the Corinthians seek both to limit the destabilizing effect of *autarkeia* (exemplified for them by their problems with Corcyra) and to assert that imperial orders are grounded in and limited by justice (both in order to justify their own actions and to rein in the *autarkeia* of Athens). Although we can, in this way, derive many strategic and self-serving motives from these Corinthian proposals we should keep in mind the ways in which they also differ from a simple claim that “necessity justifies” because of their insistence that it is not simply stability and peace that justifies their proposals but that the proposals themselves are actually demanded by a justice grounded in orders of existential necessity.

They are keen to wrap the Athenians in bonds of necessity by suggesting that this vision of just order also reveals the many ways in which their empire is not held in the manner of an autarchic *aphilos*, but in the context of a far reaching cooperative necessity and on the basis of existential necessity between Athens and its own allies. The justice of existential necessity is here intertwined with cooperative necessity. In the Corcyrean view, failing to acknowledge the importance of these two *anankai* threatens to undo all justice and lawfulness and, by putting all relationships on the basis of achieved *philía* grounded merely in the calculation of strength, to set Hellas in furious motion. By basing all relationships on the consideration of immediate strategic concerns, a principle of achieved *philía* shows itself, for the Corcyreans, not to be a form of *philía* at all, but the reduction of all relationships to those of master and slave, and the *anankē* of kinship to

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Corinthian *oikistes* in this founding by the Corcyreans, though, suggests some legitimacy to the Corinthian interpretation, perhaps. Crane (1998), p101, points out the sense of superiority displayed by cities with long histories and lineage over merely “derivative” *poleis*, suggesting some currency to the kind of distinction the Corinthians are trying to draw.
the *anankē-bia* of sheer violence. To understand these points, however, we will need to pay close attention to the Corinthian arguments.

When they warn the Athenians that “to avoid wronging one’s equals (*homoious*) is a more secure basis of strength than can be found by grasping a dangerous advantage when incited by the immediate prospects” (1.42.4) the Corinthians present us with a puzzle: what do they mean when they say they are the equals of the Athenians? The equality they point to here is not that of their strength in wealth or power, which, as we’ve seen is less formidable even than that of Corcyra. Rather, they are invoking a second sense of *homoios* indicating their equality of status. Given their statements about the proprieties of relations between colonies and metropoleis and insistence that colony and mother city are different *kinds* of cities, it is reasonable to suppose that the status they have in mind is that of old, hegemonic cities. The assumption is further buttressed by their later comments about “disciplining allies” (to which we shall turn soon), suggesting that the leadership and domination of subject allies is a shared concern. That they mean to extend their vision of colonial relations beyond the immediate situation with Corcyra in this way into a broader conception of imperial power is evinced by the parallels they draw

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125 Orwin (1994) seems to me quite wrong in his interpretation of the Corinthians on this point. For him this reference to equality is a suggestion that justice is less important than “skill in gauging relative power”, p40. Crane (1998), by contrast, emphasizes the importance of status to this language of equality, pp110 -12, with which view I concur.

126 See Liddel & Scott, I.4 “equal in force, a match for one”, II “of the same rank, station.” To the objection raised by Gomme that the Corinthian and Athenian empires are fundamentally different in kind – the Corinthian being a genuinely colonial enterprise, the Athenian being the product of recent aggressive domination of the Delian League – we can point to the use Athens itself made of the putative colonial relationship between herself and Ionia. Indeed Thucydides himself upholds this view in his Archaeology when he notes that “the Athenians colonized most of Ionia and the islands” (1.12.5). Thucydides, in these claims takes a position in line with Athenian imperial views that promoted related notions of Athenian autochthony that underwrote claims that Athens was the Ionian *metropolis* rather than an Ionian city (Ionians having been traditionally traced to the Peloponnesos). See Wilson (2006) for a provocative discussion of this combination of myths in the context of Thucydides’ Archaeology. Hornblower (1992) has illustrated the religious elements of this project of imperialist history.
between themselves and Athens. Imperial strength is on a more secure basis when hegemonic cities do not wrong each other.

Solidarity between hegemonic cities is, then, both a source of power and a requirement of justice, and hence has both ethical and strategic consequences. The power such solidarity generates, though, is limited and contained. It is different in kind from the kind of power that is won by grasping “a dangerous advantage” because of its close relationship to justice. Hegemonic solidarity is a way of generating just power and order, against which background grasping an advantage stands out as unjust. Part of wronging an equal, on this view, is adopting a stance of competition rather than solidarity towards them.

Before we can see clearly what it is that makes this solidarity just we should, perhaps, consider why embracing the Corcyreans would be “wronging” the Corinthians. It is true that because the Athenians in associating themselves with “violent and grasping” men (biaioi kai pleonektai) (1.40.1) and being “their accomplices in crime” (sunadikaien) (1.39.2) would be committing themselves to a share of any specific injustice the Corcyreans may commit. Similarly they would be breaking the treaty to which both are parties, forbidding the poaching of each others’ allies. However, it is the very act of making the alliance that is a large part of the wrong they would do Corinth, rather than all of the specific injuries it would reward and perpetuate, or the legalistic foundation for complaint. It is, most of all, a failure to recognize the requirements of justice that are inherent in a status and thus a threat to the entire order that it represents. What is at stake is a principle of philia and a way of marshalling military strength that is
grounded and limited by justice. What the alliance threatens to replace it with is a view of *philia* that is, they argue, governed only by the perpetual pursuit of advantage.

We have seen from the early part of the speech that they are claiming a just but asymmetrical authority over their colonies based on an analogy with the conventions of maternity. There was there, we saw, a claim to a justifiable compulsion: the *anankē* of existential necessity justified violent enforcement of obligations in a way that was distinct from the violence (*bia*) of mastery over slaves. We distinguished, in this way, between *anankē* as existential necessity and *anankē-bia*. From the perspective of the advantage the Athenians may be trying to seize they seem to stand aloof from the principle of justice the Corinthians have been concerned with. The Athenians are not, after all, party to the relationship which is said to embody this justice of kinship between Corinth and Corcyra. On the other hand, if they too claim such justified domination over their allies, the justice of the relationship between Corinth and Corcyra may become their concern. This is the point the Corinthians are making when they remind the Athenians that in the past they have treated the Athenians according to this principle. When the Peloponnesians debated coming to the aid of Samos in its revolt from Athens the Corinthians were staunch in adhering to their sense of order and “told them plainly that in disciplining (*kalazein*) allies everyone is on his own” (1.40.5)\(^{127}\) which, they explain means that no defector should be given aid.\(^{128}\) When the Corinthians warn the Athenians against receiving and

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\(^{127}\) “In this picture”, says de Ste. Croix, p71, “Corcyra stands to Corinth in the same relationship as Samos to Athens: that of a subject ally. In fact, Corcyra was, and had been for centuries, entirely independent of her mother city.” The distinction is too easy, however, because, as we have seen, Athens like Corcyra invokes claims of maternity over its colonies in its claims to be both the home of the Ionian people and the metropolis of the Ionian colonies. See note 53 above.

\(^{128}\) Rather than suggesting that all alliances are bilateral relationships (which would be belied by their own impressive alliance assembled for Epidamnos), the “everyone” here refers to a more limited set, meaning those cities at the top of the kinds of hierarchical relationships they have outlined in the first part of their speech when they addressed the asymmetry of the colonial relationship.
aiding “wrong-doers” *(tous kakous)* (I.40.6) we should bear in mind that in calling them *tous kakous* they suggest not only that they are violent and grasping with a history of injurious acts, but also that they are inferiors in status. This *kakous* parallels the *homoious* the Corinthians claim for themselves in respect to the Athenians. It represents not just the men themselves, though, but also the principle of *philia* they invoke when the Corcyreans appeal to the Athenians on the basis of the exchange of benefits between equals in strength: they offer only *philia* with the *kakous*.

That the world of parallel orders characterized by the just domination of ascribed *philia* is opposed by another unjust possible order is suggested in this warning against helping *tous kakous*. The Athenians must be aware that “if you are going to start harboring and abetting the wrongdoers (*tous kakous*), it is obvious that there are just as many on your side who will come over to us, and you will be establishing the principle more against yourselves than against us” (I.40.6).\(^{129}\) The Corinthians will retaliate for this violation of the principle of hegemonic solidarity they describe and practice, and will pursue not only direct revenge for aiding the Corcyreans (I.40.4), but, worse, will abandon the principle of just *philia* and take up instead an indiscriminate pursuit of alliances themselves. Going to war against the Athenians in this way will no longer be a choice for them, but will become a necessity, the Corinthians argue: “For if you join their cause our defensive operations will necessarily (*anankē*) involve you” (1.40.3-4). More than describing the new strategic necessities that an Athenian alliance will produce, however, they are suggesting that because the most powerful Greek city has chosen to

\(^{129}\) In this prediction the Corinthians are correct: as Ober puts it, “this proved to be a terrible problem for the Athenians.” Setting aside for a moment the problems Athens did encounter with defecting allies, the whole trajectory of Athenian imperial policy was aimed at overcoming the need to rely upon the loyalty or gratitude of allies by charging them tribute that strengthened the Athenian navy and diminished those of the allies rather than relying on assistance in kind.
reject established practises and understandings of just *philia*, adherence to such order will no longer be possible for Hellas in general.

By abandoning the principle of just *philia* supported by solidarity between *homoioi*, the Athenians will discover that the just order it represented actually bore great benefits for the leading powers. A thread of cooperative necessity runs through the Corinthian depiction of just Hellenic order, but it is a thread that runs not counter to, but in service of, both justice and hegemonic interests. In the scheme the Corinthians are laying down equality moves from mere symbolism to actual strength through the mechanism of hegemonic solidarity. To avoid wronging one’s equals in status serves in the end to render less significant the inequalities in power such as that the Corinthians suffer with respect to Corecra: for if hegemonic cities can rely on each other to isolate rebellious subordinates, the strength of individual cities will rarely be enough to equal the power of empires.

While they propose no alliance between themselves and the Athenians they suggest a view of the proper relationship between hegemons that bears a resemblance to the “achieved *philia*” of the Corecraean proposal to the Athenians.\textsuperscript{130} They do not wish to give to achieved relationships though, the status of *philia* at all and instead make definitive of friendship the kind of unequal treatment that they have justified in their behavior towards the Corecraeans. In suggesting that the Corinthians and Athenians should exchange favors in isolating each others allies they argue that the Athenians

\textsuperscript{130} While not allied, the Corinthians and Athenians are both parties to a treaty and thus have legal relations. This is the Corinthian point when they note, at 1.40.4, that the Athenians have never had so much as a truce with the Corecraeans. Pointing, perhaps, as Sheets suggests, to the privilege of the metropolis to enter such legal commitments. See note 106 above.
should show gratitude and repay the favor the Corinthians did them over Samos precisely because they are not actually friends. They offer advice about this,

claim to gratitude which we, not being enemies to the point of injuring
you nor again friends to the point of your taking liberties, maintain you
should satisfy in the present situation (1.41.1).

Although the Corinthians here embrace the equal exchange of benefits, they reject the Corcyrean suggestion that it is the foundation of another kind of friendship, but insist that it actually stands outside the realm of *philia* altogether.

If the Athenians pursue this alliance with the Corcyreans and accept their notion that exchange of benefits produces friendship, the Athenians risk inflaming the rebellious desires of all of their own allies who will learn the lesson that the *kakous* can benefit from achieved friendship. Along with their extreme rejection of the possibility that *philia* may be generated through exchange and thus be “achieved” rather than ascribed, the Corinthians assert a background of *philia* that is “true” against which people and cities offend during time of war. This is, they say, what makes their solidarity over Samos so impressive, for the favor came,

At those crucial times when men engaged against their enemies are indifferent to everything except winning; they regard anyone who is of service as a friend, even if previously hostile, and anyone opposing them as an enemy even if he happens to be a friend, since they neglect even considerations of kinship in their obsession with immediate victory (1.41.3).

A friend may be abandoned during war time, but their status as friend is not changed by the fact that he is now approached as an enemy. Friendship in this sense, then, is a matter of necessary identity.
It is in their strategic analysis that the Corinthians give a far reaching account of cooperative necessity with robust content. We have seen cooperative necessity already in those social constraints placed on us by the need to give potential allies indicators of reliability and trustworthiness – those qualities the Corinthians say are so lacking in the Corecyreans. In their depiction of parallel hegemones the Corinthians depict cooperative necessity not as a condition of achieved alliance, but as the basis of just domination. The parallel hegemons are best able to dominate their own allies if they follow a policy of non-interference with those of others. The cooperation that is necessary is primarily that of solidarity, then, rather than active help. The constraint, or anankē, that it generates is a matter of not seeking advantages over the homoioi. It is, then, a principle of limited imperial ambitions: the empires Corinth has in mind are, like her own, strictly colonial ones that grow only with new colonies and pose no threat to the empires of others.

The cautions the Corinthians give to Athens appear in this light, as a reflection upon the impossibility of autarkeia even for the mighty Athenians – because they are superior in strength to other cities and empires (and thus independent of them) only to the extent that they can keep their empire together. Doing so, though, requires the non-interference of these other empires – thus true autarchy is out of reach. The Corinthian point is that the Athenian empire, like all others, depends on internal philia and not douleia, and thus, is actually far from being autarchic, Athens is not even aphilos. Cooperative necessity should be accepted for strategic reasons even if its justice is not appreciated. The Athenians have no reason for denying its justice, however, because it is all to their advantage – both in terms of strategy and ideological justification of empire.
As we see here that *philia* may have to be enforced with violence – but this is a just form of violence in a way that slavery is not – its essence is not violence in the way that *bia* is the essence of slavery. If the Athenians choose, instead, to pursue a policy of *douleia* with respect to their empire and their alliances, measuring potential allies and enemies in terms of force rather than status, they will unleash the justified rebellion of slaves and undermine their own force, discovering that they are not, in themselves, autarchic. The Athenian claim, then, to enjoy the privilege of the *aphilos* – the ability to enact a kind of justice that is abstracted from relationships and, hence, free, generous and noble – is challenged by the Corinthian case. While they cannot be compelled to commit injustices by allies, as hegemonic cities, Athens and Corinth cannot freely choose injustice in the way the *aphilos* individual might. For the *aphilos* justice does indeed become a matter of choice, and hence honor, since one may choose it over the demands of advantage or necessity. While Athens and Corinth are neutral with respect to each other, however, they are not *aphiloi* – each has a set of relationships which must, in justice, be upheld. It should be clear to the Athenians, then, what justice demands in the present case: helping Corinth receive obedience from her colony.

It is worth pausing for a moment to bring together the themes of this complex speech. Taken together the many threads of Corinthian argument present two possible futures that hinge on the Athenian acceptance or refusal of the Corcyrean alliance. On the one hand there is the continuation of an old order that the Corinthians suggest exists as a standard and set of practices where parallel hegemonies enjoy their spheres of influence supported by the solidarity of their equals. This cooperative necessity is in support of a just order,
however, because the authority that the hegemons exercise over their allies is just. The orders are hierarchies of *philia* characterized by obligations and authority that mimic those of close kinship in the *oikos*. Compulsion may exist within these orders but it is the justified *anankē* of existential necessity and its obligations and not the unjust *bia* of slavery.

On the other hand, there is the Corinthian interpretation of the Corecyrean proposal. By allying with those who are not *homoious* but *kakous* the Athenians will set in train a complete reordering of Hellas. By refusing to acknowledge the just claims of *philia* made by the Corinthians they will undermine their own claims of *philia* in their empire. By choosing a new *philos* on the basis of strength, and spurning the claims of *homoioi*, they will make strength, not status the basis of all associations. Their own claims over allies will no longer command from other hegemons support based on recognition of the *anankē* of kinship as the shared concern of equals. They will instead have to rely on their own strength to maintain their empire through *bia* alone. From an order of *philia* their empire will become one of *douleia*.

Standing between the *anankē* of kinship and the *anankē* of *bia* there is cooperative necessity which is a form of *anankē* with no definite content. Whether it is just or unjust is governed by whether it is tied to moral obligation or to the private expedience of the parties. It takes its character from its surroundings. Depending on the nature of one’s allies, as we have seen, it may be aligned with either justice or injustice, with *anankē* as kinship or *anankē-bia*: the cooperative necessity of upholding orders of true imperial *philia* is just while the cooperative necessity of obligations generated by chosen alliances with the *kakous* are not.
In imploring the Athenians to ally themselves with justice and kinship the Corinthians ask the Athenians to embrace the qualities that the Corinthians associate with themselves rather than the Corcyreans. The two cities come to stand in for the two ways of organizing *philia*. Like cooperative necessity, the Athenians appear to have the potential to turn towards both injustice and justice, and thus to share qualities with both cities in character and action. Although, in the flattering picture they give of themselves the Corinthians are more vocal in suggesting their commonalities with the Athenians in the theme of the *homoioi*, there are also latent comparisons with the criminal path of the Corcyreans. The Corcyrean claims of aphilia and injustice protected by *autarkeia* bear resemblances to the Athenian view of her own *autarkeia* based in her naval empire that is built not so much on the obligations of allies but their monetary tributes. The Corinthians work hard in their speech to suppress any Athenian notion of their own self-sufficiency, however, by stressing their dependence on the passive support of other hegemons. Similarly, when the Corinthians characterize their colonists as “violent and grasping” the description maps closely onto their claims about the consequences of the path to which alliance with Corcyra leads. Rather than the *anankē* of kinship, as we have seen, the Athenians will have to rely on *bia* towards allies who are no longer friends but slaves. They are, the Corinthians can see, tempted towards this path by the desire to grasp an advantage which, in the Corinthian view, is more than their share – they display *pleonexia* like the Corcyreans.

The Corcyreans come to represent in the speech, then, the destruction of all genuine *philia* and the establishment of a regime of violence, disorder and injustice. As

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131 This view of the empire and the basis of its strength is made by Pericles in his first speech to the Athenians in the history where he encourages them into war with Sparta. 1.140 -144.
they exist in this depiction they prefigure both the *stasis* which engulfs their city and the war between the Greeks itself. Earlier we noted a scholar’s remark that being *aphilos* was an equal misfortune to that of being *apolis*, and the wisdom of that remark is now apparent.\(^{132}\) The Corcyreans in rejecting the regime of true *philia* find themselves, in their *stasis*, without the benefit of human political institutions and to have fallen foul of all human standards. The connection between isolation, lack of respect for law and political institutions and the inhuman suggests the figures of Homers’ Cyclops who “have no meeting place for council, no laws either”, and are,

> each a law to himself, ruling his wives and children,

> not a care in the world for any neighbor. *Od.* 9.125-8

To draw out the implications of a condition below that of the properly human we might follow a Greek habit and consider the human from the perspective also of what stands above. While beasts and titans stand below and lack both politics and *philia*, the gods above, in their self-sufficiency, did not require friendship either. The justice of the *aphilos*, abstracted from all relationships and hence, being unconstrained, both free and generous, turns out to be the justice of the gods alone.

While the Corcyreans were able to maintain a condition of afinity and *autarkeia* as long as they kept to themselves, as soon as they exerted themselves beyond their shores in Epidamnos they found themselves in need of friends and hence under the constraints of cooperative necessity. The Corinthians in their stress on the unacknowledged cooperative necessity the Athenians benefit from, point out to them that they are not isolated and *aphilos* as the Corcyreans had been able to claim for themselves, but deeply engaged in the world and would have to acknowledge and take account of

\(^{132}\) See p77 above.
cooperative necessity. They are not, after all, able to stand aloof of human standards. The question they must address, then, is whether they would embrace a cooperative necessity that is allied with the just *anankē* of kinship, or whether they will chance the unjust *anankē* of *bia*. Cooperative necessity is the unavoidable *anankē* of human life, and if it is attuned to the properly human concern for *philia* it embraces kinship and justice rather than violence. There is in this view a vision of a just order of nature of which *philia* is an essential part. It is through this order and the proper practice of *philia* that *dike* and *anankē* can be reconciled.

Contrary to the views of those commentators who see *anankē* and *dike* at odds in the speeches, the Corinthian speech acknowledges that while *anankē* can take the form of naked violence and lack all justice, justice is never without *anankē* – it must simply be of the right type. Justice implies a proper orientation to *anankē*. This is the point that is difficult to understand, perhaps, from the modern perspective, as is the notion that true *philia* is that represented by kinship and not voluntaristic, personal friendship.

Whereas to the modern liberal imagination, choosing an obligation legitimizes it and makes it all the more binding,¹³³ this is not the view reflected in the Corinthian speech, and students of Thucydides need to keep this in mind.¹³⁴ This modern ordering

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¹³³ “Free consent is regarded as the primary mechanism through which individual liberty may justifiably be limited, for consent is a clear source of created obligations that is nonetheless plainly consistent with respect for individual liberty and choice,” Simmons (2001).

¹³⁴ As Hornblower has noted, not only Corinth’s speech here, but also Thucydides’ comments about colonial relationships in the introductory narrative on Epidamnos suggest that colonial relationships at the very least complicate the assumption that the relations between *poleis* were based on an assumption of formal equality. This view has been advanced by, e.g. Vernant (Les Problèmes de la guerre en Grèce Ancienne, p.21) and endorsed by Loraux (2006), p.141. See also White, (1984), p69 who finds that the “nominal equality and autonomy of the cities” is an “essential premise of the culture of argument” exemplified by the Corinthian/Corcyrean debate, similarly with “the free choice of autonomous cities to band together and choose a leader”. These premises of equality and free choice are not, on my reading, shared by the Corinthians, or rather, they limit the universe of those for whom these premises are true. Arlene Saxonhouse has argued that it is a modern conceit to read onto even the Athenian democracy a
may reflect a sense (demonstrated in the scenario the Corinthians discuss) that obligations may hinder optimal arrangements, may even constrain us away from acting on our own sense of justice, and that this constraint needs justification. The unjust orientation of cooperative necessity suggested in the speech demonstrates that the Corinthians are well aware of this possibility. In the Corinthian speech, however, this matter of having reasons is under suspicion as connected more with the calculation of advantages than with justice. The only matter of choice in the speech concerns the matter of solidarity with or rejection of the *homoioi*, the acceptance or rejection of the characteristic human order embodied in the practice of *philia*. There is, though, no escape from *anankē*.

v) Filial piety and citizenship: generation and generations

The Corinthian understanding of justice, in its profound conservatism, can appear to be little more than a moral gloss put upon a stubborn resistance to all change that would be to their own disadvantage. At the level of motivations this may well be the case. It is grounded, however, in a narrative about political life and its sources that they expect to be compelling and which, further, through the image of *philia* points to the interdependence of political life that should be significant for us also. When we probe the narrative further, however, problems emerge and we must turn now, belatedly perhaps, to some of the flaws and implications of their position. With their emphasis upon their founding of colonies the Corinthians stress the necessity of the maternal relationship, but in an artificially limited way because they ignore both the fact of growth

and change over the course of life and that of their own status as *apoikia*. To take the last problem first, we see on several occasions in Thucydides’ narrative the Spartans exert themselves to defend and support the tiny Dorian *metropolis* of Doris, thus apparently taking their role as citizens of an *apoikia* seriously.\(^{135}\) As Dorians the Corinthians share the Spartan mother city. We have no evidence from Thucydides’ text that Corinth did not also take its role as *apoikia* seriously, but in this context the stridency of their claims as mother city, juxtaposed with their assertiveness over Epidamnos, are troubling. If we follow the logic of Corinth’s claims over Epidamnos, for example, we could imagine Doris asserting that Corcyra was as much her *apoikia* as the Corinthians’. More significantly, the fact of Corinth’s status as a Dorian *apoikia* undermines her claims to respect as *hegemonēs* on ascriptive grounds rather than ones of power. Just as Athens sought to deny that it was an *apoikia* of Ionians originally from the Peloponnesos and embraced instead a narrative of autochthony and the role of Ionian *metropolis*,\(^{136}\) Corinth implicitly denies her Dorian roots and presents herself as the center and origin of a specifically Corinthian empire.

These problems point to a more fundamental one in the Corinthian case: their emphasis on generation at the expense of generations. Emphasizing one dimension of the maternal relationship – the fact of generation – they ignore the rest of the lifespan and the fact that each mother was also a child once and is thus also a contingent being. Being someone’s child is a necessary identity with regard to filial morality, but it is not the whole of identity. There is a grounding justice in the necessity of the maternal relationship and its asymmetry which relates to generation, but there are also all the

\(^{135}\) E.g. 1.107 and 3.92. Simon Hornblower (1992) explains the likely religious motives for these actions, pp181-182.

\(^{136}\) See Wilson (2006), Saxonhouse (1986)
specific acts of help and harm that constitute the daily justice of *philia* and have to do with the particular circumstances and events of life. Instead of acknowledging these vulnerabilities and obligations, the Corinthian narrative of the metropolis and *apoikia* depends, for its authority, on a particular sense of time that draws constantly upon the past. It is, in this sense, (at least on some readings) an appropriately “maternal” perspective:

Maternal insight is conceived to be Epimethean, associated with the lore of the past and with the projection of the past into the future; cycle is the time-metaphysic of the Earth Mother. In her association with birth and nurture, the mother symbolizes those qualities required for a continuous, ongoing society.\(^\text{137}\)

The Corinthian speech indeed employs this Epimethean perspective to express a sense of order, value and justice that is grounded in constant reference to the past – but not to the past generally, but only to the moment of founding. Eliade has argued that constant reference to moments of founding, and repetition of them through religious rites, are central to archaic notions of order and even of reality itself (as opposed to formlessness and chaos). The establishment of colonies provides, for Eliade, one important example of the phenomenon:

Settlement in new, unknown, uncultivated country is equivalent to an act of Creation… every territory occupied for the purpose of being inhabited or utilized as *Lebensraum* is first of all transformed from chaos into cosmos; that is, through the effect of ritual it is given a ‘form’ which makes it become real.\(^\text{138}\)

On this view denying the order represented by founding is an embrace of chaos – the Corcyreans invite in chaos not just because embracing a principle of achieved friendship


\(^{138}\) Mircea Eliade *The Myth of the Eternal Return.* (Trans. Willard R. Trask. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), p10 – 11. Greek rituals of foundation involved the transfer of the sacred fire from the common hearth of the *metropolis* to that of the *apoikia* and the transfer may have been one of the duties of the *oikistēs* (founder) whose cult constituted the first home-grown religious feature of the colony. Irad Malkin: sacred fire, 266-268; cult of the *oikistēs* Ch 7 & 8.
will render alliances unstable and prone to revision, but more fundamentally because in their rejection of the story of their own creation and, by extension, of Creation generally, they threaten to turn “cosmos” back into chaos. The justice that is exemplified by filial obedience is grounded in the necessity not just of maternity, but of the cosmological reality that it represents. Both Athens and Corinth employ maternal myths to naturalize and justify imperial projects by grounding them in nature (the Athenians employing a pair of them, both autochthonous and metropolitan.)

Despite these myths, however, and the centrality they are given in stories of colonial founding, the colonial experience itself seems to have contributed to the unraveling of the order the myths sought to preserve. Even in its reverence for the founder, the lives of colonies tended to highlight the role of deliberate human action in political life by emphasizing its importance to the basic existence of poleis. Foundation decrees, for example, which, while often couched in the language of parental friendship (for example “as parents to children” from the decree of Locris), explicitly addressed and committed to writing aspects of political life that were unwritten in the old cities of Greece: who would be included in the colony, and in what capacity, what were their obligations to the city, who would lead the city, and so on. This act of writing things down accomplished at an intellectual level something that was enacted at a more basic level in the very experience of colonists: “fundamental bonds of loyalty to oikos and kome – to home, household and community – were broken” with the result that a process of differentiation inevitably unfolded. This process of un-imbedding people from traditional contexts of kinship and society may, indeed, have helped produce the concept

\[139\] Graham (1964), p40.
of citizenship itself.\textsuperscript{140} Similarly, while colonies “brought with them the institutions of the mother city … [t]he concrete problems colonization posed nevertheless made of the colonial cities a laboratory for remarkable political and social experiments” and, indeed, the results of these experiments were transferred back to the mainland, and may have inspired some of the reforms of Cleisthenes in Athens.\textsuperscript{141}

Whether or not it is through these experiences of the colonists that the Corcyreans come to formulate the critique of the Corinthian position that is presented at Athens to explain their treatment of the metropolis is not clear. It is apparent, however, that such experiences \textit{could} underwrite their objections. In particular, they are extremely conscious of the nature of the status of “citizen” and its distinction from other statuses, especially that of “slave”. In the next chapter we will explore this critique and see that it expresses a concern for the fact that cities and even empires are made up of “generations” of citizens who live in a condition of change and growth rather than a perpetual state of childhood in thrall to a powerful mother for whom they must feel gratitude for their generation. This concern for citizenship rather than kinship, however, opens up the old question of the conflict between the \textit{oikos} and the polis and the sometimes contradictory loyalties and obligations each produces. The Corinthians and the Corcyreans adopt extreme positions in this debate with no room for either the concerns of the \textit{oikos} or of the polis in their arguments. The need to appreciate and resolve these tensions, however, is a fundamental political task that we see explored throughout Thucydides’ work.

Before we can consider the Corcyrean case against Corinth it is helpful to look at one


more version of ascriptive *philia* that attempts to consider these issues internal to the life of cities in the case of Sparta.
2.b Worthy of the fathers: Spartan *philia* and citizenship

The paired speeches of the Spartan king Archidamos and the ephor Sthenelaïdas take place in the context of the Athenian siege of the Corinthian colony Potideia. The Corinthians address the Lacedaemonians before the assembled Peloponnesian allies urging them to take action against what they describe as Athenian aggression. The two Spartan speakers subsequently devote themselves to considering whether or not to go to war with Athens. In this way the speeches are an example of internal political decision making that was absent from the speeches of Corinth and Corcyra at Athens, which essentially concern foreign policy. Nonetheless, it is this very domestic aspect of the speeches that allows us to see at work the politics of *philia* that the Corinthians eulogized in their speech to the Athenians. For both Archidamos and Sthenelaïdas the political task is described and limited by the considerations of the particular form of *philia* that the Spartans embrace in their citizenship: the *philia* of fathers and sons to each other. For the most part they regard the practice of this *philia* to be the reproduction of the customs of the forefathers (and in this share the epimethean orientation of the Corinthians at Athens).

The Spartan deliberations, however, are set against the background of a changed Hellenic situation to the nature of which the Corinthians are trying desperately to alert them. The rise of Athenian power and the nature of that power are facts which the Spartans must acknowledge and which render their practice of political *philia* irrelevant and in danger because, as the Corinthians are aware, the just orientation of cooperative necessities is dependent above all upon a stable and peaceful context. The Corinthians press on them the decisions they say are necessary to a broader context characterized by *anankē-bia*, including the abandonment of specific customs, reproduction of which, we
will see, constitutes the obligation of *philia* with the fathers. The Spartans are unable, however, to accept that the specific practices of *philia* that may continue to build internal cohesion will no longer support a wider Hellenic order, nor Spartan prestige and influence within it.\(^\text{142}\) The ties between cooperative necessity and justice have been cut and the Spartans must fundamentally alter their ways of ordering themselves if they are to address the Athenian threat. In particular, they must being to look outwards and heed the views of their allies. Before we can address the Corinthian speech to the Lacedaemonians and the two Spartan speeches in detail we need to consider more closely what threat the Athenians are thought to pose.

\(\text{i) The Athenian outlook}\)

The Corinthians we see at Sparta speak quite differently from those we have seen at Athens. They have done as they threatened the Athenians and embraced as a necessity a fundamental change in their orientation to *philia*. The decisions they press upon the Spartans are not those of people concerned with the preservation of stability and peace through hegemonic solidarity: the moment for this has passed. Instead they insist that the aggressive pursuit of advantage will be the only defense against a powerful city which has chosen to reject the just order they offered them. Their utter change of orientation here highlights this threat from the first speech about the necessity of taking action against the Athenians should they ally with Corcyra, for it seems to cast their fundamental orientation to their own empire in a far less sanguine light. In their first

\(^{142}\) Debnar (2001) notes that both the Corinthians and the Athenians at this assembly play up to the Spartan self-image and assumption of their city’s right to hegemony: “The Corinthians … emphasize Sparta’s image as hegemon of the League, which in turn should lead all Greeks; the Athenians appeal to the Spartans as a partner in the shared hegemony of Greece”, p28.
speech they argued that colonies are required to sacrifice their own interests and submit even to injury for the sake of the justice of existential necessity. In suggesting that when hegemonic solidarity based in respect for order built on this just *anankē* breaks down leading cities must switch their orientation to each other to that of violent enmity, the Corinthians perhaps reveal that they would rather look to their own survival and avoid injury than submit to injury for the sake of upholding justice.

In this their argument that enmity towards Athens must become a matter of *anankē* points, perhaps, to the Athenian description of the foundation of their own empire in a series of compulsions that comes in their speech to the Spartans at this present assembly. The Athenians argue that they were compelled (*katananksthēmen*) to expand their empire “to its present state, especially out of fear (*deous*), then prestige (*timēs*) as well, and later out of self-interest (*ōphelias*)” (I.75.2). In accepting the empire that was offered they say they have simply submitted “to the great forces (*tōn megistōn*) fear, prestige and self-interest” (I.76.2). It is by use of the language of compulsion that the Athenians gloss over this elision of the concerns of basic survival, the desire to be honored and the desire to profit all of which they depict simply as submission to the compulsions of ordinary “human behavior” (*anthropeiou tropou*).

While, as we have seen, the Corinthian speech and their domination of their colonies can be seen through this lens as motivated also by prestige and self-interest as well as more basic strategic fears, their argument for the justice of existential necessity has tried to differentiate between orders which, while providing for *hegemonēs* all of these goods, also distinguishes itself precisely over this issue of the properly human. For them the *aphilos* lies outside of the normal bounds of the human world, either through
brutish isolation that disregards all standards of justice, or through an *autarkeia* that makes prestigious actions possible. Within these bounds, however, the compelling form of *anankē* is the cooperative necessity which, directed either towards ordered *philia* or disordering *bia* and slavery, may be either just or unjust. The human may contain both these poles and necessity may drive us towards one or the other. It is not, however, simply a natural necessity but a necessity produced by the context of human affairs. For the Corinthians the question is not so much the motives that compel us as the limits we accept in pursuing them. The justice they have argued for exists less in individual acts than in a form of order which requires a certain context of stability and peace. Viewed charitably, then, their shift in orientation may be that of a *hegemonēs* looking to defend its imperial order by adopting an aggressive stance towards the outside now that the context of stability is threatened.

Whether or not we accept this charitable interpretation of the Corinthian embrace of necessity of this strategic kind is, however, somewhat beside the point. The Athenians in their defense of the compulsions that drove them into ruling an empire have articulated a view of human nature (*anthropeia phusei*) that holds it to entail the rule of others (1.76.3). The Athenians believe they are due praise, in this context, independent as they are in their power from compulsion by other cities (the cooperative necessities), because they are “more just than their actual power dictated” (1.76.4). They grasp in this way at the godlike justice of *autarkeia*. It seems that by the “justice” that characterizes being only as just as one’s power dictates they propose an arrangement by which others are treated on a basis of either equality or violent domination according to their strength. They exhibit praiseworthy justice beyond necessity because they treat their allies on the
basis of the law and hence as equals despite their relative weakness. To be only as just as their actual power dictates would mean that the Athenians would be correct to follow a policy that says: “those who are in a position to use force (biazesthai) have no need for legal procedures (dikazesthai)” (1.77.2). There is, in this view, no room for a differentiation between equality of status and equality of strength, nor its attendant distinction between anankē as just existential necessity and as bia, violent and unjust force. The context in which human beings experience anankē is on this view simply a matter of greater and lesser strength or capacity for bia, in which those who are strong enough let themselves submit to the anankai of desire: strategic considerations (fear), desires for prestige and objects of self-interest.

For the Corinthians these desires of the hegemonēs are, in the end, best satisfied by adhering to the demands of cooperative necessity grounded in existential necessity and supporting a stable order of parallel empires. The pursuit of self-interest that extends beyond these bounds is a threat both to just order and, ultimately, to self-interest. The Corinthian fears about autarkeia rest on the observation that Athens no longer sees its self-interest as bound up in this just order. It is able to both ignore cooperative necessity and more successfully gratify the anankai of desire by the embrace of a power that is independent of just order. Resistance to the compulsion of desire is, for Athens, so much more than before a matter of self-limitation.

Athenian power is both great and different in kind and, importantly, free of many of the cooperative necessities that limit other powers – especially Sparta – when they try to assemble a great force. Through stinging comparisons of the cautious and slow ways of the Spartans they address with the boldness and speed of the Athenians the Corinthians
focus on issues of character and culture. Nonetheless, their speech assumes a background of real Athenian power that is different in kind to that of Sparta and, indeed, of any that Hellas has seen before. This Athenian kind of power is as essential to their criticism of Sparta and the Spartan response as any other issue, especially as it informs the Athenian self-understanding and their view of the roles of anankē and justice in the world.

Thucydides, in the pentekontetia, his account of the fifty year period between the Persian and Peloponnesian wars when Athenian power grew and developed an imperial form, locates the shift from Delian league to Athenian empire in the negligence of the allies. To avoid having to go abroad themselves and help the Athenians defend Hellas from further Persian attacks, as their contribution to the League, the allies,

arranged to have themselves assessed to contribute the appropriate amount in money instead of ships, and the Athenian fleet was then expanded out of the funds they contributed, while they themselves went into each revolt without preparation or experience in war (1.99.3).

Their ability to stand up to Athenian power and insist on being treated as equals in status within the alliance was destroyed by their own naval incapacity, coupled with the Athenian naval power they themselves had funded. Weak and dominated, they were no longer able to put any constraints on the Athenians by making their cooperation or contributions conditional. From a league of cooperation, limited by cooperative necessity, the Athenian empire grew into an order of bia and subjection, one might even say slavery.

In his first speech in Thucydides’ work Pericles urges the Athenians towards war with Sparta and in doing so shows keen awareness of the nature of the power of this naval empire funded by allied tribute. Unlike the Spartans and Peloponnesians they are
dependent on neither land for the wealth to fund campaigns, nor limited by concern for the safety or cultivation of that land (1.141.3-4). Similarly, they no longer rely on forging agreement and unity amongst allies to provide them with their force (1.141.6-7) and instead enjoy full control over their own navy whose most important and skilled members are Athenian citizens (1.143.1). The Spartans as leaders of the Peloponnesians suffer from great military, economic and political limitations that once were standard fare for Greek warfare. In their naval empire, having transcended these characteristic limits of land warfare and land power, the Athenians are an entirely new kind of enemy, one who, in her own view, enjoys such independence of concern for the opinions and help of others that they stand aloof from cooperative necessity entirely and approach autarkeia. 143

ii) The Corinthian Speech at Sparta

The Athenian way of moving – their character as a city, their typical behaviors and, above all, their fundamental orientation to movement itself – is the model the Corinthians put before Sparta in their second speech of the work. The justice or injustice of the Athenians is in this speech, it seems, beside the point. This is especially apparent in the complete lack of concern the Corinthians show for the justice of the ancient Spartan institutions and the philia for their fathers that underwrites their care for them. What the Spartans must recognize is that their inheritance is fundamentally under threat and cannot be protected except by adopting the style of the Athenians themselves. The only way to successfully respond to the bia and pleonexia of the Athenians is with the same qualities: the key Spartan quality of sōphrosynē in its definitional opposition to this idea of violent

143 Debnar (2001) notes that the Athenians in their speech at the assembly of allies in Sparta mention the word “ship” twelve times, p50 – certainly they are keen to remind the Spartans of the changes in Hellas.
overreach is the Corinthians’ ultimate target in their demands for fundamental Spartan reform.

The speech finishes with a statement that encapsulates many of the problems debated by the speakers at this assembly of Peloponnesian allies. Make “the right decision (bouleuesthe eu),” instruct the Corinthians, “and strive to lead the Peloponnesos forward in its full greatness handed down to you by your fathers (hoi pateres)” (1.71.7). By finishing in this way with a reference to Spartan fathers, the Corinthians attach their appeal to the emotional core of Spartan identity, and the only thing on which the two Spartan speakers who follow can agree: Spartan pride in their consistency, heritage and resistance to change. This proud conservatism is, in this statement, however, an apparently paradoxical principle of action. The Spartans are asked to lead the Peloponnesos forward, and to make the right decision, yet according to the Corinthians these very concepts – a forward moving conception of culture and politics, and the complex decision making this requires – are in serious ways at odds with the Spartan stance of concrete loyalty to the fathers and their political practice of philia.

The major substantive point the Corinthians want to get across to the Spartans is that a fundamental contradiction within this practice of philia has emerged because of the growth of Athenian naval power which must necessarily set the specific traditions of Spartan life against their concrete power. While the Corinthians ask the Spartans here to act to preserve the regional prestige and leadership handed down by their fathers (such as they exhibited during the Persian War), they tell them very directly that to do so they must act in un-Spartan ways. The choice they offer is stark: follow the specific customs

144 Debnar (2001) argues that by reminding the Spartans of their historical claims to be the “liberators of Hellas” they should strive to resume their “rightful place at the head of a panhellenic alliance” which was, she notes, a project dear to one group of hawkish Spartans at least, p41.
that have been your inheritance and preserve the institutions and character they create, or keep the powerful position in Hellas which that cultural inheritance has won and passed on, for to do both will be impossible. For while Spartan customs may once have made them powerful, now their, “ways are obsolete (archaiotropa) against” those of the Athenians (1.71.2). The relations between cities whose power rests on such radically different foundations are engaged in a competition of customs so that, “just as in technology (technēs), the most recent ideas must (anankē) always prevail” (1.71.3).145

At one level this speech from the Corinthians, with its disparagement of stability, its encomium of Athenian virtues, and its threats to abandon an alliance (1.71.5-7) is quite at odds with their speech at Athens. Rather than illustrating the dishonesty of that first speech, though, it has been suggested that this new vigor is the result of their shock at the aggression of the Athenians in rejecting Corinthian calls for peace. What remains from that former speech, though, is a dominant concern for the preservation of imperial holdings. In that speech they attached such preservation to the upholding of a just order of philia. They displayed this concern in the speech at Athens when they assumed that the Athenians too would make such preservation their primary end, if not for its justice then for the sake of their own prestige and power. They had told the Athenians then to avoid grasping an advantage over their supposed peers because they stood to lose much; here at Sparta they recognize that such grasping does not derive from the desire for the secure possession of more than they had before, but that the Athenians care less for possession than for acquisition. The Athenians “least enjoy what they have,” the Corinthians say, “on account of always acquiring (aiei kiasthai)” (1.70.8). Peaceful

145 In citing technology here they conjure up, of course, the relation between the technological foundation of naval power and thalassocracy that Thucydides outlined in the Archaeology.
stability goes against their urge to be always active so that “if someone were to sum them up by saying that they were born to have no peace (hēsuchian) themselves and to allow it to no one else he would be right” (1.70.9). 146

Where in their original speech the Corinthians argued for the preservation of parallel hegemonies in peace through respect for the just customs they embodied, they now think that one must choose between the preservation of customs and the preservation of hegemony. This is because Athens, apparently not concerned with the long-term preservation of even their own order, is certainly no respecter of the peaceful order of others. The Corinthian speech at Athens described the way in which the cooperative necessities embodied in customs of kinship and alliance could be made to support both justice and hegemony, but the Athenian character visible in their aggressive imperialism, has created a new context in which new practices are needed if the ends of the old and prestigious cities are to be pursued. In this speech to the Spartans they give a performative indication of their adoption of a policy of active aggression towards Athens that they argued in their first speech would become a necessity to them. The “most recent ideas” (epigignomena) that “must always prevail” (1.71.4) are Athenian ones and they force change and movement upon those around them because the new ways reject stable order almost as a matter of civic temperament. Since the Athenians “believe that by being away they are gaining”, the Spartan caution which teaches that “by making any move you will damage even your present assets” (1.70.4-5) is not an adequate means to the end of preservation. In order even to preserve what one has in the face of this energy, one must

146 Note the use of hēsuchian here. We will see presently that, in invoking the practice of leisure (for example in deliberation) prized by the Spartans and associated closely with sōphrosynē the Corinthians are here attacking part of a cluster of particularly Spartan virtues to do with slowness, caution, stability and oligarchy.
to some extent emulate the Athenian way, for since imperial holdings are finite, every Athenian gain may be a loss to somebody else.

Although they acknowledge the Spartan desire to “preserve the status quo” (1.70.2), to be at home (1.70.4), and hence for peace (héuchazete) (1.69.5), the Corinthians insist that neither peace nor war can preserve everything. While “for a city at peace (héuchazousē men poleï), fixed customs are best” (1.71.3), Athens “has long since prepared itself to face war at any time” (1.68.3-4), and this preparation, coupled with aggressive acquisitiveness, energy and boldness make a confrontation inescapable. As peace must end, so must the devotion to fixed Spartan customs. At this point, having cited the word three times in quotations from the speech we should examine the word that has been translated as the “peace” the Spartans are said to desire above all else. It is not “eireinē”, peace as opposed to war that the Corinthians invoke, but instead forms of hēsychia, which means, rather, stillness, rest or quiet. It is not a condition of peace as the absence of war that the Spartans desire but rather rest, quietness and the lack of movement. As we have seen, in the opening lines of his work Thucydides describes the war as noteworthy for being “the greatest movement (kinēsis) to affect the Hellenes” (1.2). As one of a set of words (like apragmasunē) that Thucydides reserve for positive use by or about Spartans, hēsuchia stands in opposition to the kinēsis that characterizes the Athenians. When Spartan hēsuchia is set along side the kinēsis of the Athenians it underlines the Corinthian point that it is not fundamentally Spartan or Athenian power or skill that is at issue so much as their disposition towards war. Archidamos, as we shall see, defends the notion that the Spartans are warlike (polemikoi) and while they are indeed courageous and skilled in battle, the Corinthian criticism is of the way these

qualities and this power is produced and the fundamental aspects of Spartan character to which they are attached. *Hēsychia* is part of this problem, along with its even more important partner *sōphrosynē*, which is the subject of a direct attack by the Corinthians. The Athenians are powerful in a different way and because of fundamentally different character traits than the Spartans. The new kind of power is deeply attached to the Athenian way of moving and the Spartan response to it will require that they relinquish their own traditional style of quiet, slow movement.

For this reason the Corinthians do not in their speech discuss the Spartan customs themselves so much as the character and habits which they produce and, by contrasting them with the Athenian ways, argue for their obsolescence and danger. They begin with trust – the Spartan distrust of outsiders which is due to their “trust in [their] own constitution and society” (1.68.1). Despite this mistrust of outsiders, the Spartan reputation for reliability (1.69.5) and as “the liberator of Hellas” (*eleutherōn ten Hellenada*) (1.69.2) leads other cities to a disastrous trust in their aid (1.69.5). Spartan mistrust extends most to those non-Spartans – even though friends and kinsmen (1.71.1) – who ask for their help, because they fear the influence of private motivations in the requests (1.68.2). Although they do not make the point explicitly, the Corinthian speech suggests that Spartan mistrust would be better directed towards the Athenians, who are slowly encroaching, relying on Spartan “imperceptiveness” (1.69.3). Indeed, it is Spartan mistrust of their friends that makes them ignorant (*amathia*) of things outside their own polis (1.68.1) and thus actually unaware of the nature of the Athenians and the threat their city poses (1.70.1).

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148 Debnar (2001), p43, argues cogently that *pistēs* – trust – is a “Spartan catchword” and it is repeatedly used by and about them in the History. She links it to the Spartan sense of “physical, political and social confidence” and the cohesiveness necessary for hoplite fighting.
This isolation of the Spartans differs from that of Corcyra, and their perception of their own power from that of the Athenians. The Corcyreans parlayed their isolation and contained self-sufficiency into exploitative relations with all those who needed help. The Athenians, on the other hand, overflowing with a sense of their own power assert an autarkeia that puts them beyond the reach of those cooperative necessities of dependence or threat that, in their view, govern justice. The Spartans do not exploit those who need their help, but, out of fear fail to be reliable and in underestimating their power are prone to deny the need to assert themselves against Athens. That mistrust, isolation and cautious passivity are enmeshed in the Spartan character is suggested neatly in the Corinthian claim that “your way is to act short of your power and to mistrust your judgment (gnoomēs) even over certainties and to believe that you will never find an escape from danger” (1.70.3). While the Spartans trust in their constitution and society, they are unable to trust in their ability to judge and decide on matters pertaining to their interaction with the outside world. Indeed, if the Corinthians are right, they do misjudge the situation by underestimating their own strength relative to that of others; Spartan mistrust in this regard, though, is a typically cautious overestimation of the risks they face from outside.

This habitual misjudgment and mistrust of judgment itself points to the central problem outlined in the final sentence of the Corinthian speech: the need to make decisions concerning the future in order to preserve what they have. Indeed, the lengthy comparison between the Athenian and Spartan characters of 1.70 is principally devoted to highlighting the advantages the Athenians derive from their bold and rapid decision-making: the Athenians “alone possess and hope as a single undertaking, on account of
their speed in acting on their resolutions (gnōsin)” (1.70.7). The success of Athenian aggression suggests to the Corinthians that this relation between judgment, decision and action must now be considered a preferable one. Unlike the Spartans, the Athenians overestimate their power and underestimate the risks they face since they are “bold beyond their strength and risk takers beyond their judgment (gnōmēn)” (1.70.3). (This makes sense, of course, when we remember that the Athenians care more for acquiring than for secure possession.)

All of this is an attack on sōphrosynē which the Corinthians begin their speech by describing as a Spartan strength. An inherently conservative virtue, the centrality of sōphrosynē makes sense for people who put so much trust in their own constitution and society, for in its aspect as prudence it suggests a preservative caution. In confrontation with the fast-moving and risk-taking Athenians, however, it has little place because such a confrontation requires above all keen foresight and aggressive pre-emption. Indeed, the Corinthians argue, that sōphrosynē even stands in the way of these new virtues. Lack of foresight and insight into Athenian character in general has prevented Sparta from checking the growth of Athens; instead they have allowed Athens to win a Corecyrean navy that could have belonged to the Peloponnesos (1.68.4), and have delayed action until Athenian power has doubled (1.69.4). The cluster of virtues associated with sōphrosynē – apragmosynē and hēsuchia – all contributed to the Spartan delay in acting that has seen Athenian strength grow, potential allies dominated, destroyed or alienated, and Sparta herself now threatened.149 In disparaging these values the Corinthians are counseling the abandonment of, not only Spartan, but also Dorian and oligarchic values.

149 “The association of sophrosyne with apragmosynē and hēsuchia firmly establishes it as part of the conservative Dorian tradition.”, North, p103 In speaking of Spartan delay, the Corinthians come close at
While sōphrosynē literally meant sound-mindedness, it carried a political meaning that included “‘moderation or stability in government’”. 150 The two were connected in conservative tradition by the conviction that it “is natural to consider ‘sound-minded’ those who acquiesce in a traditional arrangement,” and that to resist the traditional order is an indication of hybris. 151 That sōphrosynē is not a word ever in the mouths of Thucydides’ Athenian democrats, then, is unsurprising, since the word’s history made it a virtue associated with whatever is “‘sound, conservative, aristocratic, oligarchic’”, and also, with what is Dorian. 152 Indeed, it is the Dorian additions to the language of sōphrosynē that the Corinthians most reject in their speech, because they are at odds with the Athenian way they here recommend: where the term originally implied soundness of judgment in one’s own interest, the Dori ans added specific behavioral prescriptions that included “resistance to unjust ambition” and “refusal to seek wealth or power beyond one’s due”. 153 This is exactly the outlook which they feared in the Athenians in their first speech when they characterized it as seeking a dangerous advantage and suggested a similarity with Corcyrean hybris and pleonexia.

When they claim that Spartan ways, their own brand of sōphrosynē, are inadequate to the challenge presented by Athens and its new ways, the Corinthians are counseling an abandonment of fundamental Dorian ethical judgments that are embodied in tradition. Resistance to unjust ambition is no longer the stance of a sound mind, and seeking wealth and power beyond one’s due may be the only way to preserve what one

1.69.5 to reminding the Spartans that they were “too late to fight at Marathon and almost too late for the battle at Plataea”, Debnar (2001), p42.
150 North (1966) contends that this is its usual meaning in Thucydides, p115.
151 North, p17, who continues that “this is the doorway through which sōphrosynē first enters the Greek political vocabulary.”
153 Ibid., p18
already has. *Pleonexia* and *hybris* may be the essence of the “new ways” which must prevail.

iii) **Archidamos and the warlike wisdom of moderation**

In his speech Archidamos rejects this Corinthian critique and denies their fundamental contention about the contradiction between Spartan customs and power created by Athenian power. He insists on maintaining the link between Spartan ways and Spartan possessions by defending the adequacy of *sōphrosynē* to the tasks of sound policy.\(^{154}\)

The aspects of justice that are especially associated with Dorian *sōphrosynē* – the avoidance of *pleonexia* and *hybris* – are not only essential to the internal cohesion of Sparta and thus to their strength as a unified polis, but are essential to their successful way of moving as a city. Archidamos, by insisting on the unity of internal cohesion and external power, and by failing to address the specific Corinthian concerns about the changes needed to address Athenian strength, actually raises the stakes, as it were. By highlighting how deeply imbedded Spartan customs are, not only in their internal unity, but in the most fundamental political identity, he reveals just how difficult change is for the Spartans.

The old king joins the Corinthians in opposing *sōphrosynē* to risk-taking, but denies the wisdom of embracing an Athenian style of boldness. In making a prudential argument against precipitate involvement he suggests that an aspect of Spartan *sōphrosynē* is a kind of forethought and in this, surprisingly, he has something in

\(^{154}\) On the rationality of Archidamos’ speech see Debnar (2001), p68 & 73, where she suggests that for the king *sōphrosynē* is “the rational calculation of the nature of the proposed war and Sparta’s resources”, but I will argue, this prudential rationality is also tempered by the relation of *sōphrosynē* to shame (*aidōs*).
common with Pericles. On the other hand, as he delves further into the connection between Spartan character and custom, and between these and his concerns about the war, he reveals an approach to the situation and to decision-making that is very unlike Athenian ways. Where Athenian foresight is in service of their acquisitiveness, that of Spartan sōphrosynē bumps up against the limits of their sense of aidōs (respect/shame). It is in this concept of aidōs that the political practice of philia amongst the Spartans becomes apparent because it is at this point that we see the nature of their connection to the fathers. In this practice of philia and, in the way it shapes the responses to the prospect of this war of Archidamos and Sthenelaïdas, we see another version of the human order that is based in philia and oriented towards justice. Unlike Corinth’s however, the Spartan version is an exclusively internal matter. The key to Spartan political philia is their relation to the fathers, as objects of reverence and of reference, whose customs and character are the ideal towards which all Spartans aspire.\(^{155}\) Tracing this concern for the fathers also reveals the nature of the Spartan stance towards equality and, hence, towards justice as well. Equality of status for the Spartans in many ways means the creation of literal sameness and the denial of difference and diversity. Viewed in light of the conception of justice between cities the Corinthians presented in their first speech, that of Archidamos appears to overstate the Spartan capacity to avoid pleonexia and hybris in both their internal and external dealings. In this we will return again to the Corinthian view that justice is dependent on a surrounding order.

\[^{155}\text{Debnar (2001), p60, notes that the Spartan deference for age was viewed as exceptional, and exemplified in the role they accorded to the council of elders, the Gerousia. This reverence for the elders is, in my view, part and parcel of an ethic of replication of the ways of the fathers that extends also to dead generations.}\]
In reply to the Corinthian accusations which held that Spartan moderation led them to habitual misjudgments about their own power and that of others, Archidamos spends most of his speech carefully adumbrating the grounds of his judgment that to go to war with Athens immediately would be a great folly. In his view it is precisely Spartan sōphrosynē that makes them good judges of such situations. This analysis of the military situation and the difficulties it presents to the Peloponnesians (1.80-83) is followed by Archidamos’ defense of Spartan values in 1.84 which explicitly links sōphrosynē and courage, but courage filtered always through sound judgment. Helen North has argued that this defense of Spartan sōphrosynē by Archidamos represents a Thucydidean innovation in the conception of political sōphrosynē: “Archidamus links sōphrosynē with the refusal to give way to delusive hopes about fortune and with Sparta’s consequent immunity to overconfidence and despair”.156

Archidamos builds towards his theme of sōphrosynē by beginning with its prudential aspects, which include the importance of careful judgement. The customary inheritance involves careful and calm analysis and planning, resting on a foundation of courageous action as well as rigid discipline and education. Courageous action follows slow and deliberate preparation not accidentally but through the essential link of sōphrosynē: the Spartans are able to refrain from risky action, even under the goads of their allies’ complaints, because their wise moderation and steadiness are precisely what make them warlike.

Archidamos begins his speech with an appeal to the experienced members of his audience who, like the king himself, should be immune to feeling enthusiastic (epithumēsai) about the war (1.80.1). Instead, anyone “making a prudent calculation”

(sōphronōs eklogizoito) will recognize that “it will not be on any limited scale” (1.80.2). He is asserting here his own ability to make such prudent calculations and his subsequent comments describe them in detail: he perceives, in particular, the open-ended nature of the proposed war and predicts the difficulty Sparta, as a land power, will have in pinning down and defeating the sea-going Athenians. Archidamos demonstrates that the war will be a much larger one than familiar to the Spartans by enumerating the extent of Athenian power in terms of space (they “occupy a distant land”), experience at sea, equipment (“wealth…ships, horses, armaments, and a populace that no other single place in Hellas can match in size”) and tributary allies (1.80.3). To this he compares the extreme limitations of Spartan preparations in all of these areas, asking “where should we put our trust (pisteusautas) when we rush in unprepared?” (1.80.4). Here Archidamos answers the Corinthian attribution to the Spartans of trust in their own customs but lack of trust in their own strength and judgment: the Spartans would be correct not to trust in their power to easily overcome the Athenians. Better to trust in their customs which, in Archidamos’ account of them, dictate a refusal to confront the Athenians until they are properly prepared.\footnote{In this the king shows a more realistic grasp of the technological and military challenge represented by Athenian naval power than do the Corinthians who urge on them a land invasion of Attica. Debnar (2001), says that in this he responds to a Corinthian attempt to appeal to Spartan traditionalists who hope that old ways (including hoplite warfare) will prevail, (pp45-46), a view that Archidamos upends, p62.}

He cautions the Spartans against being “carried away by the hope” (tēi elpidi) that the Athenian weak spot will prove to be the one the Spartans are most capable of attacking: their land. Ravaging the land of the Athenians of all people is unlikely to be effective since the sea-going Athenians “in their pride will neither enslave themselves to their land (tēi gē douleusai), or like novices, be panic-stricken by war” (1.81.7). In this he
shows in negative, a recognition of the Periclean understanding that sea-power and supraterritoriality are sources of Athenian freedom. He seeks to place trust instead in a combination of military preparation through the accumulation of resources and allies (1.82.1), and diplomacy with Athens (1.82.2) so that they can approach the Athenians with “both preparation and words to match it perfectly” (1.82.3).

Since, in the view of the king, the strategic situation is such that Sparta is simply unprepared to confront Athens, longer term plans must be made, as well as specific preparations. It is vital, then, to stand firm against all the forces tending to sweep the Spartans precipitously into war, so that Archidamos stresses in several places that they should not let themselves be carried away (epairometha): not by hopes (1.81.6), nor by the “words of our allies” (1.83.3); nor should they be “rushed into” (tois tôn summachōn egklēmasin) plundering Athenian land by the allies while still unprepared. Swift action against Athens is simply not possible in the way that it would be against another land-power like a Peloponnesian city (1.80.3). While his list of Athenian and Spartan strengths closely matches that of Pericles, Archidamos does little more here than propose a delay and a more strenuous effort in traditional diplomacy in preparation for an eventual conflict with Athens. He does not appear to recognize, after all, that their conventional modes of preparation may be inadequate.158 He does not respond fully, then, to the Corinthians by imagining a way that Spartan customs and power can be reconciled with the nature of the Athenian threat.

158 Debnar (2001), p65, argues that this simply represents a rejection of the Corinthian position that “the Spartans must put an end to the Athenian empire because its very existence is harmful to the Greeks,” perhaps in the belief that the Athenians will give up. In this he too, I would note, would be guilty of being carried away by hopes.
Having outlined the many military reasons that argue against immediate action on the problem of Athens, and failed to articulate any Spartan response to the new kind of power she represents, Archidamos turns to the issue of Spartan character. It is here that he begins to delve into Spartan self-understanding and to disclose the practice of *philia* towards the fathers that upholds their political order. It is here that we begin to see both why even this most thoughtful and articulate Spartan is unable to dislodge himself from Spartan ways enough to properly address the question of Athens: to do so would be to reject not only specific customs but also the grounding of an entire political order.

Once he has considered the immediate military situation Archidamos addresses the presumed Corinthian contention that such arguments are mere excuses for a habitual Spartan procrastination. It is not cowardice (*anandria*) to recognize these realities, and because the Spartans, as leaders, will bear the moral responsibility for starting the war (1.81.6, 1.83.3) and because it is their reputation that will suffer (1.81.6), they are justified in taking their time in making their decision and preparations. This suggests that in the terms the Athenians have just given, of the three *anankai* which compel human beings, the Spartans are most driven by prestige. It is, however, a prestige of a different kind from that pursued by the Athenians because it is linked to lawfulness rather than the simple status of *hegemonēs*. It is in terms of this concern for the consequences of action in terms of prestige and blame, even more than victory, that the Spartans must direct their thought, “since we will have the major responsibility for the consequences for better or worse, let us also be the ones to give them some forethought (*proidōmen*) at our leisure (*kath’ hēsuchian*)” (1.83.3).
These kinds of public responsibilities are similar to those discussed in the Corinthian speech where they showed up as the concerns one might have when seeking or considering an alliance and which were examples of the necessities thrown up by the need to cooperate with others. The Spartans however, as the Corinthians have insisted in their second speech, are quite inadequate allies and repeatedly fail to assist their kinsmen, so it is unlikely that they feel greatly the force of this form of cooperative necessity between cities. Their traditional strength has, indeed, made them such a powerful city that they are always desirable as allies (if they can be prevailed upon to act) even despite their unreliability and their calls for assistance, in turn, should not go unanswered. The concern Archidampos shows here, then, is not so much for cooperative necessities as for the public prestige of leadership executed lawfully. Nonetheless, there is something odd about the stated Spartan concern for prestige in the context of their execution of their role of ἡγεμόνης suggestive, perhaps, of a tension in their way of measuring praise and blame. The Spartan concern for prestige is fundamentally no more dependant on the opinions of the Greeks in general than is their attitude to assisting allies and kinsmen. The oft-stated Spartan concern for the reputation of the city can only be squared with their treatment of outsiders if we consider a less “heteronomous” understanding of prestige, to use an anachronism.

It is in light of this concern for Spartan responsibility that Archidampos begins his defense of Spartan slowness and his argument that it is the core of Spartan culture and inseparable from a Spartan strength that relies on careful preparation. Slowness and strength are woven together as the foundation of Spartan prestige. He urges his audience to “feel no shame over the slowness (bradu) and hesitation (mellon) for which they blame
us; by hurrying you will delay the end because of starting unprepared” (1.84.1). Leisurely forethought is the foundation of preparation and, ultimately, the quickest success that is possible. If anyone has doubt of the truth of this formulation, they need only look at Sparta’s past to see that the Spartan way has always been successful since: “we live in a city that has always been free (eleutheran) and of high reputation (eudoxotatēn)” (1.84.1). In this Archidamos points to the subject of Spartan pride at having the longest lasting constitution among the Greeks – and, thus, to the inseparability of the laws and customs that make up that constitution from the territorial possession and military prestige of the city. This pride in their longevity and power must be kept in mind then, and used to resist the immediate shame invoked by the Corinthians over slowness to enter this war: Spartan prestige has never depended on their responsiveness to such taunts but rather their resistance.

It is, indeed, such resistance that is central to the Spartan ways that have served them well all this time. Archidamos suggests that he has identified the central Spartan trait when he associates this steadfastness with sōphrosynē. “It is very possible that true sōphrosynē is this quality of ours” which:

is the reason that we alone are not filled with insolence by our successes and give way less than others in misfortunes and are not swept away into perils against our better judgment because we are gratified by those who cheer us or nor again, if someone badgers us with contumely, are we the more likely to be over persuaded in our chagrin (1.84.2).

Here Archidamos backs up his warnings against being swept away by hope or the words of allies by arguing that to refuse to be so swept is of the Spartan essence. Spartan sōphrosynē has to do, fundamentally, with refusal to be changed by circumstance in anything essential. Certainly this has to do with a refusal to be rushed into precipitate
action, but it is something more fundamental as well: it is a resoluteness of character in confronting the world which means that a knowledge of, and satisfaction with, one’s place. This is the lack of *hybris* that we saw was central to the Dorian conception of *sōphrosynē* and which checks the pursuit of extreme ambitions that might make one responsive to persuasion towards imprudent action. Knowledge of one’s place, in this case, however has less to do fundamentally with Spartan leadership over the Peloponnesians, nor less yet with the equality with other hegemonic cities such as Corinth might assert. Rather it is a matter of civic identity. For the Spartiates knowing one’s place and avoiding *hybris* means knowledge of, and satisfaction with, one’s place as a *homoios* – a Spartan peer, an equal in status as citizen – which means, also, resoluteness in Spartan customs and the kind of character that results from their traditional, compulsory education. It is in his discussion of this education that Archidamos begins to discuss the *aidōs* which is central to the practice of *philia* towards the Spartan fathers and explains why the Spartans connect prestige more with the opinion of the *homoioi* than that of the world at large.

For Archidamos Spartan customs, practices and education are at the root of the Spartan character and its true *sōphrosynē*: “Through our orderliness (*to eukosmon*) we are rendered both warlike (*polemikoi*) and wise (*eubouloi*)” (1.84.3).\(^\text{159}\) Warlike because “moderation (*sōphrosynēs*) is the greatest part of the sense of shame (*aidōs*), and a sense of shame is the greatest part of courage.”\(^\text{160}\) This insertion of shame (*aidōs*) between

\(^{159}\) Charles Forster Smith in a note to the Loeb edition suggests that Archidamos employs “*eukosmon*” for “orderly temper” instead of “*bradu*” – slowness, or prudent deliberation – in order to avoid the word employed by critics of Spartan sluggishness. The aim is to “suggest the contrast with impulsiveness and undue haste.” *Thucydides* Vol. I. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P., 1935), p142.

moderation and courage is important because it tempers the prudential aspect of söphrosynē and suggests its limits: the Spartans don’t follow the dictates of prudential calculation beyond the limits of honor, rather such calculations are informed always by concern for it. Where, though, do these limits of honor lie, for the Spartans? In the opinions of the Greeks, or elsewhere? We need to explore aidōs to begin to answer.

Meaning both shame and a sense of respect, aidōs is intimately connected with the idea of honor and with the public nature of the warrior life. As well as suffering controversy concerning word order, English translations of this line do not indicate a settled interpretation, with scholars choosing either shame (Lattimore), a sense of respect (Hornblower), or attempting to encompass both with the use of a term like “honor” (Cameron). Before considering, then, whether Archidamos wants to isolate either shame or respect as a central device and product of Spartan education and customs, it is worth spending a moment adumbrating the connection between the two senses in Greek thinking.

In the sense of “shame” aidōs seems to regard only the self and evaluations of it (determined either by internal or public standards), while a sense of respect seems to concern our attitude to others. Understanding their connection requires us to understand something of the way in which our actions and our evaluations of self and

example, Stephen Lattimore in his translation of The Peloponnesian War (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998) and H.D. Cameron, Thucydides Book I. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), present the line as follows: “a sense of respect is the greater part of moderation, and courage is the greatest part of respect” (Lattimore); “honor is the greatest part of prudence and courage is the greatest part of honor.” (Cameron). Since, however, the subject of this chapter of the speech is the centrality of söphrosynē to other Spartan virtues, to seek to explain it in terms of courage seems a contradictory exercise.

161 The question implicit in this parenthesis of whether or not shame is a matter of internal or external sanctions is the subject of long debate, going back to the work of Margaret Mead and her distinction between shame and guilt cultures, now widely rejected. Cf Williams (1993), Saxonhouse (2005).
others may be governed by considerations of honor or status. Douglas Cairns nicely maps out this connection in a passage that is worth citing at length:

> to be concerned with one’s own honour is to envisage oneself as one among others, also bearers of honour; thus to limit one’s own claim to honour is to accept one’s status vis-à-vis others, to inhibit self-assertion is to recognize how such conduct would impinge upon the honour of others, and to experience inhibition before an audience whose disapproval might lead to impairment of one’s honour is clearly akin to the inhibitory self-consciousness one might feel in a situation in which one was forced to consider one’s own status in relation to that of another person.\(^{162}\)

While the possibility of shame involves an evaluation of whether one has lived up to some important ideal (or not fallen below a minimal standard), the connection of shame to respect for others highlights the ways in which such evaluations are public, and that honour is a prize bestowed by the opinion of others that ideals have been met. Similarly, it suggests that we are more concerned with the opinions that people have of us if they are people we respect, or who have special status.\(^{163}\) In feeling shame, then, we may internalize the opinions and imagined evaluations, and adopt the stance of those we respect.\(^{164}\) As well as pointing to the way in which our shame is not purely a matter of personal standards but seems to be inherently public, \(\text{aidōs}\) as a “sense of respect” suggests also that shame means recognizing that honor is a necessarily scarce commodity and that acknowledging the share of others in it is not only part of respecting them, but a way of preventing ourselves from reaching out for more than we can expect to be accorded. It also helps to constitute standards we are ashamed to fall below. Cairns gives us a helpful phrase when he describes this acknowledgement as “inhibitory self-consciousness”. \(\text{Aidōs}\), then, suggests an acute awareness of one’s own status and that of others, and of the ideals attending each.


\(^{163}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p3.

\(^{164}\) Williams (1993), p82.
In saying that sōphrosynē is the greatest part of aidōs, then, Archidamos is indicating that, as well as the prudential calculations he has been making about the Athenian threat, Spartans are limited in their actions, finally, by an inhibitory self-consciousness concerning honor. His calculations concerning the relative threat to Spartan prestige of immediate accusations of cowardice by allies, and the damage to reputation promised by responsibility for an illegal war, demonstrate one way in which the prudential aspects of sōphrosynē and aidōs are connected in order to bring out the aspect of sōphrosynē that resists hybris. Archidamos wants to represent this kind of calculation as the result of inhibitory self-consciousness rather than sluggishness or fear. To attack Athens with haste and unprepared, promises no glory and threatens shame instead. Prudent calculations, then, help to assess and guard one’s own honor and avoid shame. Archidamos emphasizes the centrality of sōphrosynē to aidōs in this way out of fear that the Spartans, goaded by the Corinthians, will connect their honor simply to immediate action. Courage is not demonstrated by a readiness to fight fruitlessly for any and all causes, nor do prudential considerations necessarily indicate cowardice. Rather, prudence, if informed by a concern for one’s honor and a correct understanding of its nature and requirements, can be a source of courage because it gives a sense of confidence in one’s likelihood of success and that the action itself is not dishonorable.

This arrangement of sōphrosynē, aidōs, and courage is, in Archidamos’ view, the product of Spartan education. In its famous harshness and strictness the Spartan education sought to inure young citizens to the physical and mental hardships of campaigning, but also to prepare them to deal with the specifically Spartan problem of the Helots. Essential to the Spartan conception of “manly virtue” (andragathia) with
which their education program (*agogē*) sought to imbue the young, were the specific qualities of endurance (*karteria*) and self-control (*enkrateia*).\(^{165}\) Although this self-control is related to endurance of the difficult living conditions, physical training and harsh punishments that characterized Spartan education, it is easy enough to see their relevance to Archidamos’ argument in this speech. The Spartans, able to endure such physical hardships, should be able to endure the merely verbal taunts of their allies and stand firm in their evaluations concerning threats and actions rather than be “swept away” by enthusiasm for war. If shame were detached from *sōphrosynē*, instead of informed by it, the Spartans would indeed be in danger of being swept away by such taunts.

The second sense of *aidōs*, the sense of respect, also helps to inform this call for resistance to Corinthian criticism by reminding the Spartans that while shame necessarily has a public aspect, the opinion of some audiences should matter more than that of others. Indeed the Spartan indifference, of which the Corinthians complained, to the opinions of non-Spartans, even allies and fellow Dorians, prompts one to ask again towards what audience Archidamos wants the Spartans to direct their sense of respect in evaluating their own honor or shame. If it is not to their nearest kinsmen and allies that they look for the most significant evaluations of their merit, are we to conclude that the Spartans are concerned only with their own opinions of themselves, and that the “sense of respect” is similarly self-directed because they do not consider themselves to have any worthy peers? Certainly Spartan arrogance and even injustice in their dealings with non-Spartans – with the Helots and Perioikoi in Lacedaemonia, certainly, but also with other free Hellenes – was notorious and also forms part of the Athenian warning to the Spartans in their speech to this assembly. The Athenians remind them of their historic difficulty in

leading other Greeks precisely because of an inability to reconcile their own standards with those of others (1.77.6). In Archidamos’ account, however, the Spartan sense of respect is not directed towards themselves alone (which would, surely be the kind of excessive self-regard that leads to hybris), but towards the laws and, as we shall see in a moment, towards the Spartan “fathers” of the past. Respect for the laws informs a proper Spartan sense of shame by internalizing the ideals encoded in the behaviors the laws require or forbid. Since the laws are part of the Spartan inheritance, respecting them is a practical way of keeping alive the audience of Spartan fathers who handed them on.

It is to the relationship between law and education that Archidamos turns in the next breath when he shifts focus away from what makes the Spartans warlike to what makes them wise (euboulia). The ignorance (amathia) for which the Corinthians chastised the Spartans Archidamos here embraces as a lack of the kind of sophisticated learning that allows one to “despise the laws (nomōn)” (1.84.3). Part of the Corinthian accusation of Spartan ignorance involved their failure to listen to their allies. In arguing that Spartan respect is directed to the laws and the fathers they represent, then, Archidamos suggests that is not a negligent kind of ignorance, but rather a wisdom that causes them to block their ears to the complaints of allies, whose opinions (framed in manipulative language as it is) they cannot respect more than they respect the laws. Spartan education is of a different kind which, in its “severe discipline” (zun kalepotēti), produces “more self-control (sōphronesteron) than to pay no heed to” the laws. The

166 See, for example, Thucydides’ account of the Spartan-led colony at Herakleia (Thuc. 3.92-93) which he tells us was ruined by the Spartan leaders who “brought the city to depopulation, frightening the [non-Spartan] majority by governing harshly and at times incompetently, so that their neighbors then overpowered them more easily.”

167 This translation is from H.D. Cameron (2003), p96, who makes a more literal version of the Greek than does Lattimore’s “we are educated with too little learning to despise the laws and too sensibly, through our strictness, to disobey them”.
Spartans are not educated, on the other hand, to “make a fine case against our enemies’ preparations” in order to “proceed against them with quite contrasting results”, as is, apparently, the Corinthian way. Spartan education, and here again, is the core of Archidamos’ practical recommendation, is rather about preparation: “we always make our preparations against opponents on the assumption that they have planned well”.

Archidamos’ comments about education concern preparation in a double sense, though. The practice of careful preparation is based in a clear-eyed assessment of the situation rather than one swayed by rhetorical pressures or hope, but the education of Spartan character is the foundational preparation for this kind of practice. It is to this that Archidamos refers when he concludes his comments on education with the assertion that “there is not much difference between man and man (anthrōpon anthrōpou), but the strongest (kratiston) is the one educated in the most necessary way (anankaiotatois paideuetai).”\(^\text{168}\) Just as his comments on preparation can be taken to refer both to practical concerns and the educational foundation, this comment on the nature of Spartan educational methods points also to the lessons they convey. The Spartan character, grounded in sōphrosynē and everything that implies – moderation, firmness, stability, self-control – should be best able to judge the location and nature of true necessities while ignoring and resisting those that are merely apparent. Merely apparent necessities here include those raised by “useless cleverness” of the kind Spartans avoid in their

\(^{168}\) I veer from Lattimore’s translation in the latter part of this line for “anankaiotatois paideuetai”, while it may be conveyed by “strictest discipline”, echoes the repeated theme of anankē which has been of so much concern to us here. The translation “educated in the most necessary way” I owe to Gerry Mara. Ostwald (1984) agrees with my interpretation making his own loose translation, “a superior person is he who is brought up to face the most essential constraints to which all men are subject, suggesting that “an education aimed at recognizing basic anankē that apply to all men makes a person superior to others,” p17. Debnar (2001) points out that this claim that there is no difference between men except what is produced by education is meant to address the Corinthian argument about natural differences between the Spartans and Athenians, p68.
education and which the Corinthians use to badger the Spartans into action. Concern for reputation is a keenly felt *anankē* for the Spartans, but one must weigh up the importance of different threats to reputation. The taunts of the Corinthian critics, while embarrassing, perhaps, are not of the gravity of the shame the Spartans would feel in settling a lost war that they bore the blame for beginning. Similarly, the strategic necessities, when properly assessed, dictate restraint and full preparation rather than immediate action – no matter how the Corinthians attempt to portray the situation.

Furthermore, *sōphrosynē* as a stance that makes Spartans resistant equally to unrealistic hopes and to despair implies this kind of prudent orientation towards *anankē* because hopes and despair fill the space outside the realm of preparation and have to do with one’s perception of compulsion. The Athenians, so much more prone to both hope and despair have described not only their fears, but their desire for prestige and for the pursuit of self-interest alike as *anankai*. The Spartan education and its focus on the disciplines of self-restraint and hardiness, on the king’s view, suppresses such compulsions. A proper assessment of the necessities of the situation, and preparation for them, minimizes the role given to hope as well as the unexpected failures and loss of confidence that produce despair. An education in necessity, Archidamos suggests, furthermore impresses upon one the difficulty of such an undertaking as the defeat of the Athenians so that, as much as possible, the Spartans must make preparations on which they can rely rather than on the chance of Athenian errors.

The Spartan reaction to the difficulties, and then defeat, they experience during the battle at Pylos suggests that Archidamos overestimates the resilience in the face of the unexpected produced by the *agogē*. Where the Lacedaemonians expect an easy victory on
their own territory (4.5.1; 4.8.4), they actually find themselves in a series of unaccustomed situations.\textsuperscript{169} At first they do well in an unaccustomed way, fighting in the manner of what Thucydides calls a “sea battle on land” (4.14.3) after attacking from the sea an enemy on land that was actually theirs (4.12.3).\textsuperscript{170} Once a large group of Spartan hoplites are besieged on the island of Spachteria off the coast of Pylos and ultimately taken prisoner by the Athenians, however, Lacedaemonian resilience crumbles in the face of unexpected failures. Their prolonged desperation to have the men returned comes to govern all of their negotiations with the Athenians. Indeed, that the men were captured at all causes great Athenian surprise because they had thought that “the Lacedaemonians were not supposed to give up their arms because of hunger or compulsion but to keep them and die fighting any way they could” (4.40.1). The loss of Spartan prestige and mystique from this one incident is reflected in the taunting question of an Athenian to one of the Spartan prisoners as to whether perhaps all of the braver Spartans had died on the island (4.40.2).

Whether or not, then, the Spartans are really able to perceive and manage the truly necessary things as a result of the \textit{agogē}, as a description of the methods of Spartan education \textit{anankē} is an appropriate term. The physical hardships and even violence of the \textit{agogē} are distinguished from the brutality used towards slaves even though it often embraced such tactics as whipping, starving and spying on the boys much as they might

\textsuperscript{169} The Spartans are not alone in expecting that, in general, they will have easy victories over the Athenians. The Greeks in general expected a short war (7.28.3), the Spartans themselves thought they would need only a few years. (5.14.3). Paula Debnar (2001) has investigated the background of ethnic stereotypes whereby the Athenians were associated with Ionian softness and thus not expected to be able to stand up to Dorian strength. Pp9-10.

\textsuperscript{170} This reversal of military strategies prefigures the reversals that characterize the end of Thucydides’ narrative in Books 6 & 7 with the Athenians engaged in land war and, by Book 8, the Spartans engaged in naval war.
the helots. The difference, of course, lies in the distinction between the just violence of *anankē* and the naked force of *bia*. The physical *anankē* that characterized the *agogē*, and even the very fact that it was universally compulsory for the sons of citizens, are markers of citizenship suggesting not subjection to unjust force but preparation to become part of the city. It is through the *agogē* that the Spartan youth can begin to approach the ideals embodied for them in the Spartan fathers and is, thus, suggestive of another kind of *anankē*, that of blood kinship.

Archidamos presents an interpretation of Spartan character and tradition that is, in many ways, a seductive and promising one. As we shall see in the next chapter he presents a nuanced version of the political invocation of parenthood that overcomes several of the signal weaknesses of the Corinthian version presented at Athens. The complex amalgam of prudential calculation, self-restraint and shame that he argues characterizes the Spartans seems likely to account for the strengths they display at their best. Even if the Spartans were to live up to this ideal in general, however, Archidamos fails to address the central Corinthian point about the nature of the Athenian threat. He neglects to explain how the Spartans would make a decision which would require a choice between the replication of the ways of the past and the survival of the city in its full prestige into the future. Put in Archidamean terms the Corinthians have demanded a choice between the fathers and the sons. When we examine further the Spartan practice of *philia* towards the fathers, however, we will see why such a choice is essentially impossible for the Spartans. *Philia* towards the fathers is so closely tied to the Spartan conception of the *homoioi* which involves such a thorough-going collapse of all

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171 Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* notes the hunger II.7 and whipping 8-9 of Spartan boys. Cartledge notes the spying, (2001) p86. For details of the *agogē* see Cartledge pp79-90.
distinctions amongst the citizens that even the temporal distinction between fathers and sons is in some ways effaced. Even could it be clearly conceptualized, however, such a choice would undermine absolutely the source of Spartan identity and all the principles of action and decision that Archidamos has outlined in his speech. To understand this, we must delve more deeply into the centrality of the Spartan conception of fatherhood.

iv Spartan Fathers & Sons: generations of homoioi

The debate between Sthenelaïdas and Archidamos is, in some ways, a debate about the authentic content of the inheritance from the Spartan fathers. We have examined the vision of Archidamos in depth. For the king the fathers have passed on a territory and a reputation and form of education, as well as a complex set of practices, and characteristics that serve to defend and maintain the concrete inheritance. As he finishes describing Spartan strengths he gives credit to the fathers: “let us never abandon these practices that our fathers handed down to us and we ourselves to our benefit have kept all this time” (1.85.1). In his short speech Sthenelaïdas advances a much simpler version of the Spartan patrimony and of the behavior that it demands of the current generation.172 For the ephor the Spartan inheritance requires simply acting “in a way worthy (axios) of Sparta” which in this case means voting for war (1.86.5). To be Spartan, then, is to be warlike. This preparedness for war, though, is Spartan in particular because it is driven by a strong concern for honor, which is demonstrated by Sthenelaïdas’ insistence that it is not “fitting (prepei) for us to deliberate while being wronged (adikoumenous).” (1.86.4)

172 Hornblower describes the speech as appropriately “laconic.” Debnar (2001) notes “his bluntness and brevity signal to his audience that they are about to be adressed by a true Spartan – one who disdains words and self-serving oratory”, p70.
For the ephor aidōs is less nuanced than it is for Archidamos because it is largely uninformed by a careful understanding of sōphrosynē. Although Sthenelaïdas invokes sōphrosynē when he declares that “if we are prudent (sōphronōmen) we will not look on while our allies are wronged or hesitate to help them,” (1.86.2) he gives no explanation of the prudence of this act, except to say that they are “good allies” (summachoi agathoi) which implies simply that good allies may be lost if they are not defended. Beyond this, however, the defense of the allies is justified in the same way that reaction to Athenian aggression in general is: retaliation to a wrong that has been done to Sparta. This suggests a form of aidōs that is lacking the “inhibitory self-consciousness” that characterized that of Archidamos. Rather, the high level of Spartan military, moral and hegemonic prestige must be defended, and an extreme sensitivity to these matters of honor is indicated by the repetition of the word “fitting” and the disparagement of “[legal] judgments and speeches” (dikais kai logois) (1.86.3). It is not even that legalities and speeches must always be directed towards and informed by the concerns of prestige, but they have no validity at all, so that “judgments and speeches must not be used when we are not being injured in word alone”(1.86.3). The only response to positive injury is active retaliation.

Although he does not invoke the Spartan fathers directly, Sthenelaïdas suggests their importance when he claims that the Spartans “are the same men now as” during the Persian war (hemeis de homoioi kai tote kai nun) (1.86.2). In this he denies both any

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173 This reference to legal judgments suggests that Sthenelaïdas does not completely ignore the issue of Spartan guilt for breaking the treaty of peace should they go to war, as Debnar (2001) suggests (p69), but simply dismisses it. Orwin argues that the ephor’s speech is compatible with his (Orwin’s) interpretation of the Spartan stance as one in which the Spartans only go to war “under duress” because the ephor believes the war is unavoidable and that this therefore does not “impugn Sparta’s concern for justice” (p57). For Orwin this suggests that sparta here subsumes expediency beneath justice. Sthenelaïdas’ disparagement of judgments, however, flies in the face of Orwin’s contention that Spartan justice is, above all, a concern for sworn oaths (p49, 58-59).
disintegration of Spartan power since the earlier conflict and the importance of the Athenian innovations listed by the Corinthians: the Athenians have simply changed and become unjust even if they weren’t before, while the Spartans have remained as they always were. What is important is the fundamental quality of the men who make up a city, and the Spartans are as they always have been. The phrase suggests something else, though, about the Spartan conception of the relationship between fathers and sons: the way in which, in its rigid conservatism and pride in constant replication of the past through strict obedience to the laws, the Spartan forefathers are in some way the contemporaries of the living generation. It is impossible not to notice that the word the Spartans use to characterize their status as fellow-citizens and the word the ephor uses here to denote their unchanging identity is *homoioi.*

Pericles makes a similar point to describe the relation between the earliest Athenians and those who came later: “it is the same men (*hoi autoi*) always occupying the land through the succession of generations, who have handed it down in freedom until the present time because of their bravery” (2.36.1). This invocation by Pericles, however, plays a significantly different role from that of the Spartan ephor. In the first place, it is meant to defend the myth of Athenian autochthony which, as we have seen, assists the cause of Athenian imperialism by making Athens the original source of Ionian peoples and by confounding the inconvenient alternative myth of Ionian descent from people pushed out of the Peloponnesos by invading Dorians. Its second role, however, seems to be to reinforce the significance and preeminence of the present generation, for as he

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174 Debnar (2001) notes that “*homoioi* implied that the Spartan ‘people,’ equivalent to the Spartiate assembly, had no master and that Spartans were superior to non-Spartans. Thus the term subtly boasts off racial purity and military strength”, p72. I will argue that the term also has a powerful temporal dimension, but these other meanings serve only to enrich that sense.
continues he notes that “those of us here now who are still somewhere in the prime of life have expanded most areas of it” (2.36.3). While the forefathers maintained and passed on the same land, they were also limited by it, while the present generation is able to transcend its boundaries. Indeed, as we shall see, for Pericles attachment to the land and concern for the continuity of that attachment between past, present and future generations is an obstacle to expansion or even to commitment to defend the imperial holdings already in Athenian possession.

Compare to this the words of Archidamos in contemplating the possibility that the present generation will exceed the past in the glory of its deeds in his speech to the Peloponnesians at Plataia. Here he asks obedience of them in battle “since you are campaigning against a city of such greatness [Athens], and since you will make the greatest name for your ancestors and yourselves according to one outcome or the other” (2.11.9). The present generation is only distinguished by the greatness of its enemy; in its essence it is still the same as those of the past. Similarly, the credit for present deeds does not belong to the present generation alone, but precisely to those who passed on the land and the customs that defended it. While Pericles too passes from the deeds of present and recent generations to praise of the city’s character and form of government, this praise is framed always in the present tense and its origins left ambiguous. As we shall see, for Pericles “the city” also stands somehow apart from the citizens who have made it up — which is how they can contemplate and approach her as a lover – in a way that it does not for Archidamos, for whom Sparta is the unchanging Spartans.

I suggested above that Spartan respect for the laws may imply respect for the fathers, but this suggestion needs now to be refined in order to indicate just how little the
Spartans wished to distinguish themselves from those who went before. We should bear in mind, in the first place, that the fathers are not respected as creators of the laws, but as model Spartiates who revered and obeyed them. Reverence was due also, of course to Lykourgos, the non-Spartan framer of the laws, but the fact that he was a foreigner highlights further the peculiar importance and nature of the Spartan relationship to the fore-fathers. Hannah Arendt makes an interesting observation in *The Human Condition* on the subject of Greek lawgivers that, in its very inapplicability to the Spartan case, is illuminating. Arendt argues that the Greek habit of turning the task of lawmaking for the city over to foreigners who would, nonetheless, never be allowed to participate in its politics, highlights their understanding of politics in terms of action rather than making. Where politics as action implies always the possibility of beginning something new, laws and constitutions function rather as a permanent boundary around the sphere of politics that frames and makes action possible, but is not part of it. The lawgiver, then, is like an architect contracted to build a city wall: “the laws, like the wall around the city, were not results of action but products of making.”\(^{175}\) Since they were not “the content of politics” the laws, then, “did not command the same loyalty we know from the Roman type of patriotism.”\(^{176}\) While this observation betrays a typically Arendtian elision of (an idealized version of) Athenian democratic practice with the Greek conception of politics in general, it suggests in negative precisely the kind of relationship to the laws suggested by the Spartan self-understanding.

The Spartans approach the laws precisely as artifacts – the products of “making” – the preservation of which, however, forms the center of Spartan politics. It is precisely

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innovation that the Spartans seek to avoid. Spartan politics, as evinced by the debate between Archidamos and Sthenelaïdas, is concerned not with natality, but with replication. Debate and decision-making is concerned primarily with identifying the authentic tradition to be preserved and imitated, rather than proposing innovative actions. That Lykourgos was a foreigner only supports this vision of politics and action as reproduction and repetition because it avoids one possible source of distinction between Spartans of different generations in terms of the nature of their political activities. No generation of Spartans were distinguished by having been lawgivers, creators of laws rather than their subjects and followers just as no family of Spartans are distinguished by being descended from Lykourgos. The royal houses themselves are confirmed as of semi-divine (Herakleid) origin by Lykourgan decree and hence do not represent the elevation of one group of Spartans over their peers through violent domination.

This extreme emphasis on the idea that past and present generations of Spartans are homoioi may easily, it seems, produce an arrogance and incaution that regards greatness as an essence that will be manifest wherever Spartans apply themselves: Spartans on this view simply cannot fail to be worthy of their fathers, except by choosing not to act. This seems, indeed, to be the attitude of Sthenelaïdas when he disparages speech and lawfulness in favor of immediate action “worthy of” Spartans. Archidamos, at least, is awake to this danger which is apparent in his invocation of future generations when he admits to his “fear that we will pass [this war] down to our children” (1.81.6).

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177 In Arendtian terms, of course, this means that for the Spartans, neither true action or politics were possible.
178 Xenophon, *Lac. Pol.* XV.2 notes the divine descent of Spartan kings. Thucydides also notes that they are descended from a son of Zeus, 5.16.
Since the end of the war, especially one begun too hastily and in contravention of the treaty, may be humiliating for Sparta, this inheritance will be an ignoble one. Losing territory and power (as the Corinthians warn they will) and passing on only blame and humiliation, the Spartans may leave their children unworthy of the ancestors. The sameness of Spartan generations is on this view somewhat fragile, something to be cared for and protected. Prudential concerns, then, are unavoidable and, indeed, must be as central to Spartan identity as courage.

By invoking the future in this way Archidamos gives the idea of Spartan generations a literal quality lacking from that implied in Sthenelaïdas’ speech. For the ephor the Spartan fathers stand as the ideals that inform aidōs and as the audience whose judgment one fears, but also as guarantors that those ideals cannot fail to manifest themselves in Spartan action since all Spartan generations are, in some way, contemporaries and not merely equal, but the same. For Archidamos they are generations who have had to toil and risk, but also judge and restrain themselves, in order to replicate themselves and their ways. It must always be remembered, however, that these nuanced views of the king are not the ones that prevail when the Spartans make their decision at this assembly. The kind of temporal collapse that is suggested by a view that holds all generations of Spartiates to be not only the same, but peers and contemporaries, is ill-suited to the kind of prudential and foresighted outlook Archidamos eulogizes.

While both differ considerably from the Corinthian invocation of parenthood in their speech at Athens, it is that of Archidamos that seems most successfully to answer the
problems raised by it. The Corinthians, for example, demanded sacrifice of personal interests for the sake of a parent in their claims upon the Corcyreans, and the Spartans are successful in producing this kind of attitude in their loyalty to the Spartan fathers. In part this is because the Spartans are able to generate the kind of emotional power to motivate these sacrifices in a way that the Corinthian cannot – as we shall see in the next chapter. Part of this ability may lie in the difference between the maternal and paternal form of the parental image invoked. While the Corinthians emphasize the radical difference between the mother who generates and the children who can never repay the debt of birth, the Spartans emphasize and seek to produce sameness of fathers and sons. While Spartans must go through the agogē and become warriors in order to achieve the status of homoios, the terms of their philia with the fathers do not insist that they are different in kind. Rather, it is of central importance that they are the same. For the Corinthians the fact of birth debt and this permanent assymetry generates the right to command and rule, while for the Spartans obedience is to the laws which no Spartan father had a part in designing.

That Spartan loyalty is to the fathers as upholders of the laws similarly means that they do not run into the need to defend the original source they claim in the way that the Corinthians might, should someone question them about their status as Dorians and, hence, as a colony of Doris. Spartan identity and reproduction of the same ways goes back only to the constitution of Lykourgos, an historical event. There is, then, a judgment involved in this filial loyalty: the ways of the fathers are judged to be good ones, whereas the judgment of the generation of the reform must have been that new ways had to be adopted. This judgment is precisely what the Corinthian maternal claims seek to deny:
loyalty to the mother is never a matter of choice, but of asymmetrical obligation. The matter of beginnings is not, however, important for the Spartans precisely because the identity of fathers and sons collapses the temporal dimension of their politics so that change and movement are never acknowledged and need not be resisted.

Spartan loyalty to the fathers overcomes one more obstacle that the Corinthian vision faces as a solution to the problem of opposition between oikos and polis. As we shall see presently, the Corcyreans attack the metaphorical maternity asserted by the Corinthians by emphasizing the literal fact of generational change, stressing that Corcyreans are citizens of their own city. For this civic status to be meaningful Corinth must recognize that new generations of people have come and gone since their founding of the colony. In this the Corcyreans raise obliquely the potential for conflict between household and city when the particular obligations one owes one’s own parents, for example, stand in opposition to those one owes the city as a citizen. One way of attempting to overcome such obligations is precisely that attempted by the Corinthians, but also invoked in myths of autochthony: raising the city to the status of a shared metaphorical mother in an attempt to overthrow these particular obligations owed to literal mothers or other kin.

The Spartans avoid this problem, and its somewhat fraught solution, by deciding the question quite thoroughly in favor of the polis. The city itself is not the Spartan father, but is always constituted by living (and dead) Spartans. The Spartans refer rarely to “Sparta” but often to “the fathers” and mean this quite literally because, removed permanently from the family home at the age of seven, young Spartans “were encouraged
to consider all Spartans of their father’s age to be *in loco parentis*.”\(^{179}\) It is for this reason that Spartan concern for their fathers is not the obstacle to political unity that it is in other poleis: the *oikos* is not opposed to the polis. The conflict between *oikos* and polis was settled in Sparta to an extent to which it was not elsewhere in Greece. Spartans were encouraged by all their institutions and education to be attached much more strongly to the city than to the family, and this preference for the polis was symbolized by the first decision of parenthood – whether or not to raise an infant. It “was not the father, as was normal, but the elders of the male infant’s tribal grouping who decided whether or not he should be reared.”\(^{180}\)

By effacing the distinctions between particular fathers and making reverence for them central to being a *homoios* the Spartans collapse not just their conception of time but also a major source of social distinctions. By putting the *oikos* so far in the background of life and attempting to remove it from the politically important *philía* for the father, the Spartans attempt a reduction of the concentric circles of *philía* noted by Mary Blundell to just one, which encompasses both citizenship and father-son relations.\(^{181}\) The status of *homoios* is one that tolerates very little diversity at Sparta. It is not merely a formal equality but, as far as possible, denotes literal sameness.

This prompts a comparative question about notions of equality at Sparta and Athens and about whether the conception of equality and sameness of the oligarchic Spartan *homoioi* I am presenting resembles too much the Athenian democratic notion of arithmetic equality – *isotēs*. It is true that whereas radical democrats in Athens may have

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\(^{181}\) See above, p71.
sought complete *isomoiria* (equality of distribution) but settled for *isonomia* (equality before the laws.)\(^{182}\) the Spartans retained elements of political inequality in its kingship and limited eligibility in the Gerousia, which was probably restricted to those of aristocratic birth.\(^{183}\) Nonetheless, one might argue that despite these formal inequalities the Spartan *homoioi* approached much closer to equality, in the sense of homogeneity, of outcomes than did the citizens of Athens with their political *isonomia*. Cartledge lists four dimensions of inequality amongst the *homoioi*: birth, wealth, age and accomplishments (*andragathia*).\(^{184}\) On the one hand birth and wealth determined one’s eligibility to be a *homoios* at all, which demanded Spartan lineage and ability to contribute food to the shared mess. On the other hand, the very institution of the shared mess points to ways in which these distinctions of birth and wealth mattered less for the *homoioi* than for the citizens of other cities. The mess hall is just another instance of the Spartan solution to the conflict between *oikos* and polis which involved bringing the potentially divisive institutions of the household into the public realm and expanding them to include all *homoioi*. Xenophon makes much of this institution of common messing, pointing out that it prevented the financial ruin and physical damage of “gluttony and wine bibbing” (5.4), brought age groups together and provided more compulsory exercise in the walk home after dinner! (5.5-8). He notes also the degree to which property was used in common amongst *homoioi*, despite it’s private ownership (5.3-4). Thucydides himself in his Archaeology pointed out that the Spartans were the first to diminish the appearance of


\(^{184}\) Cartledge (2001), p74
disparities of wealth so that “their wealthy men began to live most like common people” in style of dress, for example (1.6.4).

Distinctions of birth were effaced in the sense that all homoioi, with the exception of the kings, were subject to the same compulsory agogē and military discipline, while distinctions of rank may remain, produced an extreme homogeneity in the sense that the same expectations were on all and, as Xenophon put it, political virtue was compulsory rather than voluntary for all. 185 Xenophon, indeed, points to the ignominy to which those who fell short of these uniform standards of public virtue were subject when he describes the fate of the men labelled as cowards (8.4-5). Cowards, who are able to enjoy the freedoms of Athens, are excluded from that symbolic site of Spartan citizenship, the common messes, because “everyone would be ashamed to have a coward with him” there (8.4).

The distinctions of age, of course, are part of the practice of reverence for the fathers, both living and dead, and not inconsistent with a view of homogeneity between the homoioi because it is a status to which all, with luck, may eventually succeed. This leaves accomplishment which, as we shall see presently, the Spartans are actually uncomfortable about beyond a certain common degree. Where the coward may be shunned for lack of andragathia, anyone whose prowess distinguishes them in excess seems to threaten the andragathia of the rest of the homoioi.

This demand, then, for something like literal sameness is apparent in the reaction of the Spartans to two instances of self-assertion by leading citizens. The first is one recounted by Thucydides in the Pentekontaetia when he describes the career of Pausanias

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185 Xenophon, *Lac. Pol.* X.4-7 remarks on the fact that Lykourgos made “the virtue of a citizen” (politiken areten) compulsory, making it a matter of the most irresistible necessity (anpostaton anankeen) X.7 rather than a voluntary effort as elsewhere.
who, he says, was largely responsible for the loss of leadership of the Greek alliance to Athens because of his violence and arrogance (1.130.1-2). The Spartans are alarmed by his “flouting of convention (paranomia) and his imitation of the barbarians” (1.132.1). Having been hailed by the Greeks as the hero of Plataea he had become “much more conceited and could no longer bear to live in the conventional manner”, adopting the dress, habits and retinue of Medes and Persians. To go with his hedonism he betrayed evidence of even grander ambitions (1.130.1). Instead of the respect for the laws and imitation of the fathers praised by Archidamos, Pausanias despises them and all Greek standards in his display of hybris and bia. The specific crime with which they charge him, however, is a particularly grave one, because it is a direct attack on the military nature of Spartan civic unity: he had had a couplet engraved describing himself as ruler of the Hellenes on a tripod dedicated at Delphi on the defeat of the Medes. (1.32.2). This the Spartans considered a grave offense which further shed light for the Spartans on his medism and hybris. Where the other Hellenes had lauded him as a hero after Plataea, such public distinctions and, especially, the active pursuit of them, are sources of anxiety for the Spartans. They are threats to notions of the citizens as homoioi and, just as they take care not to take pride in their achievements in a way that would diminish those of the fathers, they cannot tolerate achievements of one of the living that greatly exceed their own.

This is the danger a later notable homoios, Brasidas, encounters in the conflict with Athens. Where Pausanias had alienated the Greeks with his violence and hybris Brasidas eventually “inspired enthusiasm for the Lacedaemonians amongst the Athenian allies” (4.81.2) because of his “courage and intelligence” and by “behaving justly and
moderately towards the cities” (4.81.1) he was able to persuade many allies to revolt. He inspired fear in the Athenians that their allies would, indeed revolt, because “Brasidas not only behaved moderately in general but was spreading the word everywhere that he was sent out in order to liberate Hellas” (4.108.2). In engineering the rebellion of Amphipolis, however, he falls foul of the “leading men” of Sparta and they refuse to give him reinforcements, “partly because of envy” (4.108.6-7). The Spartan desire that to be one of the homoioi be a matter not just of equality of status but of literal sameness here undermines the work of the man who is almost singlehandedly responsible for restoring Spartan prestige by rebuilding Hellenic confidence, just as Pausanias was almost singlehandedly responsible for destroying it. Where Pausanias thus propelled the allies towards the control of Athens and set the course for the present war, Brasidas goes the furthest towards breaking Athenian power, although, in doing so, he extends the war because he is, thucydides tells us, not motivated by desire for peace, but for honor (5.16.1). Neither of these men, however, were orthodox homoioi – one by failing to adhere to the customs of the fathers and the other by following them even amongst non-Spartans. It is to these issues of the Spartan engagement with other Greeks that we will now, finally, turn.
v) The Spartans in motion

The vision of paternal-filial loyalty as the foundation of Spartan greatness articulated by Archidamos has theoretical appeal in appearing to solve several of the problems that characterized other forms of ascriptive friendship. Several problems remain, however. In the first place there are practical problems that Archidamos does not address. Secondly there are several respects in which the Spartans do not live up to the standards Archidamos sets for them. Thirdly, however, there are ways in which even when the Spartans practice *philia* for the fathers in the way Archidamos praises, they cause great problems for Sparta. As well as these omissions and internal contradictions, several incidents illustrate ways in which, even when the Spartans evince the characteristics Archidamos claims for them, their institutions and practices appear inadequate and self-defeating.

Archidamos’ fundamental thesis is that the Corinthians mischaracterise Spartan practices and that the old ways will continue to serve them well simply because they have in the past. He does not, however, address the more fundamental Corinthian point that even had this tradition been successful in the past it is wholly inadequate to the changed nature of Hellas now that the Athenians have discovered a new form of power. The Corinthians observe that this changed Greek context drives a wedge between Spartan success and fidelity to tradition that may, indeed, never have existed before. To rephrase it in Spartan terms the rise of Athenian naval power may ultimately require a choice between the inheritance from the fathers or the legacy to the children. The war or disgraceful resolution of that war that Archidamos fears will be handed on to the children may prove to be the better of two bad choices, if the Corinthian analysis is correct.
There is nothing, however, in the decision making process of either Archidamos or Sthenelaïdas that is able to acknowledge this situation. For both of the Spartan speakers making a decision is intimately dependent upon and limited by the practice of *philia* towards the fathers.

This is not to say, however, that Archidamos is wrong to advocate caution and patience in approaching the Athenian threat: his analysis of the difficulties faced by a land power confronting the Athenian thallasocracy is perceptive. Where he falls short, and where the Corinthian frustration with Spartan slowness proves well-founded, is in his optimism regarding the Spartan ability to catch up. His notion that further delay will give the Spartans time to build alliances, naval power and prowess is overly hopeful. Pericles anticipates this Spartan move in his first speech of the *History* where he points out that “military opportunities are not stationary” (1.142.1) and that the Spartans have missed the chance to turn their hand to naval warfare. Under Athenian blockade they will be unable to build the skills necessary to confront an experienced navy successfully. Furthermore, “seamanship” cannot be adopted as a part-time concern since “there is no way to cultivate it as an outside activity when chance offers, but rather there can be no activities outside that.” Whereas this kind of exclusive focus on military training does not stand in fundamental contradiction to Spartan life with its permanent mobilization (as it does for the other Peloponnnesians who are principally farmers and only secondarily soldiers), it would require radical changes in the Spartan way of life and mode of social organization that would upturn both traditional practices and their political foundations.

Pericles connects Spartan “shortage of money” (1.142.1) with the impossibility of building a navy and, indeed, to remedy this situation would be to change the foundation
of Spartan economic life and citizenship in the agricultural produce of each citizen’s *chleros*. This produce was the basis of a Spartan’s status as a *homoios* in a very direct way for it allowed him to make the contribution of food to the shared mess that was the mark of a citizen. This in turn was only made compatible with the full time military mobilization of the Spartans by the large scale use of helots to cultivate the land in a citizen’s stead. While Spartan education and the character it builds is unmatched in its ability to produce stalwart hoplites, it is rendered obsolete by a shift to naval power where the provision of large numbers of rowers is more important than the tight and disciplined military formation of an elite infantry. Not only is Spartan education inadequate or irrelevant to this task, but, more fundamentally, the very concept of Spartan citizenship is threatened by it. The Spartan concern for protecting and maintaining the inheritance of the fathers is also a concern for protecting and maintaining the boundaries between Spartiates and the other Lacedaemonians – the Perioikoi and Helots. Building a Spartan navy able to challenge that of the Athenians would require either the admission of these non-Spartan elements to a central, rather than peripheral, military and hence political role, or else the ability to pay large numbers of foreign mercenaries – neither of which the Spartans could undertake without countenancing fundamental changes in their traditional practices and social organization. To use the helots as rowers instead of as farmers would destroy the *chleros* system and make impossible the fundamental distinctions of civic identity that were marked by military service, education and the contribution of agricultural produce.

It is, perhaps, not surprising then, that Archidamos does not really address the Corinthian attack on its most dangerous ground – the radical difference of Athenian
power. While Archidamos addresses the main line of Corinthian complaint and negative comparison of Sparta and Athens – the issue of character and temperament – the roots of these characteristics go down through custom and education to the very foundations of Spartan order in *philia* between *homoioi* – both living and dead through the cultivation and maintenance of their sameness. When this sameness is violated either by the introduction of new customs, or a change in the way citizenship is conceived, this *philia* is fundamentally violated. If Spartans and their sons, and Spartans and their fellow citizens are no longer “the same men” will they still be Spartans?

A second kind of flaw in Archidamos’ encomium of Spartan virtues has to do with its simple accuracy. The fact that the assembled citizens vote in favor of the ephor’s speech rather than the king’s suggests a certain agreement with his condemnation of speeches. It is precisely careful deliberation, though, that forms the essence of the king’s speech. Thucydides tells us that the Spartans made the decision on the grounds of the legality of the war: “there were many more who thought the treaty had been broken”, (1.87.3) suggesting that the Spartans, in their fear of Athenian power, were decided upon war already. Nonetheless, their subsequent actions prove something of their character and suggest problems with the analysis of Archidamos. Having voted for war rather than delay, they send envoys to the Athenians making demands about piety, culminating in the vague ultimatum that the Athenians “leave the Hellenes autonomous” (1.139.3). Having voted for war with Sthenelaïdas, the Spartans follow the recommendations of Archidamos rather by default and as, perhaps, a confirmation of the Corinthian accusations of sluggishness.
Their actions elsewhere in Thucydides’ narrative help to explain the appeal of the ephor’s speech, however. In particular, his one-sided understanding of ἀιδός as an extremely heightened sensitivity to the public prestige of Sparta seems to be a problem. This sensitivity was untempered by prudential concerns about the actions that will best uphold Spartan prestige in a permanent way. His understanding of the source of Spartan prestige is limited also to their reputation for courage and military skill without regard to where or how it is applied. Either through the misapprehension that this prowess will always be appreciated, or through indifference to the opinions of non-Spartans, a characteristic Spartan problem throughout the History is the alienation of previously sympathetic allies through harsh treatment as is evinced above all by the career of Pausanias. This points to the self-referential nature of the “respect” aspect of ἀιδός: it is only the opinions of the Spartans themselves, or the imagined opinion of the forefathers, that really matter in deciding whether they have lived up to central ideals. When these ideals are, furthermore, limited to an image of courage that cannot include prudential calculations out of fear that they imply cowardice, the danger of a harsh and arrogant indifference to the sensitivities of non-Spartans is ever-present. In their actions the Spartans prove the Corinthians correct in their estimation that they view all non-Spartans, even fellow Dories and allies as foreigners whose opinions are not to be countenanced and who are not deserving of sustained attention. The Spartans’ inward focus is, instead, on the helots on whom they are deeply dependent and, as a result, of whom they are deeply fearful.

The inadmissibility of more general standards of Hellenic opinion and the Spartan sense of separateness makes them also immune to any sense of broader Hellenic identity.
This seems, in part, to explain the actions of Pausanias who, having begun to find Spartan discipline unbearable, embraces utterly an image of Persian despotism in his tyrannical fantasies that extend to rule of Hellas itself (1.130-132.). Once the ethic of reproduction of the ways of the fathers is overthrown, the Spartan loses all limits to his actions and all ethical guidelines. This was the concern raised by the Athenians at this assembly when they tell the Spartans, “you have rules among yourselves which are incompatible with other people, and it may be added that each one of you when he gets abroad follows neither these nor the rules that the rest of Hellas observes” (1.77.6).

In this lack of regard for the opinions of other Hellenes the Spartans stand aloof from the kinds of cooperative necessities that, for the Corinthians, should bind hegemonic cities together in concern for just order. The Spartans are, of course, deeply concerned for their own civic order which, in its suppression of hybris and pleonexia has great claims to cultivate virtues important to justice between the citizens. Since, however, they do not recognize equality of status, between their city and others but only amongst themselves as Spartans, this thread of justice between cities does not constrain Sparta. Deeply concerned with philia amongst themselves as homoioi, they often fail to countenance the claims of philia of their fellow Doriens unless it suits their purposes, nor do they recognize any equality with other old cities. During the Melian dialogue the islanders hope that the Spartans will intervene for them out of an obligation of honor towards kinsmen. The Athenians dismiss the notion with a most pithy critique of the Spartan inability to extend concern for justice beyond themselves:
in dealing with their own affairs and their local institutions, the Lacedaemonians are the greatest practitioners of virtue; where others are involved, one could speak extensively about their conduct but summarize it just as clearly by the statement that they are the most striking example we know of men who regard what is agreeable as noble and what is expedient as just (5.105.4).

The hedonism and hunger for power and distinction of Pausanias, in this view, is simply an extreme manifestation of a basic logic of Spartan culture which suppresses these compulsions in its citizens through harsh education and an insistence on strict sameness between them. When, like Pausanias, they become essentially *apolis* and escape the cultural context of Sparta, the tight bindings of the Spartan education in necessity unravel and they are no longer inclined to practice *philia* either. They lose their inhibitory self-consciousness outside of the gaze of fellow Spartans and that gaze, it turns out, has not been at all internalized during their education. Spartan self-restraint and resistance to the *anankai* of honor, fear and interest is, in fact, connected only to the brutal *anankē* of life in Sparta. The political *philia* of Sparta is, finally, a matter of the strict enforcement of sameness both between generations of *homoioi* and between them as individuals.

That the Spartans know this to be the case is suggested by their reaction to the return of hoplites taken prisoner at Spachteria – for whose return they had struggled so long and desperately. The disgrace of their surrender was well observed by the Athenians and it is in anticipation of the men’s fear of the Spartan response that the city finally acts,

186 The contention of Orwin (1994) that the Spartans do not submit to honor and profit as compulsions, p53, may be correct at the regime level, but is complicated by the extremity of the apparent subjection to them of individual Spartans once released from immediate discipline.
they were afraid that these might expect to be reduced in status because of the disaster and start revolutionary activity while they had citizen rights, and they now deprived them of rights, even though some were in office, to the extent that they could not hold office or have authority to buy or sell anything. At a later time, their rights were restored (5.34.2).

The Spartans at home are not able, nor do they expect those returning from imprisonment to be able, to reconcile the defeat with the Spartan self-image. This rigidity reveals a deep problem in the Spartan practice of *philía* in its commitment to precise reproduction, indeed, embodiment of past men. The Corinthians recognized that friendship was not a matter or precise exchange, but had room for flexibility and excuses (1.41.1). For the Spartans, however, deviation is intolerable and, as their fears about revolution suggest, seems to threaten the very roots of their political life. There is very little range for the Spartans in successfully achieving the ideals embodied by the fathers. The distance between the achievement beyond which they shouldn’t reach (because of inhibitory self-consciousness concerning the honor of the fathers) and the standard below which they cannot fall is a very small space. The two aspects of *aidós* – a respected standard and inhibitory self-consciousness – are closely tied for the Spartans because of their ethic of precise reproduction. The tight link that Archidamos makes between Spartan strength and success and careful *philía* for the fathers means that failure – especially one that occurred in such unexpected and unusual ways – is a threat to both *philía* and future success. The incident of Spachteria suggests, then, that he is wrong in his eulogy of Spartan *sōphrosynē* as inuring them to disappointments. This inflexibility is so extreme that, more than just a resistance to change, it is a fundamental difficulty in managing the task of movement itself.
The Spartans solve the problem of movement in internal politics, and in their dealings with the internal threat of disordering movement posed by the helots, by establishing a kind of rest that characterizes every aspect of their shared life. Not only is change not admitted to their way of life, but the kinds of differentiations and distinctions within the ruling caste that might give rise to internal conflict, and hence movement, are to a large extent effaced. The difficulty the Spartans have in understanding the movement that happens outside their borders and of countenancing the possibility that they themselves may need to change in response to it are simply one side of the problem this form of internal rest creates for them. That the Spartans, because of Pausanias, were indirectly responsible for the rise of the Athenian Empire and hence the present threat of war is indicative of the ways in which their form of internal rest is injurious for their style of movement.
Conclusion

The two forms of ascribed philia embraced by the Corinthians and Spartans share a resistance to most kinds of movement at their cores: movement is limited to repetitive kinds. The Corinthians, in their insistence that maternity is the permanently triumphant form of philia when it comes to obligation see the manifold changes and complexities of the lives of cities and citizens as irrelevant to the basic structure of just order. As we will see in the next chapter, these concerns of life as lived under the inevitable conditions of change and movement have pressing claims to make. The Spartans are even more deeply resistant to movement because their form of paternal-filial philia is not concerned simply with authority, but with all of the details of life including not just customs and institutional structure, but even with the essential political tasks of decision-making. That this form of philia is so deeply devoted to precise repetition of the ways, character and achievements of the fathers means that its essential task is to make the fathers of the past live on in the present generation. The collapse of temporal, social and kinship distinctions that this creates, however, makes the Spartans not only largely immune to change at home, but also essentially unable to grasp the reality of change abroad.

It is the great compactness of Spartan politics, society and culture that creates this imperceptiveness. The Corinthians, perhaps because their claims to hegemonic status are not firmly supported by superior strength, are able to perceive the importance of the larger context of Hellenic matters. For the Corinthians the justice of an imperial order of philia requires the recognition and support of other hegemonēs. The Spartans, however, do not recognize any space between status and strength: the Spartans are strong because they follow their customs, education and the ideals embodied in the fathers, and all of
these Spartan attributes are embodied in the equals in status, the *homoioi*. The only context that, in the end, matters to the Spartans is that of their own city. No recognition of equality or, hence, concern for justice reaches beyond their borders because vices such as *pleonexia* and *hybris*, to them, are not offences against justice so much as they are offences against the *homoioi*. Corinth, even in its vision of hierarchical domination distinguishes between just and unjust treatment of unequals and recognizes that a mother city who misuses a colony acts disgracefully. The Spartans, unable to find a place for degrees of difference even between equals in status, are unable to see in non-Spartans anything but difference in kind of a radical sort. It is, indeed, such difference in kind as is usually preserved in Hellas for dealing with slaves, which requires not justice or *philia*, but simple *bia* and mastery.

The problem is not one of the exclusivity of ascriptive groups, in that those who are outside of the privileged group are subject to violent domination because they exist outside of a realm of justice attached to particular relationships. As we saw in the first Corinthian speech, there is a possibility that even those without specific ties may recognize in each other a concern with justice that should be respected. (We see a mirror image of this, indeed, in the next chapter when we examine the Corcyrean demand to recognition of their own citizenship in their city as the foundation of their autonomy.) The problem, as the Corinthian interaction with Sparta shows, is not so much the exclusivity of groups but their lack of an over-arching concept of justice – or, to be more exact, a shared conception of the authoritative form and location of the *philia* that embodies justice. In the next chapter we will begin to explore the difficulty of establishing this kind of binding *philia* even within single cities.
Chapter three: the Politics of Achieved Friendship

This chapter addresses the politics attendant to orders that are held together in ways that are self-consciously the result of choice. The “political identity” of both orders and individuals are, on such a view, to some extent subject to interrogation, to the demand that reasons be given for the existence and persistence of relationships and obligations. To some extent, then, these orders acknowledge the contingency that Thucydides finds in history, but, in doing so expose themselves directly to its disintegrative power. The Thucydidean imperative demands that this power be harnessed for the growth and strengthening of successful orders, but not all politics of achieved friendship are able to manage this feat. From the modern point of view it is most interesting perhaps, to consider the ways in which such orders can establish and maintain solidarity, cohesion and trust. We can rejoin Thucydides, however, in the concern that such goods are not achieved by the Greeks of his narrative, with more than temporary success.

The Corcyrean resistance to the Corinthian claims to colonial authority is couched in terms of an alternative vision of friendship – friendship as an achieved relationship. Their appeal to Athens shifts between emphases upon mutual utility and upon equality as the basis of just and lasting friendship. As such they work from a model of friendship that emphasizes its personal and chosen nature in a way designed to undercut the Corinthian emphasis upon the binding nature of unchosen familial “friendship”. Emphasizing equality of strength and choice in this way draws a sharp distinction between kinship and personal friendship that is close, perhaps, to our modern one. The Corcyreans assert the importance of politics over the claims of the oikos and, in particular, point out the inadequacy of the epimethean time metaphysic of the mother city to the role of citizenship both in the city and in individual lives. The kind of change that
is symbolized by the growth from childhood to adult citizenship is not a disintegrative change but a development that demands recognition, both as the status of the free as opposed to the slave and in terms of the political tasks citizenship represents. The quiet theme of citizenship and the autonomy of cities that underwrites it is paired, in the Corcyrean speech, with a dominant theme of foresight. Although, as their stasis suggests, the Corcyreans do not combine much wisdom or self-restraint with their foresight, their claims about the foundation and nature of alliances is resolutely oriented by concern for the future. In this orientation the Corcyreans address something we suggested was a flaw in the attempt to shape cities on the model of ascriptive philia. Such regimes are not well able to deal with newness or change.

That politics, as the task and prerogative of citizens, involves managing the city’s affairs with a concern for the future has already been introduced quietly by the worry of King Archidamos that the war will cause a breakdown in Spartan philia. By reducing the prestige and power of the city, war, he fears will destroy the pattern of perfect transmission of the inheritance of the fathers. We saw then, however, that the Spartan conception of citizenship and the temporal orientation attached to it was quite unable to address such questions of the future in clear-sighted ways. In their demands for foresight and for the recognition of citizenship the Corcyreans articulate a view of politics that steps aside from the demands of inheritance and emphasizes instead calculated decisions as the foundation of both friendship and sound policy. In the reckless quality of their approach to making these calculations, however, and in their disintegrative view of the composition of cities, the Corcyreans above all suggest that politics demands much more than a reconciliation to the fact of movement.
These demands of politics are sketched powerfully in negative in the account of the stasis that overcomes Corcyra against the background of the broader Hellenic war. Here the calculation and preparedness for change that the Corcyreans eulogize in their speech to the Athenians show up as sources of a terrible vulnerability to the compulsions of desire. In Thucydides’ account of the stasis he seems to suggest that these compulsions can be contained, even in the absence of a restraining culture, by an order of cooperative necessities between citizens that ordinarily structure politics. When war gives citizens non-political means to pursue their desires, however, the movement of the world at large spills into the city whose people are unable to resist the momentum it lends to their own compulsions.

The case of Corcyra argues that a politics that addresses movement requires more assertions of status and a temporal orientation attuned to the future: indeed, the Corcyreans demonstrate powerfully that both of these characteristics are dangerous accelerants of disintegrative movement. The alternative vision is that which, while being blamed for setting off this great movement of the whole Greek world, is also characterized by remarkable internal cohesion and coordination. Rather than relying on the oikos and its backwards glance to anchor Athens Pericles boldly demands of the Athenians that they set it aside, along with all of the loyalties to kinship, land and ancestry that goes along with it. In his disparagement of these institutions Pericles seems to recognize that it is not the fact of a kinship model of citizenship or authority that prevents Sparta from following the Corcyrean path to disintegration, rather it is their ability to direct inner compulsions of citizens away from private ends. When he implores the Athenians to take the city as their lover he hits upon a form of philia which, in his
metaphor, stimulates but also gathers up and directs these compulsions away from the city itself. The cohesion and coordination that this internal unification of the manifold disparate ends of the Athenians has a terrible cost, however, because it succeeds temporarily in strengthening Athens only by setting the rest of Hellas in motion.

**a) Corcyra: achieved friendship as alliance**

In the Archaeology Thucydides pursued the idea that smaller human orders (tribes, villages, small poleis) are gathered into larger orders (cities and empires) and that this process is the foundation of the power to build civilizations and pursue daring actions in common. Thucydides extends, in this way, the synoikism which mythically formed Athens itself to a more general pattern of development which encompasses both the growth of Athens and of its empire. We have seen the Corinthian approach to the founding of orders which emphasizes the extension of order outwards from an original source through colonization and considered the limitations of this view in light of Thucydides’ temporal perspective. Between these two accounts of the source of larger orders, however, comes a third: the Corcyrean pursuit of an Athenian alliance which rejects both synoikism and filial loyalty in favor of a form of voluntary, achieved friendship based in mutual aid.

The Corcyreans reject the mother city’s demands of filial loyalty by disputing the purpose of colonial foundings – which they argue should replicate the conditions of citizenship enjoyed by those who stayed behind in the metropolis. Colonists are thus equals, not subordinates (or “slaves”) of those left behind. Rejecting the maternal claims of the mother city, they also reject the synoikism that it may really stand for – a forced
gathering in of previously independent cities. Their demand that they be recognized as equals of the citizens of the metropolis suggests a principle of recognition of that independence as necessary to the recognition of the status of citizenship and, further, as a principle of just interaction between neutrals. This is, however, the quieter of two principles the Corinthians give to describe just relations between those who have no prior relationship to generate obligations to each other. (Recognition of citizenship is a principle of just interaction that, indeed, requires no deeper relationship to be established: it is a kind of justice that could pertain between the aphiloi. In this it mirrors the Corinthian demand for recognition of the equality of status between hegemons which they suggest should govern the relationship between old cities who are neither friends or enemies.) The second, and dominant principle of the speech, however, rests not on equality of status, but on claims of equality of strength, or at least on equality of exchange. It is not as equals in status, but as a city able to exchange equal benefits in an alliance that they approach the Athenians: it is as parties to equal or fair exchanges that neutrals may become friends. Such friendships are undertaken only for a compelling reason, but this reason itself is not subject to broader concerns for justice as was the interaction of hegemons in the Corinthian scheme: rather its particular kind of justice concerns simply the equal exchange.

Choosing friendships in pursuit of an interest requires a fundamentally different temporal stance from that embraced by the Corinthians. Rather than sharing the pose of the epimethean mother, the Corcyreans concern themselves very much with foresight. They begin by speaking of their own previous lack of the promethean virtue, and parlay this experience into a warning to the Athenians that looking with a proper concern to
their own future requires this alliance. In looking to the future, though, the Corcyreans recommend a strategic stance of continual foresight. Where the Corinthians looked to the past to identify and ground obligations, the Corcyreans suggest that looking to future threats compels immediate unity, but are more ambivalent about the course of such unity into the distant horizon. In their references to the more distant future they speak first of the gratitude of “undying memory” but shift later to the importance of “common enmity” as a source of loyalty and trust. What these arguments suggest is that the uncertainty of future loyalty must always be kept in mind when alliances are made on the basis of a strategic view of what is ahead. When friendships are made on this basis it must always be of concern to us whether they will be kept or broken on the same one, for the grounds of friendship also contain grounds for mistrust.

**i) The Justice of the fair exchange**

Where the Corinthians, so concerned with justice, begin their speech with necessity (anankaion – “it is necessary”), the Corcyreans begin with justice (dikaion – “it is just”). This initial invocation of dikē has rightly been described as simply the justice of rhetorical necessity.\(^{187}\) Justice is mentioned in the rest of the speech largely in Corcyrean complaints at the unjust treatment they have received from Corinth, and the potential injustice they would suffer should Athens deny their request for aid. It is worth untangling the Corcyrean perspective on justice as it appears in their speech because it reveals a stance on the potential grounds for cooperation between neutrals: it is the justice of achieved friendship. Of course, just as we saw that the Corinthian view of necessity

\(^{187}\) Orwin (1994), p39
was intertwined with a concern for justice, we should be prepared to find that the Corcyrean view of justice too confronts the issue of necessity.

The rhetorical necessity the Corcyreans face in addressing the Athenians, is nicely captured by Lattimore’s translation: “Athenians, there are reasonable obligations for people who, like ourselves at present, come before neighbors to ask for help when there is no prior claim based on great service or an alliance” (1.32.1). These obligations, though, unlike the ones of which the Corinthians spoke are not specific acts of loyalty and service directed towards a particular friend, but are the obligations the speakers must meet in order to achieve their ends: the first end is rhetorical (convincing the listeners of something), the second strategic (winning aid or alliance). Price has argued that the Corcyreans are here merely acknowledging this rhetorical necessity and that *dikaion* “can only mean proper or fit; it certainly implies none of the moral or legal compunction with which the Corinthians will presently endow the word”. It seems to me, however, that there is a sense in which the Corcyreans are giving some moral weight to the word in approving the rhetorical obligation that they confront here, for it represents the fact that an alliance of the sort they seek must at least have the character of a fair exchange. It is right that a rhetorical burden be on suppliants in such a case to prove that an exchange will be fair, and their approval of this rhetorical burden constitutes an approval of this principle of exchange (although such approval itself may be a rhetorical necessity.) In contrasting this sense of *dikē*, though, with that invoked by the Corinthians, Price prompts the valid objection that there is a great difference between the morality of a fair

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188 Price (2001), p83, he also suggests the Corcyrean preference for “practical advantage” over the moral or legal quality of the proposed course, a view they thus attribute to the Athenians in the opening of their speech.
exchange between two parties and the kind of broader legal and moral structure invoked by the Corinthians. The Corinthian view was, by comparison, concerned with much more than the mutual advantage of the parties and argued that that advantage itself was just in a deeper sense because grounded in a human order of *philia*, and, indeed, that justice must sometimes take precedent over advantage.

What this opening statement reveals, when placed next to the Corinthian speech and the concern for *anankē* developed there, is that the Corcyreans too are concerned with the links between justice and necessity, but only with the first two kinds outlined in the Corinthian speech: the compulsion of desires and the cooperative necessities. The third, that tied to necessary identity, is absent in the colony’s speech. The Corcyreans face a strategic necessity – their survival, or independence requires the assistance of Athens, and this first necessity implies the second – the rhetorical necessity of persuading the Athenians to their cause. The Corcyreans are in this way caught up in the first two kinds of necessity suggested by the Corinthian speech: strategic necessity, or the compulsion of fear which demands self-defence and produces for them the need for the help of other people. The result is a need to recognize the cooperative necessity that requires one to be predictable and acceptable in terms of the cultural context and strategic stance of those others. According to the Corinthians, it will be remembered, the Corcyreans have avoided both of these necessities because of their sense of independence. They have felt themselves to be autarchic because of their location and wealth and, not needing to cultivate allies, have thumbed their noses at the cultural niceties embodied in their traditional relationship to the metropolis: they have been beyond the reach of cooperative necessity because of their imperviousness to strategic
and material necessities. The Corcyrean speech, then, can be understood in terms of their recognition of the failure of their stance of autarkeia and their resulting recognition that they can no longer be aphilos. In essence, they must now respond to the demands of strategic and cooperative necessities and embrace some form of philia.

This dual recognition informs the Corcyreans’ opening gambit, and links justice to the practical need people have of each other. The nature of this kind of justice is made most clear by juxtaposing a counterfactual implied by the Corcyreans themselves against the Corinthian claims of the justice of prior obligations. In their acknowledgement that they have no “prior claim based on great service or an alliance” they suggest that, had there been such basis for a claim on Athenian help they would not now face the need to convince them of certain facts in order to entice them to enter an alliance. A certain kind of justice, if they were already allied, would compel the Athenians to aid them. At this level, then, the Corcyreans may be seen to uphold the authority of alliances, claimed too by Corinth, to compel one to particular acts. Cooperative necessity dictates that one fulfil these obligations or be unable to find cooperative allies in the future. In this, though, they mistake Athens’ sense of her own autarkeia and consequent aloofness from such concerns of cooperative necessity, for when the cooperation of others can be compelled through bia, concern for future cooperation does not restrain. Cooperative necessity requires a background of voluntary association. Either way, when the Athenians have the free choice to accept or reject their plea for aid, justice requires something different: the compulsion of cooperative necessity is upon the suppliants in this case. Where choice is the foundation of a relationship a reason must be offered and the cooperative necessities
which require the just exchange of benefits, gratitude, reliability and public justification must be satisfied.

Since an alliance of this kind is a strategic and voluntary one, it, unlike the exchange between parents and children, must be acceptable to both parties. The agreement must not, at minimum, bring any harm to the ally, and properly must “actually offer advantages” (1.32.1). The justice of this situation is marked by the fact that a party failing to prove that they can bestow advantages “should not be outraged at not getting what they requested” – outrage being the proper response to injustice. No one should be outraged at having an unequal or damaging exchange refused – for such an exchange is an unjust exchange, and acquiescence in it would be an act of generosity. The conventions governing the cooperative necessity of alliances holds, they imply, that a pre-existing obligation has the authority to trump considerations of interest and makes some claims compulsory, even to one’s cost. Again, though, they are apparently oblivious to the fact that the Athenians hold themselves aloof of cooperative necessity, or else they are trying to flatter them that they are respecters of convention.

The Corcyreans mention these elements of justice only to drop them: questions of generosity and prior obligation are irrelevant to this case, as the Athenians should feel compelled by their strategic interests to accept the Corcyreans, all the more so as the larger justice of the Corcyrean cause means there is no conflict between justice and expedience. When the exchange is so much in the interest of the Athenians, their concerns for honor, fear and self-interest should compel them to accept it. The Corcyreans, should such a clearly beneficial offer be refused, would be right in feeling
outraged and understanding the refusal as a positive injury since it would suggest that the Athenians would rather hurt their own interests than help those of the Corcyreans.

This is the first, and dominant, of two Corcyrean suggestions about the just approach to neutrals in this speech: alliances should be based on a just exchange of benefits, grounded in choice that is driven by the compulsion of strategic necessity.

**ii) The Promethean Virtue: the embrace of foresight**

When an alliance is to be grounded in a voluntary exchange of benefits in this way, the ability to assess those benefits and to calculate one’s need for them is of central importance in a way that it was not under the Corinthian proposal. The Corinthians argued that the existential necessity of necessary identity (*anankē*) compels colonies to obey *metropoleis*, whatever the cost to their interests or honor. Further they argued that relations between hegemons should be governed by calculations concerning, not naked interest, but the manner of upholding the justice of the hegemonic system, which is also in their interests, but only secondarily. The Corcyrean position, by contrast, puts calculation and prediction in the foreground of friendship: it has no other basis.

In making this case, though, the Corcyreans must navigate a treacherous path. Their own history, both in their factual isolation and their neglect of the obligations claimed by the Corinthians, renders the benefits they promise Athens uncertain. For this reason, as well as offering the Athenians something advantageous in exchange for their aid and the risks it will entail, the Corcyreans acknowledge that they must also demonstrate “that their gratitude can be relied on” (1.32.1). The Corcyreans reasonably suppose that the Athenians will find their previous policy of non-alignment
“inconsistent” (1.32.3) with their present request, which makes the policy now seem “disadvantageous” to the Corcyreans in their “situation at present.” The lack of a history of alliances renders one’s capacity for gratitude and reciprocity unknown and, hence, suspect. This history damages their ability to make the case convincingly – and yet the Corcyreans are confident it can be made (1.32.2), thus their case will rest not on their past record, but on something else – the lessons they have learned from their erring course.\(^\text{189}\) The most general of these is the need for accurate foresight from which they draw the particular lesson that friendlessness, especially in the context of the coming war with its assembling power blocs, is an untenable position. They seek to impress both of these lessons of strategic necessity upon the Athenians.\(^\text{190}\) In explaining their course the Corcyreans press on the idea that it was the result of a mistaken policy, indeed, of the embrace of the wrong virtues: what seemed *sophrosunē* turned out to be “folly and weakness (”*aboulia kai asthenia*”) (1.32.4).\(^\text{191}\) This revelation about the true nature and foundation of strength and weakness has suggested to them a strategic insight that the Corcyreans attempt to impress on the Athenians: alliance, the assembly of the greatest possible power is the only source of the necessary strength to survive the coming crisis–standing aloof is not wise (1.36). The Corinthians will presently promise to embrace this kind of principle of sheer strategic necessity if the Athenians ally with Corcyra. In their vision of a stable order of parallel hegemonies, though, they offer a different vision of

\(^{189}\) As well as stressing the future promise of their navy because of this inability (unlike the Corinthians) to cite any past favor to Athens as precedent, as Morrisson has noted in *Reading Thucydides*. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), p35, the Corcyrean attempt to have the whole of their past discounted as the product of a mistaken (and I would add, mistakenly Dorian) temporal stance.

\(^{190}\) Morrison (2006) correctly notes that they suggest that an Athenian refusal of their request for alliance would be a mistake of a similar kind to those the Corcyreans have made up until now, p36.

\(^{191}\) North (1966) notes that here *sōphrosynē* means “isolationism ” p110-111.
these necessary power blocs that is not oriented towards large scale war, but only to the disciplining of allies in a context of peace between the great cities.

The Corcyrean statement about sōphrosyunē has other resonances, however and suggests, at first glance, a shift from a more classically Dorian to an Athenian (and, especially, Periclean) vision of policy. Sōphrosynē was a classically Dorian and oligarchic virtue and is associated in this aspect in Thucydides’ history with slow deliberateness in action and self-restraint, as exemplified by the Spartan king Archidamos who claimed that it was sōphrosynē that allowed the Spartans to avoid “hybris in prosperity” (1.84.2). It is exactly hybris in prosperity, though, that the Corinthians attribute to the Corcyreans when they attack the policy of non-alignment that the colony here explains as having seemed sōphrosynē. While the Corcyreans invoke the virtue here in connection with the avoidance of risk, saying that they had sought to avoid “the risks brought on by the other party’s judgment (gnōmin)” (1.32.4), the metropolis replies that the Corcyreans have simply avoided the shame of having witnesses to their crimes. On this view, the claimed Corcyrean sōphrosynē is in an improper relationship to aidōs – a proper sense of shame. Corcyrean sōphrosynē only restrains them from entering relationships that will provide witnesses, and hence public shame – it does not restrain them from the crimes themselves. In contrast to a properly Spartan sōphrosynē then, the autarkeia that the Corcyreans enjoyed because of their prosperity led them to embrace isolation (aphilia) in order to facilitate crimes and avoid self-restraint. Corcyrean sōphrosynē also lacks a proper orientation towards hybris because isolation has simply facilitated Corcyrean hybris rather than restrained it. Corcyrean sōphrosynē is closer to

192 “What the classical sōphrosynē shares with the Homeric aidōs is chiefly a fear of overstepping boundaries. It is for this reason that both can restrain hybris, the arrogant violation of limits set by the gods or by human society”, North (1966), p6.
what has been called the simplest Homeric version of the virtue: “prudence in one’s own interest”.

From a rhetorical standpoint, however, the Corcyreans employ an interesting strategy with this assessment of their failed policy of friendlessness, because by invoking ἁπροσφυγή (a word Thucydides avoids in reference to Athenians), the failed policy is made resonant with Spartan or Dorian qualities. ἁπροσφυγή implies ἡσυχία (hesitation) and ἀπράγμοσυνή (aloofness, minding one’s own business) and, in explaining it in terms of the risks brought on by the judgment of others, the Corcyrean speakers also suggest a policy of slow deliberation and general inaction of a very Spartan kind. Their comment that the apparent ἁπροσφυγή has been revealed as “folly and weakness” echoes a popular opposition of ἁπροσφυγή to bravery which will be outlined by the Corinthians, ironically enough, in their speech at Sparta. It points also to the large degree to which their ἁπροσφυγή has meant “prudence” in the sense of the avoidance of risk. The lack of wisdom in their own judgment in adopting this strategy was revealed by their isolation against Corinth – who are able to assemble “a large force from the Peloponnesos and the rest of Hellas.” (1.32.7) This showed them “that we cannot survive through our own strength alone”: Coryccean autarkeia has been revealed as a mistaken strategy based on an illusory assessment of themselves and their situation, in particular, they are suggesting, their dependence on Dorian cultural traits of hesitation and aloofness have stood them in ill stead.

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193 North (1966), p4. For North ἁπροσφυγή here means isolationism. Similarly, Hornblower argues against any oligarchic overtones here (1991, p77). It seems clear, however, that it is the Dorian, oligarchic version that is being invoked here by the very use of the word, even though the Corcyreans are clearly not exemplars of it. To portray it as self-interestedness, perhaps, merely plays to the Athenian view that Spartan virtue is simply a matter of a polished self-interest. That they reject the Dorian virtue in favor of foresight seems to be a case of drawing a clear contrast between ethnic catch words and to signal that they are throwing their lot in with the Ionian Athenians.

This rejection of ἁπαθροσύνη marks a shift to a stance that embraces foresight and pre-emptive activity – which they recommend to the Athenians as the fruits of their own unfortunate experience. In this they appear to embrace the qualities that, so often in Thucydides’ work are associated with Athens (not least in the Athenians’ self-understanding), and which are opposed to Spartan ἀπράγμοσύνη and ἕσσυχία. The Corecyreans, in failing to assess properly their own strength and that of others have failed to look to the future appropriately: the avoidance of risk is no substitute for aggressively positioning oneself to anticipate and preempt future threats in just the way the Athenians do. Similarly, in their reference to their position on the route to Sicily the Corecyreans endorse the Athenian principle of taking advantage of opportunities for gain. The rest of their speech concerns very directly their own view of the future, for themselves but especially for the Athenians. They seek to promote a quality associated in Thucydides’ work with Athens, and especially with Pericles, pronoia (although they do not use the word here). They suggest to the Athenians that a Corecyrean alliance is in keeping with the very essence of Athenian policy and that to reject it would be a failure to act like Athenians. The Athenians will foresee the advisability of allying with Corecyra if they consider three things: justice, Corecyrean gratitude and the Corecyrean navy (1.33.1). With reference to the navy they suggest that Athens will get, from this alliance, something for free that would come otherwise only “at a high cost in both money and gratitude,” and which they will desperately need. Absent this alliance, strategic necessities will dictate that they turn to two alternative sources of augmented power: employing mercenaries, or begging for favors. The Corecyrean navy is available to them now, however, without cost and will actually come along with Corecyrean “gratitude in undying memory
Rather than owing gratitude to others when the crisis comes, the Athenians can now accrue a great store of it from the most powerful naval force besides themselves.

By emphasizing the amount of gratitude they will owe the Athenians, the Corcyreans gradually drop their emphasis on its duration. While they begin by stressing that their gratitude will be etched in Corcyrean memories forever, notes of doubt enter their references to gratitude as the speech proceeds. The weight of Corcyrean history, their lack of gratitude towards the mother city, for example, can only put their capacity for gratitude in serious doubt to any thoughtful listener. When they assert that the most important advantage they offer the Athenians is that they “have the same enemies”, they explain that this is “the strongest basis for trust” (1.35.7). There is nothing in this claim, however, that is more binding than commonality of interests – and holds within itself the possibility that, should those interests, or perceptions of them, change, so would the foundation for trust. It is a vision of trust that falls in the face of competing interests, (that may outweigh enmity, for example), and excludes, therefore, those cases where trust is most important – where obligations may stand in the way of the pursuit of interest.

The difficulty of trusting in Corcyrean gratitude points to a flaw in their arguments concerning foresight. When friendships are grounded in mutual aid and cemented by strategic calculations about mutual advantage, recalculations about advantage may provide a solvent. It is true that obligations taken on voluntarily may be considered just as binding and inviolable as those grounded in identity – an obligation is, after all, an obligation. Grounding the obligation in shared interests, however, raises the possibility of justifying their abrogation in a way that obligations grounded in necessary identities
avoid. After all, necessary identities, at least on the Corinthian reading, oblige even to one’s cost. When a relationship is purposive, it becomes somewhat harder to tolerate such costs.

The third advantage the Corcyreans list is that the Athenians “will be helping those who are being treated unjustly.” It is not, however, a recommendation for justice, so much as an assertion of the importance of the cooperative necessity of reputation to approaching basic strategic necessities. Since strategic necessity will dictate that the Athenians will need to augment their forces through mercenaries or alliances, they must concern themselves with their reputation – and a reputation for aretē (Lattimore helpfully translates this it as “generosity”), will stand them in good stead. For while their true concern will be the strategic advantage of being able to employ the Corcyrean navy, the injustice of the Corinthian campaign against her colony will give them the justification that will make their action seem like generosity. This suggestion of aretē points to the noble generosity of the justice that is abstracted from relationships and prior obligations that we see explored in the Corinthian speech: that most noble justice that is not compelled by a relationship and its obligations. The very “neutrality” of the Corcyreans, then, simply adds to the benefits alliance with them will bestow on Athens. The Corcyreans in this way suggest that strategic necessity compels the alliance, but that it also (via cooperative necessity and Corcyrean isolation) need not appear that way (providing further strategic benefits). Now we can see that the suggestion that the Athenians too may need to be concerned with such cooperative necessities as reputation is not based on Corcyrean obliviousness to the Athenian stance of autarkeia. It is part of their attempt to depict the strategic situation as one in which everyone will need allies.
They hope, like the Corinthians, to convince the Athenians that it is not feasible to take
the stance of the *aphilos*, even for the great Athens.

A certain hollowness attends these arguments about the strategic advantages of a
reputation for justice, in that the Corcyreans offer no explicit account of the justice of
their cause, beyond the insistence that they themselves are being treated unjustly. And yet
at least two of their claims seem to require it. 195 A vision of justice beyond that of the
equal exchange can be constructed from the speech, however, by considering the
Corcyrean account of the Corinthian injustices against them. This itself is raised in order
to deal with the question of the legalistic injustice of breaking the treaty by allying with
the (putatively already allied) Corcyreans.

### iii) The Justice of Equality

The sense of justice the Corcyreans invoke when they complain of unjust treatment at the
hands of the mother city is intimately connected with the issue of equality. It has been
observed that the opposition between Corinthian and Corcyrean senses of “justice” in the
speeches rests on their evaluations of the equality or subordination of the colony. 196 The
Corcyreans anticipate the Corinthian assertion of an alliance based in the colonial relation
and attack the foundations of such a claim by arguing that the relationship is a conditional
one: “every colony honors the mother city when it is treated properly but is alienated
(*alloétrιũtai*) when treated unjustly” (1.34.1). This allegation of injustice is given some

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195 The first is the claim that absent strategic disadvantage (and hopefully outright benefits) justice compels,
so that failure to help in a just cause is a ground for outrage. The second is the claim that they will win a
reputation for virtue by helping those who are being treated unjustly.

content when the Corcyreans continue: “colonists are not sent out to be the slaves of those who stay behind but their equals (homoioi)” (1.34.1).

In this use of “homoios” the Corcyreans point to the very contrast of achieved and ascribed status Thucydides has outlined in his introduction of the two states, for the word encompasses both equality (or sameness) of strength and equality of status. The Corcyrean point here, then, is complex. Do they mean that colonies are sent out to be the equals in strength of the mother city? At one level the contrast with slavery suggests this, for slavery implies always a kind of violent domination: it is always a matter of physical compulsion with no expectation of just submission, either violence or the threat of it. A colony which is an equal in strength, then, is one that cannot be literally enslaved by the mother city. The Corcyrean point, however, (facing a Corinthian alliance that - unlike the simple strength of the mother city itself - threatens to engulf the colony) is that the colony is the equal in status of the metropolis. They invoke similitude of status as an obstacle to the application of force. Equals should not enslave each other, even if they have the strength to do so.

In terms of what status, though, are the Corcyreans claiming equality to the metropolis, and how does this status relate to the unequal status Corinth insists on for the colony? The answer lies in the status of citizenship. The suggestion that the citizens of the colony are sent out to be equals of those who stay behind might be taken to imply that the Corcyreans are, in some way, citizens of Corinth – and hence their equals. Yet this surely would be intolerable to people so attached to their independence, implying as it

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197 See reference to Lidell & Scott note 103 above.
198 Williams, pp116-117.
199 While this possibility of colonial citizenship in the metropolis has been explored by scholars of Greek colonization it has generally now been rejected, cf Graham (1964), Malkin (1987).
does a direct Corinthian hand in Corcyrean affairs – even if Corcyreans might in turn participate in the decisions of the metropolis. Another possibility might be entertained: that the Corcyreans are talking about equality not, of all human beings, but of those who are citizens of a polis. The Corinthians should recognize Corcyrean independence because they should recognize the equality of the Corcyreans’ citizenship in their own city. That this is the central meaning of the Corcyrean statement is, I believe, confirmed by an interesting shift in focus in the statement here, between the city as actor to the city as a community of citizens, from the singular abstract “apoikia” in “every colony (pasa apoikia) honors the mother city” to the collective voice of “we were not sent out (ekpempontai) to be slaves (tō douloi)”.

Nicole Loraux has noticed similar shifts of focus in her study of epitaphioi and interpreted them as indications of an imperial ideology that, by abstracting the city (hē polis), seeks to deny the multiplicity, the cleavages, of the city as a community of citizens (hoi Athenaioi). Here it occurs instead as a form of resistance to imperial ideology. In speaking of colonization not as a relationship between cities, but between colonists and those who stay behind, the Corcyreans highlight the composition of cities from individual citizens rather than the strength with which these collectivities confront each other. This focus on the aggregative nature of cities is central to the Corcyrean point of view – ultimately, as the stasis shows, to their detriment, where it becomes, by contrast, a disintegrative and atomistic view. It stands, however, as a corrective to the Thucydidean habit – evinced in the account of the Corcyrean affair as much as anywhere – of speaking of cities as actors, as though they were monolithic entities. As the Corcyrean stasis will

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reveal, and as the Epidamnian conflict points out here, there is an important “tension between the ideal of a united polis and factionalism.”

The contrast between slavery and equality serves further to suggest that the Corcyreans are appealing here to the fact that Corcyreans and Corinthians alike are citizens of cities and should be respected, in this way, as equals in status. Since, “the only entirely free employments were law, politics and military service” the Corcyrean point here is resonant: if they were not free to conduct their own law, politics and military commitments (which would be the case if they are not free to choose their own allies), in what sense are they truly citizens, equals of those in Corinth? In an important way, later explored by Aristotle, the authority to make decisions requires autonomy for the polis. “For,” says Aristotle, “it is impossible that a city that is by nature slavish merits being called such: the city is self-sufficient, but what is slavish is not self-sufficient.”

To demand the rule of the mother city is to destroy the autonomy of the colony, which is the only thing that makes citizenship in it truly meaningful – the ability of citizens to conduct the business of politics and self-government. Pericles too argues this case to the Athenians in his final speech, imploring them to recognize the city as the only guarantor of their safety and property (2.60-64).

Such recognition is more than simply symbolic (though it is importantly this, as the substance of the disagreements between the cities shows) but extends quickly to matters of policy. At one level we can see that the Corcyreans make a legitimate complaint in describing the Corinthian attitude as that of slave masters, for the

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204 See Manville, (1990) “if decision making belongs to the citizens, the polis must be autonomous – responsible for its own political affairs.”
substantive Corinthian expectations of her colonies attack the heart of those realms of life that were essentially and definitively free and citizen and, hence, seeks to carry them over into the realm of the unfree. Morrison attributes to the Thucydidean analogy between cities and individuals as actors the lesson that the practices that maintain peace within cities should be applied to the relationships between cities also. In their claim about equality the Corcyreans make the same point, but by rejecting rather than embracing the analogy. This instance of Corcyrean concern for the status of citizenship points, I think, to the limitations of the strategy Morrison identifies in the Thucydidean analogy: pointed in the wrong direction, it may justify treatment of individuals with the injustice that typically characterizes the relations between cities – and this is the Corcyrean complaint against Corinth.

If this is the case, not just the Corinthians, but all Greek cities fall far short of justice in their treatment of the citizens of other poleis: defeated cities may be subjected utterly to the victor; their citizens stripped of citizenship and turned into literal slaves. This, of course, is part of Aristotle’s point: cities must be able to defend themselves to maintain their independence and, hence, the title of polis, and that this end alone delimits justified military action. The Corcyrean claim for recognition of equality in citizenship (quiet and quickly abandoned as it is) is a potent critique of imperialism in general for rendering independent poleis subject and hence their citizens something less than citizens. That citizenship itself, though, is utterly dependent upon a city’s ability to

205 Morrison (2006) devotes a fascinating chapter to the Thucydidean analogy between city and individual. Ch. 6, pp103-115. For claims concerning the lessons of internal politics for inter-polis relations, see especially p113.

206 Indeed, it has been suggested that, at least in the case of Athens, the development of prohibitions against enslaving fellow citizens helped shape the distinction between citizen and slave, but also may have led to the need to replace domestic with foreign slaves: Manville (1990), p132-133. This would have had the effect of simply increasing the pressure on citizens of other poleis. As Manville continues, this served also to sharpen the distinction between Athenians and foreigners.
maintain its independence and independence is not, in reality, maintained by recognition of the status of its citizens, but by military strength.\textsuperscript{207} The anti-imperial implications are not drawn out, however, by the Corcyrean speakers – unsurprisingly not only given their audience, but the general character of the Corcyreans themselves. We have, in the Corcyrean speech as in that of the Corinthians two alternative visions of Hellenic order. One, the just one, is here not the just \textit{philia} of existential necessity, but the justice of the recognition of autonomy and citizenship. Since this is not, in fact, respected they must have recourse to military strength to support what they argue is just, just as the Corinthians did. Here, then, first \textit{autarkeia} and \textit{aphilia}, and then military action and alliance are justified by reference to a vision of just order, just as the same things were condemned by the Corinthian vision of justice. For the Corinthians, however, respect for a stable view of equality and inequality of status was a way of maintaining the strength of \textit{hegemonai} where, for the Corcyreans, equality of status justifies an aggressive, and perhaps temporary, pursuit of alliances to build strength. This vision of the relationship between equality and strength informs their ultimate view of the nature of cities themselves which is fundamentally aggregative and, as we shall see, prone to slide quickly into justifying a disintegrative and atomistic orientation.

The Corcyrean demand here is supported by their deflation of the central Corinthian conceit, the metaphor of mother city and daughter colony: the Corinthian

\textsuperscript{207} In this, though, one might ask whether the Corcyreans are more in line with Diodotus, who argues that while internal politics may be a realm of concern for justice, such things are alien to that of foreign policy, where expediency should rule, or with Aristotle, who finds inconsistent the phenomenon that those who demand justice at home are content to inflict injustice on those abroad, especially through imperial adventures. It points, perhaps, to a weakness of Aristotle’s argument, in his insistence on the autonomy of cities and their self-defense in the context of his similar demand that cities treat each other justly: at some level even cities who desire and can articulate demands for justice in international affairs, must submit to the realities of international injustice. (Of course, Aristotle’s object here is to condemn the thoughtless aggression of imperialist politics.) For a discussion on Diodotus on this point, see Morrison (2006), p112.
argument rests on a view of the cities as monolithic, rather abstract entities standing in rather simple relation to each other. The Corcyrean demand to be viewed as a city composed of individual citizens, on the other hand, points to a more complex reality – which includes ties of real kinship between the citizens of the two cities that may generate obligations quite contrary to those asserted on behalf of the metropolis. The literal *oikos* and its obligations stands as a rebuke to the ideological use of a metaphorical *oikos*. A second strand of the objection, however, is implied by translating the suggestion of citizenship back to the level of the city and points out a way in which the Corinthian metaphor is profoundly apolitical because it bypasses the typical institutions of the polis. The “time metaphysic” of the Corinthian scheme is inadequate to political life as it is lived by citizens, because it fails to acknowledge the fact that grown children, while still in the debt of their parents and their unequals in the parental-filial relationship, are their equals in status in terms of citizenship.

The truest perspective of the Corcyreans is revealed by another shift of focus between city and citizens. Where the first shift to the level of individual citizens focused attention on the individual’s status as a member of a political community, (which in turn justified a view of the relationship between cities as concerning relative strength), the second shift reveals a darker vision. When the Corcyreans return again, late in the speech, to the view that cities are aggregations of individuals, the individual citizen is now considered from the perspective not of status, but of power, and his relationship to the city is revealed as tenuous and voluntary. If cities must address the reality of aggressive imperialism, the consideration of equality of status must always collapse into considerations of relative power, and for the Corcyreans this means a consideration of the
actual foundations of military strength. In their emphasis upon the significance of mercenaries to the Corinthian force the Corcyreans stress the composition of cities from individuals, not viewed as citizens, but as units of force (1.35.3-7). Corcyrean anger at the Corinthian insistence upon a monolithic and metaphorical view of city actors is evident in the analogy they make between their own proposed alliance and the mercenary force being assembled by the Corinthians. They find it “intolerable” that “they [the Corinthians] have the opportunity to recruit crews from your allies and the rest of Hellas in addition, and last but not least from your own subjects” while Corcyra is supposedly prevented from allying with Athens because of the treaty. Obligations are, for the Corinthians, apparently binding on cities, while their citizens may happily be recruited away whatever obligations their home cities have. Here again the freedom of citizens is the reality that must be recognized in the context of the relations between cities, and which renders many of the claims of cities meaningless obstacles. The Corcyrean rejection of the analogy between citizen and city serves here to destroy the moral agency that may be claimed for the city on its basis: as an aggregation of individuals, many of them not citizens, the city has no center of responsibility because it has no core at all.\textsuperscript{208}

This is not, perhaps, a promising statement coming from a city asking for a favor, repayment of which relies on their “undying gratitude”.

The freedom of citizens, here goes beyond the freedom tied to the \textit{status} of citizenship, and suggests ways in which the power of cities is ultimately eroded by the self-serving actions of individuals. It is, rather, a supra-political freedom that permits the individual to abandon (or rather, cannot stop him from abandoning) his polis and its ties.

\textsuperscript{208} For a discussion of the implications for collective moral agency implied by the analogy between cities and individuals, see Morrison (2006), pp111 – 112. Cited here are Hornblower (1991-96, I:127; cf.131) and White (1984), p64.
and obligations, and sell his military prowess, or brute strength, to the highest bidder.\textsuperscript{209} The claims to individual equality in status dissolve in the face of the equality of individuals in terms of power (\textit{bia}). Indeed, this supra-political freedom that sees individuals deserting their cities to be mercenaries, by powering imperial adventures, ultimately undermines the equality of citizens by threatening the autonomy that supports the status of citizen. The Corcyrean refusal to acknowledge the analogy between individuals and cities in terms of moral agency, rather than making space for justice in relations between cities (which is its first promise in the critique of Corinth), ultimately empties the city itself of justice. Without acknowledging the legitimacy of the analogy, in short, it is as if the Corcyreans have applied the model of the most aggressive realism advocated by cities and used it to describe individual behavior within them. Individuals, like cities, are compelled by the basic \textit{anankai} of honor, fear and self-interest and, if able to leave (or as we will see, betray) their city in pursuit of them, they are no longer constrained by the cooperative necessity that attends citizenship. Selling their personal \textit{bia} abroad they can unleash the collective \textit{bia} of cities on each other.

The power of cities and their claims to equality or otherwise, then, are not dependent upon the history and status of those cities \textit{as cities}, nor on respect for the status of their citizens, but on the actual force in men, wealth and technology that cities can muster and hold together. This approach concentrates attention upon the changeability

\textsuperscript{209} Ostwald, \textit{Anankē in Thucydides}. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), p11 discusses the relative freedom and subjection to \textit{anankai} of citizen conscripts and mercenary soldiers. Whereas citizen soldiers are subject to the \textit{anankē} of social pressures (which they could resist at the cost of disgrace), mercenaries are subject to the \textit{anankē} of being “detailed to tasks for which they have no taste.” Thucydides’ view that mercenaries are not serving voluntarily as compared to citizen soldiers (VII.48.5) rests on the fact that their motive for going to war is pecuniary. Mercenaries are compelled by self-interest, while citizens, in our terms, are compelled by a cooperative necessity inherent in citizenship. The ultimate Corcyrean view, then, is that the \textit{anankai} of desire make the cooperative necessities of cities merely hurdles that the determined citizen can jump in their pursuit of self-interested ends.
and vulnerability of the power of cities in a way that is quite in keeping with Thucydides’ account in the Archaeology. The Corcyrean account here points also to the fact that Corinth too is aware of this fact, in spite of her protestations that what matters fundamentally is the justice of the ascriptive hierarchies between cities which, if recognized, can overcome shortfalls in actual power.

Two principles of justice between neutrals can be reconstructed from the Corcyrean speech, one concerned with the measurement of strength, and the other with the measurement of status. In the first, a friendship of utility can be arranged on the basis of a fair exchange of benefits. Achieved, rather than ascribed, this kind of friendship requires a stance towards the future of foresight and calculation – both of benefits and of the likelihood that one’s friend will bestow them when the time comes. The justice of this kind of friendship, though, is limited, and concerns only the fairness of the exchange. The more robust form of justice implied throughout the speech, especially in their complaints against Corinth, but also in their assertions that Athenian help will be just, is the justice of recognizing citizenship as a general category: it is just to recognize that citizens of any polis are in this fundamental way each others’ equals in status. Justice in international relations means supporting actions designed to uphold the independence of cities that underwrites citizenship.

Just as did the Corinthians’ demands regarding a kind of justice based on the status of ascriptive hierarchies, the Corcyrean suggestion of a justice of equal status in citizenship butts against inequalities of strength and demands self-restraint. Where the Corinthians demanded the voluntary submission of the stronger city on the grounds of
ascriptive inferiority, the Corcyreans suggest that strong cities and weak alike share the status of being home to citizens. If cities are truly to recognize and respect the citizenship of others, they must respect also the autonomy of their cities: it is an anti-imperial conception of justice (without, of course, being a fully blown cosmopolitan or universalistic one).

In both senses of justice invoked by the Corcyreans, cities approach each other without prior obligations or relationships: both encompass the situation of the kind of *aphilos* city they claim to be. Their vision of the nature of the city itself is substantially the same in both cases, but with profoundly different outcomes: in each case the salient thing to be recognized is that cities are composed of individual men. The status of cities, the requirement that they be left autonomous, is simply the condition of the status of the citizens who compose them. Similarly, in evaluating the relative strength of cities (a preliminary to any exchange of help) what must ultimately be recognized is that this strength is built on the force of individuals. In this last point they reveal what turns out to be the central truth of Corcyrean domestic politics: an aggregative vision of the strength of cities with regard to each other turns out to fuel a disintegrative vision of cities themselves. The Corcyrean talk of undying gratitude and secure trust between themselves and the Athenians appears all the more hollow when they cannot even envisage any stable basis for loyalty between citizens and their own cities.

When the Corcyreans return from demands of recognition of the equality of the status of citizenship to the reality of the inequality of power between cities, it seems like appropriate realism: absent the self-restraint of the powerful, citizenship is never recognized because it requires that cities be free and autonomous. Suggesting, however,
that cities themselves should be reduced to the calculating perspective of relative strength – a sheer assembly of numbers, slave, free, mercenary, citizen – conceptually effaces the city itself because it fails to recognize the significance of the status of citizen, or any way in which citizens and cities are mutually constitutive.\textsuperscript{210} If they took such a view they would find, as we have consistently done in this study, that a concern for status rather than, or in addition to, considerations of power, requires self-restraint. The events that overtake Corcyra during its \textit{stasis} illustrate powerfully the centrality of self-restraint and the restraints provided by institutions to all alliances and friendships.

\textsuperscript{210} Manville (1990) explores this interdependence pp5-6.
b) The *stasis* at Corcyra: foresight, friendship and survival

The *stasis* that overwhelms Corcyra in Book 3, viewed through the lens of the Corcyrean speech at Athens in Book 1, appears as the working out at the level of the polis of the logic and principles that informed that speech. In particular, we see there the complete overthrow of the *anankē* of kinship (necessary identity) that the Corcyreans rejected at Athens. The manifestations of the second kind of *anankē*, the cooperative necessities which demand reciprocity, gratitude, and above all, trustworthiness as the foundation to achieved friendship, are also destroyed in the civil war. When the institutions that both rely on and reinforce these necessities, such as the assembly and the law courts, are made hollow by deception, these cooperative necessities no longer compel – and the belief that they do points only towards destruction. The citizens of Corcyra are left with the *anankē* of desires for prestige and self-interest – or as Thucydides describes them here, greed (*pleonexia*) and ambition (*philotimia*) – and the necessity of assuming that they compel others equally. In their relations with each other, then, it is with the assumption of violent force (*bia*) that they must approach the matter of predicting the future and calculating their path, and it is a path that no longer can lead to, or make use of, friendship. With the political realm destroyed, they confront each other not as fellow citizens to be recognized as equals, nor as kin towards whom *anankē* may require voluntary submission: both the polis and the oikos are overthrown as the Corcyreans no longer approach each other even as potential slaves to be mastered by force. Instead, complete destruction is the only goal of this most improvident warfare.
i) The overthrow of necessary identities

At the end of his narrative of the first part of the Corcyrean civil war, Thucydides uses his own voice to deliver a powerful commentary on the Corcyrean stasis, and those others that follow it in the Hellenic cities. Central to this commentary, and most remarked upon by scholars, is his account of the “revolution in thinking” that overcame the cities during the *staseis*, which involved a stark inversion of valuation (3.82). Along with the revolution in thinking, though, went what might be called a revolution in *philia* as the old grounds of association were upended and replaced. Thucydides’ baldest statement in this regard is that “kinship (*sungenes*) became alien (*allotrioteron*) compared with party affiliation (*hetairikou*), because the latter led to drastic action with less hesitation (*aprophasistos tolmaan*)” (3.82.6). In this statement we can see enumerated again the themes of the argument between Corinth and Corcyra which linked alienated kinship with a principle of swift and decisive action, and which also reflected the contrasting civic temperaments of the Spartans and Athenians. To understand how these themes fit together in the account of the *stasis* we should consider first what Thucydides tells us about its causes.

The first thing to say is that abandonment of kinship is not the cause of the *stasis*. Rather, as 3.82.6 suggests, it is overthrown because it stands in the way of the progress of the civil war itself which comes to demand bold and unhesitating action. This is because, when other forms of affiliation may lead to “hesitation” rather than action, accomplishing the ends of one’s faction in the stasis simply requires that factional loyalty be paramount. A situation of strain, then, throws up tensions in multiple facets of identity, and filial, for example, may be set against factional loyalty. When one wishes to accomplish the goals
of his faction he sides with his faction so strongly that identities that are actually more “necessary” are treated as more alien. This preference for the achieved philia of the faction over the ascribed one of kinship is, as we have seen, a thoroughly antinomial one so that we should look to Thucydides for an explanation of how this upending of conventional order occurred.\footnote{Orwin (1994) notes “standing by one’s kin was the true north of the Greek moral compass, the bedrock of social relations”, p179, so that its overthrow suggests, indeed, that the Corcyreans have suffered what Macleod calls moral perversion.}

He tells us that the leaders of the factions were motivated by a desire to rule (archē) which was based in “greed and ambition” (pleonexian kai philotimian) (3.82.8), although they concealed their motives with the slogans “political equality for the masses” (plēthous tē isonomias politikēs) and “the moderation of aristocracy” (aristokratias sōphronos) (3.82.8). The motivations of greed and ambition map onto two of the three basic compulsions listed by the Athenians in their speech at Sparta. They said there that anankai towards prestige or honor (timēs) and self-interest (ōphelias) (1.75.2) characterized all ordinary human behavior (anthropou tropou) whenever there was the opportunity to pursue them. The third anankē, fear, does not motivate the stasis itself but as the conflict progresses it is only action motivated by fear that is successful or prudent.

We should regard philotimia and pleonexia, or timē and ōphelia, as included in Thucydides’ meaning when he says of human nature that, if it remains the same, it will always result in the same cruelties (3.82.2). He qualifies this statement, however, noting that the occurrence of these cruelties will not be constant but will occur “sometimes more terribly and sometimes less, varying in their forms as each change of fortune dictates.” His next sentence suggests that he means by this that the broader context of war and peace is determining. “For in peace,” he says,
and good circumstances, both states and individuals have better inclinations (*amenous tas gnōmas*) through not falling into involuntary necessities (*akousious anankas*); but war, stripping away the easy access to daily needs, is a violent teacher (*biaios didaskalos*) and brings most men’s passions into line with the present situations (3.82.2).

In the context of his broader observations about the *staseis* in Hellas during the war we can see that Thucydides means that the war increases the incidence and cruelty of civil conflict. When we consider this statement also in light of the Athenian account of the *anankē* of desires, it appears that *philotimia* and *pleonexia* are given new opportunities of satisfaction by the broader wartime context. The war gives those ambitious and greedy men who lead the factions opportunities and pretexts to call in outsiders, “with alliances available to both factions for damaging their opponents and at the same time strengthening themselves” (3.82.1). At the same time the population at large, stressed by the exigencies of the broader war were more easily swept into factional conflict both out of need and out of the debasing experience of war. 212 Orwin puts it nicely: “in times of peace, these actional leaders would less readily gain a hearing (perhaps even with themselves); in wartime they feed on the prevailing anxiety.”213

Balot has suggested that the material scarcity imposed by war makes the pursuit of “power as instrumentality” (that is, as the currency by which other desires – for material things or tokens of recognition – are won) a “zero-sum game”. 214 This connects the perspective, perhaps, of the men dominated by *pleonexia* and *philotimia* to the more

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212 Colin Macleod puts this point eloquently, “the war supplied opportunities to the *stasiotai* for bringing in the belligerents (3.82.1); it also encouraged faction by debasing men’s behavior… the war increases power; but at the same time, by imposing pressure, it reduces welfare and perverts morals”. “Thucydides on Faction” in *Collected Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp123-139, p124.

213 Orwin (1994), p177

ordinary concerns for daily needs which, during war, can no longer be separated from the pursuit of power. The uncertainties, brutalities and shortages of war, then, produce a situation and an outlook in which the ordinary anankai of daily needs are pursued in the manner of the anankai for honor and self-interest – philotimia and pleonexia.

The rejection of necessary identities, of the ties of kinship, in favor of those of faction should be seen as a result of these larger causes which can be summed up, perhaps, as a radical change in the circumstances in which people feel anankē and pursue their desires. The choice to make kinship alien when compared to faction is not, fundamentally, the choice of democratic or oligarchic identity over the necessary ones of kinship: factional membership is a vehicle for the pursuit of private ends that are not so well supported by membership in the oikos. As the stasis progressed these private ends were reduced to those of basic survival which came to dictate the abandonment of all other associations in favor of faction simply because “citizens in the middle either because they had not taken sides or because begrudged their survival, were destroyed by both factions” (3.82.8).

With the causes of the stasis in mind we can look again at the reasons Thucydides gives for the abandonment of kinship in favor of faction and begin to draw from them an understanding of how philia is used, transformed and ultimately, destroyed by the stasis. In the rejection of kinship for faction there is, of course, a clear echo of the stance of the Corecyreans in their speech at Athens where kinship’s claims were rejected in favor of an achieved friendship grounded in the pursuit of interest. If we consider the rejection of kinship within the city in light of the arguments made in the earlier speeches we will see that the debate there between ascriptive and achieved status, equality as status and as
strength, and between self-restraint and decisive action show up clearly again in the account of the *stasis*.

The alienation of kinship that Thucydides describes as part of the *stasis* echoes exactly the terms used by the Corcyreans to describe their relationship with the Corinthians in their speech. There it appeared in a conditional statement: “every colony honors the mother city when it is treated properly but is alienated when treated unjustly” (1.34.1), here it is comparative and passive, kinship is not alienated by actions of one’s relatives, but becomes alien. In their speech the Corcyreans suggested that while the relationship between colony and metropolis was conditional it should ordinarily be honored. During the *stasis*, by contrast, kinship obligations fall victim to the exigencies of the broader situation; no injury voids them. As we have seen, the pressure of the *anankai* of honor and prestige, and that more basic one to do with fear for survival, were felt keenly during the conflict. Even without injury or fault, kinship must become alien compared to faction because of these pressures.

Yet the Corinthian argument against Corcyra at Athens suggests that even in this situation their basic judgment about the correct ordering of the *anankē* of kinship over the *anankē* of desire and interest must hold. The Corinthians argued that the obligations of necessary identity may compel one to submit to treatment, or to commit to a course of action, against one’s own perceived interest or preference. It may be a voluntary submission, or surrender of autonomy, when one’s actual strength would allow rebellion. In short, “necessary identities” generate obligations that compel by requiring self-restraint and even self-sacrifice. The Corinthians, in their warnings to the Athenians, had argued that refusing to support an order built upon this stance threatened to put all
relations on the basis not of *philia* but of the basic confrontation of *bia*. Here we are reminded that in his account of the causes of *stasis* Thucydides gives us two threads of argument. On the one hand the broader context of war created opportunities and pressures that changed the experience of *anankē*. On the other hand, the experience of war itself changed the character of men – as Macleod put it, war “perverted morals”. In the account of the *staseis* the abandonment of kinship is symbolic of the abandonment of all restraint, and alienated kinship is the most powerful symbol of this for, of all necessities, necessary identity is perhaps the one whose compulsive force is most a matter of *self*-restraint, exemplifying as it does the possibility of a status that cannot always enforce respect for itself, but should be respected nonetheless.

It is exactly this self-restraint that Thucydides points to when he explains the alienation of kinship in favor of faction in terms of the greater hesitation kinship sets in the way of drastic action. The sentence is resonant with elements of the Corcyrean speech as well, however, in its invocation of hesitation which the Corcyreans come to reject as an obstacle to bold and swift action. Here he does not use the Spartan *hēsychia*, however, to capture the kind of slow, deliberate action that is rejected in the *stasis*. Instead when he says that faction led to swift action with less hesitation he uses the phrase “*aprophasistōs toλman*”. *Aprophasistōs* captures something of the perspective of the Corcyreans who have undergone a revolution in thinking because it suggests lack of hesitation in its literal sense of “without excuse”.  

Deferring to kinship comes to seem an ignoble lack of the manly courage required of the *stasiotatoi* when “moderation came

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215 Orwin (1994), makes the wonderful point that “Kinship makes excuses; faction does not accept any” p179. This confirms the point made by the Corinthians at I.41.1 when they stress the importance of exact exchange between themselves and the Athenians precisely because they are neither friends nor enemies (and the only foundation of friendship they recognize in that speech is kinship.) Kinsmen may demand and give flexibility and, as Orwin notes, make excuses; neutrals may not – and, neither may hetaioroi.
to seem lack of manhood [courage]”  (*to de sôphron tou anandrou*) (3.82.4). His use of *aprophasistōs* comes after this opposition of *sôphron* and *anandron* which suggests that in his statement about kinship he is adopting the perspective of the *stasiotatoi* and explaining the principle of action that they employ. In its opposition of hesitation to swift action, and especially in the contemptuous description of what is *sôphron* as *anandron*, which echoes a common accusation against the Spartans, the outlook of the Corcyreans during their *stasis* echoes their criticisms of Dorian ways they made in their speech at Athens. Seeing hesitation as an obstacle to swift action echoes the regret they express over their previous policy *sôphrosyne* which meant remaining unallied and their decision to adopt more Athenian ways (echoed here in the use of *tolma*, perhaps the central Athenian characteristic of boldness.)

When the Corcyreans made these observations during their speech they presented them as part of their new policy of preemptive action grounded in foresight and calculation which, they said, was necessary for all because of the coming war. There foresight and calculation were the companions of strength and were necessary to defend political autonomy. In the *staseis*, though, the principle of action the Corcyreans advocated at Athens comes to dictate with complete logic not only the rejection of kinship, but of all self-restraint in favor of drastic actions. Such actions become the only truly compelling necessities since, without them, one’s very survival is imperiled. At Athens the Corcyrean speakers see the calculation of relative strength and the prediction of the behavior of others as the lynchpin of the achieved friendship of strategic alliance. In the *stasis* this calculation is reduced to its most venal level: one should always predict that others will betray all alliances, and doubt one’s own strength and ability in the face
of them. Not just pre-emptive action, but pre-emptive betrayal becomes the wisest strategy. The response to “reasonable words from their opponents” was thus “defensive actions, if they had the advantage” and “reconciliations under oath” were the result only of mutual weakness “and lasted only as long as neither found some other source of power” to fuel their betrayal (3.82.7).

Rather than any attempt to build powerful alliances, wise foresight calculated only “the impossibility of security” (3.83.1) and hence simply the avoidance of suffering, since feeling trust was fatal. Taken to this extreme, a principle of action based on the calculation of relative strength and the prediction of the future behavior of others resulted in the greatest success for those least able to make elaborate calculations. It is the weakest in intellect (phauloteri gnōmēn) who, “out of fear of their own deficiency and their enemies’ craft, lest they be defeated in debate or become the first victims of plots as a result of the others’ resourceful intellect (tēs gnōmēs phthasōsī) … went straight into action” (3.83.3). In short, those who made the worst possible assessments of the characters of others, assumed betrayal and their own weakness, acted preemptively and unreasoningly out of fear, had actually made the best judgment. Those who “contemptuously supposed that they would know all in advance” were instead destroyed.

In his statement about the alienation of kinship in favor of faction Thucydides points to a radical principle of action and in doing so recapitulates the debate between the Corinthians and Corcyreans at Athens. Here, though, we see it enacted in deeds rather than debated in words, and what has seemed to so many a fanciful Corinthian argument is borne out. When the self-restraint that was symbolized by recognition of the anankē of kinship, but which is also the foundation of any order based in philia, is renounced, the
alternative is an order based simply in force. The *stasis* begins with those ruled by *philotimia* and *pleonexia* who seize an opportunity to pursue the objects towards which their *anankē* of desire drives them. As it rages, however, the opportunities to obey any *anankē* except fear dry up completely and along with it even the instrumental *philia* of faction. Thucydides’ reflections on the result of the Hellenic *staseis* and the revolution in thinking they brought about follow his narrative account of the beginning and progress of the stasis in Corcyra. It is to that account that we should look to understand how the foundations of even the most instrumental friendship were so thoroughly destroyed.

**ii) Philia and the stasis**

We see the rejection of kinship in the Corcyrean *stasis* itself when the Corcyrean orgy of violence culminates in every impiety under the gaze of the Athenian general Eurymedon. Thucydides tells us, “every form of death prevailed, and whatever is likely in such situations happened – and still worse. Fathers killed sons, men were dragged from the sanctuaries and killed beside them, and some were even walled up in the sanctuary of Dionysus and died there” (3. 81.5). These are the last lines of Thucydides description of the Corcyrean *stasis* before beginning his commentary on the causes and results of this and other *staseis*, so it stands as a statement of the greatest enormities to which the *stasis* drove the Corcyreans.

Seen in light of his statement about the view that emerged that held kinship as an obstacle to action (hence, connecting it to the Spartan constellation of values that included *hēsychia* and *sōphrosynē*), the description of impious violence suggests a new relationship to both shame and *philia*. When the Corinthians accused the Corcyreans of
avoiding alliances in order to avoid having witnesses to their crimes, they implied that the Corcyreans possessed a certain kind of shame: they were ashamed to commit crimes in public and their self-sufficiency made privacy possible. This strategic self-sufficiency also made them immune to the cooperative necessities which would bring witnesses and, through shame perhaps a kind of self-restraint. During the *stasis*, by contrast, the greatest impieties are committed in the open – fathers kill sons and men are murdered in the sanctuaries – all under the gaze of their Athenian allies. Here, then, it is not just the shame at committing murders that is overthrown – rather the shame that is tied to necessities of identity is absent: both kinship and religious reverence or fear dictate a sense of proper behavior towards particular people and objects, in particular places and situations – the foundations of a kind of self-restraint. When fathers kill sons, and people are murdered in the sanctuaries this kind of self-restraint has been abandoned.

If the ties of the *oikos* are overthrown, though, those of the polis are not respected either, for while kinship or ascriptive *philia* is replaced with the achieved friendship of faction during the stasis, this achieved bond must be clearly distinguished from anything truly political – even if politics forms its initial site and justification. In Corcyra, horrendous crimes find political justifications, so that personal enemies (*echthroi*) are charged “with putting down the democracy” (3.81.4). These political justifications and the factions and slogans around which they rally are often cover for personal acts of revenge: “some died also because of personal hatred and others at the hands of those who owed them money” (3.81.5). These smaller instances of employing the *stasis* for private ends actually characterize the phenomenon of the *staseis* in general: as we have seen, the leadership used the slogans of “political equality for the masses, the moderation of the
aristocracy” (3.82.8) as cover for the “greed and ambition” that motivated them. Politics is the context and the cover, the achieved affiliation of faction the means, for the pursuit of purely personal goals. Just as the Corcyreans in their speech violated the Spartan meaning of sōphrosynē by describing it as the mere avoidance of risk, here they invert the structure of shame: rather than feeling shame at being uncovered as violators of the most sacred necessities of religion and kinship, they take cover under the achieved loyalties of faction and conduct their enormities with pride at their justice, having declared kinship something alien and faction the thing closest to home – and most necessary.

The insecurity of these loyalties between faction members, though, is suggested in several places: they are a cover for purely private concerns and not a true replacement for the kinds of friendship that require self-restraint. We have seen that it is not simply the strictly necessary identities of kinship that require this principle of action: all relationships held together by status rather than bia and strategy seem to require it. The Corcyrean demand to be respected as equals in terms of their status as citizens of a polis rather than dominated or enslaved by the Corinthians was just such a demand for self-restraint. The predominant realism of the Corcyrean speech, however, recognized that each polis must secure for itself the conditions of its own autonomy and meaningful citizenship, precisely because the strong cannot be relied upon to exercise this self-restraint. Since self-restraint could not be counted on, equality of status between states had to be supported by equality, or superiority, of strength, and, perhaps, aggressive preemption.

Justified in their speech in the name of the autonomy that underwrites meaningful citizenship, when applied to domestic politics the Corcyrean strategy is disastrous. Even
if one were to take seriously the democratic slogan of “political equality for the masses” the stasis that results so fully occupies and destroys the political realm that citizenship becomes, worse than meaningless, worse than slavery, a fight to the death. There is no external autonomy to be secured for these citizens that can guarantee their enjoyment of their status as citizens: such enjoyment is itself dependent upon self-restraint, hesitation, religious fear, and the reasonable expectation of these qualities in others. Cooperation with others cannot be, as the Corcyreans suggested in their speech, purely a matter of rational calculation and foresight: stripped purely to this principle, cooperation becomes impossible and the range of individual concerns reduced to those of mere survival.

**iii) Cooperative necessities: the destruction of politics**

To arrive at the point where a citizen’s best hope for survival is a blind and unreasoning violence against his fellows requires the total destruction of the grounds of cooperation, both between individuals and between groups. In Thucydides’ narrative, the destruction of individual self-restraint is the last stage. Before the Corcyreans lose respect for the necessary identity of kinship or their religious fear, (and, indeed, before these are cast aside in favor of survival), the public context of cooperation is destroyed. This context is the realm of what I have been calling “cooperative necessity”, and these necessities, by providing limitations on and avenues for, the pursuit of individual interests or the anankē of desire, impose a kind of self-restraint by offering strength on a conditional basis.

Cooperative necessities are those we must consider if we want to secure the help of others, and which we can ignore only if we are self-sufficient and independent. They were the necessities that the Corinthians claim the Corcyreans have avoided in their
strategic self-sufficiency and, hence, aphilia. Cooperative necessities include all those social considerations through which the anankai of desires must be funneled in order to secure the cooperation of others in pursuing them – against which the Corcyreans found themselves knocking in their speech at Athens. In pursuing an alliance, for example, one must demonstrate a reliable history of other such affiliations, the capacity for trust, gratitude and reciprocity, and the ability not only to offer benefits but also to actually bestow them. As the Corinthians argued at Athens, all those who can’t choose aphilia because of a lack of autarkeia are, to some extent, subject to these cooperative necessities.

In his account of the Corcyrean stasis Thucydides recounts the unraveling of one of these cooperative necessities – trust – through the abuse of a political tool founded on it – persuasion. The narrative of the Corcyrean stasis is replete with references to persuasion (nine by my count) and the analysis in Thucydides own voice which follows it deals explicitly with the foundations of trust and the cause of their destruction.

The centrality of persuasion to democratic government is symbolized, perhaps, by the name of the “leader of the common people”, Peithias, and it is the democratic faction that throughout the account employs persuasion with deadly effect – indeed, Thucydides does not use the word to describe oligarchic actions, although they are often themselves persuaded. The democrats repeatedly follow up persuasion with deadly betrayals as when they employ persuasion to get some of the oligarchs to board ships (on which they are later murdered) (3.80.1, 81.2); and it is democrats who persuade oligarchs to leave a sanctuary in order to stand trial (at which they are condemned to death) (3.81.2). We hear of no more persuasions after this trial, and it is after this last example of the use (and
manipulation) of public institutions in Thucydides account that we hear of the suicides of those who could not be persuaded to leave the sanctuary. This in turn is followed by the paternal murders, and killings inside the sanctuaries. The end of persuasion accompanies the end of the use of civic institutions, even as instruments deployed perfidiously in the destruction of one’s enemies and with them, ultimately, perishes all of the restraints represented by kinship and piety.

It is ironic that it is the oligarchs who suffer the most by being persuaded, for it is they who seem to fear persuasion the most – in its effects on the masses and on the direction of the city’s policy. It is the oligarchs’ refusal to accept the decisions of the assembly about the direction of Corcyra’s alliances that sets in motion the events of the *stasis*, which come to be characterized by the interplay of oligarchic force and democratic persuasion and abuse of institutions, culminating in democratic violence. Having been taken prisoner by Corinth in the initial struggle with the metropolis, these oligarchs have been suborned (*pepeismenoi* – literally, “having been persuaded”) to overthrow the alliance with Athens and return Corcyra to Peloponnesian control (3.70.1). They set out to do this, however, by intrigue rather than open persuasion, going from citizen to citizen (*epasson outoi ekaston toon politoon metiontes*) (3.70.2) rather than speaking openly in the assembly. When, under the gaze of a Corinthian and an Athenian ship, the Corcyreans vote for a middle position between the Peloponnesians and Athenians (3.70.3) regarding alliances, the oligarchs bring Peithias “to trial, saying he was enslaving Corcyra to Athens” (3.70.4). This recourse to institutional means is, though, sharply rejected when Peithias is acquitted and successfully seeks revenge, also through the courts. Peithias’ ability to persuade the masses, and their own inability to do so, leads the oligarchs to
forsake political and legal institutions altogether: they murder Peithias and sixty others in the council (3.70.6). The oligarchs similarly use force to get ratification (eenankasan teen gnoomeen) of their proposal concerning a return to isolationism (3.71.1-2). The relative moderation of this policy is abandoned, however, when a Corinthian ship arrives (3.72.2) and precipitates an outright attack on the democrats. The arrival of twelve ships from Naupaktos and an Athenian general, Nikostratos gives rise to the next wave of persuasion. The general’s persuasions concern the use of political institutions to settle the conflict: to “try the ten men most responsible”, to make a truce, and to ally fully (summacchia) with Athens (3.75.1). These persuasions of Nikostratos are followed by more duplicitous ones on the part of Corcyrean democrats.

This bloody escalation, then, begins with the oligarchic rejection of persuasion and their use of force, which is only emboldened by the arrival of Peloponnesian allies. The democrats use persuasion to increasingly deadly effect, sometimes abandoning the institutional means of trials and assemblies, as they begin to panic in the face of Peloponnesian support for the oligarchs. The attempt of Nikostratos to use political institutions to resolve the conflict is met with attempts by Corcyrean democrats to manipulate the Athenians to provide the ships onto which they embark their enemies. It is fair to say, in summary, that both sides are tempted into escalation by the presence of Athenian and Peloponnesian support. That the wider Hellenic war provided opportunities that were otherwise unavailable to factional leaders motivated by greed and ambition simply confirms, of course, Thucydides’ basic account of the causes of the stasis. In doing so, though, it also plays out an aspect of the aggregative view of cities presented by the Corcyreans in their speech at Athens that was, apparently, unforeseen by
them. There they argued that cities should be seen as composed of citizens, rather than as monolithic entities. More darkly they warned that this was the only way to view the relations between poleis because cities can always undermine the power of others if they have the money to lure away their residents as mercenaries. The actions of the factional leaders at Corcyra simply confirm that war provides an opportunity for those driven by greed or ambition to get around the cooperative necessities that usually restrain them within the city itself.

The possibility of securing outside cooperation in factional conflict displaces the necessities that govern cooperation within the city. We have seen that the presence of these allies allowed the democrats to employ persuasion in a way that operated outside the range of cooperative necessity because it was no longer bounded by the concern for future cooperation. Persuasion used in this way ultimately destroys its partner, trust. What makes persuasion deadly at Corcyra, of course, is the duplicity that attends it: cooperation is met with betrayal, any and all conciliations are met with destruction. The stasis becomes deadlier still, though, when persuasion becomes difficult or impossible. It is to this latter predicament that Thucydides points in his commentary on the Corcyrean and later staseis at 3.82-82. At this point,

“There was no secure principle, no oath that was feared, but those who were stronger, in contemplation of the impossibility of security, all took measures to avoid suffering rather than allowing themselves to feel trust” (3.83.2).

When one trusts another, persuasion is possible, as are all the necessities of cooperation, because one may be persuaded that they are reliable, capable of gratitude, loyalty, promises, reciprocity. Indeed, persuasion and trust are mutually reinforcing for we see
that it is against a background of comparative civic health that the democrats employ their early, fatal persuasions and continue to do so until oligarchic trust is finally destroyed. When the possibility of being persuaded by the promises of help, gratitude or reconciliation is destroyed and the Corcyreans can no longer pursue their interests or political projects by means of it, they can neither be persuaded, nor persuade others.

This background of trust is possible only because persuasion has been more honest, and safer, in the past. A stable politics makes trust necessary because it requires both cooperation and a temporal orientation that can extend into the future the experiences of past trust rewarded. The stance the Corcyreans adopt in their speech at Athens is all the more audacious in this light because, recognizing that they have no such history of gratitude or trust fulfilled, they seek to persuade the Athenians that they can now be trusted because they have revised their whole principle of action. Their emphasis on the future in this speech asks the Athenians to fly in the face of the dictates of political experience. On the other hand, the events at Corcyra suggest that reliance on history alone is no safe basis for trust either, because the context of past trustworthiness may change radically, as it does once external allies are available to the combatants.

This inability to recognize the changed context was the central criticism of the Spartans made by the Corinthians in their second speech. Long experience of success and stability had made the Spartans put their trust in their customs alone, even as they distrusted their allies. The inability of the Spartans to see that Athenian thallasocracy threatened this pattern of success in deep ways was the result of a trust that was too habitual and untempered by perceptiveness and foresight. The Spartan trust in their own customs and the *philia* for the fathers that enacts it is at odds, ultimately, with trust in
each other as living citizens. As well as usually being rewarded, trust requires some of
the flexibility of real friendship as well and must tolerate some falling short of standards
against a background of general achievement of them. The absolute precision the
Spartanas demand of themselves in reproducing the standards of the fathers underwrites
their lack of trust in the men who return from Spacteria in dishonor. Too great a trust in
custom underwrites a problematic lack of trust in actual citizens.

The usefulness of perceptiveness and foresight are greatly limited, however,
during the *stasis* and events reveal that these kinds of awareness also require a context of
trust to produce anything but violence. The temporal perspective of the *stasis* is severely
truncated, the past having proved a fatal indicator, the future unpredictable in any detail.
Rather than predicting any specific conditions the only foresight that proves reliable is a
blanket assumption of betrayal and untrustworthiness which is as inflexible a view, and
one as disengaged from the qualities and efforts of real individuals, as the Spartan self-
image.

In his account of the “revolution in thinking” Thucydides outlines the path that
leads to this point and suggests how space not only for cooperation, but even for
competition within the city is lost with the destruction of trust. The Corcyreans come to
revel in their ability to destroy those who remain trusting and persuadable: seeing one’s
partner in an oath of reconciliation “off guard, [one] enjoyed vengeance more in a
situation of trust than if accomplished openly”, and “those who managed to accomplish
something hateful by using honorable arguments were more highly regarded” (3.82.7).
As well as recommending a stance of absolute distrust of others, and a refusal to be
persuaded by their cooperative gestures, the *stasis* rewards and celebrates those able still
to coax trust out of their fellows in order to betray it. Thucydides’ next remarks, though, about the survival of those least intelligent who are thrown to preemptive, unreasoned action points to the increasing difficulty of glorying in one’s intelligence in this way: attempting to persuade and then betray one’s fellows may be highly regarded as a demonstration of strategic calculation, but the scope for such a course is radically diminished as the stasis progresses. In the absence of meaningful and reliable cooperative necessities, the pursuit of individual interest (and sheer survival) through strategic calculation is severely limited and its temporal horizon utterly truncated. Foresight becomes impossible and mindless so that violent, and above all individual, action becomes the most reliable path to survival. The fear of those survivors who are weakest in intellect that they will be beaten in debate gets to the heart of the phenomenon of the stasis and what makes it a realm of pure bia: the destruction of all intermediate necessities, the cooperative necessities of institutions. The observation that being aphilos was a “desperate plight, as bad as being apolis” 216 is again helpful here, for in the context of the stasis, it points to the fact that where there cannot be friendship, or at least reliable cooperation, there can be no city.

From this perspective, the “revolution in thinking” and the praise of those who are able to win and betray trust is merely a temporary stage on the way to the collapse of all cooperation. The philotimia of the participants in the stasis cannot be satisfied through traditionally praiseworthy actions after the revolution in thinking, but it is before long out of reach by means of the betrayal of trust too, because trusting citizens have disappeared. The conflict between the competitive and cooperative aspects of Greek culture is

familiar, but in its most extreme moments, the *stasis* reveals ways in which, in its aspect as a community of praise and blame, even the agonistic aspect of the life of the polis requires a foundation of cooperation, both in terms of agreement about what is to be praised and blamed, and in terms of providing a context in which successful competition can provide meaningful rewards. When the Corcyreans embrace their initial division into factions the city loses its ability to bestow rewards in this way. The *anankai* of desires, the *pleonexia* and *philotimia*, that motivated the *stasis* cannot, in the end, be satisfied by it at all and are replaced by the last of the set of compelling desires listed by the Athenians: fear.

At Corcyra we see internal politics that are deranged and undone by too much responsiveness to the context of Hellenic war. The restraints of cooperative necessity that made politics possible inside the city turned out to require individual self-restraint once the contextual boundaries were radically expanded by the war. The decision of the Corcyreans – or the individual decisions of enough of them – to allow the *anankai* of desires to compel them to take the opportunities offered by the war is a renunciation of self-restraint. That there is a choice between *ankē* and self-restraint is part of the argument that the Corinthians had made to the Athenians in their first speech. The Athenians, in recognizing that they are, after all, beneficiaries of the cooperative necessity that is oriented by the just order of *philia*, should restrain themselves from grasping an advantage that will unleash an entirely different principle of action.

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217 Adkins’ treatment in *Merit and Responsibility* is the classical statement of the conflict.
218 See below for Pericles’ understanding of the ways in which the empire can provide these rewards and deflect competition between citizens outwards – and away from pursuits that are destructive to the city itself.
The notion of self-restraint was central to the self-image of the Spartans as articulated by Archidamos and essential to clear judgment and prudent action. In the end, though, this self-restraint is, as are all of the Spartan virtues, a product of the practice of *philia* for the fathers that has to do not with the individual suppression of the *anankai* of desire, but with the precise reproduction of customary ways. While the Spartans do indeed have a culture of restraint it is not, in the end, one of self-restraint as is evident whenever Spartans are dealing with other Greeks or are away from Spartan discipline. Spartan *philia* for the fathers stands as a symbol of restraint in the way that the overthrow of kinship at Corcyra during the *stasis* stands as a symbol of the lack of all restraint, and yet citizens of neither Sparta or Corcyra can muster the self-restraint to allow the city to deal effectively with changing contexts. The internal politics of neither city is adequate to the problem of movement. Sparta is unable to move in a way that is responsive to movements in the world at large and Corcyra is too responsive to them.

We have seen that the Spartans, in their devotion to reproducing the ways of the fathers produced a kind of temporal collapse that made them necessarily oblivious to the changes around them. The temporal collapse at Sparta was due to the attempt to elide all differences between status and strength amongst the *homoioi* which, while productive of unity rendered them imperceptive and inflexible. It also made them unable to engage with other Greeks because of their radical lack of any capacity for the metaphorical or abstract thinking required to conceive of Hellenic rather than Spartan identity, which as *philia* for the fathers was conceived of in a thoroughly literal way. The Corcyreans also suffer a temporal collapse, but it is one that pushes them towards a disunity as radical as the unity of the Spartans. Where the Spartans conflated equality of strength and status, the
Coreyreans, seeking to distinguish themselves, render themselves each almost equally weak. The only distinction during the stasis is capacity for survival, and its only source is the shortest of temporal ranges: immediate, destructive action.

The examples of internal politics we have seen so far, then, those of Sparta and Corcyra, have been both radically unable to respond adequately to the fact of movement that Thucydides outlined in his Archaeology. From their examples, however, several requirements of an adequate response have emerged in negative. Of central concern is the preservation of a properly political temporal orientation. Unity and cooperation within a city require a sense of time that extends well beyond the immediate situation, both forwards and backwards. Cooperation can only be robust and sustained when citizens are able to trust each other, which requires a reasonable expectation of continuity between past and future. These expectation, however, may be confounded by changes outside the city that may radically change the context of cooperation within it. Cities oriented by continual reference to the past are able to sustain great internal unity and cooperation, but politics of a purely epimethean kind threatens to efface temporality altogether in a way that makes a city too inward looking to respond to the world at large and its dangers. In both cases politics ultimately requires citizens to find some way of resisting the compulsions of the anankē of desire – they must have self-restraint.

In the funeral speech Pericles gives to the Athenians we see another attempt to address these requirements of politics in the context of movement that uses the language of philia. Pericles argues for a conception of citizenship that is a relationship of eros between citizen and city which greatly extends the temporal horizon of the citizens and, while demanding of them great self-sacrifice, promises them great rewards. The self-
restraint necessary to political cohesion and coordination comes, in this speech, not from the suppression of the \textit{anankē} of desire, but its sublimation for collective purposes.
c) The Funeral Speech of Pericles: political friendship and erôs

The disaster that befalls Corcyra reveals terrible fractures in their vision of the possibility of founding cooperative alliances in the calculation and foresight of strategic necessities. The reduction of all relationships to the strategic perspective of individuals destroys not only concern for kinship, but any meaningful citizenship. Yet it was citizenship that the Corecyreans invoked in justifying their rebellion against the mother city in their speech at Athens in Book I. The reduction in that speech of all relations to either citizen or slave missed one terrible alternative: beyond enslaving each other, men may simply destroy their fellows utterly.

The reduction also misses possibilities pointed out by the Corinthians in their demands for filial piety, in particular the difference between anankē and bia, for while slavery is, indeed, a matter of violent force and is not justified in any other way, the compulsion of the family is one that, existentially grounded, exercises a different kind of force that is reflected in its ethic of loving submission to parents. The stasis too revealed the importance of acknowledging necessities other than that of violent force. The cooperative necessities embodied in the norms and institutions of cities, and also in the cultural and religious practices surrounding kinship, guide and restrain the greed and ambition that otherwise tear cities apart. The Corecyrean point that grown children are also fellow citizens of the parent, however, highlights key inadequacies of the Corinthian perspective, in particular the apolitical nature of its temporal perspective.

Political life, as a realm that requires decision making requires a special temporal orientation that accepts the reality of movement and change: cities cannot remain immovable and backward looking for the simple reason that they must defend
themselves. While the *stasis* is Thucydides’ signal example of movement as pure destruction lacking any core of order, all cities exist within the world of movement or its potential in their relations to each other. What the *stasis* reveals is that, while cities must be able to exist and make decisions in a world of movement, they require within themselves a core of order and stability: they must have some cooperative foundation on which to act. While a habit of foresight and calculation is useful for acting in a world of movement, without cooperation its scope is severely truncated, as is the range of one’s planning. If cooperation is founded, as on the Corinthian and Spartan models, on the eternal repetition of the past, necessary action itself is ultimately forestalled in favor of a rigid stability. Politics, then, requires both stable cooperation and a practical orientation towards movement and decision-making.

The Corcyrean recognition in their speech that the possibility of domestic politics rested on a foundation of the independence of cities seemed, at times, a promising model. Cities must defend themselves and resist attempts to enslave them if their citizens are to be worthy of the name. The latter parts of their speech, and the eventual *stasis*, revealed, however, their failure to recognize the need to maintain a core of order, of cooperation, within the city. Citizenship was not simply a status to be recognized from the outside, requiring restraint on the part of the mother city – it had to be upheld and defended internally as well. It is when calculations and predictions concerning the relative strength of fellow citizens, rather than self-restraint and recognition of equality in status, dominate their foreign policy and their domestic concerns that the Corcyreans face destruction.

Viewed in terms of the language of *philia* it is striking that the Corcyreans lack, in their concern for the equality of citizens, the kinds of cultural resources the Corinthians
can marshal for their scheme of ascriptive orders grounded in maternal priority. The Corcyreans are unable to come up with an equally compelling metaphor to argue for the equality of citizens. The metaphor derived from the most basic familial relationship is surely psychologically compelling, and must be, for it demands extremes of self-restraint and self-sacrifice even in the absence of actual force. In Corcyra, however, the self-restraint and self-sacrifice demanded of citizens lacks any such compelling image.

Against this background, the funeral speech of Pericles shows up as an important attempt to solve the problem of movement and rest within the city by attaching citizenship to a metaphor that is as compelling as that of the parent-child relationship, indeed, it is more compelling. This metaphor of political order, though, must also be appropriately political (rather than familial), able to accommodate (or even promote) change and movement, but also in some way temporally robust, offering a more distant horizon than that which comes so fatally to encircle the Corcyreans. When Pericles implores the Athenians to become the lovers (erastai) of Athens, he provides a metaphor that unseats the oikos from its authority, but avoids the pitfall of admitting factional allegiance as its replacement.
i) Situating the funeral speech

My consideration of Pericles’ funeral speech here will build upon the perspective developed by Sara Monoson in her exploration of its central metaphor: the city as beloved (*eromenos*). The image comes when Pericles, as he finishes his praise of the dead, urges his listeners to live up to the standard set by their deeds:

> you their survivors must pray to meet the enemy at lesser cost but
> resolve to do so just as unflinchingly, not calculating the benefits by
> word alone … but wondering at the city’s power as you actually see it
each day and becoming her lovers (*erastai*), reflecting whenever her
fame appears great to you that men who were daring, who realized their
duty, and who honored it in their actions acquired this (2.43.1).

Monoson develops the implications of this image through a careful consideration of an idealized form current in Athens of the erotic relationship between a young *eromenos* (beloved) and an older, citizen *erastēs* (lover). This relationship of *erastēs* and *eromenos* involves an exchange of benefits: the young man receives the civic education and political connections he will need when he becomes a citizen, the *erastēs* receives limited gratifications of his desire. What emerges is a reading of the speech that sees Pericles calling for a conception of citizenship that demands of the Athenian citizen an ethic of concern for the development and virtue of the city (rather than its exploitation for personal ends).

Monoson’s reading of the speech plays up the democratic resonances of the *erastēs* image, in particular its implications for reciprocity between citizens and the city.

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220 Horst Hutter also offers a good account of the nature of this relationship and its political resonances in *Politics as Friendship* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1978).
It is her view that while the *erastēs* image is attached directly in Pericles’ speech to the power of the city, the empire has only derivative importance as the source of the beauty which compels the citizen lovers: the cultural and political institutions of democracy are what underwrite the city’s imperial success and are thus at the heart of what makes it a worthy beloved. This element of Monoson’s reading seems problematic to me. The empire cannot be discounted too easily and certainly cannot be disentangled from the democracy under Pericles, nor fail to make that democracy problematic. The structure of reciprocity that pertains between lover and beloved, which involves benefaction and gratitude, certainly provides a fascinating model of democratic citizenship that transcends many of the problems that beset models founded instead on, for example, the relationship between parent and child. In the Periclean context, however, it is vital to keep in view exactly what favors the beloved city is able to offer the citizen lovers: what Pericles himself stresses is the favor of immortal fame, which is unimaginable in the form he promises without the empire, and, even, underwrites the meritocratic character of the democracy. Thus, while Monoson’s analysis is invaluable for tracing carefully the cultural resonances of the *erastēs* metaphor in the funeral speech, her interpretation of the speech itself may benefit from being placed in the wider context of Thucydides’ work and, in particular, of his use of the language of *philia* elsewhere to outline alternative understandings of citizenship and belonging.

By situating Monoson’s reading in the context of alternative metaphors in Thucydides’ work I will consider both the strength of Pericles’ innovation here and its limitations. It is my contention that Pericles actually picks up a metaphorical thread in his speech that runs throughout the *History* in his equation of citizenship to an erotic
relationship that sees forms of membership on the model of various modes of *philia*. In particular I will explore the ways in which Pericles avoids several pitfalls exemplified by Corinth, Sparta and Corcyra: the overemphasis of the *oikos* (which is an obstacle to his imperial project) and the difficulty of establishing a purely political understanding of citizenship.

**ii) The Citizen Lover**

Making the citizen the metaphorical lover of the city is an innovation upon the tradition of *epitaphioi* which typically conceived of the relation between city and citizen as a parent-child one.221 As I have suggested, invoking a metaphor of maternity is a powerful way of grounding authority and hierarchy and, thus, of suggesting the legitimate natural subordination of the citizen to the city. The authority of the parent over the child is grounded, as the Corinthian speech demonstrates, in precisely the fact that it is an unchosen relationship – it is a signal case of *anankē* as necessary identity. In the metaphor of the *erastēs* Pericles suggests that the link of citizen to city is very much an *achieved* relationship – one that Monoson notes “does not exist prior to and independent of the conscious choices of the parties involved”.222 Although we may have cause to disagree with her on this matter of choice, it is certainly true that erotic *philia* is an achieved, not an ascribed relationship – one is not born into it and it is conditional in a way that ascriptive *philia* is not.

Part of the genius of Pericles’ use of this metaphor is the way in which it bypasses the *oikos* both metaphorically and literally, and as such finds a way to conceptualize the

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221Plato, for example, invokes it in his *Menexenus*, Monoson (2000), p81-82. Nicole Loraux (2006) has also charted the territory of traditional *epitaphioi* and Pericles’ place in it.
political realm that can do away with the authority of the household. Pericles has reasons of his own, however, for seeking such a metaphor, which need to be unpacked carefully and without a too-easy recourse to modern forms of discomfort with familial metaphors. The reasons we can deduce behind Pericles’ rejection of the metaphorical oikos involve the desire for robust, unthreatened and purely political loyalties; the desire to detach Athenians from territorial identifications; and the desire to take a temporal stance oriented towards future achievement rather than repetition of past patterns, in order to open the way for imperial greatness.

Traditional invocations of the oikos as a metaphor for the city are inherently compromised because they rely on precisely the institution they seek to undermine. The oikos and the loyalties it generated stood as a threat to those loyalties and obligations required by the polis. Saxonhouse has been especially good at exploring ways in which Athenian civic and imperial ideology sought to generate political loyalties by conceiving of the city on the model of the oikos and replacing the actual bonds of kinship with political ones conceived of as the ties of a metaphorically shared political “household”.

The myth of autochthony, for example, was used in this way to replace literal mothers with a shared civic mother. As a strategy for generating political loyalties this is somewhat fraught, however, as not only is the citizen constantly caught between the metaphorical and literal sites of loyalty and their obligations (which, as any reader of Antigone knows, continue to throw up contradictions), the metaphorical demand for loyalty relies for its effect on the fact that the literal loyalties continue to be felt most powerfully. Conceiving of the city as a kind of oikos writ large makes sense only so long as the household is meaningful and thus, while an ideology of a metaphorical civic oikos

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may attempt to disarm and minimize competing claims of the literal *oikos*, it cannot quite do away with it. A model of politics based metaphorically on the household relies powerfully on the psychological and ethical experience of the literal *oikos*.²²⁴

It seems to me that Pericles is seeking for a way to sideline the *oikos* quite thoroughly in Athenian politics. This is revealed, it is true, in his disparaging comments concerning women in the funeral speech and in the fact that the central erotic metaphor excludes them from political relevance (2.45.2).²²⁵ It is also visible in the rather glib consolations he offers to the parents of the fallen (2.44). The conflicting loyalties generated by membership at the same time in *oikos* and polis, as well as the undesirability of a politics grounded in either literal or metaphorical membership in the household, is neatly encapsulated in another incident that Thucydides relates concerning Pericles: what has been called “the second Athenian synoikism”.²²⁶ Athens owed its early strength, according to Thucydides, to the forced political *synoikismos* accomplished by Theseus when he took the disparate, and sometimes fractious cities of Attica and “compelled (*ēnankase*) them, even while they managed their own affairs just as before to treat this as a single city”. To this Thucydides’ attributes the beginning of Athenian greatness, owing to the fact that “everyone was now contributing” (2.15.2). This first synoikism was, however, incomplete in the sense that it simply abolished the political institutions of its component cities – which lay outside the walls of Athens – without physically moving the citizens into the *astu* – this was left for the second, physical synoikism of Pericles

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²²⁴ The Spartans, by contrast, achieve a kind of literal politics of kinship by collapsing the actual oikos into the public realm so that many of the features of the household are shared by the citizens in their life of permanent military mobilization.

²²⁵ Monoson (2000), p76.

²²⁶ Hornblower (1991)
which occurred as the Archidamean War loomed and outlying Athenians were moved inside the city walls.

The significance of these two synoikisms – and of the fact that they are called by the name synoikismos (the bringing together of households) and don’t invoke instead the concept of sympoliteia (the bringing together of cities) – is suggested by the reaction of these outlying Athenians to being moved inside the city walls as the Archidamean war begins. 227 This majority of the Athenian population finds the “uprooting” difficult (2.14.2) because “they were grieved and distressed at deserting their homes as well as what had been their ancestral shrines (iera) throughout going back to their ancestral form of government (archaion politeias)” (2.16.2). The distress is not simply resistance to a changed form of life, “but also each of them was doing nothing short of abandoning his own city” (2.16.2). Yet the purely political sources of such local loyalties, and thus their status as cities, has long since been effaced.

While all the Atticans have been forced to treat Athens as a single city it is now revealed that, in the heart of each, a city is defined by more than existing political institutions, but by his connection to the city through the oikos and its physical roots in a place, as well as its temporal roots in ancestral connections. Thucydides’ use of the term synoikismos rather than sympoliteia, then, seems very deliberate and important, pointing as it does to the ways in which the political is both rooted in, and obstructed by, the particular loyalties of literal kinship. That loyalty to the city of one’s ancestors persists in the face even of a total lack of ongoing political institutions suggests a robust form of

227Synoikismos, means literally “the joining together of family households” (Manville (1990) p55) Sympoliteuo – joining together cities has been suggested as the more correct term – see Hope Simpson & Lazenby, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970) (cited by Hornblower (1991)) which I believe misses a crucial point being made in this passage about the way in which membership in the polis may be felt primarily via membership in the household which is situated in it.
membership; on the other hand, this territorially and ancestrally grounded loyalty is resistant to the kind of change and growth necessary to the development of larger orders (which, as Thucydides suggests in the Archaeology is the foundation of civilization itself).

Pericles’ own relationship to the land and the oikos stands in contradistinction to that of the outlying Atticans. Thucydides prefaces his account of the second, physical synoikism of Athens with the tale of Pericles surrendering his own lands to the public in fear that he would lose the trust of the Athenians if the Spartans should spare his holdings out of his xenia with Archidamos. In this he demonstrates, perhaps, the lack of emotional attachment to the land that he hopes for from the citizens when he wishes he could persuade them to lay waste to it themselves (1.143.5). This detachment from the land and its forms of loyalty may not be due simply to the recognition of political necessity, however, for Pericles lacks the ongoing territorial connections enjoyed by the other Athenians. As Thucydides has revealed, the family of Pericles, at least on his mothers’ side, had been expelled and their ancestral tombs emptied at the time of the curse of the goddess over Kylon (1.126). Although Pericles’ ancestors returned to the city, this link with the land and with the earliest times through ancestral tombs had been broken. At this level, then, Pericles models a new kind of relationship to the city that is direct, rather than conducted via his relationship to a territory or tomb and the unbroken ancestral connections they symbolize.

Like the Corcyreans, Pericles disparages the authority of the past to determine the path of political action. His praise of the ancestral Athenians is limited by his more enthusiastic praise of the recent generations who did more than simply pass on the city
but expanded its territories and made it an imperial power (2.36). Praiseworthy conduct requires more than the repetition of past patterns extolled by the Spartans. Unlike the Corcyreans, however, Pericles recognizes the importance of cohesion to the achievement of great movements in common: establishing and maintaining a commitment on the part of citizens to remaining both unified and resolute is the goal of his leadership. The truncated time horizon of the Corcyreans is useless for the accomplishment of great projects. Where the Corcyreans vaguely reference the equality of citizens in the present, and then conduct their external and internal politics on the basis of shifting evaluations of relative strength, Pericles demands and embodies a robust embrace of present goals carried into the future. In both his first and final speeches he is explicit about the need for this temporal orientation, warning first that the emotional effects of setbacks will tend to sway minds (1.140) and, finally, that the “realization of the benefits [of their course] is still a long way off for one and all” (2.61.2). The orientation to the future of Pericles encompasses foresight and calculation (2.40.2), it is true, but it also embraces and maintains a resoluteness in commitment to a shared end. Being a lover of the city means refusing to respond to the immediate \textit{anankai} of desire and fear for the sake of a greater, distant goal. There is nothing in the notion of the citizen as lover that argues against the notion that the desire for prestige is a great compulsion – indeed it is one that Pericles wants most of all to promote. He wishes, however, for this desire for prestige to be coordinated and directed to a shared end, so that competition for honor can be put in service of the city rather than enacted within its walls.

Interestingly, he does not allow a diversity of desires to directly inform his description of the beauty and desirability of the city-\textit{eromenos}: desire for wealth is
explicitly excluded. Pericles makes a point of noting that “none of these men turned coward from preferring the further enjoyment of wealth, nor did any, from the poor man’s hope that he might still escape poverty and grow rich, contrive a way to postpone the danger” (2.42.4). It must be noted in this regard that the only other instance of erōs in the work occurs when the Athenians decide on the Sicilian expedition – essentially defying the essence of Pericles’ advice that the empire should not be expanded while they are at war (1.144.1) – because, long after his death, they have fallen “in love (erōs) with the enterprise” of invading Sicily. Although some of them desire “faraway sights and experiences (theōrias)”, the masses are interested in “earning money in the military for now and acquiring dominion that would provide unending service for pay” (6.24.3). It is significant, surely, that Thucydides does not tell us that any of them are in love with the fame they will win there. This diversity of desires, however, points to the problem Pericles is trying to resolve through his metaphor of the citizen-erastēs: a city of diverse (2.37.2) and relaxed habits (2.39.1) that admits both rich and poor to government (2.37.1) has many competing desires to satisfy. In his encomium of the city he presents Athens to them as the source of greater satisfactions than can be had anywhere else. The city’s politics provides the opportunity for recognition and distinction (2.37.1), its importance makes imported goods commonplace (2.38.2), and it also provides an abundance of sights and spectacles (2.38.1). If the city itself, though, is able to provide such unique satisfactions for the anankai of desire by making their typical objects available in such abundance, why, we must ask, can and should the Athenians not remain content to enjoy their wonderful city in peace? Why can the Athenians not, indeed, rest content with the wealth and spectacles at home, but must insist instead on seeking them later in Sicily?
Setting aside for a moment the Corinthian argument that they are temperamentally unable to enjoy peace, nor allow it to anyone else, and Pericles’ own references to the boldness and energy of the Athenian character, it is clear that for him the ability of Athens to provide all of these satisfactions is grounded squarely in the possession of empire. In his final speech in particular he stresses that the alternatives are to rule or be ruled, and that the goods and freedom the Athenians enjoy are the spoils of empire (2.63). The freedom that makes Athenian political activity and its rewards available is one of the benefits that cannot be calculated by words alone, nor, no doubt can those that are made possible by imperial wealth, including, of course, campaign pay for the poorest, and spectacles for the lovers of strange sights.

What Pericles is demanding is that the Athenians look closely at the city and perceive what it is that lies at the center of all of these objects of diverse desires: the city is the fount from which all of these desirable goods spring. When he asks them to wonder at the power of the city he may, it seems, be asking them to understand the instrumental relationship of power to desire. Just as in his repeated pleas to the Athenians to really embrace and understand the nature of sea power, Pericles is asking the Athenians to let go of particular attachments – in this case, of the desire for specific objects – and to recognize that just as the city’s power allows them to replace lost land for new possessions (1.143.4), it can be translated into the satisfaction of any desire. Close attention – really looking at the city – reveals that the real source of her beauty, because it is source of all these other goods, is her power. It is not enough, though, that the citizens love the city as the source of other derivative goods – such a love might prove conditional and hence turn cold – as his denials that the dead loved wealth above
all suggest. For the city to continue to supply the goods the Athenians enjoy they must support the empire and, since these particular desires may put them at odds with the hard work of building and defending the empire, they must transform their desire itself to embrace the signal benefit of empire: the fame that it enjoys for its very power when Athenians do their duty (2.43.1).

It is significant that, in order to persuade them to transform their desire, he asks the to look at the city – as we will see in the Symposium, eros is deeply connected to the visual and the sense of beauty. In asking them to find beauty in the power of the city he is asking them to see that they desire its truest gratification. It is the truest gratification because it is the only one that is lasting. He stresses that other goods are not lasting in the way that characterizes the kind of fame Athens offers. In the funeral speech he notes that the dead recognized the “uncertainty of prosperity in the future” (1.42.4) which seems to foreshadow his recognition in his final speech that the empire may one day slip from their grasp (2.64.3-4). In this desire for the greatest good Athens has to offer is different from all of the others it makes available, because this one is not reliant on the continued existence of the empire and its prosperity. Fame, unlike prosperity, will never fade because it exists in the minds not even just of Athenians, but of all who witness it. For this reason he asks the Athenians to understand their love for the power of the city as one that seeks this truest gratification of the Athenian eromenos. This transformation of desire, further, promises to yield a transformation of the whole man: by offering immortal fame and the imperial arenda as stage on which to win it, the city offers the chance to exchange a poor, miserable, perhaps even cowardly life into one of lasting (because famous) virtue. Pericles is insistent that death in battle on behalf of the city
serves to efface an ignoble history, declaring that such a death, even as a “first indication” of virtue, should be given first place in the accounting of a life’s history (2.42.3-4). Neither poverty, nor even poor character, stand in the way of distinction for the citizen who is compelled by the beauty of its power to become a true lover of the city. Such a lover stands in contrast, then, to those Athenian erastai we see in book 6 who are in love once again, not with the city, but with the many specific goods that it provides. The immortal fame of the Periclean citizen-erastēs stands in stark contrast to the Athenians who are in love with the prospect of “unending service for pay” in terms of his understanding of the true nature of the empire and what it can actually offer.

A shared orientation to a distant future, erotically embraced, promises the suppression of intermediate desires that may not only distract from the shared good of the city – as they do, indeed, when the Athenians embark on their Sicilian expedition – but threaten to fall into competition and conflict, as they do at Corcyra. In connecting the fame of the city itself to the “imperishable praise” that the dead Athenians “individually gained” (2.43.1-2), Pericles reveals the means by which a shared distant goal is supposed to be individually satisfying. The two are joined, above all, in the connection he draws between the future and tombs, those emblems of the past, the oikos and the reverence for both. Where the Corinthian and Spartan perspectives demand a politics grounded in the ancestral, and the Corcyrean in its disparagement, Pericles attempts to transcend the problems of both approaches by transfiguring one of the central institutions of ancestral politics. Rather than the literal tombs that prove to be political obstacles by tying citizens both to the land and to the oikos, the war dead he is praising have “individually gained imperishable praise and the most distinctive tomb (taphon episēmotaton)”
(2.43.2) in the memory of their deeds. These deeds have won them “an unwritten memorial, present not in monument but in mind, [which] abides within each man” (2.43.3). Such a tomb can never be the site of territorial or merely familial attachment because it has no location, and hence no limits: “the whole earth is the tomb of famous men” (2.43.3). The empire and its war have in this way provided a solution to one of the problems of domestic politics – the persistence of sub-political allegiances that mediate and, sometimes, subvert political loyalties. The temporal grounding and satisfactions of the ancestral that are embodied in tombs and localities are replaced with temporal fixedness of another kind: one located in the future, “the brilliance of the moment and glory in the future remain in eternal memory” (2.64.6-7). The pursuit of this goal, however, is limited neither by overarching concern for justice (these are, after all, “lasting monuments of our acts of harm and good” (2.41.4) ) nor, even, by the demise of the city itself, which it may actually precipitate (2.64.3-4). This last admission in the final speech of Pericles is perfectly acceptable within the terms of the funeral speech because the “eternal memory” in which the Athenians will live is not their own, but exists in the minds of those in “foreign lands” (2.43.3).

My claim has been that the empire (and hence the metaphor of the citizen erastēs) is not easily extricated from the Athenian democracy and I hope that we can now begin to see why. One of Pericles’ political concerns is the pursuit and defense of empire and in his speeches a constant theme is his attempt to get the Athenians to understand the nature of their power as based on the sea and not the land (1.144.4-5). Giving up their attachment to the land is both a literal necessity of his war strategy but also a symbolically central aspect of becoming an imperial power. Part of this symbolic
campaign includes presenting an image of citizenship that neither relies on, nor reinforces the kinds of particularistic thinking he wishes to suppress. The metaphor of the citizen as lover accomplishes this task beautifully.

It may be objected, however, that the pursuit of empire is not the only reason for Pericles to embrace the erotic metaphor over a familial one of the kind the Corinthians employ. After all, it provides scope for a more purely “political” conception of citizenship precisely because it bypasses the *oikos*: the association of lovers is characterized by freedom and choice, surely, and is thus a fitting metaphor for citizenship in which we seek both these qualities. Like non-erotic friendship, it is a matter of felt affection between equals rather than unchosen obligation. Surely these are all qualities that should be desirable in understandings of political membership. Further, it lacks the authoritarian quality of the relationship between parent and child, which, for Aristotle made it a signal example of a non-political relationship, mere household rule. Monoson is correct in noting that this last concern is more properly modern in so far as it reflects any fear that the state should take advantage of its citizens – the Athenian fear being more over the exploitation of the city by its citizen rulers. What needs to be kept in mind is that the equality of the lover and beloved here is important in referring to the relationship, not between citizens, but between citizen and city (and then for the sake not of the citizen’s dignity, but for that of the city). Equality between citizens is implied only indirectly through the metaphor because of its ability to suggest a direct relationship between each citizen individually and the city – that is, a relationship unmediated by any sub-political forms of membership and any alternative loyalties or hierarchies these may imply.229

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228 Monoson (2000), pp82-82.
229 Ibid., p72.
Neither *oikos*, nor faction mediates political membership. Equality and purely political membership, then, are coextensive in the metaphor, and in this sense it is, indeed, profoundly democratic.

As well as equality, however, the erotic relationship implies compelling affection and, Monoson says, a conscious choice. It is at this point that we must question her interpretation, both of the metaphor and of the nature of citizenship. A large part of the power of the metaphor derives precisely, it seems to me, from the difference between friendship and *erōs*.\(^{230}\) Whereas non-erotic friendship may be a matter of more or less voluntary affiliation, it must be considered to what degree erotic attraction is under our control. To ask this question need not be to demand a model of sovereign agency of a Kantian type, rather, one need only consider the constant association of the *erastēs’* pursuit of his beloved and the state of enslavement to see that the question was a pertinent one for the Greeks as well. While from the perspective of the *eromenos*, then, freedom of choice and the lack of ulterior motivations (such as money or political favors, or simple sexual pleasure) should be scrupulously avoided in order to emphasize and preserve the distinctive character of citizenship,\(^{231}\) such concerns are less rigorously demanded of the *erastēs* – the party who actually feels the erotic attraction that grounds and drives the relationship. One need only consider the constant recurrence of the word *anankē* and its derivatives, as well as references to slavery itself, in the *Symposium* to see the close connection of erotic attraction and compulsion.\(^{232}\)

\(^{230}\) Or, between friendship and friendship heightened by *eros*, Hutter (1978), p63-64.


\(^{232}\) This may reveal problems with Orwin’s distinction (1994, p44) between the views of empire in the speeches of Pericles and the Athenian envoys at Sparta. For Orwin Pericles sees the empire as a freely chosen project while for the envoys it is a matter of submitting to compulsions.
This asymmetry between erastēs and eromenos in terms of their free choice of the relationship is not incompatible with the metaphor of citizenship Pericles invokes, but may be, in fact, an important aspect of it. The city should not be enslaved by the citizen but remain unimpeachably free; at some level, however, the citizen may be enslaved by the beauty of the beloved city. Consider the claim of Pausanias in the Symposium:

if, in wanting to take money from someone, or to take a governmental office, or any other position of power, one were willing to act just as lovers do toward their beloved – making all sorts of supplications and beseeching in their requests, swearing oaths, sleeping at the doors of their beloved, and being willing to perform acts of slavishness that not one slave would – he would be checked from acting so by his enemies as much as by his friends, the former reproaching him for his flatteries and servilities, the latter admonishing him and feeling ashamed on his behalf. But if the lover does all of this, there is a grace upon him; and the law allows him to act without reproaching him, on the ground that he is attempting to carry through some exceedingly fine thing.233

Whether or not we accept Pausanias’ claim about the public endorsement of this erotic enslavement, what his speech demonstrates is the familiarity of the phenomenon. The honorable degradation of the lover is the result of his single-minded devotion to the object of his love, and forgetfulness of all other concerns, including even dignity and honor. This kind of focus is the sort of thing Pericles has in mind when he implores the Athenians to resist the distractions of grief over their land and other setbacks and remain resolute in their defense of the empire – to transform their desire by setting all other concerns below this erōs for the city.. While the suggestion that the citizens are, under

the metaphor, in some way enslaved by love of the city may disturb us with its authoritarian resonance we should keep in mind that it is democratic in maintaining the equality of the citizens vis a vis each other because their status as citizens is, in a sense, dependent upon their relationship to the city-eromenos and not to each other. This, of course, is helpful for the Periclean goal of detaching citizenship from mediating attachments to particular things like land, houses and ancestors. The citizens are at odds with each other (and indeed, in contact with each other) in this conception only as individual competitors for the affection of the city, rather than as members of factions. The democracy has an important element of meritocracy: as Pericles insists, the city is a democracy not because offices are distributed by rotation, but because all alike have access to distinction, should they prove worthy of it, even from a position of poverty (2.37.1). The competitive forces within the city that rest on philotimia are directed outwards because the empire provides the greatest possible hopes of honor, and the points of attachment that previously grounded citizenship are no longer important.

The connection between the democratic and the imperial aspects of the erastēs metaphor cannot, then, be ignored or severed. The gratification offered by the “most distinctive tomb”, the immortal fame to be won in dying for the imperial city, is essential to differentiating the Periclean concept of citizenship from the chaos of competing and uncoordinated desires we see at Corcyra in the stasis. Without this unified, but individual, erōs, the citizens have no source of cohesion because they are detached from all of the particular sites that used to ground their citizenship.
Conclusion

The erotic citizenship that Pericles envisions in his funeral speech is ingenious when placed beside the ascriptive *philia* invoked by Corinth and Sparta, and the Corcyrean attempt to base association in a model of achieved friendship dependent upon choice and instrumental rationality. The metaphors of ascriptive *philia* were able to achieve, or at least embrace, a kind of stability and cohesion that eluded the Corcyreans. The Corcyreans, however, recognized the historical and political relevance of movement and change in a way made impossible under the ascriptive approaches. Pericles’ erotic citizenship uses the metaphorical approach of the Corinthians to promote the uniformity of purpose of the Spartans, but is nonetheless able, like the Corcyreans, to acknowledge the historicity of political associations and the need to consider the future with an awareness of change and vulnerability. His vision of citizenship promises, then, to avoid the main pitfalls of other approaches to politics in the context of flux, and manages, further, to fulfil the promise of the Archaeology that great things can be accomplished out of an embrace of movement.

Pericleanism, however, has pitfalls of its own. In his final speech Pericles holds to the view that commitment to the city is the source of the greatest rewards, and that the empire represents “the greatest ends” (2.64.5), but he is now explicit that it may have been like “a tyranny that seems unjust to acquire but dangerous to let go” (2.63.2). Pericles is not, after all, indifferent to the ethical quality of the city’s actions, but judges greatness to be more important than justice. It is of a piece, perhaps, with his acknowledgement of the fact of movement because he ultimately admits in this speech to the likely demise of the city’s greatness – as a result of the very imperial course he asks
the Athenians to maintain (2.64.3). The injustice of the empire is outweighed by its exceptional power and fame because, it seems, the only alternative to pursuing power and being a “ruling city” is to be a “subject one” in safety (2.63.3).

One must ask in this context whether what is claimed for the reciprocal care of the citizens for the city in the erastēs metaphor is really plausible: if the erastēs is supposed to exchange an education in civic virtue for erotic gratifications, can he be said to have educated the beloved wisely when his own gratification sets it on a course of destruction? Similarly, does the erastēs reveal poor character in his longing for the fatal beauty of the imperial city? Dana Villa’s claim that Pericles’ oration seeks to mobilize Athenian citizens most of all through the image of “greatness”, which is “a fundamentally aesthetic category [which] trumps all moral values”, recognizes a central problem here. Apart from the fact that the separation of the aesthetic and the moral in philosophy is an essentially Enlightenment artifact (and thus must be questionable, or at least constitute an obstacle to full understanding, when applied to classical thought), the separation fails to recognize something important in the role of the aesthetic in Thucydides. In Thucydides’ narrative, the task of establishing and maintaining order and, perhaps, some modicum of justice within cities falls not to rationality but to something else – might we call it the aesthetic?

A politics governed by an over-arching metaphor certainly suggests something of the aesthetic. The effect of these metaphors, furthermore, carries further suggestions in that direction. Presenting a fixed object, outside of the flux of temporal experience and using it to orient action within that temporal experience seems, in many ways, an aesthetic approach to politics. For the Corinthians that image is the maternity of the

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metropolis, for the Spartans the immortal repetition or embodiment of the fathers, and for Pericles it is, indeed, remembered greatness. All three claim a kind of immunity to the flux of the world because they are located either in the past, in an identity that is the embodiment of the past, or in something that itself claims immortality – human memory. These aesthetic approaches to politics also share in permanently elevating some central characteristic as the most important thing, that by which all else is oriented. For the Athenians, as Villa notes, it is greatness, but for the Corinthians it is generation. For the Spartans it is simply being a Spartiate rather than a Helot, Perioikos or Hellene of some other kind. To respond to these images is to accept a representation of the world that is ordered and, in some ways, incomplete: what is excluded from the representation is as important as what is left in. From the Corinthian metaphor of imperial maternity is excluded the ongoing experience of generational growth and replacement, as well as the status and tasks of citizenship. From the Periclean metaphor of erotic citizenship, as we have just seen, is excluded all of the particular attachments and desires in terms of which Athenians have been used to understanding their citizenship.

It is striking that the metaphors of the colonial maternal city and of the city-eromenos both exclude from view the relations of citizens with each other. In the case of Corinthian colonial maternity the absence is obvious – the metaphor operates only at the level of whole cities. In erotic citizenship, on the other hand, citizens are directly addressed, but they are asked to engage each with “the city” individually, essentially as a device to bypass horizontal relations between citizens along with all of the sub-political hierarchies of oikos and faction.
This absence of any image of the particular relations between the citizens (except, perhaps, in the claim that they leave each other alone “without wearing expressions of vexation” at each other’s habits (2.37.2)), goes along with a persistent denial in the speeches of Pericles that any particular person or thing has any inherent value. Land and houses are not to be lamented (1.143.5; 2.62.3) but should always be considered next to the imperial sea power that allows everything to be replaced since, “for us there is abundant land on both the islands and the mainland” (1.143.4). Similarly, the parents of sons commemorated in the funeral speech young enough to have more children will find that “those who come later will be a means of forgetting those who are no more” (2.44.3). When even their own parents are expected to forget these dead Athenians, how, one wonders, can his audience find plausibility in Pericles’ promise that their deaths not only contributed to the fame of the city, but that they “gained imperishable praise, each individually”? What these examples point to is a habit of mind that goes along with the use of an over-arching metaphor to talk about citizenship which is supposed to act, furthermore, as an orienting image for the whole city. When, in the absence of a robust conception of citizenship itself, it is conceived of in such terms, the device has consequences for both the conduct of politics and the fate of the city. The vision of Athens as a city of lovers is one where all citizens alike are driven by erōs for the city and detached from lesser desires that might distinguish them from each other as well as from concern for household, land or ancestors. It is an image of a city that floats above all moorings and acts, in a way, as one man – so indistinguishable are the citizens from each other. We might speculate, indeed, that this citizen lover is a projection of Pericles himself who not only gives up his land, but avoids his friends once he enters politics, and
for whom the key to political power was, originally, undercutting Cimon’s politics of personal largesse with the institution of public pay for the service of citizens.\textsuperscript{235} Rather than, as the outlying Atticans did, approaching citizenship only through the particular bonds of land, family and history, Pericles substitutes a citizenship in which individuals are connected to each other only via this floating city so that their relations too are made abstract.

The Spartan approach to citizenship is also aesthetic, but in a somewhat different sense. In their literalism do not rely on a metaphor, but it is precisely because they actually \textit{live} in a state of such tight order and temporal fixedness that there is no space for something as abstract as metaphorical thinking. They are mimetic rather than contemplative, one might say – their politics is an “artistic” matter in the sense that they are concerned with such perfect replication that it constitutes embodiment. Indeed, their politics is limited to the question of what counts as an authentic copy of their model. One might argue that this model is itself an aesthetic representation, albeit more complex than those of the Corinthians or Pericles, in the sense that it imposes an order on reality that excludes large parts. It denies, for example, that historical movement can affect it, and thus that it may be an incomplete picture of what it is to be Spartan. It excludes the diversity of human possibilities that are, nonetheless, revealed to lurk in the souls of its citizens and are visible in their subjection to antinomial desires when abroad.

To suggest that an entire way of life is aesthetic, in this way, is, perhaps, to stretch the concept beyond acceptable bounds and to suggest that, insofar as we find order or meaning in the world we are engaged in an aesthetic activity. The danger is, perhaps, of denying the role of rationality and morality altogether. To this reasonable objection I can

only say that the term “aesthetic” seems better to describe the sense of order and meaning that hold together the cities who rely on metaphors or a mimetic culture of *philia* than does a concern for justice or rationality. The city that relies most on something we would recognize as rationality, Corcyra, deploys it in an entirely instrumental way and is, indeed, also the one most lacking in any aesthetic approach to politics. Even when its politics have not descended into violence Thucydides gives us the distinct impression that this peace is due only to the ability of institutions to coordinate and constrain the diverse desires of the Corcyreans through cooperative necessity. As far as we can tell there is no sense of shared meaning that provides an overarching image that can stabilize and unite the city. That this absence may, indeed, be in the background of all politics, the situation to which all cities are prone to return is not, perhaps, inconsistent with the notion that it is an aesthetic approach to politics that guides the stability that is to be found in the *History*. It may also, of course, guide the great destructive movements that Thucydides sees as great actions in common and we see as imperialism and aggression. This points, of course, to Villa’s objection that the aesthetic category of “greatness” has no moral content. On the other hand, an aesthetic politics like that of the Corinthians helps to distinguish good order from bad, and just violence from chaos by marking important boundaries – for example those between gods, humans and animals – that, unlike the category of “greatness” assert limits on action. Their aesthetic politics, relying as it does on the permanent elevation of an orienting image of maternal generation speaks the

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236 Kateb cites similar concerns about the admission of the aesthetic to politics, noting that “the passion of the imagination for meaning or meaningfulness must encounter something to assuage it… An aesthetic void must be filled or, by contrast, super-abundant energy must find discharge aesthetically.”, pp16-17 For Kateb this drive for meaning is experienced as a craving and, spilling from its proper site of satisfaction in art, threatens to colonize politics, without regard for morality. (2000) “Aestheticism and Morality, Their Cooperation and Hostility.” *Political Theory*. 28(1), pp5-37.
language of morality in a way that Pericles does not. A resemblance to justice, however, may still be very far from justice and such an aesthetic politics may be capable of very great injustice. The Corinthian domination of her colonies, the Spartan suppression of the Helots are perhaps only injustice on a smaller scale than that attempted by the Athenians. Since rationality in Thucydides, however, is a matter of calculation and foresight, of sound strategy rather than ethical reflection, an aesthetic approach to politics may be all we can explore, in terms of attempts at comprehensive views of justice in the *History*.

In turning to Plato we will see the approach to politics that relies on orienting images, or over-arching metaphors, to ground important political goods repeated and, indeed, taken to perhaps the greatest possible extreme in Socrates’ Kallipolis in the *Republic*. Here, in a way not possible in Thucydides’ *History*, we will be able to explore not only the consequences of pursuing citizenship through metaphors, but also find an account of the responsiveness to representation that makes such metaphors effective – to the degree that they are. More than a political device, such representations are part of our way of navigating a world that is, for Plato as for Thucydides, in flux. In the *Symposium* we will find an explanation of the limitations of metaphorical approaches to politics and the causes of their inevitable breakdown.
Chapter Four: *Erōs and Ikon in the Republic and Symposium*

The call by Pericles for the Athenians to take the city as a beloved proved to be problematic, even on the assumption that the citizens were capable of the meritocratic, honor-loving form of democracy he eulogizes. By tying love of the city to love of the eternal memory of their collective deeds, Pericles is forced to countenance the possibility that the Athenians may choose this imperial fame at the expense of the city’s survival. *Erōs* proves to be a powerful image of the kind of attachment a citizen might feel for a city that is not complicated or compromised by territorial or familial attachments. However, the solution to the immediate Thucydidean problem of the coordination of group movement in a world itself in motion gives rise to a problem which becomes the province of political philosophy: the just direction of that movement. As we see in Athens, some ways of constituting group cohesion lead inevitably to a kind of motion that is at once ethically unjustifiable and unsustainable as a permanent endeavor.

I turn to Plato at this point in order to explore this question of the just ‘movement’ of cities and its connection to their stability. It is my hope, however, that examining Plato’s political theory in light of Thucydides’ work will reveal certain commonalities that will expand our understanding of each. In particular, considering the *Republic* in light of Thucydides’ work reveals the invocation in Socrates’ Kallipolis of a political structure that makes use of the ascriptive *philiai* discussed in Chapter 2. The city is one which, although located in this realm of becoming, is given over to establishing and sustaining an experience of rest. Socrates’ claim for Kallipolis is that it is founded on knowledge of justice and injustice rather than mere opinions of justice like Sparta or the Corinthian empire, though both claim concern for justice.
The city Socrates imagines with his interlocutors is, like Sparta, devoted to the replication of honored models and, like Corinth, grounded in a myth of maternal autochthony. Even more than at Sparta private spaces are collapsed into public and even more than at Corinth historical contingency is hidden from view. Not only is the fact of past change obscured for those living in the city, the possibility of movement from fixed ways is altogether hidden. Even in Kallipolis then, the possibility of just movement still eludes us – since everything there appears to be at rest. And yet this city is imagined in the course of the same conversation in which Socrates explains that life in the physical world is inherently subject to movement and that knowledge depends on truths that lie beyond the realm of becoming. Justice as an object of knowledge and the movement that characterizes politics – the realm where justice is above all at issue – are in fundamental metaphysical tension. Yet Plato’s account of reality assures us that political life is conducted in a realm of movement, be it ever so well guided by knowledge of Being, so that we must examine carefully claims that Kallipolis is really at rest.

We cannot avoid, of course, the interpretive question that bedevils all discussions of the Republic concerning the seriousness of Socrates’ institutional proposals. That proposals for a city whose educational, military, social and political structures are devoted to rest precede the elaboration of a metaphysics that sites that city in a realm of unavoidable movement, of generation and decay, is certainly one of the largest of these interpretive problems. It is certainly possible that Plato seriously intends us to view a philosophically ruled city in which non-philosophers are devoted to a mere illusion of permanence and stability as the best possible and inevitably temporary arrangement in a world in flux. On the other hand, the very impermanence of such an arrangement and the
deliberate creation of a culture of false consciousness (or salutary opinion, depending on one’s perspective) stands rather at odds with the project of a philosopher – a lover of truth who cannot stand by and hear it besmirched. While we will not skirt the issue, what is most importantly revealed for our purposes in both the metaphysics of the *Republic* and in its institutional proposals is a sense of the appeal to the soul of the kinds of arrangements that we saw grounding political cohesion and stability in Thucydides. Whether or not Plato intends us to take seriously the proposals for a city that Socrates makes we can fruitfully consider why and how they might be successful. To ask what human quality could make Kallipolis appealing or workable will help us understand the appeal of the orienting images of *philia* that, we saw, maintained internal rest in Thucydides. We have observed that having an apparently fixed temporal point to which political projects and ethical questions can be referred has a stabilizing effect on politics.

What Plato offers in the *Republic* is an invocation of this phenomenon side by side with an analysis of the soul’s responsiveness to images which promises to explain its appeal and its consequences. On the one hand the account of representation and response to images is suggestive of the way in which non-philosophers attempt to navigate a world in flux in the absence of truly stable bearings. In this light the orienting image or the aesthetic approach to politics promises to produce stability and, perhaps, even justice. On the other hand, by reducing the complexity, multiplicity and change of human life into a merely apparent stillness, unity and simplicity, metaphorical politics leave human beings mired in confusion and prone to slide into injustice. In the *Symposium* *erōs* appears as a force in the soul that counters the passive responsiveness to images that underwrites metaphorical politics. The transgressive impetus of *erōs* as well as its inherent tendency
to unveil our metaphysical situation, means that metaphorical politics can never succeed in achieving rest. Indeed, in the depictions of Socrates we may find a way of living in the city and practicing *philia* there that acknowledges movement, change and multiplicity. In looking at the role of images in his philosophic friendships we will see that, although Socrates is a force of *erōs* in the city, revealing complexities that challenge its orienting images, he also makes sure to create more comprehensive images to replace them.

**a) The Republic: a city without contradiction**

While at one level he pits philosophic rule against tyranny as the poles of political possibility between which are ranged a set of more or less defective regimes, for Plato as for Thucydides the fundamental danger of political life is *stasis*. It is true that tyranny is the greatest misfortune for the city, a regime where the people “have put on the dress of the harshest and bitterest enslavement to slaves” (569c), while those who are great-minded, prudent or rich have already been purged from the city (567b-c). It is *stasis*, though, that is the danger that all regimes face and which may, only if unchecked, end in tyranny. *Stasis* is the possibility that emerges as soon as the divine city begins to lose its harmonious order, when guardians begin to be born who are unworthy of their fathers’ powers and neglect the careful education, breeding and sorting of the guardians and citizens of Kallipolis (546c-547a). The “unlikeness and inharmonious irregularity” that results is the ancestor of faction (*polemon kai echthron*), says Socrates, wherever it arises. It is interesting that Socrates does not here refer to *stasis* but to *polemon* and *echthron*. This is at odds, at first glance, with his argument that war with Greek is *stasis* because it is war with one who is like oneself (with one’s own – *oikeious*) and should not be spoken
of as *polemos* (471a). Once unlikeness emerges, however, not only fellow Greeks, but even fellow citizens are not recognized as *oikeious* but, as we have seen in the *stasis* at Corcyra, emerge as *allotrious* – alien or foreign. These two apparently discordant references by Socrates to *stasis* and *polemos* point, perhaps, to the fragile and achieved nature of the apparently natural allegiances that underwrite political stability. As we saw at Corcyra, what appears as most *oikeios* – kinship – is rendered *allotrioteron* (most alien) during *stasis*. Socrates’ point is that, far from the kinship of all Greeks defining the bounds of the *oikeios*, cities themselves are in all but extraordinary circumstances riven by lines of difference and alienation. The extraordinary circumstance is the existence of a philosophically ruled city such as that described by the interlocutors in the *Republic*. Any other kind of arrangement, indeed, is not even worthy of the name “city” because “each of them is very many cities but not a city… There are two, in any case, warring (*polemia*) with each other, one of the poor, the other of the rich. And within each of these there are very many” (422e-423a). Rather than as friends who “have all things in common” as they do in Kallipolis (424a), the citizens of such divided cities live in a state of war and enmity (*polemon kai echthon*).

That the violent disunity of *stasis* is actually a product, rather than a cause, of the alienation of what is actually alike (such as kinsmen) is a point at which Plato appears to depart from the account of Thucydides. Socrates’ argument that only a radical rearrangement of the city is adequate to healing the underlying *stasis* rests on the claim that a complete unity, not only of property, but even of feeling must characterize citizenship. He is explicit that such unity is a prerequisite to any attempt to avoid faction (464c). In Kallipolis, however, the measures of likeness depart from those at work in
Thucydides’ narrative. There the *oikos* and *syngenēia* (kinship) stood as standards of natural likeness that could not be alienated within the bounds of customary justice, and yet fell victim to the demands of factional conflict. In Kallipolis Socrates pursues a more radical and comprehensive measure of likeness, one which would be immune to the confusion and contradiction that suggests that two things are at once like and unlike. The debates about the importance of equality of status and of strength, and the rearrangements of alliances on the basis of each, that characterized Thucydides’ narrative are replaced in Kallipolis by the insistence that each kind of person be and act only like himself and others of his sort. The divisions that create *stasis* exist not merely at the level of the city, but at the level of the individual human being.

Strength and status, which were set at odds in the debate between Corinth and Corcyra – where kinship was first alienated – are reunited in the guardian class. This is only the beginning, however, of the effacement of all of those sites of contradiction that open up spaces between those who should be unified and alike, (and of the erection of clear and permanent distinctions between what should be separate and unlike). It is through this rearrangement of the city that Socrates claims to be able to replace war and enmity in a shared territory with a true united city of *philia*. Rather than, as in a tyranny, a place where the people are enslaved to slaves, or an oligarchy or timarchy in which they are enslaved to the few, Kallipolis is a place in which the many are viewed by the strong as “free friends (*philous*) and supporters” (547b-c). It is only in such a city that *stasis* is no longer the underlying reality.

This spectrum of possibilities is, of course, rather different from that we have identified in Thucydides’ work. There we saw that the universe of political possibilities
seemed to span the distance between Corcyra’s *stasis* and those regimes which muster inner cohesion through orienting images. The greatest source of difference between these possibilities was not the lack of divisions between rich and poor, but the ability to resist the pressure of changed circumstances in order to maintain internal cohesion. We suggested that what those cities best able to maintain this kind of cohesion, Athens and Sparta, had in common was their invocation of powerful images that provided a temporally fixed point of orientation that, through the language of *philia*, inspired the necessary degree of self-sacrifice and solidarity by capturing, uniting and even transforming the disparate *anankai* of individual desires. For Thucydides the danger of *stasis* lay in the eternal pressure of these *anankai* as exemplified in the *stasiotai’s* *philotimia* and *pleonexia*. That cities use metaphors of political *philia* to control and direct these *anankai* may suggest some other elements of human nature at work, however – in particular, certain temporal concerns. The Athenians concern for permanent future fame, the Corinthian obsession with their founding of colonies, the Spartan practice of *philia* for dead *homoioi*, and even Thucydides’ own claim to be writing a possession for eternity, are suggestive of a strong temporal thread running through political arrangements.

In Plato we find these same elements of the human experience of time explored along with an account of the soul’s nature which expands vastly upon the vision of the *anankai* of desires we saw in Thucydides’ work. Time and the soul are connected to the city through *stasis* and the orienting image, both of which play a role in the *Republic*. Since *stasis* is a more explicit topic for Plato than the orienting image and occupies center stage as the fundamental reality of cities deficient in justice, it is appropriate to begin
with it. When he begins to build the city in speech and to transform it into Kallipolis
Socrates gradually brings unity and likeness more radically to the center of the city. To
understand these proposals, however, it is appropriate to begin with consideration of the
dramatic role of his construction of the city, in particular because it comes as a response
to descriptions of political life that are enlightening adenda to the account of the *stasis* at
Coreyra.

**i) On the causes of injustice**

The questions posed by Glaucon and Adeimantus in book 2 are particularly helpful in
fleshing out the process of ethical and institutional unravelling that Thucydides tells us
occurred during *stasis*. When he writes of the decline of traditional values during the
*stasis*, of the “ancient simplicity” that made reverence for kinship and piety an
unquestionable ethical foundation, the cause was the misuse of public institutions,
motivated by private greed and ambition. For Thucydides this revealed the role of such
institutions in channeling the *anankai* of desire through cooperative necessity and
limiting the destruction they caused. This restraint on injustice was fragile, however, and
upset by the availability of external allies who lent power to the combatants and allowed
them to bypass institutions in pursuing their desires. In the speech of Glaucon we see
these themes explored again. His thought experiments reveal in greater detail both the
power of cooperative necessity to limit justice by structuring consequences, and also its
fragility in the face of *autarkeia* and its dependence on the ethical quality of the city as a
whole. It is this last problem that Adeimantus explores as he charts the decline of the
ancient simplicity which, while not concerned with justice in itself, ties justice closely to
public justification. Adeimantus poses the possibility in this account that beliefs about consequences and one’s power to manipulate them are essential restraints upon injustice which should be protected, or possibly restored. For Adeimantus the demise of traditional piety and respect for nomoi serves to worsen the situation by making this secret and limited reality public and, therefore, general. For both brothers justice is primarily a matter of the public justifications that conceal souls in the thrall of the anankai of desire which, like the Athenian envoys at Sparta, they take to be part of our essential nature. It is worth pausing to examine their complaints in detail, because when read in light of the Corcyrean stasis they help to enrich our understanding of that conflict and its revolution in thinking and set the dramatic context for the response of Socrates.

Glaucon and Adeimantus are both, ultimately, concerned with the superficiality of the way justice is conventionally defended – that is, by reference exclusively to the benefits that attend its reputation, an appearance that is actually consistent with the greatest injustice. Their demands of Socrates for a compelling defense of justice both reflect rejections of the view that concern for reputation is a sufficient incentive to just living. Glaucon demands to hear of justice and injustice in terms of “what each is and what power it has all alone by itself when it is in the soul – dismissing its wages and consequences” (358b), while Adeimantus desires Socrates to not only “show us by the argument that justice is stronger than injustice, but show what each in itself does to the man who has it – whether it is noticed by gods and human beings or not – that makes the one good and the other bad” (367e).

The brothers’ dissatisfaction with defenses that rely on concern for reputation stands in contrast to the central role Thucydides gives to such appearances in restraining
injustice. We have seen in Thucydides’ account of the *stasis* at Corcyra that the concern for the appearance of virtue plays a saving role by acting as a brake on the pursuit of self-interested desires. There it is only once the appearance of virtue has ceased to matter that injustice is performed openly and with great abandon. As we saw in the Corinthian critique of Corcyrean character, a reputation for reliability or justice is a precondition for winning the cooperation of others – it is one of what we have been calling the necessities of cooperation. Justification is a cooperative necessity because it is part of the appearance of justice that is necessary to secure the help of others either now or in the future. It implies a history that indicates aspects of justice that may be important to the interests of others, including reliability, reciprocity and trustworthiness, as well as power. When during the *stasis* the Corcyreans no longer cultivate even the appearance of justice and look instead for a reputation for thorough-going viciousness as their index of reliability when selecting allies, these cooperative necessities show up as an important brake upon injustice. By dissolving the tie of justifiability and justice that is represented by the demand for a just reputation the Corcyreans undermine all cooperation – and even all rewarding competition.

For Glaucon justice and injustice are matters of convention and contract and reflect a balancing of the compulsions that underly human behavior in Thucydides’ work. Justice comes about out of the fear of the injustice of others who, like ourselves, would rather do injustice because it is “naturally good” (358e-359a). What makes injustice naturally good, supposing we can do it unpunished, we only learn as Glaucon lays out his “proofs”. The two thought experiments that Glaucon puts forward in his speech serve to highlight the vulnerabilities of attempts to ground justice in the coordination of diverse
desires through cooperative necessities. While he uses the language and the logic of cooperative necessity and the *anankai* of desire in these proofs, however, they have many of the qualities of the orienting image, standing aloof from time and culture while claiming to be comprehensive descriptions. These “proofs” will show, he says, first, that “those who practice [justice] do so unwillingly, as necessary but not good” and secondly that “the life of the just man is, after all, far better than that of the just man” (358c). The first proof concerns the story of “Gyges’ ring” (or rather, of the ring found by Gyges’ ancestor) which through conferring invisibility on the wearer gives a power to commit injustice that is almost infinite because it can always be accomplished in secrecy (359c-360d). In his second thought experiment Glaucon imagines a perfectly unjust man with the reputation for perfect justice who is able to fulfill all of his unjust desires without discovery and, indeed, with the cooperation of his fellow citizens, while his counterpart ends in disgrace and torment (*Rep.* 360e-361d).

The story of Gyges’ ring explores the danger of *autarkeia* and endorses the Corinthian and Athenian suggestions that immunity to the consequences normally imposed by cooperative necessity allows one to respond in full to the *anankai* of desire. In constructing this proof Glaucon removes entirely the concern for consequences that he has excluded from the defense of justice he wants to receive from Socrates because the ring’s wearer is not constrained by any cooperative necessities. The point of the story is to suggest the compulsive power of reputation by imagining the actions of one who is unaffected by it. While Bloom argues that the story is suggestive of the power conferred

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237 These are, one should note, those consequences Julia Annas calls “artificial consequences of justice” (or injustice) noting that “they depend on the existence of human practices and conventions, and would not accrue to the possession of justice in the absence of these,” *An Introduction to Plato’s Republic.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p66. The “natural consequences” of justice are those, she says, which Glaucon will accept as benefits of justice.
by rhetoric to effectively render one’s injustices invisible, the story can stand also for any
capacity to stand aloof from the ordinary consequences of one’s actions. In
Thucydides’ narrative the Athenians make some claims of this kind about themselves,
praising themselves for being more just than they have to be, while others are more just
than they want to be, and only because they are forced. As we saw in Chapter 2, claims
of this kind of magnanimity are also demonstrations of power and freedom: the *aphilos*
city which is also autarchic stands aloof from cooperative necessities with the result that
it can claim for itself the privilege of a prestigious kind of justice – that which is unforced
by the need to cultivate a reputation for cooperative reliability. This Athenian concern
for the pleasure of prestige, however, suggests a problem that while, as a proof that
eliminates concern for consequences, Glaucon’s first story is inadequate in demonstrating
the power of injustice, for the kinds of desires the ring wearer can pursue are limited to
those that can be enjoyed in secret. If he were, like the Athenians of Pericles’ funeral
oration, to desire fame for his acts of both harm and good, his immunity to consequences
must take another form – the *autarkeia* of the ring wearer is, after all, incomplete.

The second proof is concerned with the power of injustice. This power in turn is
not an autarchic one, but one dependent precisely upon those cooperative necessities the
ring wearer has skirted. At first sight the story of the man who thrives because of his
ability to cultivate a reputation for the utmost justice, despite his actual injustice, seems to

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239 It is in the context of this kind of power, and this kind of claim to immunity to the “artificial
consequences” of one’s actions that we can suggest that Annas goes too far in her objection to Glaucon’s
demand for a defense that ignores artificial consequences of injustice when she says, “We live in a world
where we have to take into account the natural and artificial consequences of injustice, and it is merely silly
to ask what we would do if we escaped these by having magic rings.” Annas, (1981), p69. Even if, as the
Corinthians try to persuade them, and as events finally seem to demonstrate, the Athenians are not utterly
autarchic, their belief that their power puts them beyond concerns for “artificial consequences” suggests the
importance of Glaucon’s demand for an argument to put to them about the value of justice nonetheless.
represent the complete dislocation of justice and justification. The power of Glaucon’s unjust man of just reputation lies in his ability to send counterfeit signals of reliability, to meet the cooperative necessities in appearance only. Glaucon tells us that when a man seemed just “there would be honors and gifts for him for seeming to be just” (361c) and that the unjust man of just appearances “rules in the city because he seems just” (362a, my emphasis). Power, honor and gifts are his prizes for reputation, yet this reputation is won precisely through his ability to help friends and harm enemies (362c). This ability to help and harm, however, is itself the product of wealth and influence won through unjust practices, so that the accumulation of power is both the product of injustice and its means.

While it is clear that Glaucon is trying to reveal the status of justice and injustice in nature, the reception of the man he describes is revealing of the quality of the surrounding culture, for this is where his acts are evaluated and rewarded. The case of Corcyra shows that cooperative necessities need not point towards justice and that “justifiability” may refer to all kinds of private or factional ends and be consistent with great injustice. Corcyra, of course, provides an example of the worst scenario: one in which conventional canons of justice are openly mocked and injustice made the quality that is rewarded with cooperation.240 By comparison we might, perhaps, take it as a sign of a society in reasonable ethical health if those actions that are actually rewarded have the appearance of justice. It turns out, though, that the unjust man’s fellow citizens do not

240 This is the case even when unjust men are content to preserve belief in justice because, as Strauss (1978) notes, “an unjust man would not attack justice; he would prefer that the others remain the dupes of the belief in justice so that they might become his dupes”, p86. As we shall see presently a great deal more injustice will characterize a city where the appearance of justice is rewarded than one in which the belief has become pervasive that the appearance alone is necessary to win this reward – such a city is prone to descend into one in which even the appearance is foregone as it is in Corcyra.
look very closely at his actions, and do not scrutinize them with more than a concern for their own interests. It is because he is wealthy, Glaucon tells us after all, that he does “good to friends and harm to enemies” (362c). We have no evidence, then, that the man’s fellow citizens are concerned for justice except to the extent that they are able to benefit from it, which is, after all, his initial premise: we value justice in others, but not in ourselves. The friends and fellow citizens of this man, one might say, are so interested in the help they expect to win from him that they are unconcerned by any justice that goes beyond mutual self-interest. The difference between a city like that Glaucon describes where “justice” is publicly honored and one like Corcyra during the stasis where it is openly disparaged, is simply a matter of its utility which, as we have learned, has to do with the presence of absence of functioning public institutions. The power of the unjust man of just reputation depends, then, upon the existence of such institutions combined with the basic indifference of his fellows to justice itself. This indifference is reflected in the fact that the desires, by the satisfaction of which he enlists their help, appear to be like his own: for wealth, prestige, power and pleasure. It is not justice or, as in the Corcyrean case injustice, themselves that are actually honored in the cooperative necessity imposed by reputation: in both cases the reputation for justice or injustice are simply indexes of capacity to aid our pursuit of objects of desire.

The bedrock of Glaucon’s speech, then, is the view that the goods pursued by his unjust man of just appearance and by Gyges’ ancestor are those which all men will pursue should they find themselves standing aloof from consequences and with the power to do injustice. For Glaucon that justice which is reflected in law is no more than convention and contract (358e-359a), while nature itself provides no consequences for
transgressions against the law and contains no standard of justice for, it seems, Glaucon
dismisses the role of the gods in human affairs. While he has made an argument about
the lack of any natural consequences of injustice, Glaucon has allowed the case to rest
upon undefended assumptions about the force of those natural necessities that govern
human action – the anankai of desire and fear. These were the necessities embedded in
his initial account of justice as originating in a compact which was based on the view that
injustice is a good and which we learn have to do with power, wealth and erotic
satisfaction.

Where Glaucon’s proofs are aimed squarely at distinguishing the natural and
“artificial” consequences of justice and injustice, and their foundation in the necessity of
cooperation and desire respectively, Adeimantus takes the perspective of convention
more seriously and discovers nuances there. While he does not deny the picture of
natural necessity in our desires that Glaucon assumed, Adeimantus does point to
distinctions within relations to cooperative necessity that explain the way in which justice
and justification drifted apart in the Corcyrean stasis, and, by implication, suggests a
thesis about the goods that attend keeping them closely tied.

Adeimantus continues his brother’s argument that justice is choiceworthy in
reputation only, but instead of the analysis of relative benefits, he begins to explore the
sources of our evaluations of benefit and harm. He agrees with Glaucon that injustice is
closely associated with power, and states the problem in the following question: “by what
device, Socrates, will a man who has some power – of soul, money, body or family – be
made willing to honor justice and not laugh when he hears it praised?” (366c). Here, in
the style of the Athenians at Melos, Adeimantus suggests that equality is measured

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simply in terms of relative power and the slightest edge in power is converted into some benefit. If one is stronger, smarter, better connected or richer than some other, the difference is regarded as a license to injustice. In Thucydidean terms, upon such weaker types one imposes “possibilities” (Th. Pel. 5.89.1). An observation that Glaucon made in the extreme case of the perfectly unjust man of just reputation is here generalized: power may facilitate injustice, but injustice facilitates the further accumulation of power. In this light, a reputation for justice is simply another kind of power that elevates one above his victims.

The possibility that a reputation for justice might cease to be a source of power and become instead a label of weakness (that we saw lived out in Corcyra) is noticed by Adeimantus in a way that Glaucon stipulates away. Glaucon’s experiment assumes that the fellow citizens of the unjust man of just reputation do not, themselves, value justice except in terms of its effects, while expecting that others will honor it. It is this public valuation that makes the man’s just reputation an attractive source of power and satisfaction for his friends. In the city Glaucon describes, this valuation of justice is static and constant, and he ascribes, perhaps, too little awareness on the part of the citizens of what their fellows are thinking and doing. They trust, in short, that the others will reward justice and continue to do so. Part of the abstraction of his story, despite its narrative quality, is a temporal one.

In Adeimantus’ argument this valuation becomes something very fluid and dependent upon a keen interest of the citizens in what their fellows believe. This fluidity is signaled by his descriptions of three groups of men – the young, and two groups of elders. Of the two groups of elders who have influence on the young, the first group
(363a-e) recommends justice, but only in terms of “the good reputations that come from it” (363a). The second group (364a-e) agrees that “moderation (sōphrosynē) and justice are fair, but hard and full of drudgery, while intemperance and injustice are sweet and easy to acquire and shameful only by opinion and law” (364a). Here we see justice joined to sōphrosynē with its resonances of Spartan virtue. In the suggestion of the drudgery of moderation we hear the Periclean opinion of the Spartan training said to give rise to the virtue: sōphrosynē is hard and full of drudgery, it is the “laborious training” with which Spartan children pursue manhood (Th. Pel. 2.39.2). In admitting the fairness of justice, such men have not, perhaps reached the Corcyrean stage of denying even the usefulness of justice but they do publicly dishonor “the weak and poor”, and “both in public and in private they are ready and willing to call happy and to honor bad men who happen to have wealth” (364a).

The second group, then, admits openly what the first group, along with the citizens in Glaucon’s second thought experiment will not: namely, that their own devotion to pleasure and profit leads them to disregard justice itself whenever they can. It is the admission that, since what is desired is pleasure and the most efficient and least painful way of attaining it is injustice, injustice recommends itself. This group, however, has a more pernicious influence on the young than the first because, while the fathers value a just reputation for its political, social, marital and economic benefits, there is sincerity in their belief that these rewards and punishments in this life and the next are apportioned according to canons of virtue. In their account, for example, of the divine punishment of the unjust they are innocent of all claims that men or gods could be fooled by appearances. For Adeimantus this is illustrated by their assumption that “those
penalties that Glaucon described as the lot of the just men who are reputed to be unjust … are [according to the first group of men] the lot of the unjust” (363e). For these men, that is, punishment and disgrace attend injustice and one only wins a reputation for justice and its benefits by actually being just. It is the second group, the one which openly praises successful injustice, which teaches the young that one may receive all the supposed benefits of justice (that is, the things we all really desire when we praise justice), by cultivating its mere seeming.

Adeimantus deplores this unmasking of motivations and the generality of corrupt intentions that it reveals because of its effects on the young, who, when they hear such things proclaimed draw from these speeches ideas about “what sort of man one should be and what way one must follow to go through life best” (365b). The sort of men, who “must go where the tracks of the argument lead”, are led to become masters of the cooperative necessities of their city: to cultivate a virtuous reputation (for the sake of enlisting the innocents of the first group), to learn to speak well and manipulate the assembly and courts, and to conspire (presumably with other self-aware pursuers of pleasure) (365d). Even with the gods they will employ their tricks of persuasion and bribery to go unpunished. In this they take advantage of the religious traditions and practices that insist that, while the gods may see all, including one’s injustice, they may be bribed with offerings, and, indeed, employed in one’s misdeeds (364b-365a).

That injustice is the best use of one’s natural relative advantages over others and is the path to political power is summed up for these young men by the belief that “the first man of this kind to come to power is the first to do injustice to the best of his abilities” (366d). A talent for understanding and manipulating the cooperative necessities
of a city, including the unrecognized but fundamental cupidity of its citizens, allows one to accumulate social, economic and political power to profit from ever-larger injustices. Like Glaucon, Adeimantus sees that, while it may have no natural status, the conventions of justice provide a framework in which injustice may beget great power. His suggestion that there is, rather than one person, a whole class of men in the city who are aware of this fact and devoted to the practice of techniques for manipulating cooperative necessity points the way to the kind of situation in which, as in the \textit{stasis} at Corcyra, each must guard against the other, and the injustices of none is particularly fruitful.

Adeimantus sees that the result of the generalization of this approach to life in a city is that we must “keep guard over each other for fear injustice be done” (367a). Once the fundamental greed of our nature is widely understood and injustice seen as the quickest and most profitable path to whatever one desires, the sense that justice is generally valued must begin to fray. At this point one can only assume that others are actively pursuing injustice also. The Corcyrean \textit{stasis} should lead us to suppose that at this point the crooked paths that the unjust man has plotted through cooperative necessity to the satisfaction of his desires are, increasingly bisected by the paths of others. His own path is made harder as a result.

The praise Adeimantus gives to injustice has the advantage of a human historical perspective lacking from that of Glaucon. Where Glaucon speculates about the historical origins of justice, his “proofs”, while they contain narratives, do not take into account the change of beliefs and insight over the course of generations. His argument suggests that we must pay attention not only to the relation of justice to our nature, but also to the fact that we together remake the consequences that meet our actions through both those
actions, but especially through our speech about them. His solution is to exclude all reference to cooperative necessity from our understanding of justice: our reward for justice must be internal and not dependent on convention and the unexpressed desires of others that it embodies. The natural necessity that is experienced as the anankai of desire must be understood to be met with natural, not artificial consequences, ones that are immune from the kind of shifts and interference that characterize cooperative necessity which points, in the end, whichever way the wind of mass opinion about consequences blows.

Rather than responding to this demand, however, Socrates provides a cultural solution in reply to Adeimantus’ cultural critique. He tackles the problem at the level of the beliefs about justice that Adeimantus has suggested drive the city downwards towards stasis. His strategy is to make the contradictions between the religious beliefs embraced by the two groups disappear so that citizens can no longer believe it possible to persuade the gods to overlook their injustice. He also forefends the possibility that citizens could recognize and fear the injustice of their fellows which is itself a spur to injustice. In this he restores and strengthens the ancient simplicity of those fathers who had believed that justice was rewarded and injustice punished and purges the observations of the men who have recognized that this need not be the case. He also suppresses the view of human motivations espoused by this second group by stressing the centrality of honor and shame rather than desire and fear in the self conception of the citizens and in their view of each other’s motivations.
ii) Building the city in speech

As Socrates begins to unfold a developmental history of the city and the place of justice and injustice within it, the interlocutors quickly find themselves dealing with the relationship between justice and necessity. In this discussion cooperative necessity is quickly pitted against the ability to judge what is truly necessary in two alternative conceptions of the origins of justice and injustice. A necessity that is neither simply the *anankai* of desires which compel our actions, nor the limits laid down by cooperative necessity begins to emerge. This necessity is one that concerns not compulsion towards objects of desire, but compulsion as restraint, indeed, self-restraint. Necessity here appears as the recognition of limits. These two conceptions need to be kept in mind as the guardian education is expounded because the proper relationship of justice to necessity forms a standard by which that education can be judged.

The true nature of Adeimantus’ understanding of justice is illustrated in his reply when, as they begin to build their city in speech, Socrates asks him whether he can locate the origins of justice or injustice in the first city, that of “utmost necessity” (*anankaiotatee*, 369d). Adeimantus admits that he doesn’t know, “unless it’s somewhere in some need (*kreia*) these men have of one another” (372a). In this Adeimantus seems to blame cooperative necessity for injustice which reflects, perhaps, his demand to hear an argument praising justice in terms of its natural consequences only. In tracing justice also to this origin, however, he allows it too to be a matter of convention only. By beginning the construction of the city in the individual’s lack of economic self-sufficiency Socrates has, to some extent, prompted this kind of answer. As we have seen in Thucydides’ work, and in Glaucon’s and Adeimantus’ speeches, degrees of self-
sufficiency seem to be connected to degrees of freedom to commit injustice. Self-sufficiency was an abundance of the kind of powers that, we saw, allow one to commit injustice. Adeimantus’ comment, however, points us in the other direction also, towards the needs of those who are injured by injustice and are made vulnerable by their very lack of self-sufficiency. We saw this in the Corinthian complaints that the Corcyreans took advantage of the necessity of travelers to put into their ports. The Athenian description of their own justice at Sparta in Book I of Thucydides rested on the view that not taking advantage of these asymmetries of power and need was adequate to justice. This is the kind of justice that is lauded to some extent in the Corinthian speech at Athens, where the autarchic, aphilos city enjoys the prestige of unforced “just” actions. If injustice enters the city because of mutual need then justice may simply be the refusal to take advantage of assymmetries of power need can throw up. Viewed in light of Adeimantus’ demand for a reward within the soul it seems he is expecting a benefit to accrue to those who somehow manage this otherwise unmotivated self-restraint.

On the one hand the city of utmost necessity demonstrates the deep location of our interdependence. On the other it foreshadows in negative Socrates’ later claim that the “decent man” is “most of all sufficient unto himself for living well and, in contrast to others, has least need of another” (387d), to which proposition Adeimantus readily agrees. The just man does not feel himself forced to act unjustly against his desires, nor to act justly because he is forced to. The impetus to act justly or otherwise, we ultimately learn, stems from the direction of the soul’s eros. This alone determines the sense of need according to which reward and punishment becomes meaningful.
Adeimantus’ confusion here is followed by Glaucon’s interruption about the lack of “relish” in the lives of its citizens and his demands that the city be transformed into what Socrates calls a “luxurious city”. The reference to “relish”, contrasted with the diet of simply cooked and raw vegetables, nuts and pulses consumed in the city of utmost necessity (372c-d), points to a familiar contrast between the human, the divine and animals symbolized in food. Eating meat was the result of participation in (especially public) sacrifices and was a statement both of humanity (standing between the bestial and the divine) and of citizenship. In their vegetarianism the residents of the city of utmost necessity are, in Glaucon’s view, deficient both in humanity and in politics.\(^{242}\) Socrates agrees on the grounds that it is here that “we could probably see in what way justice and injustice naturally grow in cities” (372d-e). It is here that gluttony, hedonism and self-aggrandizement begin to appear in the city with a proliferation of luxuries and the professions that provide them (373a-d). Socrates traces the origin of war to this shift towards the luxurious city, since it must be supported by more land than the citizens originally possessed, requiring them to take some of their neighbors’ territory “if they let themselves go to the unlimited acquisition of money, overstepping the boundary of the necessary \(\textit{anankaiōn}\)” (373e).

There is a natural necessity, we now hear, but it is not the necessity that compels us through desire. Quite the contrary it is a necessity that should appear to us as a boundary, a limit. The connection between justice and necessity, it turns out now, lies not in the need we have of each other, but in our capacity to assess necessity itself. This image of the luxurious city set on expansion because it doesn’t know how to judge

necessity is resonant with the Athenian assertions at Sparta that *anankai* for honor and self-interest propelled them into the pursuit of empire. By contrast, Archidamos claimed that Spartan strength and moderation were due to their education in necessity which made them able to recognize and resist those temptations that were not truly necessary. From the actions of individual Spartans, however, especially outside of Spartan control, we saw that this claim to possess self-restraint grounded in sound judgment was, to say the least, overstated. The Spartan lack of self-control when confronted with *anankai* of desire in the absence of the structural compulsions of their own city should be kept in mind as we consider the education of the guardian class in all its similarities to Sparta.

In Thucydides’ narrative the most radically opposed cities in terms of internal affairs are probably those of the Corcyreans and the Spartans. Spartan discipline and unity at home provides a strong contrast to the complete collapse of Corcyra into a chaotic pursuit of individual desires. The difference between the Corcyreans and the Spartans, in the end though, was not that the Spartans were sound judges of the truly necessary and hence resistant to the *anankai* of desire. Rather it lay in the strength of the restraints of custom and institutions that were supported by a strong and closed political context, highly resistant to pressures of external movement. In considering Socrates’ *Kallipolis* we should look for these elements of institutional restraint as well as for any evidence of the ability to recognize and judge the limits of necessity itself.

What we find in the city of the guardians is that there are elaborate restraints, but little in the way of judgment. While the city does not adopt a strategy of the coordination of diverse desires, this is because a strict uniformity of desire has been cultivated through offering only an extremely narrow range of rewards and allowing only a very precise and
limited model of behavior to be honored. Rewards are, in fact, limited to those of honor, while only those characteristics and actions that are useful to the city win it. Other desires and other qualities are consigned to the forbidden and shameful, being suppressed by institutional arrangements that make them impossible to pursue and, indeed, perhaps even difficult to conceive of. It is, in fact, the limits placed on the guardians’ consciousness, the way in which their education and institutions shape their beliefs that is the most significant thing about the city. In his lament Adeimantus was insistent on the role of belief in the prevalence and growth of injustice: the evidence of both his experience and cultural education has made him despair about the prospects for a man who wants to pursue justice. In his response Socrates makes the creation and protection of beliefs that uphold justice the central focus of both the education and the institutions of his guardians. While the city of the guardians is the purged of those institutional and cultural elements that made susceptibility to the anankai of desire a source of injustice, it does not replace that susceptibility with an understanding of the boundary of necessity.

**iii) The guardian education**

To defend and sustain the luxurious city Socrates finds a class of specialized warriors to be necessary. To be effective these guardians must turn all of their strengths towards the benefit of the city, rather than, as Adeimantus says happens now, to its detriment. Whereas Adeimantus lamented that the Athenians guard against each other’s injustice, the guardians are a class created to guard the city against its external enemies (374a-e); where Adeimantus tells us that young men feel pressed to use all of their natural advantages to commit injustice, the same natural advantages of intelligence, quickness
and strength in the guardians are used to protect the city (375a-e). These desiderata for the warrior caste require a careful restructuring of the city because these young men, full as they are of natural power and drive, are a threat to it. This is the first suggestion that, in identifying this class, they have not found men able to guard over their own souls for injustice. Care must be taken with their education lest they “be savage to one another and the rest of the citizens” (375b). In designing their education Socrates purges the cultural influences that Adeimantus has cited as the sources of injustice in Athens and, along with them, the kinds of incentives and beliefs that seem to nudge young men towards an unjust path. The first part of this reversal concerns belief.

The guardians are given beliefs about both the gods and each other that are useful to the city from childhood, beginning with political education. While, as warriors, they are guardians of the city, what they guard above all are these useful beliefs. As Socrates reveals when he explains the criteria for selecting those guardians who will be rulers rather than auxiliaries, the quality most valued in a guardian is not justice or even love of honor, or indeed great deeds in service of the city, but resistance to change in their beliefs. This is the quality Socrates eventually defines as “political courage” (430c), which is the power “that through everything will preserve the opinion about which things are terrible – that they are of the same sort as those the lawgiver transmitted in the education” (429b). The courageous guardian is certain and unmovable in his opinion about what to fear and what not: gods are to be feared, the injustice of fellow-guardians is not. These are, of course, the reverse of those opinions Adeimantus says the young receive in Athens.

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243 A second implication of Glaucon’s objections to the simple vegetarianism of the city of utmost necessity appears here, one that noted by Leon Craig: these warriors are “a dangerous class of men armed with teeth, of “meat eaters” who will rule if they have a mind to”, Craig (1994), p7.
Fear of the gods is vital because Adeimantus has shown us that certain religious beliefs serve to assuage the last anxieties that might prevent injustice when fears of human punishment have been dispelled: those concerning divine punishment. Socrates summarizes Adeimantus’ point by asserting that incorrect sayings about the gods “are neither holy, nor advantageous for us, nor in harmony with one another” (380c). He recommends instead making the tales told about the gods internally consistent to remove any suggestion that the gods might be bribable. They rather should “say that the bad men were wretched because they needed punishment and that in paying the penalty they were benefited by the god” (380b). 244 When Socrates pits the goodness of the divine against the supposed multiplicity of the Olympians in his argument about the true nature of the gods he begins to make religious beliefs invulnerable to the kind of critique. This is the beginning of another important thread in the tapestry of the kallipolis which is intended to make the guardians’ beliefs resistant to the kind of criticism that begins by revealing internal contradiction. As Adeimantus has argued, these contradictions in beliefs about the gods tend to dispel piety and religious fear, and to suggest the possibility of human mastery over divine justice.

Beliefs about their fellow citizens are, though, the primary defense against injustice. The young men Adeimantus describes, informed by those among their elders who openly praise injustice and recommend deception as a way around human and divine punishment, perceive their fellow citizens to be corruptible and greedy. It is partly out of fear of them that they come to pursue injustice almost competitively. The guardians must

244 See also 392b, where this stipulation about the ethical content of poetry is made general: “what both poets and prose writers say concerning the most important things about human beings is bad – that many happy men are unjust, and many wretched ones just, and that doing injustice is profitable if one gets away with it, but justice is someone else’s good and one’s own loss. We’ll forbid them to say such things and order them to sing and to tell tales about the opposite of these things.”
not hold this kind of opinion of their fellows and this must be reflected in the depictions of the highest models by which the young might be guided. In one telling passage Socrates argues that the gods must not be depicted fighting or conspiring with each others, since “if we are somehow going to persuade them that no citizen ever was angry with another and that to be so is not holy, it’s just such things that must be told the children right away” (378c). The conditional phrasing of this sentence suggests powerfully that Socrates is not taking truth but utility as his ultimate standard in determining what beliefs the guardians must hold.

It is important also that there be unity in the guardians beliefs and this is established and reinforced by the standards that are honored. Honor and shame mark the boundaries of what is allowable and are reinforced by poetic representations and the guardians’ relationship to them. This relationship is, above all, mimetic. Poetic representations present a standard by which the young are expected to shape themselves through imitation, imitating only “men who are courageous, moderate, holy, free, and everything of the sort; and what is slavish, or anything else shameful, they must neither do nor be clever imitating, so that they won’t get a taste for the being from its imitation” (395c). As well as being taught what, and what not, to fear, the guardians receive more detailed models both to emulate, and in falling short of which to feel shame. Shame is, indeed, invoked repeatedly when Socrates turns to the topic of imitation. It is vital that a young guardian should “laugh scornfully” at lamentations and “believe these things to be unworthy of himself, a human being,” and believe, for example, that shame and

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245 Joshua Mitchell’s exploration of the theme of mimesis in the Republic has been greatly influential on my view of the nature of the guardian education, which he calls the habituation “unto mortal patterns”, Plato’s Fable. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006) p53. See in particular, pp51-56. Any flaws in the account here of the role of mimesis in the guardian city are, of course, due to my own imperfect mimesis.
endurance are the proper responses to suffering (388d). Equally important is that he despise certain kinds of people so that, while he “won’t be ashamed” to imitate a good man, he cannot bear to imitate a worse one (396c). Poetry will avoid depicting great men in any kind of shameful behavior, and the guardians will be trained to respond to such behavior with scorn.\(^{246}\)

This sheds light on Socrates’ curious claim in book 3 that the guardians are philosophers by nature because they are like dogs (375e). Dogs, he says, are philosophers because they are driven by knowledge, but it is knowledge of a kind categorically different from that Socrates discusses later under the heading of philosophy. “Knowledge” here is simply recognition: a dog “distinguishes friendly from hostile looks by nothing other than having learned the one and being ignorant of the other… it defines what’s its own and what’s alien by knowledge and ignorance” (376b). The cultural education of the guardians and their sensitivity to honor make them love what is like themselves and what they have been taught to admire, and to scorn what is otherwise. Guardians do not fear each other because of what they have been taught to believe about the nature of their fellow guardians, thus they do not (or are not able to) look beneath the status of “guardian” to discern even basic friendship or hostility in their fellows. The analogy between guardians and dogs also reintroduces the question of the humanity of the residents of the kallipolis that has been at work ever since Glaucon objected to the lack of relish at the vegetarian feasts of the city of utmost necessity. That the introduction of swine and swineherds went along with the introduction of both injustice and justice into the city suggested that the city had entered the realm of the truly human and political.

\(^{246}\) The guardians are, indeed, particularly sensitive to honor because, as we shall see, it is the only kind of reward made available to them by their institutional arrangements. As a consequence they “must find a higher satisfaction in the honors paid to them by those they protect”, Mara (1997), p118.
On the other hand, the notion that the guardians are merely dogs implies that they have yet to really approach full humanity. The residents of the kallipolis, if we follow the metaphorical trail laid down by Socrates, are like domesticated animals rather than the wild beasts that one finds preying on each other in most cities. Without their shepherds, the philosopher rulers, the guardians will always become again untamed animals who “feed, fattening themselves, and copulating” freely (586b). The guardian’s sense of honor, his belief that certain actions are “unworthy of himself, a human being”, shows up in this light as another of the useful beliefs that may not, in fact, be true.

Part of making and keeping the guardians tame is creating unanimity about what is to be honored. There is no conflict amongst them about this as there is in the city Adeimantus describes. There one group of men honored bad men who happened to be wealthy (364a), while others valued both the prestige and wealth that went with a reputation for justice, but not justice itself. As Glaucon’s second story suggested, when justice is valued simply as a cooperative necessity that lights the path to private ends, men who honor justice may be as indifferent to justice itself as those honoring bad men. Where justice and justification are aligned, cooperative necessity restrains injustice not by reforming the desires of the citizens but by coordinating their pursuit of them.

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247 Domesticated animals: nursing mothers led "to the pen when they are full with milk” 460c, guardians are “like dogs obedient to the rulers, who are like shepherds of a city” 440d. Uncontrolled animals: those without philosophy (or the taming effect of habituation in the guardian city) are like cattle who “kick and butt with horns and hoofs of iron”, 586b; the philosopher in ordinary cities is “just like a human being who has fallen in with wild beasts” 496c. For a short but illuminating exploration of some of these animal images see Craig (1994), pp99-100.

248 Straussians in particular take the implications of these bestial images to suggest that Kallipolis is not desirable and presented ironically. For a discussion of this point see Mara (1997), p123. See also Bloom (1991), pp388-389, Craig (1994), p212.

249 Indeed, we might see the guardian’s learned scorn for those who are unlike himself as a replication of the downward glance of the philosopher king on “the imperfect political world” that despises “the limitations of one’s surroundings” noted by Mara, Socrates’ Discursive Democracy. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), p111.
diversity of benefits that Glaucon and Adeimantus attribute to the cultivation of a reputation for justice suggest just how wide a range of desires are at work. They cite rewards that include political power, advantageous marriage, wealth, prestige and divine favor (362b-c, 363a-c). In attributing these diverse motives to the same men they suggest the kind of person Socrates later describes as a democratic soul, who “lives his life in accord with a certain equality of pleasures… dishonoring none but fostering them all on the basis of equality” (561b). In a democratic city, similarly, no one kind of end is publicly honored above all except for freedom itself (562c). The guardian education, on the other hand, narrows the field of honorable ways of life and honorable desires to one set: those that are useful to the demands of the guardian role. Education has been helpful in teaching the guardians what to honor, as well as what to fear, but we saw that the lessons the young at Athens learned taught them too to be aware of what was publicly honored and to use that knowledge to manipulate cooperative necessity. The problem lay in what they and their fathers honored privately in their souls and homes, and in the cynicism that this disparity between public appearance and private motive taught them. Like contradictory statements about the gods, this kind of disparity is a space through which injustice can enter the city. Before we examine Socrates’ attempts to close this space through institutions we should consider briefly the question of contradiction itself. Those who seek out and expose contradictions in the inherited views of justice have, in Adeimantus’ account, used these inconsistencies to justify their pursuit of their unconstrained desires through unjust means. In rendering the cultural inheritance of the guardians resistant to this kind of critique Socrates is responding to Adeimantus’ demand, but is also suggesting a criticism of philosophy that he himself voices later in the
dialogue. Philosophers are easily confused with the sophists who teach the young to manipulate cooperative necessities for the sake of unjust desires because they too rely on contradiction in their teaching. Socrates points to the danger when propounding the course of education for those guardians who are to become philosophers. Here he rails against the introduction of dialectic to the young in terms very familiar from the complaints of Adeimantus. While sensible (metrion) men will “honor the teachings of their fathers (ta patria) and obey them as rulers” (538d) and will not be dislodged from their beliefs by pleasure and flattery, they are weak in the face of refutation in argument. Such men describing the fair (kalon), in the terms “he heard from the lawgiver” finds that

the argument (logos) refutes (exelenchee) him many times and in many ways, reduces him to the opinion that what the law says is no more fair than ugly, and similarly about the just and good and the things he most held in honor (538d-e).

Losing these beliefs through refutation (elenchus) such a man becomes “an outlaw (paranomos) having been a law-abiding man” (539a). Those youths who practice dialectic as sport “fall quickly into a profound disbelief of what they formerly believed” (539c).

We have seen that establishing and maintaining useful beliefs, about what to fear, but also about what to honor, has been the task of the guardian education. The guardians’ political courage is aimed at preserving what they have learned “and not casting it out in pains and pleasures and desires and fears” (429c). These emotions are “lyes” that can remove the dye of education and are, as much as possible, resisted by the educational preparation that has made the dye of belief colorfast. It is interesting to note, however, that while Socrates cites pleasure as a great solvent of belief at 429c, and it is pleasure
again that the sensible man resists at 538, this latter man cannot sustain his belief in the face of refutation. Contradiction appears to be an even greater threat than fear or pleasure to the useful beliefs the guardians receive in their education that make them fear the gods, but not each other’s injustice. In the passage on the colorfast beliefs of the guardians, however, contradiction is not mentioned and we must ask ourselves how the danger is avoided amongst the guardians. Certainly the internal consistency of their beliefs and the poetic education that encourages recognition and mimesis of sound models are essential to defending against the entry of injustice into the city, as is the absence of argument from their lessons.

Contradiction, however, as an experience, rather than as a practice of dialectic is essential to the philosophical education Socrates designs for the future rulers. Philosophy, of course, is Plato’s resolution of the problem of movement and rest that Thucydides explored. For Plato it is resolved into an opposition between what is and what comes into being and passes away. Epistemologically speaking the soul of the philosopher who knows something, knows “that which is”. The souls of those who merely have opinions fix themselves “on that which is mixed with darkness, on coming into being and passing away” (508d). The epistemological statement is matched with a metaphysical claim that, since the physical world that is accessible to the senses is always in transition, the object of knowledge (that which has being) exists instead in a realm accessible only to intellection and not to sense. The philosopher’s education as Socrates describes it in the Republic involves gradually revealing to the student that his judgments of the world based on sense are merely opinion and in this way revealing both the need for and nature of abstraction as a path to knowledge.
An important method for achieving these tasks is to “summon the intellect” (parakalounta ten noësin) through objects of sensation that “bid [the intellect] in every way to undertake a consideration because sense seems to produce nothing healthy” (523b). These objects stimulate reflection because they produce both one sensation and its opposite (523c). Socrates gives a helpful example of the phenomenon when discussing the proper use of instruction in calculation. He asks Glaucon to think of three neighboring fingers on a hand, noting that “each of them looks equally like a finger” (523d). The three seen together, however, suggest that the same finger may be both big and little when seen in contrast to the others, and that these descriptive terms are thus relative. What appeared to be one (a finger) turns out to be multiple – both a big and a little finger. In this experience, the “soul, summoning calculation and intellect, first tries to determine whether each of the things reported to it is one or two” (524b), and is then forced to reflect on what big and little are (524c), which can be pursued only through intellect and not sense. In this way multiplicity can be resolved back to oneness because the soul, asked to judge opposites ultimately finds it necessary to pursue the question of being (524e-525a).

While this experience of sensory dissonance is essential to the education in philosophy it also suggests that the kind of contradictions that refute beliefs come not just from arguments but from experiences. It is in light of this possibility that we should consider the institutional provisions Socrates makes for the city to support the educational preparation he has given the guardians. Belief about what is to be honored and feared must be supported by non-contradictory cultural representations that can avoid refutation in argument, but this is not enough: no confounding experience can be allowed to
undermine them either. Representation and reality must not be allowed to drift apart and create space for the cultivation of appearances as a cover for injustice.

**iv) Guardian institutions: polishing the surface**

Socrates proposes a set of institutions that prevent the cultivation of deceptive appearances by making the guardians live, as much as possible, *in* their appearances. The complete lack of privacy works towards depriving the guardians of any interiority or self-knowledge. Contradictory experiences are forfended in this way both externally, in the behavior of other guardians, and internally in the awareness of powerfully antinomial desires. The myth of the metals and the peculiar relationship of the guardians to previous generations push this flatness of guardian life to the greatest extreme by effacing even the experience of change to avoid the contrasts it may throw up. While living in a world of movement, change and multiplicity, the guardians, as much as possible must regard themselves as residents of a city of stillness, permanence and unity.

The simplest way in which Socrates prevents the guardians from experiencing contradiction is to ensure that no space emerges between what is honored in word and in deed. To go with the shame that the guardian is taught to feel at acting in ways unworthy of his class, Socrates limits the rewards and satisfactions he may win to public honors for cleaving successfully to guardian customs. Rewards for those who win a reputation for military valor include more frequent “marriages” (468c), being honored in their shares of sacrifices (468d-e), and, if they die in battle or after an “exceptionally good” life, having their tombs become sites of worship as those of daemonic and divine beings (469a-b). In this way those things that are honored in poetry are honored in experience and become
the incentives of guardian life. No hollowness is allowed to appear in the standards presented by the poetic education. Hollowness may also appear, however, through the observed behavior of fellow guardians which, if falling short of received standards and going unpunished, may introduce fear and suspicion into the community. The inadequacy a guardian might identify in his own soul can only be kept a source of private shame rather than an affront to all publicly held values if it is never acted upon. As Socrates continues to build the city, moving from education to institutions of economic and reproductive life, it is clear that for a guardian to fall short of his standards in action is doubly corrosive of the city. In the first place it does immediate harm by straying from what is useful to the city, and does harm also to the beliefs of those around him about what a guardian is and does and, importantly, about whether their motives are to be feared. The institutions Socrates proposes, by making every aspect of guardian life public, lack all hiding places in which a guardian could secretly fall short of the cultural standard.

At this point in the description of guardian institutions many similarities with Sparta begin to emerge, including a distrust of private motivations. Rather than being actively on the alert against such motives, however, the guardians live within a set of institutions that work more thoroughly than those of the Spartans against their even experiencing them. In dispelling private motivations Socrates goes to such an extreme that the guardians possess “nothing private but the body” because “possession of money, children, and relatives” are all inevitable sources of faction and conflict (464d). Both the oikos and private property are abolished to avoid dissension. In effacing the oikos

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250 Socrates reveals in Book 8 that the “aristocratic” regime ruled by philosophers that he has been describing is closely related to that of the Spartans and Cretans since it is into this form that the kallipolis first degenerates (544c).
Socrates goes much further than the Spartans do in their practice of calling “father” all men of one’s father’s age group. While the Spartan boy was removed early from the household of his birth which then enjoyed negligible authority over him compared to his militaristic relations with the Spartan “fathers”, Socrates removes even the *oikos* of birth. It is impossible for any guardian to know the identity of their parents or children. Instead, with “everyone he happens to meet, he’ll hold that he’s meeting a brother, or a sister, or a mother, or a son, or a daughter or their descendants or ancestors” (463c). Instead of private attachments, kinship is diffused throughout the community and, as much as possible, made general. Since private relations beget private motivations, they must be avoided altogether.

The same is true for private property. In its place the guardians move in public spaces for all the functions of life and the city provides them with whatever things they are determined to need. It is the possession of private objects above all that dictates these arrangements. There can be no private spaces – “no one will have a house or storeroom into which everyone who wishes cannot come” (316d) – precisely because guardians cannot possess these private objects. For the guardians,

alone of the city it is not lawful to handle and to touch gold and silver,

nor to go under the same roof with it, nor to hang it from their persons,

nor to drink from silver and gold.

It is this law in particular that Socrates insists is essential to the city: prohibiting these things is how the guardians “would save themselves as well as save the city”. The danger attached to money, as to the household, is faction and with it, fear of each other (417a).
These institutions, certainly, restrict the opportunity to develop and harbor private motivations at odds with the common good. More significantly, however, they are designed to establish a community of even pleasure and pain so that,

when one of its citizens suffers anything at all, either good or bad, such a city will most of all say that the affected part is its own, and all will share in the joy or the pain (462d).

The community of pleasure and pain is connected to the absence of oikos and private space when Socrates says that the community disappears whenever we find,

one man dragging off to his own house whatever he can get his hands on apart from the others, another being separate in his own house with separate women and children, introducing private pleasures and griefs of things that are private (464c).

Socrates claims that all of these elements are essential if faction is to be overcome since “privacy dissolves” the community of pleasure and pain that holds the guardians together and makes it one (462b).

These prohibitions on private space, property and affections provoke reflections on the nature of publicity and interiority in the lives of the guardians. The implications of the radically public life of the class are, perhaps, summed up best in Socrates’ insistence that imitation be limited strictly to the replication of cultural models. In restricting imitation he makes the guardians say that “there’s no double men among us” (397e), in contrast to the poet who hides himself when he gives an imitation of another man’s speech (393c-d). Taught always to despise what is unlike the narrow and restrictive customs of his own class, rewarded only with publicly bestowed honors that are also useful to the city, and allowed no private space or relationships, the guardian is not so much sincerely himself as inevitably a being remarkably lacking in knowledge of
himself or his fellows. That he is not a double man is not due to his eschewal of imitation but to the fact that he would hardly exist outside of his imitation of a single model. This is, indeed, Socrates’ intention. The city is not to be composed of a community of men but to be “most like a single human being” (462c). Both in the relentless publicity of guardian life and in their adherence to a single shared model, their life avoids both diversity and complexity. Not only are the guardians not double men, they are not even really individual men. This is due to the minimization of the experience of contradiction so that no diversity or interiority can offer a challenge to what is publicly honored. Their city offers them no vantage point from which to see doubly – they are not exposed to contradiction in experience at any level, even within their own souls.

The danger of contradiction was pointed out first by Adeimantus with his account of how, by revealing the distance between publicly held values and private motivations, certain men had made the young afraid of their fellow citizens. In his response Socrates, as we have seen, eliminates private motivations and has his guardians live entirely through their reputations. The guardians are extraordinary, above all, in the elaborateness of the defensive carapace with which Socrates encases their souls. Indeed, it brings to mind a suit of armor so heavy and restrictive that the man inside can neither move nor recognize himself within it – nor recognize more of his fellows than this exoskeleton.

One might say that the guardian class is to be like a phalanx that moves as one and never drops a shield, to allow no entry point for injustice. The image is inadequate, however, because a phalanx is a symbol of the polis as a community of equals who are, while interdependent, nonetheless also individuated. For Socrates it is not enough that they should move as one – they must actually be one.
Even given the extremes to which Socrates takes the Spartan customs that suppress the oikos and encourage homogeneity, several of the same problems appear to threaten the guardian class, for which Socrates must find solutions. The unity of the community needs constant policing, partly because of the difficulty of the attempt to ground unity and cohesion in the collective replication of a model. The Spartans who returned from their defeat at Spachteria, for example, were feared and punished because their failure had opened up a space between themselves and their fellow citizens big enough to contain a significant private motivation – fear of the regime’s response. In the terms of the Republic these Spartans had, in surrendering to enemies and then fearing their fellow citizens, lost their grip upon political courage – their fear had become deranged. Socrates anticipates this problem with a firm pronouncement that such captured guardians would not be retrieved, and any who dropped their weapons in battle would be thrown out of the guardian class (467e-468a).

He also suggests an ingenious solution to the other problem the Spartans faced in this regard, the problem of citizens who greatly exceed the others in valor or virtue. Opening up a space between themselves and their fellows in the other direction they are, in death, worshipped not as fellow human beings but as daemons (469a-b). The other alternatives, as the Spartan envy of Brasidas shows, are that the guardians accept that they exceed the model and prove truly “wiser than the laws”, or else that they reveal how very far short their fellow citizens fall: both open up intolerable spaces for multiplicity instead of unity. The Spartan envy of Brasidas parallels the envy of the achievements of others, especially those rewarded with public honors, that Pericles acknowledges as an obstacle to his praise of the dead in the funeral speech (Th. Pel. 2.35). It is true that
Socrates goes to some pains to hide from the guardians the distinction of more frequent sexual unions that is accorded the best among them as part of the city’s eugenics program (459d7-e2), he appears to violate the same concern in his awarding of honors. While Socrates is pleased that, in offering them prestige and protein by rewarding valorous guardians with the choice cuts of sacrifices, they are at once making them stronger and encouraging the emulation of useful bravery (468c-e), the agonistic element of guardian life is surely at odds with the common experience of joys and pains when the only licit desire is that for honor, itself only meaningful in its scarcity. If the guardians are not simply to enjoy honor as a unified class compared to other classes and cities, but as individuals within that class, divisions and distinctions must arise.

The elevation of the philosophers from the ranks of the guardians to rule over the rest must be a great blow to those who are thenceforth known as “auxiliaries” (413d-414b). When Socrates insists that the philosopher ruler must be given the greatest honors in life and death, and “be allotted the greatest prizes in burial and the other memorials” (414a) he must have in mind that posthumous recognition as daemonic rather than human which serves to soothe guardian envy and preserve their sense of unity – and also, perhaps, their pride in their humanity rather than, as is often suggested, their status as tame beasts. The myth of the metals performs the same function, by attempting to reconcile innate differences with necessary unity through a story of differentiated autochthony.

The discussion of the selection of the candidates for philosophical education immediately precedes the introduction of the myth of the metal, the noble lie that is supposed to,

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Mara (1997) notes that the problem of division is raised by the distinctions necessary to improve each generation of guardians, p122.
persuade, in the best case, even the rulers, but if not them, the rest of the city that the rearing and education we gave them were like dreams; they only thought they were undergoing all that was happening to them, while, in truth, at that time they were under the earth within, being fashioned and reared themselves, and their arms and other tools being crafted. When the job had been completely finished, then the earth, which is their mother, sent them up. And now, as though the land they are in were a mother and nurse, they must plan for and defend it, if anyone attacks, and they must think of the other citizens as brothers and born of the earth (414d-e).

The autochthonous element of the story which, we have seen previously, tends to promote unity and deny an important site of subpolitical loyalties in the oikos, is followed by another part which promotes sharp differentiations. While all of the citizens are “certainly brothers,” Socrates plans to tell them,

the god, in fashioning those of you who are competent to rule, mixed gold in at their birth; this is why they are most honored; in auxiliaries, silver; and iron and bronze in the farmers and the other craftsmen (415a).

The myth of the metals is necessary, says Socrates, to make the citizens “care more for the city and one another” (415d) suggesting some inadequacy in this care so far. As this lie precedes the account of the guardian institutions which encourage them to feel pleasure and pain as one man it seems that the beliefs the myth instills may be necessary to that goal. It may also be, however, that both the education and the institutions are inadequate in themselves to the task and that the myth is a kind of a patch over the spaces in the unity of the class that might allow the entrance of injustice. The revelation that the auxiliary guardians are not to be, as a class, the rulers of the city, but will have philosophers drawn from their own ranks and honored above them, must surely be one
such space. The problem can, perhaps, be understood in terms of the language of *philia* we explored in Thucydides, in particular, the Spartan *philia* for the fathers that unified and, indeed, homogenized the ruling caste.

At this point the guardian city departs radically from the arrangements of the Spartans who lacked any myth of autochthony to ground their loyalty to the constitution of Lykourgos. The Spartiates self-consciously recognized the role of the lawmaker in designing their education and customs, and grounded their unity in the generational repetition of the same pattern. We have seen that the Spartan arrangement also embraced both literal and metaphorical fatherhood, and found that it differed considerably from the maternal authority asserted by Corinth. The Spartans reconcile household and city without reducing the citizens to the status of permanent juniors by asserting the importance of both living and dead fathers, treating both as contemporaries, viewing all elders as “fathers”, and finally by allowing each generation of boys to grow up into the role of father and full citizen in turn. Something different happens in the guardian city, however. While citizens of all classes “are certainly brothers” according to the myth (415a), the different ranks are connected to substantive innate differences between their souls – the brothers are, in fact, different in kind. Gerry Mara has noted that the myth reinforces distinctions between the guardians and the craftsmen class that are not, in fact, reflected in nature which is why they must be so carefully reflected in strict “social and physical restrictions”.\(^{252}\) This exaggerated vision of difference is reinforced with the maternal authority of autochthony which, as we saw in the case of Corinth, is quite different from paternal *philia*.

\(^{252}\) Mara (1997), p119.
In the first place, the myth elevates the personified city – the mother – to a monolithic authority over the citizens. This stands in contrast to the unity, homogeneity and pattern of generational growth and replacement that characterized paternal *philia*. Spartans *are* the city, and citizen and city are not conceptually divided. In the city in speech, however, the city stands above the citizens in order to generate the authority to divide them amongst themselves. As we have seen, autochthony serves both to suppress the divisions produced by the diversity of citizens and their possible points of view, and to assert a permanent authority over the citizens, who remain “children” of the city and, hence, under obligation to her. The connection between a city’s “motherhood” and unchosen, unrenounceable obligation as well as asymmetrical relations of authority, was established in Chapter 2, and we see the same pattern replicated in the myth of the metals. As Socrates reveals the rest of the myth we see that political authority is his central purpose in proposing it, in particular, he is concerned that that authority be accepted as an innate, inevitable and unchallengeable quality in the leader. This is a refinement of the bipolar structure of mother and child that Corinth invokes since it sets up, not just the relationship of ruler and ruled, but a whole hierarchy of roles. The metals in the souls of the classes which determine their place in the political structure come from the earth of the *polis* itself thus they share with the mother the ability to produce unchosen, unrenounceable obligations.

The most innovative feature of the myth, perhaps, is the way in which it violates the patterns of temporal perspective we have seen in other stories of autochthony. Although the local earth is the shared mother of all the citizens, this birth is not projected back to the earliest times as it is, for example, for the Athenians in their autochthony.
Rather, the guardians are to believe that they are, each generation, quite literally born from the earth and to deny their own remembered histories. In a sense, then, the guardians derive a grounding sense of unity and cohesion not out of the persistence over time of their way of life or bloodlines, but from their belief in themselves as always the first generation. In obstructing the guardians’ awareness of either generational continuity, or deep grounding in ancient times, he is pursuing a similar strategy to that he followed in his completion of the Spartan move towards effacing the oikos in favor of the city. That is to say these metaphors provide cohesion not out of deep reverence for the earliest times, or a respect for the fundamental “existential necessity” that makes care for parents just, but because they tend to reduce the experience of contradiction that Plato sees as the main solvent of all beliefs and structures. The experience of contradiction is the doorway into awareness of the multiplicity and mutability of our lives and world. Politically speaking it is the insight that says “this could be otherwise”. The myth of the metals that instills in the guardians of each generation the belief that they are, in truth, the first generation, is an exaggeration of the Corinthian demand that the moment of founding be made central to all subsequent moments, or the Spartan sense that all generations are in some sense equals and contemporaries. It is a denial of the experience of time. The myth of the metals, by insisting that remembered experience is in fact a dream, attempts to remove all comparative evaluations that could undermine the temporal collapse on which the Spartans, and the abstraction on which the Corinthians, rely. The Corcyreans, for example, hit on one such evaluation when they noticed that as well as being descendants of Corinthian colonists, they were also citizens of their own city, elements of identity that were ultimately at odds. The protestations of Archidamos by which he denies that the
greater achievements one generation differentiate it from its forebears similarly point to
the threat that awareness of change may pose to unity.

In the city of the guardians Plato pushes the kind of political arrangements that
attempt to derive stability and cohesion from a sense of permanence and unity about as
far as they can be pushed. Indeed, permanence and unity are made so much central to the
experience of guardian life that they become almost impossible to conceive of. The
permanence of generational reproduction is collapsed into permanent autochthony, and
unity into utter identity. The conceptual distance that would allow the guardians to even
understand the meaning of change and multiplicity is, as far as possible, effaced, and with
it, the experience of contradiction.

That this experience of change might otherwise be apparent and significant to the
guardians is suggested by Socrates’ acknowledgements that the city does, after all, exist
in the realm of coming into being and passing away. Not only do the generations of
guardians improve over time due to sound eugenics (461a, 468c), the city “once well
started, will roll on like a circle in its growth” and through education and rearing will
produce new generations which will “grow up still better than those before them” (424a).
The first problem this generational improvement suggests is the possibility that the
guardians will be aware of the inferiority of their fathers. On the one hand, they are
supposed to feel *aidōs* before the fathers, but on the other, are to derive the standards by
which they judge themselves *not* from the inferior fathers but from the cultural models
they have been presented with in their education. Feeling *aidōs* before inferior fathers
seems an odd demand because it suggests a concern for one’s appearance in the eyes of
another. As we saw in the case of Sparta that other’s worthiness to judge is of central
importance, which was why the Spartans often seemed unconcerned with the judgments of outsiders whom they regarded as inferiors. For the guardians to become aware of paternal inferiority must, then throw up contradictions that interfere with the demand that they obey,

all that law prescribes about shame before fathers, and about providing
for parents and having to obey them – under pain of not being in good
stead with gods or human beings, since a man would do what is neither
holy nor just if he did anything other than this (463d).

Indeed, the suggestion implicit in Socrates’ censoring of the story of the conflict between Zeus and Chronos on the grounds that the young guardians must not believe “that in doing the extremes of injustice, or that in punishing the unjust deeds of his father in every way, he would do nothing to be wondered at” (277e), takes on new significance if the fact that the fathers are less just than the sons is taken into account.

Of course, the city, as do all things in the realm of coming into being and passing away, succumbs to its own embodiment. It is the discrepancy between the theoretical understanding of the philosopher rulers and the minute changes of astronomical reality which falls short of philosophic correctness that reintroduces the inevitable influence of multiplicity into the city. The discrepancy between theoretically accurate predictions and the movement of the stars moves the city on a downward trajectory as guardians, born on the wrong days, come to be unworthy of their fathers (546a-c). The experience of contradiction reemerges as the guardians split into opposing groups, and gathers momentum as the city rolls through descending regimes towards tyranny. The institutional and cultural arrangements Socrates has laid out are subject to the same flaws we saw enacted in Thucydides account – the problem of movement and rest – and with as
little resolution. What the account of the building of the *kallipolis* has given us only offhandedly, and the discussion of the philosophic education gives more clearly, is a sense of the human qualities that make so profoundly disturbing and disruptive the experience of contradiction that informs us of our basic metaphysical situation. By considering the discussion of these matters, especially through the comparison of art and philosophy, we will begin to prepare ourselves to reconsider love and friendship when we examine the *Symposium* and, at that point, tackle the question of the meaning of *Kallipolis*.
b) Contemplation and becoming

We have seen that in the *Republic* Plato invokes many of the tropes we explored in Thucydides’ work, in particular the reliance on the structures of ascriptive *philia* to create a city that is, as much as possible, unified and at rest. This rest, however, is illusory, given the fact that the citizens still live in a realm of multiplicity and change. Even while all those tactics employed by cities and speakers in Thucydides to tie people together by effacing the experience or political relevance of temporality are exaggerated in Kallipolis and, indeed, pushed to the extreme, the city must ultimately fall victim to the reality of change in the physical world. This recognition, in the *Republic*, that the city itself is very much part of the world of becoming is, I think, supported by the dramatic reading that the dialogue seems to demand. On the basis of this kind of reading we can say that the proposed city is intended as an interrogation of the approach to politics which seeks to create unity out of the imposition of cultural and institutional rest in the city.

We should be wary, then, of the expectation that there is an easy similarity between Plato’s metaphysics and his politics, that he advocates a simple imposition of Being (or even its temporary approximation) on human life. Hannah Arendt argued that in his focus on constitution building Plato viewed politics through the lens of his ontology – as a matter of making, rather than action. The problem as she sees it is that the standard for being is that which is permanent and unchanging – thus since nothing in the physical world meets this standard, being is thrust out into the realm of the forms, to which Plato gives greater reality and prestige.\(^{253}\) A dramatic reading of the *Republic* argues against this interpretation of Plato’s political views on the basis of his account of Kallipolis. On the other hand, the ontology of making that unarguably informs his

metaphysics may still feed back into his politics, although in ways different from those outlined by Arendt. Part of a dramatic reading of the Republic is to attend particularly to the responses and expectations of Socrates’ interlocutors in order to understand what it is that Socrates is responding to in them. This kind of reading assumes that Socrates is approaching each individually in terms of the state of his soul and its erotic disposition towards different objects such as truth, honor, money, in the way that is layed out in books 8 and 9. We cannot assume, then, that Socrates offers his sincere political hopes in his proposals for the kallipolis without considering its role in the conversation he is having with Glaucon and Adeimantus and as a response to their demands in book 2. Part of what is at issue in the Republic is whether and how the brothers are satisfied with the proposals Socrates makes. In the design of the city he responds to their diagnoses about the natural and cultural causes of their city’s pathologies by persuading them that these can be overcome by a rearrangement of education and institutions.

It is only when he reveals the nature of the just soul, whose order matches that of the city and who acts with exclusive thought to the consequences for his soul that they have demanded (443c-444a), that he steps away from the design of “external consequences”. When he is forced to say more and disclose his view about the philosopher rulers (473d) he begins, finally, to lay out an account of the path one must take in order to “found a city within himself” as Socrates urges Glaucon to do (592b). Despite these insistences that the soul is the site of justice of the kind they demanded to hear praised, the brothers are never quite willing to renounce the program of political reform they believe themselves to be designing.254

254 Indeed, it is to a comment of Glaucon’s to the effect that the just man will be “willing to mind the political things” in “the city whose foundation we have now gone through” (592a) that Socrates suggests
Part of the Republic’s project is, on this view, to examine the soul to explain why such diagnoses and solutions seem attractive and plausible. It is here that the question of ontology is significant, for it is in exploring Plato’s understanding of the soul’s attraction to states of rest and movement that we can see whether Arendt is right about his politics. I will approach this issue here through the lens of Plato’s aesthetic theory in the Republic, both as a theory of representation and a theory of response, because it is through this issue that epistemology and metaphysics seem to touch the ground in the broadest way. While most people are not philosophers, all, it seems, are responsive to representation and attracted by it. This responsiveness and attraction, I will argue, represent the latent philosophical ability of every soul – the eyes with which they can see the forms and whose sight cannot be implanted by education, but only directed properly. To this degree it is true that Plato’s view of the soul (and hence its proper politics) is embedded in an ontology of making – and of contemplation rather than action. On the other hand, we will see that Plato’s understanding of the philosopher’s activity does not end in contemplation, but implies activity in the world that has more to do with comparison than contemplation. In many ways this comparative activity of philosophy is the opposite of the tendency of souls to seek rest and permanence as it is always a critical and unsettling pursuit.

We see this activity explored further in the Symposium where it appears under the guise of erōs. Just as the contemplative side of philosophy shows up in a universal responsiveness to images, its comparative and critical side grows out of universal erōs.
This transgressive side of erōs is responsible for unsettling the given, it is an enemy, for example, of those over-arching metaphors, those orienting images by which cities try to stabilize and unify their politics. Erōs is always revelatory of our basic metaphysical situation because, in its concern for individual immortality, it cannot be satisfied with the promise of a shared transcendence of time. This concern with individual mortality is the key to the other side of erōs, that which is related to creativity – including the creation of over-arching metaphors. This creativity, may of course turn out to be a matter of precisely the kind of “making” to which Arendt objects – the confirmation of stability and permanance as the standard of being. The standard of “Being” may, indeed, seem to be transformed into the assertion of a personal immortality on the part of the philosopher through the “discovery” of an object of permanent contemplation. Erōs is, indeed, agonistic and seeks to produce the most lasting creations. On the other hand, however, when we place the Republic next to the Symposium we see that both erōs and contemplation as play roles in philosophy – and in human action generally. An ontology of making begins in this light to seem more like the problem under attack than the solution for Plato. Neither a self-sufficient life of contemplation, nor one of perfect mimesis of political models, is an appropriate or possible response to the human situation.
i) Philia and the soul

I have suggested that in order to understand the appeal of models of political belonging based on ascriptive philia we must look to Plato’s account of the soul and, in particular, to the appeal of images. In order to see the need for this exploration, however, it may be helpful to look briefly at other possible explanations. For example, I have hinted already at the possible relationship between the lived experience of family life and attachment to metaphorical representations of the oikos in the political realm. On this view the political oikos is a powerful metaphor for belonging because it draws almost parasitically on deeply felt emotional ties of personal life. This may appear to have some explanatory power simply because of the resemblance between the passionate nature of the feelings that can be aroused both by family relations and by patriotism. On the other hand, however, it has already been suggested that there is some tension between the metaphorical use of the family to bolster political unity at the same time as the oikos stands as a source of divided loyalties between household and city. Indeed, if the love of city is parasitic upon the love felt for real mothers, one must wonder whether the parasitic love can ever really exceed that of the host. Of course it is possible that the complexities of actual relations between mothers and sons mean that the city comes to stand as a fantasy mother who embodies all the shortcomings of an inadequate mother. These kinds of psychological arguments, however are unable to explain another feature of the set of relationship metaphors we discussed in the early chapters.

This other form of philia, which we have explored in relation to Thucydides’ narrative, problematizes the notion that an explanation can be derived simply from the emotional power of familial relationships. Pericles’ appeal to erōs, while designed
specifically to detach citizens from the concerns of the oikos, shares something in common with the cities that rely on ascriptive philia in its dependence on an atemporal point of orientation. In this case Pericles offers an everlasting future memory of the deeds of imperial Athens in the minds of Greeks and barbarians. This is atemporal especially in the sense that it disregards concerns of the continuity of the city, even seeming to countenance its demise. What this suggests is that the appeal of the atemporal orientation that is associated with these forms of cohesion and coordination is not simply an echo of the emotional power of familial ties.

For an alternative explanation we need to look at what might be powerful about these atemporal points themselves. That is, the Corinthian moment of founding, the Athenian future memory, the Spartan view of themselves as contemporaries to their fathers, all rely on an image of something unchanging to maintain cohesion in a world of movement. What needs to be answered is how these images of stillness are hoped to generate such powerful and elusive political goods as self-restraint and the transformation of immediate personal desires for the sake of collective future gain. In doing this I will take what will seem, perhaps, an odd turn and, before considering Plato’s understanding of erōs in the Symposium, will look at the discussion of images in the Republic.
ii) Images in the Republic: a theory of representation

The question that will frame the exploration here of aesthetics in the Republic will not concern primarily the epistemological and metaphysical points that are the topic when Socrates explicitly considers images. Rather, I want to discuss a question that is raised by the mimetic theory of representation that he presents, and indeed, by all such theories: how can we explain the attraction of art when it is so far removed from truth? To answer this question we need to examine the Republic for a theory of response to art and, in doing so, will begin to find echoes of the philosopher’s activity in ordinary human life. We will also see how the attempts to negotiate the fact of complexity and multiplicity of life in the realm of becoming may be translated into political solutions that bear strong resemblances to the aesthetic realm. To approach this theory of response, however, we need to look briefly at the basic theory of representation that is the explicit topic of the discussion of aesthetics in the Republic.

Socrates directly addresses the subject of images at length twice in the Republic, once in the context of the “divided line” in book 6, and again at the beginning of book 10 when the issue of man-made images is addressed. The divided line is an introduction to the metaphysical account he gives in the allegory of the cave and deals not with the images human beings make, but with naturally occurring images like shadows and reflections (509e-510a). These share the visible realm with animals, growing things and artifacts. The representational images made by human beings seem to occupy a strange territory on this line, for here Socrates seems to leave no room specifically for them. On the one hand they are mimetic and, like mirrored surfaces and shadows, reproduce

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animals, growing things and artifacts. On the other, they are artifacts themselves, having a solidity lacking in reflections and shadows. These difficulties are only approached in book 10 where Socrates likens the work of poets to holding a mirror up to the whole of reality, and then explores the metaphysical status of image making in visual art (596d).

His explanation makes fascinating use of two kinds of human artisan: a carpenter who makes a couch according to insight into the purposes and standards of a couch such as might make up its form, and a painter who paints a picture of the couch (596b-597c). If, as Socrates has argued, the visible, physical realm in which the carpenter makes the couch is at a second remove from the reality that holds the form from which he works, the painting is at a third remove – it is an imitation of an imitation. The example is useful for making his point that reference to representation (he has poetry in mind) is not a reliable way to seek knowledge about the world. One would be better, it seems, looking to physical phenomena, and best yet, looking to the forms themselves. As a source of knowledge images are almost as bad as mere shadows and reflections and, as we shall see, are considerably worse in ways that can only be explained by a theory of response rather than of representation. In any case, a painting provides a wonderful illustration of the basic epistemological point because, as a two dimensional image, it graphically suggests the problem of the inadequacy of representations to depict reality from “all angles”.256 Being able to see a question from all angles, that is, in all its possible manifestations, is the strength of the philosopher’s knowledge of the forms.

This problem, though, applies to more than just visual images. It can be said to characterise all claims to knowledge that rely on some kind of representation. Translated

256 Socrates suggests this point when he asks Glaucon to imagine looking at a physical couch, asking him whether a couch “if you observe it from the side, or from the front, or from anywhere else, differ at all from itself? Or does it not differ at all but only look different, and similarly with the rest?” (598a)
back into poetic claims to knowledge, for example, one’s inability to view the couch from all angles by viewing a picture of it may call to mind the difficulty Polemarchus has explaining the truth in his maxim of justice. Poetry gives him a statement that may be true some of the time, but when challenged by Socrates from a new angle, it is neither applicable nor accurate.

The example of the painting of the couch serves well Socrates’ epistemological purpose in disparaging poetic claims to truth. On the other hand, it tends to obscure another facet of the problem of images in the *Republic*, their compelling and attractive quality for us. Before we approach the topic of response to representation that may provide an explanation of this phenomenon, it will be helpful to explore some possibilities thrown up by the strange location of representative images on the divided line. Considered in terms of metaphysical rather than epistemological status we must place them with the objects of nature that constitute their media. In their physical durability some of these materials – for example stone – are akin to the stars which the astronomer might (mistakenly) believe are unchanging (530a-b). The viewer of an art object may also be prone to the same mistake, for while, as artifacts, the images of visual art are themselves subject to change and decay, compared to the movements of the human world they are still to the eye. One might say that they have a kind of apparent being in the midst of becoming. Here we are speaking in terms, of course, of human perception and response to images. What this brings to mind is a possible rearrangement of the divided line, not according to epistemology but according to movement and rest – which includes, of course, longevity and decay. While the line between being and becoming, intellection and the senses, is an absolute divide, the realm of becoming can be
divided up in terms of durability, longevity and movement. Viewed in these terms, human artifacts, including products of the visual arts, stand closer to the forms than do human beings and animals by virtue of their physical durability, (see Fig. 2).

Fig. 2: Divided line of perception

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of man</th>
<th>Unchanging</th>
<th>Being</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statue of man</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Least movement/change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting of man</td>
<td></td>
<td>Becoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living man</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Most movement/change)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the forms lack physicality, they do not change or move. Socrates is also insistent that they are necessarily unitary (597c). As well as the durability and stillness that places art objects closer to the forms on a divided line of becoming, mimetic images share with the forms a certain apparent unity. That is, the single point of view depicted by a painting, as well as being still, is also unitary because it denies the viewer alternative perspectives. The similarity is, of course, only apparent. Where the form is unitary because it is utterly complete and informs every possible sensible manifestation of itself,
the painted image is unitary because it is a simplification, a reduction of all of those possible manifestations to just one. If we reconsider the divided line of Socrates in terms of possible human experience, then, the movement and multiplicity of our basic experience of becoming is sandwiched by two experiences that share stillness, durability and unity – one true and one only apparent. My point here is to suggest something Socrates leaves silent: in their unity and stillness mimetic images are counterfeits of the forms. Our relationship to representative images, then, may bear resemblances to the philosopher’s relationship to the forms and may suggest ways in which the characteristic qualities of the forms may be sought in the world of becoming.

To explore this we need first to clarify the relationship of the philosopher to the forms. For the philosophers in the kallipolis who have the task of legislating and ruling in such a way as to be “painters who use the divine pattern” (500e), the forms play the role of the painter’s model. In “painting” the regime,

they would look away frequently in both directions, towards the just, fair, and moderate by nature and everything of the sort, and, again, toward what is in human beings; and thus mixing and blending the practices as ingredients, they would produce the image of man, taking hints from exactly that phenomenon in human beings which Homer too called god-like and the image of god (501b).

The forms act, then, as the model that, taking into account the limitations and potential of his materials, the painter seeks to reproduce. As well as the original that is imitated, the form also acts as the standard by which the city can later be judged, and from which, in its disintegration in books 8 and 9, it gradually falls away. The philosopher, then, is constantly comparing his model and his product, and it is this comparative activity that
constitutes the practice of philosophy when he is forced to return to the city and take up
his role there.

This comparative activity of the philosopher who has ascended to view the idea of
the good and then returned to service of the city is an echo of the comparative activity
that guided him to philosophy in the first place. The path to philosophy of the guardians
layed out in book 7 was fundamentally comparative too. In this case, however, the
contradictions thrown up by sense experience were seized upon to suggest to the mind the
need for abstraction and to train it to move upwards. For example, the idea of oneness
was suggested by recognizing that the same finger may at once be both big and small. In
its ascending mode, then, philosophy relies on pure comparison. When it returns to the
world of the senses, however, comparison is combined with the other philosophical
activity: contemplation.

When he reaches the summit of his comparative path upwards, the philosopher
reaches the realm of pure contemplation. The philosophers who have escaped
imprisonment in the sensible realm by emerging from the “cave” of becoming, unless
forced back into the service of the city, “won’t be willing to act, believing they have
emigrated to a colony on the Isles of the Blessed while they are still alive” (519c). The
philosopher’s activity in this new home is, it seems, simply contemplative, to judge by
Socrates’ description of his adjustment to it, since he says that the philosopher is now
“beholding the things in heaven and heaven itself,… looking at the light of the stars and
the moon” he is “able to make out the sun…itself by itself in its own region – and see
what it’s like” (516a-b). Indeed, once he has seen the idea of the good the philosopher
devotes himself to “acts of divine contemplation (theōron)” (517d).
Comparison and contemplation are, then, the two basic philosophical activities that Socrates maps out. Pure comparison propels the philosopher upwards and pure contemplation is the activity of the philosopher who has not descended. The philosopher who lives in the sensible world, however, engages in a mixed activity of contemplative comparison in which he plays a mediating role between being and becoming, shifting his gaze back and forth between them. To explore further my thesis that mimetic artifacts are often treated as something like counterfeit forms, we should look, then, at whether they are received in the mode of contemplation, comparison, or contemplative comparison. In looking at the theory of aesthetic response that Socrates gives in book 10 we will be able, also to consider the puzzling issue of our attraction to representations, which he insists are not only less real and less true than even sensible reality, but also damaging to the soul.

iii) Images in the Republic: a theory of response

Socrates begins to suggest how puzzling it is that we are attracted – even enchanted – by representation in his account of the painting of the couch. Here he makes clear the shortcomings of the apparent unity and stillness of mimetic representation when faced with a moving, three dimensional world of sense experience. Comparison quickly reveals the greater complexity and, hence, reality of the model for the painting and it is through the contradictory experiences provided by the senses that the image is revealed as illusory and partial. While his point is an epistemological one Socrates also gives his most explicit comment on the human response to images when he says:
imitation is surely far from the truth; and, as it seems, it is due to this that it produces everything – because it lays hold of a certain small part of each thing, and that part is itself only a phantom. For example, the painter, we say, will paint for us a shoemaker, a carpenter, and the other craftsmen, although he doesn’t understand the arts of any one of them. But, nevertheless, if he is a good painter, by painting a carpenter and displaying him from far off, he would deceive children and foolish human beings into thinking that it is truly a carpenter (598b-c).

We respond to images only in so far as we are tricked by them. The craftsman who, with this skill of fooling us, seems an expert in all matters, is a “wizard (gonti) and imitator” who fools “innocent human being(s)” (598d). Wizardry is invoked again a few pages later when Socrates gives a partial explanation of the way imagery works in the soul. In this explanation Socrates begins to lay the groundwork for a theory of the appeal of imagery:

the same things look bent and straight when seen in water and out of it, and also both concave and convex, due to the sight’s being misled by the colors, and every sort of confusion (tarachē) of this kind is plainly in our soul. And, then, it is because they take advantage of this affection (pathēmati)\(^\text{257}\) in our nature that shadow painting, and puppeteering, and many other tricks of the kind fall nothing short of wizardry (thaumatopoia – wonder-working) (602c-d).

Our attraction to imagery is revealed in our susceptibility to optical illusions, the ways in which our souls are not able to understand the apparently contradictory evidence of the senses. The pathēma in our nature is sensory but it is also passive and, because the word can also mean “suffering or calamity”, the suggestion is that it is unfortunate. This

\(^{257}\) Liddel & Scott attribute the sense “incidents, occurrences” to Plato in defining patheema. Other, earlier, meanings include, though “passive emotion or condition” and “suffering or calamity”.
unfortunate passivity is a failure to interrogate sensory experience and resolve the contradictions it throws up. The passivity of our nature prevents us, for example, from pursuing the kind of comparative activity that we have seen characterizes the active philosopher. Passivity, we might note, connotes a kind of stillness in the soul, a lack of erōs.

This kind of contradictory sensory experience has appeared before in the Republic in Socrates’ description of the path to philosophical knowledge through gradual training in abstraction. The existence and nature of ideas are gradually revealed to the student through reflection on the contradictory nature of sense experience. Socrates brings this to mind here when he goes on to explain that “measuring, counting and weighing” help to resolve the confusion created by these experiences of apparent contradiction and complexity so that “we are not ruled by a thing’s looking bigger or smaller or more or heavier; rather we are ruled by that which has calculated, measured, or, if you please, weighed” (602d). As a result, he reasons, it must not be the calculating part of the soul that is responsible for the confusion. Rather, “imitation keeps company with the part in us that is far from thoughtfulness (phronēseōs), and is not comrade and friend for any healthy or true purpose” (603a-b).

Let us reflect a moment on the nature of the confusion Socrates has described. By calling it tarachē (confusion) Socrates invokes the analogy between the city and the soul he has been developing because this word primarily implies the trouble or disorder of an army or fleet, and then also political confusion and tumult. Not quite stasis, perhaps, but the kind of disorder into which we see fleets fall in Thucydides’ History when they are unpracticed or come from a city in stasis. It suggests also, perhaps, the confusion

258 Liddel & Scott
aboard the ship whose sailors refuse to believe in navigation in Socrates’ story (488b-e). It implies that leadership and other roles are not recognized or even identified and that chaos is the result. In optical illusions the senses provide contradictory evidence, yet these complex sensations simply dwell in the soul in disorder because of the passivity of our natures. While such experiences of contradiction are opportunities for reflection because they “summon the intellect”, a passive element of our nature refuses to be summoned. Rather than being brought together by reason, like a disciplined fleet with clear leadership, and through reflection on their contradictions propelling the soul upwards, the array of sensations tumble confusedly about. This explanation only gets us so far, however, for while confusion in the soul may explain our susceptibility to visual illusions, it does not explain their attraction for us – unless Socrates is arguing that we enjoy being confused!

Later Socrates does give us a more complete answer, however when he notes that imitation “awakens this [the worst] part of the soul and nourishes it, and, by making it strong, destroys the calculating part”. The imitative poet produces a bad regime in the soul of every man by making phantoms that are very far removed from the truth and by gratifying the soul’s foolish part, which doesn’t distinguish big from little, but believes the same things are at one time big and at another little. (605b-c)

The soul’s tarachee is worsened when it regards itself as the soul’s natural and only state. Like the sailors on the ship the worst part of the soul does not believe that there are contradictions that need to be resolved at all and, thus, no need for reflection upon them.

The soul that is ruled by this image-loving part strongly resembles the democratic soul and regime Socrates describes in book 8. Democratic regimes also fail to make
distinctions between opposites and dispense “a certain equality to equals and unequals alike”. The democratic soul’s failure to distinguish between necessary and unnecessary pleasures raises this lack of discrimination to a point of high principle and will not agree, if someone says that there are some pleasures belonging to fine and good desires and some belonging to bad desires, and that the ones must be practised and honored and the others checked and enslaved. Rather, he shakes his head at all this and says that all are alike and must be honored on an equal basis (561-c).

In this democratic mode, the love of images is satisfied with a radical egalitarian embrace of multiplicity, and contradiction is not even perceived.259

When Socrates turns from poetry’s epistemological claims to its effects on the soul in book 10, his descriptions suggest that, unconstrained, poetry tends towards a democratic mode, and to stimulate a democratic kind of soul. Mimetic poetry both likes to represent the “irritable disposition [which] affords much and varied imitation” compared to the prudent and quiet one (604e) and, through stimulating sympathetic responses, exercises the worst part of a soul that is, as we have seen, incapable of making the necessary distinctions and evaluations. By depicting the most varied and extreme phenomena, mimetic representation strengthens the part of the soul that uncritically responds to them. Imitation is a problem because it suppresses the soul’s ability to experience its confusion as confusion. In this democratic mode it does so by suppressing the comparative capacity of the soul through sheer bombardment with images.

Purely poetic attempts to navigate the realm of becoming, in Plato’s view, must end up in this kind of radical embrace of complexity and must, in turn, lead to the

259See also, 557d, 558c, 561b, 561c, 561d.
disintegration of all social institutions. This democratic kind of aesthetic response involves serial and fragmentary experiences of imagery. Between this and the philosophical orientation, however, stands a set of orientations that navigate the world of becoming through imagery that, rather than embracing radical multiplicity, create a false sense of coherence where there is actually contradiction and complexity. While these orientations are absent from Socrates’ account of mimesis in book 10, an argument can be made for them from both the proposals he makes for the poetic education of the guardians in books 2 and 3, and from apparently systematic metaphorical allusions throughout the dialogue itself. It is reasonable, I think, to infer from these references another set of aesthetic modes of life that, rather than embracing or resolving complexity, resolve it downwards into orienting “images”. Where the democratic soul lives through images contemplated serially, these other aesthetic orientations make the contemplation of a single, elevated image the center of order. It is in these orientations that we may find both evidence of the use of what we have been calling “counterfeit forms” and the beginnings of an explanation for the orienting and organizing power of the metaphorical forms of *philia* invoked in Thucydides.
iv) A regime of comparative contemplation

The democratic mode of response to images is to regard them serially and in equality, without recognizing the authority of any one of them. This is reflected in the democratic soul’s lack of commitment to any one activity or way of life (561c-d). In some ways this is the correct response to life in the realm of becoming when it is lived unreflectively: no phenomenon has greater weight or importance simply by virtue of our experience of it. A finger may be experienced as both big and little because it is seen sequentially: in the crucial passage we have just discussed Socrates notes that the worst part of the soul “believes the same things are at one time big and at another little” (605b-c). In the action of the dialogue, however, we do not see mimesis invoked in this completely uncritical manner. Rather we see something more like the assertion that a finger is at all times big and never little. Instead of an indiscriminate embrace of complexity, a mimetic orientation to the world can also involve simplification.

This returns us to the simplification that we saw was part of the ability of representative images to appear to us as counterfeit forms with a false stillness, longevity and unity. From the perspective of the timocratic or oligarchic soul the simplifications and elisions that characterize mimetic representation are their strengths because they cover over the contradictory experiences that are thrown up by sensible reality and thus do not challenge the authority of the soul’s regime.

While his ultimate point in book 10 is to establish the democratic and tyrannical implications for the soul of mimetic representation, Socrates lays the groundwork for both democratic and timocratic or oligarchic orientations to mimesis in his basic account of representation. By dealing first with painted images, Socrates suggests how, viewed
singly, mimesis is an act of artistic simplification. Much of the first part of his analysis of art in book 10 is devoted to pointing out these simplifications by comparing art objects to the evidence of the senses. We should look, for example, to his suggestion that convincing paintings are capable of deceiving only children and foolish human beings. In its two-dimensionality a painting is the mimetic representation most easily contradicted by sense experience and expectation – in this case, the expectation that we be able to see an object from all angles.

The democratic soul by receiving images and sense experiences serially and unreflectively tends not to make this kind of comparative leap. This democratic experience is, one might say, a kind of accommodation to the realm of becoming, one that recognizes and accepts its fragmentary and contingent nature, but refuses to believe that any transcendant experience can reconcile its multiplicity into unity. We have seen that Socrates holds, by contrast, that the philosophical practice of comparison identifies contradiction and resolves it upwards, as it were, towards abstraction and knowledge of the forms. A third set of souls, however, who lack democratic acceptance of a fragmented, pointilistic experience of time seem to respond differently to this primary experience of complexity by resolving contradiction downwards into simplification rather than abstraction. This is what we might call the oligarchic or timocratic mimetic response.

We can see representation being used to simplify the complexity of lived experience not in those parts of the dialogue dealing explicitly with representation, but rather in the dialogue’s metaphorical use of art imagery. The painting viewed critically in the light of experience provides a useful analogy to Socrates’ easy refutation of the poetic
account of justice given by Polemarchus: by reflecting upon the breadth of possible experience Socrates is able to come up with a case where the maxim produces results contradictory to our usual expectations of justice. Just as the same object may appear both large and small, the same act may appear both just and unjust. The maxim, however, is revealed as a mere representation of justice, and not justice itself. As Socrates presents contradictory experiences he and Polemarchus together try to expand the maxim to encompass these objections – to make it fully representative of justice. It turns out, however, that the maxim, pushed to absurdity, only seems to contradict his understanding of justice more fully, so that the just man becomes a kind of thief (334b) and the incomplete and unreflective nature of his understanding is revealed. The representative medium of a poetic maxim is an inadequate vessel to carry all of the possibilities of justice.

That such partial and limited representations may be a part of the stability of cities and their closer approximation of justice, however, is affirmed by the warnings Socrates gives about the dangers of early exposure to dialectical method. For certain vulnerable souls the aggressive public contradiction of their salutary beliefs may unleash injustice (537d-539c). Like the young men Adeimantus describes in book 2 who were inspired to injustice through the critique of the contradictory beliefs and behaviors of their more traditional fathers, the experience of contradiction may set one free of all ethical moorings, with grave social consequences. That a coherent account cannot be given of one’s ethical beliefs does not mean that they may not be approximations to the standard of justice recognized by the philosopher, nor that they may not produce more harmonious and useful social consequences than an outlook that fails to acknowledge ethical
distinctions of any kind. (The potential results for the individual soul, however, are not so sanguine and are encapsulated in the myth of Er.) Polemarchus, keeping his maxim in mind when thinking about justice, will be right some of the time, like someone looking for a face in a crowd that has been seen only in a painting, perhaps. If the right view is presented an identification can be made. In this sense he is better off, if his task is identification, than if he had no image at all before him. Contradiction itself, then, is not simply better than contemplation of images. Indeed, the Republic entertains the possibility of a city utterly forbidden to exercise contradiction and where all taste for it is extirpated.

We have explored at length the possibility that Kallipolis is designed precisely to avoid the experience of contradiction. We can now see a little better how this design works. When their early poetic education was purged of contradictory elements, for example, Socrates was performing what on this view of representation turns out to be the essential poetic act: simplification for the sake of coherence, paring away the complicating factors that experience can throw up. These complications were not allowed to make their way into cultural representations. This was not enough, however. Purging mimetic representations of contradictions did not solve the problem of contradictory experience itself – indeed, the contradictions between and within poetic depictions are simply records of those primary, unreflective experiences of complexity. The institutional arrangements of guardian life, we saw, were thus elaborately designed to avoid contradictory experiences as well as representations. That is, the guardians are not to perceive themselves or their elders as falling fundamentally short of the models they have been given. The design reaches right down into the guardians’ souls, of necessity,
because the experience of private hypocrisy is potentially as damaging as public. The guardians are necessarily largely strangers to themselves, unable to experience and recognize the contradictions within their souls which are the natural consequence of the multiplicity of its parts. In all directions then – inwards, outwards, in experience and in culture – the guardians are protected from contradiction. Imaginative representation and cultural contingency can never be revealed as such because experience provides no vantage point from which to challenge their authority.

The guardians stand in relation to their culture and institutions rather as the philosophers who return to the cave do to the forms: their orientation is one of contemplative comparison. They are presented with comprehensive and rigid cultural models with which they are to compare themselves and to which they are taught to aspire. These models themselves and, as much as possible their fellow guardians, are not themselves objects of comparison, however. The guardians confine themselves instead to downward comparisons that contrast their own condition with those models presented to them culturally through the mimetic representations of poetry. The comparative activity of the guardians is like that of the philosophers who return to the city in that their gaze travels back and forth between model and sensible reality. It differs, of course, in that their models exist at a lower level of reality than they do themselves.
v) Orienting images

The movement of the guardian’s attention between cultural norms and their own behavior is one that is familiar to us already from the Spartan debate in Thucydides’ history. We have seen that the Spartans sought to guide their movement by contemplation of Spartan customs, by identifying the authentic tradition and reproducing it, and along the way rejecting other possibilities. The Spartans are contemplative, then, in that they maintain the ways of the fathers as their object of reverence, and comparative in directing their motions by reference to that image. While the guardians have some awareness of the possibility of other modes of behavior – those of the non-guardians whom they protect – their own codes are presented to them in an apparently coherent fashion. We do not hear of the guardians engaging in the kind of debate we see between Sthenelaïdes and Archidamos about the authentic nature of their tradition.

This debate, as we have seen, is unavoidable in the context of change and movement. We should now also be able to see the significance of the fact that it resulted from aspects of Spartan political culture that were thrown into contradiction by changes in the surrounding context. As the Corinthian speakers pointed out, the advent of Athenian naval power created a situation in which Spartan power was threatened by adherence to the specific dictates of Spartan custom, including caution and slowness to action. The debate between Sthenelaïdes and Archidamos simply enacted this contradiction, the ephor claiming to embody Spartan dominance through war, and the king, Spartan intellectual and emotional habits. The relentless movement of nature eventually threw up for the Spartans experiences that rendered contradictory the customs that had always seemed coherent because they were successful. Like the guardians, then,
the Spartans had previously enjoyed an uncomplicated relationship with their models: they had reproduced them unselfconsciously, not because they were the only images available to them, but because they seemed to be the best.

We must ask, though, how certain sets of images can be marked out in this way as “the best”, as the authoritative images that, as objects of contemplation and comparative reproduction, form the bedrock of a culture and its institutions. In the first instance the answer has to do with internal coherence. It was not the lack of awareness of other possibilities that made the guardians revere their own traditions. That reverence was, to some extent, taught to them from childhood. The lack of contradictory speech or experience helped to preserve this reverence, certainly, but it was the lack of any internally contradictory elements that was its fundamental precondition. Poetry was purged as a first task in building a strong warrior caste because Socrates recognized the necessity of presenting them with a coherent and apparently complete picture of the world. Unlike the democratic soul which believes that, for example, a finger is at one time small and at another big, the guardian soul must believe that the same thing is the same at all times. A guardian could not, then, be both a true protector of the city, worthy of honor and also an exploiter of citizens: these two qualities are contradictory in terms of the image of guardianship with which they are raised. The institutional restrictions of Kallipolis are framed in such a way as to prevent as far as possible the kinds of experiences that would reveal the limitations of this image: for example, the possibility that one might be a guardian in name, but a secret exploiter of citizens.

A society that aims to deal with complexity through comparative contemplation of images, then, requires a robust and compelling vision of the world that is fairly
resistant to contradiction. Rather than a disconnected series of images, further, it requires a representation of reality that seems coherent and comprehensive. Rather than images, one might say, it needs a single orienting image of reality, or at least of the city. The Corinthians, in this way, attempt to assert the image of colonial maternity as the orienting image within their empire. It is, however, not compelling to the Corcyreans who are all too aware of the contradictory fact of their own citizenship in their city. Pericles also asserts an orienting image of the nature of the city in his funeral speech. In attacking the image of the city as an *oikos* he introduces the contradictory fact of the empire which is neither wholly consistent with, nor supported by, the old familial view of the polis. When he urges the Athenians to view the city instead as an *eromenos*, then, he is reimagining Athens quite literally – he is proposing a new comprehensive vision of the city and asking the citizens to make it their orienting image. What remains to be answered is what it is that makes such an image seem both comprehensive and compelling.

**vi) The compelling image**

To understand a little more of the requirements of the orienting image we can consider again the use of visual imagery in the action of the *Republic* itself. As well as the epistemological point he makes through his analysis of aesthetics in book 10, Plato gives us many indirect suggestions throughout the dialogue that we should draw the analogy between visual images and claims to knowledge that we drew earlier. In particular, if one is attentive, one notices repeated references to statues that are not subject to such direct and destructive critique as Polemarchus’ “painting” of justice. The first one is powerfully suggestive and, read in light of book 10, informs how the others can be understood.
The difference in sophistication between the approaches to understanding justice of Polemarchus and Glaucon can hardly be overstated. Polemarchus relies on a poetic maxim that he is without intellectual resources to defend, while Glaucon tries to prompt a defense of justice by giving Socrates an elaborate case against it. He does so by building a complex comparative scenario from ideal types, and a counterfactual story designed to reveal deep motivations. The logic behind the account of Gyges’ ancestor and that of the just and unjust men of opposite reputation resembles nothing so much as that of social science: he is proposing models to be tested, not through field research, but through imagination and reflection on experience. He is offering what we might call imaginative comparisons, of a different kind from those we have looked at so far. Rather than comparisons between two aspects of sense experiences (as the ascending philosopher makes), or comparisons between forms and sense experience (as the descending philosopher makes), or between sense experience and counterfeit forms (as those who live by orienting images do), Glaucon is comparing two images.

When Glaucon has largely finished presenting his story of the just and unjust men Socrates responds with this praise: “My, my… my dear Glaucon, how vigorously you polish up (ekkathaireis – scour clean\textsuperscript{260}) each of the two men (androin) – just like a statue (andrianta – statue, image of a man)– for their judgment” (361d). Compared to the two dimensional account of justice of Polemarchus, Glaucon has produced an impressive simulacrum of reality that is convincing enough to have some rhetorical power and to suggest that it can produce real knowledge. Unlike a painting that can only convince children and foolish people of its reality, Glaucon’s “statue” has heft and presence, it

\textsuperscript{260} James Adams in his commentary on The Republic of Plato, notes that this should be translated, rather than the usual sense of ekkathairō – to cleanse, clean, or to polish – but scour clean, “purge from all extraneous matter.” The Republic of Plato. James Adam. (Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 1902).
seems to inhabit the same world as we do. Where Polemarchus’ understanding of justice was limited to a single narrow set of actions, Glaucon’s view of justice and injustice encompasses a whole way of life informed by a condition of the soul and by a surrounding society. By limiting the conditions surrounding it (for example, insisting on the purity of the men’s reputations and natures, making strict assumptions about the unchanging values of the surrounding culture) Glaucon has greatly reduced the complexity of his depiction – and forfended many possible objections. He has, in essence, protected his account from easy contradiction and “scoured it clean” through his stipulations.

Where the philosopher ruler in his contemplative comparison looks back and forth between his divine pattern and the human material that limits its realization, Glaucon moves from social experience and pares away its complexities to create his depiction. Where the philosopher’s comparative gaze is aimed at identifying those parts of human beings that are god like and in the image of god (501b) and scouring away the rest, Glaucon’s ellisions and simplifications are aimed at forefending the critique that would throw the conversation back onto the complexity of lived experience. In this, as we saw in Socrates’ purge of poetry, he has performed the essential poetic act. 261

To see representation as requiring simplification in this way should, now, cause us to reflect a little more upon the mimetic theory of representation that is ascribed to Plato. In his description of the painter’s activity, his two-way gaze and his focus on the limitations and possibilities of his materials, we should recognize that Plato sees that artistic representation is not – and cannot be – a matter of precise reproduction. Indeed,

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261 Scouring is mentioned as the danger one faces in being dissuaded of beliefs: beliefs, like color, scoured away by pleasure, pain, fear, desire (430a).
this is part of his metaphysical point: representations are less real precisely because they are attempts to reproduce things in “media” radically different from the original. Representations are not reproductions. The artist, while keeping the model always in mind, makes choices about what can and cannot be reproduced, given the limitations and nature of the materials he uses. Thus in building his models Glaucon makes decisions about which features are salient and which extraneous. Viewed this way representation means that what is depicted is not simply the evidence of the senses, but a limited view of the possibilities revealed by experience. In this sense Glaucon’s model is as “imagined” as that of a painter who paints from mental image rather than a physical model.  

The city that Socrates designs in response to Glaucon’s statues can be seen, in this light, as a long explication of the kinds of conditions that would refute the apparent truth of Glaucon’s models. He complicates again what Glaucon has simplified. That is, Socrates undermines Glaucon’s account of the most salient and important elements in his depiction by presenting a more complex, comprehensive image. In a city organized like Kallipolis, for example, the unjust man would not be able to develop a reputation for justice and the just man would be truly valued – Glaucon’s models would seem to be utterly unrealistic depictions in this city. This city reveals Glaucon’s stipulations and simplifications for what they are. He has not captured reality, but merely depicted a version of sense and social experience familiar to his audience – and one which reduces and simplifies the complexity even of this limited world. It is, like a sculpture, a third remove from reality.

Socrates’ Kallipolis is itself, however, merely a more complicated version of the same thing – one designed instead to reveal the diversity and breadth of the possibilities

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262 E.E. Steinis calls this an “enhanced theory of representation”.
of the world of becoming and, as a result, to reveal starkly the merely mimetic nature of
Glaucon’s account. It is set against Glaucon’s “statues” in another exercise in imaginative
comparison, of setting images self-consciously against each other. This is suggested by a
comment of Glaucon’s that echoes Socrates’ earlier praise: after he has completed his
account of the philosophical education of the guardians in book 6, Glaucon praises
Socrates, “just like a sculptor (\textit{andriantopoios},… you have produced (\textit{apeirgasai})
ruling men who are wholly fair (\textit{pankalous})” (540c).

As well as the guardians, however, Socrates associates the city itself with statues
at the crucial moment when he introduces the philosopher kings in book 5, insisting that
political power and philosophy must be united to bring rest from human and political ills.
The unification in the person of the philosopher is a necessity to the existence of the good
city itself, for if this unification fails to come about, “nor will the regime we have now
described in speech ever come forth from nature (\textit{proteron phũei}), insofar as possible,
and see the light (\textit{phũs}) of the sun” (473e). Sterling and Scott, in their translation of this
passage capture a possibility when they pick up on the latent personification of the city in
the verb “to see”: “only then will our theory of the state spring to life and see the light of
day, at least to the degree possible.”\footnote{Sterling and Scott, “2. (of painter) to fill up with colour, express perfectly”}  

It is worth pressing on this possibility somewhat, for it picks up on the idea of the statue we have been examining as a more convincing
illusion than a two dimensional painted image. The idea of the \textit{kallipolis} as a statue
whose eyes open and who sees the light of day taps into a rich tradition of Greek belief in
the ability of statues to come to life. In some cases this belief is invoked as praise of the
skill of the sculptor whose product looks “as if” it could come to life. This praise,

however, rests on earlier beliefs that the statue of a god is, in fact, its manifestation in the world and, hence, that it may leave the temple and walk around the polis (for this reason, it seems, statues were often actually chained up in their temples.\textsuperscript{265}

This notion of the divine stands at stark odds with that Socrates espouses in the \textit{Republic}. In his critique of received religious beliefs in book 2, he argued against the notion (cited from Homer) that the gods “take on every sort of shape and visit the cities” (381d). We learn in book 6 that the only things which never change and remain always themselves, as Socrates has demanded of the gods, exist at the level of the forms. The divine, then, is never manifested physically. To suggest it is manifested in an image is to suggest an even graver misunderstanding of the divine. Indeed, such beliefs about statues of the gods are the essence of the kind of dream Socrates invokes in describing those who are addicted to the realm of the visible and unable to acknowledge the possibility of something standing above in which the visible participates. “Doesn’t dreaming,” he asks Glaucon, “whether one is asleep or awake, consist in believing a likeness of something to be not a likeness, but rather the thing itself to which it is like?” (476c). If Stirling and Scott are correct in pressing forward the idea of Kallipolis as a living statue in Socrates’ comment at 473e, then it seems that he is here suggesting that it is simply another dream city, as Glaucon’s ideal types in book 2 were dream men.

These metaphorical extensions of visual art in the dialogue present us, then, with an interpretive possibility. It is not merely mimetic representation that appeals to the foolish part of the soul and suppresses its reasoning part, but our entire social “picture” of reality may be similarly partial. It may be either radically fragmented, as it is for a democratic soul, or else simplified, “designed” to resist contradiction and suggest

coherence and completeness where there is only becoming, in the manner of those souls and societies that rely on comparative contemplation of orienting images. The flickering images on the wall – projected shadows of mimetic objects (puppets) – by which the cave dwellers are transfixed and whose order and nature they compete to discern (516c-d) represent, then, not just sense, but also social, experience. The cave dwellers do exactly as Socrates had suggested earlier and mistake likenesses for the thing itself and live “in a dream” fighting “over shadows with one another” (520c).

The image of shadow puppetry is ingenious in this regard because it suggests two dimensional images in motion. Like the statues that come to life and walk about, this image suggests both simplification (a further remove from reality) and a compelling quality that convinces us wrongly of the image’s reality. It is, perhaps, what encourages us to take likenesses for what they represent and helps us remain in a dream. This helps to explain something odd in book 10 – Socrates’ easy shift between visual imagery and poetic depiction. While his argument, moving from mirror images, to visual representations, to poetry, presents all art as straightforwardly mimetic, it is, in some ways, an objectionably undefended elision. This is because when viewed from the perspective of movement and rest there seems to be quite some difference between poetic and visual representations as he describes them in book 10. In particular, when he moves on to poetry he is keen to stress that it is not mimesis itself that makes poetry “charming”, but its accompaniment by music – that is, that which sets it in motion.

He points to the source of charm in poetry, to illustrate its power, by pointing to how poetic imitations “look” when they are “stripped of the colors of the music and are said alone, by themselves”, that is, like “the faces of the boys who are youthful but not
“fair” once the first bloom of youth has left them (601b). Poetry that is without “meter, rhythm and harmony” (601a) lacks the beauty with which it normally charms souls. Each of these elements, of course, governs the movement and arranges the multiplicity of music. Poetry appears, then, to be a more complex kind of imitation than visual arts and to pose a much greater threat, not simply because of its cultural claims to be a repository of wisdom, but as an imitation that has many of the characteristics of the physical realm – movement, change and multiplicity. Poetry makes representation animated, as it were.

This is, however, another odd claim. If poetic and other forms of mimesis are only charming when they have the illusion of movement and multiplicity, does this not suggest that we are most charmed by the physical realm and that imitations charm us only to the extent that they are most like that realm? This seems to do little to explain the strong charm of poetry that pulls us down towards a lesser realm than that we already live in, since it relies on the suggestion that we find sense experience itself preferable and only enjoy poetry in so far as it seems to share its characteristics. What Socrates is suggesting is that we may prefer a representation, a simplified and shallow depiction of lived experienced, to that lived experience itself with its motion, complexity and contradictions, as long as it is set in motion and thus made compelling. Representation must, that is, hide itself to maintain its claim to describe reality in its entirety. Its partial nature, as we have seen, cannot be revealed without destroying its authority.

Complexity and movement are stimulants to comparison, and reflective comparison can reveal contradiction. Recognition of contradiction, in turn, undermines settled understandings of the nature of the world and the institutions, values and culture that rest upon them. Yet the realm of becoming in which we live is fundamentally
defined by movement and complexity, and institutions, beliefs and culture are forms of human resistance to this fact. Kallipolis is simply the most extreme form of this resistance – in a sense, the logical conclusion of the cultural and institutional response to becoming that we have been describing as the “comparative contemplation of images”. Kallipolis demonstrates the view that institutions and culture are fundamentally dependant upon a depiction of social reality that is always in danger of losing its authority. It is important to note that this understanding of how we negotiate social reality, which bears some resemblances to a “grand narrative” view, is only a descriptive element of Plato’s argument. It is this mimetic mode of life from which we are released by philosophy.

My treatment of Kallipolis in this section has been premised upon the view that it is best understood through a dramatic reading of the *Republic*. Indeed my exploration of the statue image in the dialogue has been partly directed towards establishing the plausibility of such a reading by suggesting ways in which the city is an obviously flawed response to the brothers’ demands, designed to reveal the inadequacy of Glaucon’s method of imaginative comparison for attaining truth. This view of the metaphors of imagery, however, may tend to upset the account of the activity of philosophy in the city as the involving the literal building of institutions, and hence souls, through mimesis of the forms. This is not to say that such reading provides any final refutation of the view. On the other hand, in attending to the dramatic role of Socrates, who is a philosopher, but not a ruler we must ask the question: what can we learn about the activity of the philosopher in the city from the dialogue itself? It may be that, in speaking to his friends, Socrates is attempting mimesis through comparative contemplation of the forms not of
institutions, but directly of souls and, through conversation to scour their souls clean of all but the god-like parts. If this is so, however, it is a task of the philosopher that differs from that he describes in his account of Kallipolis and of which the Republic does not give us an explanation.
c) The Symposium

Setting the Symposium alongside the Republic is, perhaps, a little like performing Glaucon’s imagined comparison of two ideal types – a comparison of mere statues. This is, of course, the inevitable result of reflecting on the dramatic and mimetic nature of Plato’s dialogues in the context of his aesthetics. For Glaucon Kallipolis was a sophisticated and beautiful representation which, standing beside his own representations of social reality, highlighted their artificiality. Unlike refutation in argument, however, this imaginative comparison did not unravel the world utterly, but placed before him an image that described the nature and rewards of justice in the soul and the suggestion that his task is to found his own beautiful city there. As an alternative to the refutation that dissolves belief without replacing it with anything, this path that proceeds through the comparison of representations seems promising, even though it does not present direct access to the truth itself.

To place the Symposium and Republic alongside each other differs, of course, from the exchanges between Glaucon and Socrates in that neither supercedes nor fully answers the other. We should see them instead, perhaps, as in conversation and, as simplifying representations of a complex reality, containing provisional accounts of a larger truth. In the Republic we have a conversation related to us by Socrates himself in which, nonetheless, the key truths about the nature of philosophy are expressed only in likeness. In the Symposium we see Socrates through the eyes of others and the account, far from direct, is so elaborately framed by retelling that it has almost the feel of urban legend. Nonetheless, in the speech of Alcibiades, it contains an extended account of the experience of friendship with Socrates. This speech, though, may be interpreted either as
the account of the triumph of philosophy over the most gifted and dangerous youth in Athens, or as expressing the failure of philosophy to reach the vital *erōs* of the non-philosopher. If Socrates has, indeed, failed in this way, we must keep in mind that he did not fail to inspire the author of the dialogue with love of philosophy.

At issue in the comparison of the two dialogues is the question of the location and nature of philosophy. The comparative contemplation of the philosopher ruler who uses strict institutions to mold the souls of the young in mimesis of the ideas stands in contrast to the ironic and playful Socrates who inspires the emulation of the young men around him. Both dialogues contain, as well as these accounts of mimetic virtue however, claims about gradual ascents to philosophy, in the *Republic* this is expressed in the allegory of the cave and in the *Symposium* in Diotima’s ladder of love.

The *Symposium* is a helpful complement to the *Republic* in the terms we have set ourselves here – understanding the role of metaphors of *philia* in Thucydides’ work in resisting the inexorable movement that characterizes the human world. In the *Republic* we saw confirmation that for Plato this movement and change is, indeed, an inescapable feature of human life in the physical world. Political solutions that produce internal cohesion try to create a kind of political “rest” by referring to images set out of time and thus rendered apparently still. In the *Republic* we saw a radical version of this kind of solution explored in the city in speech, and a theory of mimetic representation and response that suggested that all of these solutions work by simplifying and ordering our experience and, by focusing our attention on selected features, helping us find points of orientation. The image of the Corinthian maternal city, for example, is elevated and
marked out as most worthy of attention and reverence so that other competing concerns are pushed aside or suppressed. In the Republic we saw that the ordering power of images lay in their simplification of experience and their compelling appearance of coherence and completeness as descriptions. Human order, in the Republic, relies on a contemplative and mimetic relationship to these representations.

The Symposium, by contrast, deals with the disordering force that is apparent in human affairs and identifies it with erōs. This is important not merely for exploring the disordering forces that were so pervasive in Thucydides, but also for rendering more complete Plato’s account of our way of living in becoming and for suggesting an alternative philosophical way of life that is based on neither mimesis nor self-sufficient contemplation. That philosophy is at the center of the life of a citizen like Socrates, and thus at the heart of Plato’s politics, is beyond doubt. That its role is one of remaking institutions and souls through comparative contemplation of the forms as it was described in the Republic is more doubtful. The citizenship that Socrates exemplifies in war stands in apparent contrast to his lack of involvement in politics at Athens. The action of the Symposium, a private drinking party between friends, is also a new context and a new kind of philia: neither fully private, nor, certainly, public, the drinking party involves a group of personal friends. As such, Socrates’ philosophy also points beyond politics to the simply human, especially as it is expressed in the practice of friendship.
i) Socrates the silenus

Since we are so much concerned here with mimesis and representation it is only fitting to consider briefly the elaborate framing devices that separate us from the story of the drinking party. The party, while taking place during the Peloponnesian War, is described by Apollodorus to his friend, in repetition of the account he had given earlier to Glaucon of the version he had originally heard from Aristodemus. This Aristodemus, we quickly learn was probably “the one most in love with Socrates at that time” and was “always unshod” (173b) as Socrates himself usually was, even on campaign (220b). We are introduced early, then, to the odd image of Socrates as a beloved and the fact that love of him inspires emulation. Little seems to have changed, as Apollodorus too is doing his best imitation of Socrates – and it is not all that good. His friend comments on Apollodorus’ savageness in his speeches and we see it demonstrated, in his blunt statement that, while his friend may believe that Apollodorus is a wretch, he himself does “not believe it about you, I know it” (173d). He employs the Socratic distinction between knowledge and opinion crudely and unhelpfully, and it garners only hostility. With this superficial imitation of Socrates in mind we might wonder at the accuracy of what he is about to recount. These lovers of Socrates with their obsessive interest in his doings and sayings and desire to mimic him stand in contrast to Alcibiades, also in love with the philosopher who, far from emulating him, spends his time fleeing him.

It is, indeed, in Alcibiades’ account of his encounters with Socrates that we see intimately into his style of philosophical friendship. Alcibiades makes great claims to be unmasking Socrates, to have penetrated his ironic and playful façade and seen the seriousness of the philosopher’s concern for the young. What becomes clear from the
story Alcibiades tells is that if Socrates is attempting to play the role of a mimetic philosopher and, with the help of his comparative contemplation of the forms, “scouring clean” souls as a sculptor removes extraneous material from his work, it is a profoundly difficult task. It is also one that bears little obvious resemblance to working a passive material like stone or clay. The guardians in the midst of their philosophical training in the Republic relied on the gradual experience of contradiction to guide their minds upwards towards philosophy. In this ascent their souls lost the accretions that resulted from their lives in the sensible realm. While the method Socrates adopts in his conversations with his friends seems to employ contradiction a great deal, it is not clear whether the experience has brought them to philosophy.

In Alcibiades we see a profound experience of contradiction that results, in the beginning, neither from refutation in argument, nor reflection on contradictory sense experience. Rather, the contradiction that moves Alcibiades has to do with his perception of Socrates and of himself which are radically, and rapidly, transformed. Instead of a gradual ascent towards the beauty of the forms, Alcibiades has a sudden experience of insight into beauty in the soul of Socrates – but we must wonder whether it is the beauty of the forms that he glimpses, or the beauty of the power and fame he imagines he could grasp if only he had the unique qualities of the philosopher. If Alcibiades has, in fact, seen and recognized the rewards of philosophy in the soul, we may see in this friendship with Socrates another path to philosophy. On the other hand, if Alcibiades has only seen an attractive means for pursuing his own ambition in Socrates’ distinctiveness, might his story nonetheless serve, as did the allegory of the cave, as a kind of likeness to the true possibility of being turned towards philosophy in this more direct manner? Philosophy
might, perhaps, be embraced by close attention to another who reveals the nature of its rewards.

Let us explore, for a moment, this interpretive possibility. Where the guardians are gradually detached from the senses and convention in their training, the story of Alcibiades suggests that the one change in his perception of Socrates radiates outwards to overthrow his previous certainties, particularly those that inform his pride in his own beauty and sufficiency. Far from being a passive object of Socrates’ mimetic activity, Alcibiades seems now to be drawn powerfully to philosophy because he has seen the ugly accretions on his own soul and the beauty of that of Socrates. On this view, if Socrates is a crafter of souls through mimesis it is by virtue of becoming a model to his young friends for their own mimetic activity, as we have seen he does also for Apollodorus, (though to no effect that should give us hope for this possibility.) To see whether Plato offers in this way an understanding of the philosophical life that is fundamentally at odds with that recounted in the Republic we must consider what he says about the path to philosophy in the Symposium.

The language of art imagery and of aesthetic experience pervades the Symposium as it does the Republic, and the interpretive tools we have developed by our exploration of the Republic will be useful for understanding this dialogue too. An obvious place to start is with Alcibiades’ description of Socrates. “I declare,” says Alcibiades, “that he is most strictly like those silenuses that sit in the shops of herm sculptors, the ones that craftsmen make holding reed pipes or flutes; and if they are split in two and opened up, they show that they have images of gods (algamata) within” (215a-b). That Alcibiades denies he is trying to make Socrates seem laughable by presenting this grotesque likeness
of the philosopher points to the interplay of comedy and tragedy, or of the laughable and the beautiful, that pervades the dialogue.\textsuperscript{266} I mention comedy here because, in its intimate association with reversals of role and meaning, it is directly pertinent to the discussion of statues.

For Alcibiades the statue of a silenus is an apt summary of the Socrates he knows because it contrasts the ugliness of the philosopher’s appearance and his playful and ironic manner to his inner beauty of soul. Alcibiades tells the company that when Socrates drops his accustomed ironic stance and,

\begin{quote}
\textit{is in earnest and opened up, I do not know if anyone has seen the images within; but I once saw them, and it was my opinion that they were so divine, golden, altogether beautiful, and amazing that one had to do just about whatever Socrates’ commanded (216e).}
\end{quote}

The explicit and implicit treatment of representation in the \textit{Republic} has, I think, prepared us to understand something of this statement. Containing other, more beautiful statues within himself, Socrates is, unlike the guardians, a double man – indeed, he is a multiple man. We are, of course, in Athens where all men are multiple, their souls and faces usually at odds, the fair façade of Alcibiades containing within a soul that, perhaps, brings to mind the image from the \textit{Republic} of the mutilated statue of Glaukos with its covering of barnacles (\textit{Rep.} 611d). Socrates, of course, contains instead images of beautiful and perfect divinity. More than a contrast with the philosopher’s physical ugliness, perhaps, his doubleness lies in his cultivation of an ironic and goading manner that Alcibiades finds “hybristic” and which is mimicked in the shallow savagery of

\textsuperscript{266} It is, actually, the topic Socrates is discussing when we last see him: he is insisting to the tragedian Agathon and the comic playwright Aristophanes, that the same man should be able to write both comedy and tragedy (223b).
Apollodorus. While the legislators of Kallipolis were also “double men” in their preparedness to tell noble lies, this prickly and difficult exterior is a reversal of the myth of the metals told to soothe and unify the guardians, because Socrates hides his beauty in doubleness to play the role of gadfly.

That Alcibiades explains his insight with this analogy of two kinds of statues, however, should also give us pause as to the accuracy of his vision. On the one hand, the image of the beautiful and shining golden statues invoke the possibility that he really has, like the philosopher emerging from the cave, glimpsed something of the existence and nature of the forms. Perhaps such a glimpse is the beginning of philosophy. On the other, the fact that they too are merely representations leaves room for doubt that he has seen the whole truth. Socrates, indeed, suggests such a possibility in his response to Alcibiades that, because the younger man is not of an age to really develop keen thought, “without your being aware of it – I may be nothing” (219a). This is not to deny that Socrates has a beautiful soul – certainly he says will not exchange “gold for bronze” with Alcibiades, but he is doubtful of the nature of the “impossible beauty” the younger man has seen. The golden light of the *algamata* that strikes Alcibiades may, like the brilliance of the imperial fame praised by Pericles, be cast by the power, not the wisdom, of the philosopher. Indeed, when he declares his love for Socrates Alcibiades explains that “nothing is more important to me than that I become the best possible” (218d) and wants to enlist the philosopher’s help. If he truly has glimpsed the rewards of philosophy this may mean that Alcibiades sees that he can become the most just man possible, yet he praises qualities in Socrates that may suggest otherwise. Socrates is a speaker who, like Marsyas with his flute, “charms human beings” through speeches (216c). His are the only
speeches that can move Alcibiades, and in this they surpass even those of Pericles. Their power, indeed, is not even due to the distinctive character and presence of the philosopher: the speeches, in the mouth of anyone at all, leave the audience “thunderstruck and possessed.” While they do indeed make Alcibades’ soul “grow troubled and … distressed at my slavish condition” this may reflect either genuine recognition of his unjust soul, or it may be distress at having been “possessed” by the speeches of another (215e). The agonistic soul of Alcibiades certainly wishes not to be defeated by the philosopher, and he may wish in addition to possess his power to enslave others with his words.  

The question hinges, ultimately, on what it is that Alcibiades finds beautiful and, indeed, this question of the sense of beauty is the great central mystery of the *Symposium.*

Alcibiades’ claims about his insight into Socrates’ soul are ambiguous because we cannot easily tell whether, in his feelings of shame and inadequacy, he has recognized and adopted the perspective of the philosopher on his own life or whether, in his sense of the greater distinctiveness of Socrates, his agonism and *philotimia* are enflamed. Socrates alone of human beings is without human likeness, whereas even the great men of the Peloponnesian war, Brasidas and Pericles, can be compared to heroes like Achilles and Nestor (221c-d). Alcibiades feels keenly that he is in competition with the philosopher and complains to the drinkers that Socrates “believes he must surpass me everywhere” (222e). If we were to suppose that Alcibiades has truly glimpsed the value

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267 This interpretation is supported by the claims of Socrates in the *Alcibiades I* that Alcibiades is so filled with ambition that if a god were to give him power over Greece and all Asia, Socrates tells him, “it seems to me you would again be unwilling to live on these terms alone, without being able to fill with your name and your power all mankind” (105c-d). However, “it is not possible for all these things you have in mind to be brought to a completion without me” (105d). Alcibiades’ claim to have wanted to become the best that is possible is echoed in *Alcibiades I* when Socrates asks him “do we not wish to be as good as possible?” and discovers that, for Alcibiades, the good means “those who are able to rule in the city”. (125b)
of philosophy and actually fallen in love with it, we must ask why it is that he does not devote himself to its study in turn, but instead has to force himself to avoid Socrates, like Odysseus stopping his ears against the Sirens, in order to avoid philosophizing and “instead handle the affairs of the Athenians” (216a).

If he were to embrace philosophy on the basis of an insight into Socrates’ soul we could say that this is the first time that we have seen an orienting image provided by philia that has actually been embodied by a living human being.268 We have seen that attachments to particular human beings, on the contrary have been seen as a threat to civic unity – as when imperial Athens stressed autochthony as a way of elevating loyalty to the civic mother over that to particular families. Ironically, then, philosophy which, in the Republic seemed devoted to the most abstract and non-human site of orientation – the forms – would first become visible not through silent contemplation of the abstract, but through deeper attention to a particular human being. It would begin, similarly, not in the suppression of those worse parts of the soul that Socrates derides in book 10 of the Republic as stimulated by the arts, but rather in the passionate erotic frenzy that shifts Alcibiades’ attention, gradually, from himself and pride in his beauty and resources to intense interest in Socrates (217a-219c). To find an orienting image in the beautiful statues inside the silenus Socrates suggests a problem with taking this as a path to philosophy, however. Socrates may practice a kind of philosophic friendship, but those who try to take him as their model, as the poor imitation of Apollodorus suggests, are not truly philosophizing.

268 Nussbaum (1986) notes, in a similar vein, that the speech of Alcibiades is the only time in the Symposium that love is praised through the account of a particular love of a real person rather than in abstract terms, pp185-186.
As well as wishing to emulate the power of his speeches and the distinctiveness of his personality, however, Alcibiades is drawn against his will towards Socrates. As well as admiring the philosopher’s power, he is not immune to it. Like his more enthusiastic followers, Alcibiades finds that Socrates has the power to redirect their movement and, indeed, bring them up short, rendering them utterly still. It is this stillness that Alcibiades wants so desperately to avoid when he stops his ears to Socrates’ speeches, “in order,” he says, “that I might not sit here in idleness and grow old beside him” (216a). This statement is an embrace of the kinetic view of politics of Pericleanism and its derision of those who are *apolypragmōn*. It also echoes his praise of youth and association of age with idleness in his speech in favor of the Sicilian expedition in Thucydides (Th. *Pel.* 6.18). That friendship with Socrates and attention to his philosophical speech renders one apparently still is a theme of the *Symposium*. As well as being Alcibiades’ great fear, it is the effect that is praised by the tale’s narrator, Apollodorus, in the framing discussion of the dialogue. He suggests an interpretation of the political activity Alcibiades clings to when he describes his life before he became a follower of Socrates as one in which he “walked round and round aimlessly” (173a). Socrates himself is marked by occasional stillness in his bouts of catatonia – one of which we find described in the narrative of the *Symposium* (175b). His stillness is, however, not idleness. As Alcibiades recounts, Socrates entered this state once while on campaign and remained so for several days and nights in a condition of physical stillness, but intense mental activity because he was occupied with a problem (220c).

Socrates’ ability to still the motion of even the heir of Periclean kineticism suggests the possibility that he has that compelling quality that we speculated when we
discussed orienting images in the context of Thucydides’ work, in order to make those who embrace them put aside competing concerns. On the other hand, it suggests the impossibility of emulating the philosopher, even for those like Apollodorus who gives him obsessive attention and makes familiarity with all his doings and sayings his only business. (He is, in the manner of a citizen of Kallipolis, a specialist!) This relationship of the philosopher to his friends is important, as is the reversal of the conventional relationship of erastes and eromenos that Alcibiades invokes to describe it, for it suggests a form of philia that is new to us. Before entering into the topic fully, however, it may be helpful to explore what the Symposium suggests about the nature of philosophy itself.

Here again, as in the Republic philosophical knowledge is described through visual metaphors. According to the account of erōs and philosophy Socrates hears from Diotima, when the philosopher finally approaches truth he is able to see the only kind of beauty that is “seeable” while all other kinds are mere “phantom images” (212a). While the object of the philosopher’s “sight” in the Republic is the good, in the Symposium it is beauty. While, as we shall see, they are not the same, the two are not unconnected, ultimately, and, in tracing their connection we can see something more, perhaps, of the path and activity of philosophy than we do in the Republic. In the Republic (522c-540b) Socrates describes the education of the guardians in philosophy as a gradual training in abstraction. The student moves through the rational consideration of particulars to gradually resolve their contradictions into recognition of the existence and nature of formal reality. In contrast to this apparently cool and dispassionate path, the Symposium describes a philosophy that is driven onwards by erotic force. The account of Diotima, as related by Socrates, follows the path from the particular to the abstract that is familiar
from the *Republic*, but is here born in love of beauty and driven by eros rather than the
disciplined program of the kallipolis. This path moves from the love of the *erastēs* for a
beautiful young man, through the love of beautiful men generally, to recognition of the
abstract quality of beauty and its study, from whence to love of philosophy and of beauty
itself (210a-211e).

What Diotima’s long conversation with Socrates offers above all is a sense of the
basic humanity of the philosopher, for all his connection to the divine. When Diotima
expands our understanding of *erōs* beyond the conventional she connects beauty to the
philosopher’s concern for the good. In making this connection she argues that philosophy
is an amplification and redirection, even a completion, of a general human imperative.
Turning first to Diotima’s view of philosophy and the philosophic *erastēs*, then, gives us
insight into ways in which the path to philosophy requires *erōs*.

**ii) Beauty and the good**

The connection of beauty to love is the fundamental topic of Diotima’s conversation with
Socrates. The beloved thing is, as Diotima says, “wholly beautiful, delicate, perfect and
most blessed” (204c). That this connection of *erōs* to concern for the visual is
increasingly meant metaphorically is indicated early in Diotima’s instruction of Socrates
when she suggests that when we speak of beauty, we are really speaking in some way of
the good. Socrates being unable to answer her question “what will he have who gets the
beautiful things?” Diotima translates the question into the terms of the good: “Come on,
Socrates,” she says, “the lover of good things: what does he love?” (204e). *Erōs* turns
out, in this way, to be the desire for happiness through the permanent possession of what
is good: “erōs is of the good’s being one’s own always” (206a). The scope of both beauty and erōs are thus expanded far beyond visual perception in Diotima’s speech. A simple substitution, however, of the good for the beautiful would not capture properly the phenomenon she has in mind, so beauty is soon restored as the primary topic.

To understand why beauty rather than the good must be kept in mind, we need only think again of the basic sense of the erotic. The association of the lover with beauty rather than with the good captures a kind of activity of the soul that, while broader than that conventionally meant by the activity of the “erastēs”, is nonetheless, narrower than the pursuit of just any good. Erōs is the pursuit of the good, not in an ordinary or half-hearted way, but in “earnestness and intensity”, and the characteristic deed of the lover is “bringing to birth in beauty both in terms of the body and in terms of the soul” (206b). Erōs is not, further, as Socrates had supposed, “of the beautiful” but of “engendering and bringing to birth in the beautiful” (206e). This distinction captures a difference between philosophy as presented in the Republic and in the Symposium, and asks us to consider whether it is a matter of contemplation and mimesis of an “object” or some other kind of activity. Love of the beautiful seems more amenable to being fulfilled in contemplation and mimesis. Erōs as Diotima understands it has some different intention towards beauty.

In the Republic the activity of the philosopher seemed to be, at its highest level, one of contemplation: emerging from the cave of sensation he is able, gradually, to regard the forms in their reality and, ultimately perhaps, even to look at the “sun” of the good” that illuminates them.269 At the lower levels, too, it has a contemplative aspect: it involves careful investigation and comparison of phenomena that reveals contradiction

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269 This, of course, seems suggestive that Socrates is not giving us a fully sober account of philosophy. That a philosopher can look at the sun of the good any more than one can look at the sun without damage to one’s eyes, violates the sense a metaphor that, otherwise, works extensively.
and complexity in ways that give access to abstraction and reality. Philosophical training is, in this way, about detachment of the soul from what it had believed itself to possess previously. In terms of ethics it is a process of detachment from multiple partial or perceived goods until, ultimately, the soul can contemplate the good itself. From there the comparative contemplation required of the activity of mimesis of the forms becomes possible. The erotic soul, however, is not content to observe or copy the object of its love but must pursue it relentlessly and possess it permanently. Diotima’s emphasis on the beautiful stresses the erotic manner of its pursuit and stands in contrast to the cool account of the philosopher’s ascent to knowledge of the good in the Republic. While the philosophic soul is, Socrates tells us in the Republic in love with all of truth, the account he gives of philosophic education is not imbued with any sense of the erotic drive.

Returning the focus again to the language of beauty and erōs is also important in pointing to the ways in which erotic pursuit is a telling response to the way human beings are situated as changing, finite beings in a changing, multiple world. Human physical beauty and the love it inspires, especially as understood in the ritualized world of Athenian pederasty, is a very suitable symbol for the ephemerality of all things. The briefness of a young man’s “bloom” (anthe) and the fickleness and multiplicity of the affections of some lovers were well understood and stand out as exemplars of the fact that everything sensible passes away. This is true much more obviously and uncontroversially of physical beauty than of another good such as wealth. Erōs and beauty, then, hint at our location in a world of movement and change as well as to our own inevitable mutability – both in terms of body (the eromenos whose beauty fades) and
of soul (the fickle lover). In Diotima’s conversation with Socrates, then, *erōs* in the conventional, specific sense, carries this quality of the merely temporary to the broader set of activities in which human beings pursue their goods with earnest intensity. In erotic pursuit, however, human beings do not believe themselves to be seeking something temporary. Rather, the lover seeks permanent possession. Permanent possession of the good we seek is what we think of as happiness (206a). The irony of this is obvious to those who look on as lovers sacrifice all other goods at the altar of their temporary passion for a doomed flowering of beauty. There is a puzzle, then, in Diotima’s account of *erōs* in that it’s aim is apparently in conflict with its avenues of expression.

Diotima’s comparison extends this irony further, though. She argues that our passionate pursuit of any good with erotic intensity has the intention of achieving immortality, observing that “the mortal nature seeks as far as possible to be forever and immortal” (207d). Being, unlike the gods, in a continual state of movement and change, humans have a characteristic way of achieving immortality – through an activity, a movement.

For in this way every mortal thing is preserved; not by being absolutely the same forever, as the divine is, but by the fact that that which is departing and growing old leaves behind another young thing that is as it was (208b).

The erotic activity is one which fundamentally concerns, not contemplation, but reproduction and replacement and is, thus, thoroughly human. To determine what and how one reproduces himself, we can look, she says, to how he is “pregnant”: in body, or

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270 Diotima is insistent that it is not just the body that changes, but the soul itself. Just as the body changes and replaces itself throughout life, so does the soul needing to be constantly replenished changes, “his ways, character, opinions, desires, pleasures, pains, fears, each of these things is never present as the same for each, but they are partly coming to be and partly perishing” (207e).
in soul (208e-209a). This is an odd and puzzling formulation, as it is coupled with other instances in which Diotima describes *erōs* as seeking to “engender in the beautiful”, so that the lover is both pregnant and one who engenders. The pregnant soul, when he touches “the one who is beautiful,” Diotima suggests, “engenders and gives birth to offspring with which he was long pregnant” (209c). 271

The task of making our mortal selves immortal is, in this way, always reliant upon others to carry our offspring. In part, then, what the language of *erōs* expresses is dependency and the lack of self-sufficiency. Human mortality, just as human generation, is emblematic of the most fundamental dependence. As the Corinthians contended, the utter dependency of our existence upon generation is inescapable. Here Diotima suggests that we are also dependent at the other end of life – since our typical human path to such immortality as is available to us leads us to rely on the memories of others. When she considers physical reproduction Diotima does not focus on the reproduction of physical characteristics or character: rather, as in the pursuit of fame, what we hope for from even our children is “remembrance, and happiness … for all future time” (208e). That it is remembrance above all that conveys immortality makes comprehensible the apparent irrationality of those honor-loving souls who pursue fame. For “the sake of fame even more than for their children, they are ready to run all risks, to exhaust their money, to toil at every sort of toil, and to die” (208c-d).

271 In this apparently peculiar view of reproduction, wherein the male alone produces the offspring, the female acting simply as a kind of carrier (so that the male can be said to have been somehow “pregnant” first), is in keeping with early Greek views of reproduction. Greek myth is replete with this understanding of the contribution of male and female partners. In Plato’s time, however, it had already been challenged by a series of Hippokratic works and, even, by the citizenship laws of Pericles which in insisting on the importance of maternal citizenship conferred a sense of importance to the woman’s contribution. Garland, *The Greek Way of Life*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell U.P., 1990), p28-29.
Even those who are pregnant in terms of soul seek remembrance. For Diotima this sort of soul is exemplified by the political legislator who, like Solon or Lykourgos, engender laws and “every kind of virtue” (209d-e). It is these kinds of offspring, those of great and virtuous souls, that approach immortality themselves – here, she gives the example of the poems of Homer and Hesiod – so that “everyone would choose to have for himself children like these rather than the human kind” (209d). In erōs we seek to transcend our own finitude through the creation for our mortal selves of a kind of immortal replacement. We require others to carry our offspring through remembrance because our own limited mortality can only piggy back on the relative longevity of our culture or species.

That we try to engender our offspring in the beautiful suggests something of the futility of this endeavor: in erōs we recognize the ephemeral in ourselves and seek to forfend it, but do so by engendering our remembrance in something ultimately mortal itself. In the Republic this metaphysical point about the constant change of the sensible realm was made through the language of provisional goods, and the way in which they appeared different and could lose their appearance of goodness from different perspectives. In the Symposium this point is expressed much more through the fact of decay, death and changing feelings which are summed up, above all, in the image of erōs for physical beauty. 272

The ephemerality of physical beauty, and of the merely sexual passion that accompanies it, suggests the ephemerality of all the other beautiful things towards which erōs directs its energy. From the perspective of other kinds of good the lover seems mad

272 Nussbaum (1986) notes that death is present in the dialogue, in particular, in the possible dating of the retellings of the story which, she speculates, could have been sparked by the news of the recent murder of Alcibiades, pp169-171.
and possessed, irrational as Pausanias suggested (183a-b). Viewed rationally, the activity of the honor-lover, with his self-sacrifice and reckless disregard of his own body, is also inexplicable. Seen as species of erotic activity the pursuits of political legislators and begetters of children also begin to take on an air of doomed effort. By revealing them all to be forms of erotic activity Diotima both posits them as part of the same drive towards immortality, and suggests that they are similarly futile solutions. In all of these loves the lover seeks to address his own mortality by engendering something truly immortal in what he finds beautiful, and yet what one finds beautiful in all of these examples – fame, children, political constitutions – are themselves merely mortal.

iii) Choosing lovers: erōs, volition and autarkeia

This raises the vital question of the dialogue which concerns the source of our sense of beauty. In the very associations of erōs and beauty that we have been exploring it is clear that we may be mistaken in our identification of the beautiful when, if we are drawn to those things in which we hope to engender our own immortality, we choose something that is itself ephemeral. Is the initial attraction perhaps somehow based upon a calculation of the object’s ability to confer immortality? The pervasive language of force and slavery in the dialogue argues against this more voluntarist interpretation.

Diotima explains the link between erōs, deficiency and the sense of beauty through the story of the transformation of the erastēs by love of the beautiful eromenos. We cannot choose the way in which we are pregnant, although we all hope for offspring that are as close as possible to immortal. The form of pregnancy it seems, however, might be altered not by volition but through experience. This is the course by which the
lover of a beautiful eromenos may gradually be changed into a philosopher. Diotima’s account of the soul’s progress proceeds through love for different forms of beauty, from love of a particular beautiful body, to the recognition that beautiful bodies are many and the resultant love of all beauties, to love of the science of finding beauty, to love of beauty itself. Love of beauty itself is presented as the necessary course of the philosopher (210e-212a). It is the failure of each level to satisfy that reveals the underlying direction of erōs. To the truly driven and attentive erotic soul, a lesson is learned at each stage and the soul moves upwards (210d).

Diotima does not note, but it seems apparent, that this lesson is not learned by all of the “lovers” under her broader definition of erōs. Those who seek immortality through fame never have the chance to learn from the failure of their attempt: the longevity of their fame is something they can never test. This kind of love, drives one quickly to a welcome death. Similarly, children may forget a father after his death, or a line may die out, or be removed from the lands that link them to their ancestors – as the rural Atticans found. Diotima settles instead, then, on “the correct practice of pederasty” (211b) as the beginning of the path to philosophy – for the love with which it begins seems most likely to quickly reveal itself as unproductive, producing neither children, nor fame, and focussing instead on the brief bloom of young citizens. It is in this practice alone that the attentive and erotic soul has the opportunity to recognize the futility of this path. Ironically, it is by loving the most ephemeral of beauties that one may be carried towards the truest and most lasting one.

It is no guarantee, however. The inattentive soul may well imagine itself satisfied by this form of erōs. Some of the early speeches in the Symposium defend the ability of
the erastes-eromenos relationship to produce virtue and argue for it in this way as the highest form of *erōs*, because it is a source of good for the city. Phaedrus and Pausanias, in particular stress this political benefit, yet asserting an *erōs* that can in this way be satisfied and tamed, they close off the path Diotima has marked out. For this reason we will pay closer attention to these two speeches than to those of the other drinkers. Phaedrus, for example, presents the claim that *erōs* produces virtue by creating dyads intensely concerned about *aidōs*. The shame a lover feels before his beloved exceeds that felt before even fathers – it is the beloved’s evaluation above all that counts (178c-d). In this way, he argues, *erōs* is responsible for “shame in the face of shameful things and honorable ambition in the face of beautiful things” (178d), and an army or city composed of lovers “would abstain from all that is shameful and be filled with love of honor before one another” (178e-179a). There are echoes here of Pericles’ suggestion in his funeral speech that, by taking the city as an *eromenos* the citizen can achieve virtue the like of which his life had previously given no hint. In asking the Athenians to change themselves for the sake of the city Pericles points to the transformative power of *erōs*. Feeling *aidōs* before the beloved is the key to this transformation and, in asking them to fall in love with the city Pericles is, certainly, asking the citizens to take her opinion most seriously and to let this concern inspire them to bravery and self-sacrifice. Yet when Phaedrus invokes Achilles and Patroclus as exemplars he highlights the central problem with this agonistic conception of virtue and political benefits – Achilles can hardly be

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273 On the other hand, the city is able to provide a gratification that is more amenable to immortality than that offered by an individual *eromenos*: an arena in which to perform these acts of bravery around which stands the audience of an entire world, not just the city, or a single lover. From the point of view of Pericles, the fame of the Athenians of this period will survive even the destruction of the city. Such an audience is a surer source of immortal fame than an individual lover. The opinion of one mortal other is by contrast a thin thread on which to hang a lifetime of virtue.
considered an emblem of the citizen’s concern for the good of the city. Rather he points to the danger implicit in Phaedrus’s army of lovers: the exclusivity of the concern of lovers for one another takes away from the community the ability to define shameful or laudable actions. This shares with Pericles’ invocation as well the problem that the sense of shame, either of a city or an individual, may be informed by a concern for aretē that is more informed by the agonistic values of domination than by justice.

Phaedrus does, though, recognize a central aspect of erōs that Diotima explores at length: its concern with supplying us with what we otherwise lack, in this case, courage. It is the desire to obscure this deficiency from the sight of the lover that, in the end, supplies the missing courage. Pausanias, who follows him, pursues the connection of inadequacy and erōs further and reveals that it can be resolved also through exchange. It is this speech above all that presents the conventions of the erastēs-eromenos relationship as they existed in Athens and its connection to civic virtue as it was widely held in aristocratic circles at Athens. For him it is, ideally, an exchange of gratification by youthful beauty for virtue and political knowledge. One party, he says, “is able to contribute prudence and the rest of virtue, while the other stands in need of them for the acquisition of education and the rest of wisdom” (185e). He correctly recognizes that erōs seeks to produce the most lasting offspring when he notes that “he who is in love with a good character remains throughout life, for he is welded to what is lasting” (183e). So long as he embraces the relationship “strictly for the sake of virtue and of becoming better” the nobility of the eromenos should be beyond doubt, and yet this stipulation is

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274 Socrates has already, however, mocked this commonplace of Athenian eros when, responding to Agathon’s request to sit by him, he says, it “would be a good thing, Agathon, if wisdom were the sort of thing that flows from the fuller of us into the emptier, just by our touching one another, as the water in wine cups flows through a wool thread” (175e).
necessary because of the danger that the *eromenos* may be mistaken in his choice of erastes, may indeed be deceived by him (185b). Indeed, *erōs* even excuses the deceptions, so that if the *erastēs* “swears and then departs from his oath, for him alone there is pardon from the gods” (183b). In this the fathers and minders of young boys are right to be suspicious of the aspiring *erastēs* (183c-d). The fundamental assumption of Pausanias’ speech, that erotic gratifications by the young can be exchanged fruitfully for wisdom and virtue, is also problematic, because it actually betrays a lack of genuine concern for the well-being of the other. Each party approaches the other instrumentally, the elder being enslaved to the younger by *erōs*, the *eromenos* enslaved to the elder out of love of wisdom (184b-c), but neither is concerned for the other outside of his own desires. There is no sense in Pausanias’ speech that the *erastēs*, for example, would share his knowledge and advice simply out of concern for the younger man.

What the speech of Pausanias does introduce, with its view of erotic relationships as exchanges, is the notion that Erōs pursues what he lacks through exchange. As we have seen in Thucydides, exchanges suggest need and the best exchanges require roughly equal needs and powers to gratify, along with an honest presentation of relative positions. This association of Erōs with lack is captured in Diotima’s genealogy of the god who is, she says, born from a union of Poros (Resource) and Penia (Poverty). As a child of these parents Erōs applies his resources to completing himself with something external, perhaps by making an exchange. The kind of erotic exchange eulogized by Pausanias is the background to the pursuit of Socrates by Alcibiades when the younger man recognizes that he is, after all, lacking in what he most needs. In offering himself to Socrates as a beloved he points out that, as well as his “gratifications” he will put in
service of the philosopher “anything else of mine – my wealth or my friends” (218c) and, having been refused, despairs that he did not “have any resources whereby I could attract him” (219e).

Yet Diotima’s insistence that Erōs is resourceful points also to the danger that it involves not equal and open exchange but an active and devious adeptness:

- in accordance with his father he plots to trap the beautiful and the good,
- and is courageous, stout, and keen, a skilled hunter, always weaving devices, desirous of practical wisdom and inventive, philosophizing through all his life, a skilled magician, druggist and sophist. (203b)

These qualities, especially those concerning physical strength, hunting and entrapment, are pervasive images in the *Symposium*. The lover is praised, says Pausanias, if he “makes a successful capture” and “for making an attempt at seizure, the law grants the lover the opportunity to be praised for doing amazing deeds,” (182e) and thus captures an aspect of erōs that his explicit eulogy of erotic exchange tries to obscure. Erōs, in his poverty, does not rely only on making a fair exchange but happily resorts to the kind of shameful behavior that would be tolerated for no other end and which even one’s enemies could not bear to watch (183a-b), and the kinds of false oaths that are otherwise punished by the gods.

*Erōs* also lacks the voluntarism of a fair exchange: time and again we hear of love experienced as *force* and compulsion: *anankē* and its derivatives is one of the most common words in the dialogue. This squares also with what we have seen in Thucydides and in the *Republic*, that need opens the door to force, especially when it is asymmetrical or one-sided. We saw in the ability of Corcyra to withstand the claims of existential necessity because of her economic and military *autarkeia* the power that can be won
through the manipulation of the need of others. We saw this too in the viewpoint of the young Athenians of power, wealth and ability described by Adeimantus in the *Republic*. He insisted that, for these men, the ability to recognize and manipulate the needs of others, coupled with the resources to stand as much as possible above need oneself, seemed to be a path to the greatest power – and the greatest injustices. Force is of the essence of the experience of *erōs* and yet the *Republic* suggests that it characterizes also the love of truth of the philosopher who, being in love with truth must “work like a slave for it” ([Rep. 494d](#)) and who is dragged forcibly from the cave. It is, as Pausanias suggests here, a willing slavery ([Symp. 184c](#)).

The comparison with slavery, indeed, suggests ways in which *erōs* is fundamentally at odds with politics by raising the spectre of citizenship’s opposite. While Pausanias recognizes this forceful quality in *erōs* he, like Phaedrus, makes claims that it can be tamed and put to political use. For Pausanias this involves the conventions of his class that limit and constrain the pursuit of *erōs* in ways that produce political goods like lasting friendship and associations. Outside of these conventions *erōs* is rightly shameful (182a). In this he and Phaedrus invoke the notion of the coordination of the compulsions through cooperative necessities that we examined in Thucydides and the *Republic*. They imagine that mutual dependence is a path to political goods. The *anankē* in the experience of *erōs* allows it to be tamed and harnessed. For Phaedrus and Pausanias the *anankē* of *erōs* is and should be that of cooperative necessity.

Their speeches, in this way, suggest how souls may fail to recognize the true nature of the *erōs* they feel, or may fail to attend to the lesson that is taught by its tendency to multiplicity and repetition. Rather than recognizing that one feels love for
more than one beautiful young man because such love does not provide the satisfaction it promises, Pausanias elevates the love to a more lasting, spiritual plane. His attempt to move from the merely temporary to the more lasting is a move, in a sense, in the right direction, but his Uranian erōs is a terminal node of the possibilities opened by erōs. The tendency of erōs to point towards what is lasting, if misdirected, leads away from the greatest insight it might reveal: that it is fundamentally connected to our location in a world of change and movement. Both the city of lovers of Phaedrus and the dydactically intertwined citizens of Pausanias’ ideal are attempts to put Erōs in service of the city by finding terminal paths to political virtue and political stability in the soul. Satisfying the soul’s neediness is the path to invulnerability for the city. This sanguine expectation, however, is belied by both the slavish experience of love and the transgressions it permits in Pausanias’ account. The erōs that is, as Pausanias recognizes, a slavemaster does not rely on anankē as cooperative necessity, but on anankē-bia.

They also overestimate the capacity of erotic longing to be satisfied. As well as resourcefulness, erōs is a child of poverty so that even the philosopher must return repeatedly to the source of his knowledge to replenish his store:

studying, as it is called, is done on the grounds that the science (episteemees) is passing out from us; for forgetfulness is the exiting of science; and studying, by instilling a fresh memory again to replace the departing one, preserves the science, so that it may be thought to be the same (208a).

While Phaedrus gives us a vision of the warlike eromenos spurred by love into early death, Pausanias tries to find a peaceful, political role for erōs. And yet, with his
provisions for the lying erastes and the noble gullibility of the eromenos, he too recognizes the insatiability of erōs.

Despite the political uses Pausanias tries to make of erōs, in his descriptions of the experience of love he clearly recognizes its transgressive and destructive potential. While Pausanias argues that the tolerance accorded the antinomial and shameful actions of the lover because they are done in the noble cause of virtue and political goods, he cannot deny that they are actions that in other circumstances would bring extreme reproach. The obstacles that stand in the way of erōs, such as protective fathers and attendants, or social disapproval, would at other times prove too punishing to be navigated. Erōs does not, however, mollify or arrange the consent of these obstacles – he sneaks around them, or charges straight through them. Indeed, as Pausanias observes, all of our normal concerns for position, reputation, assets and interests may be overthrown under the slavery of erōs. Erōs is, then, transgressive of both cooperative necessities and of our own interests as we normally understand them. By passing by the realm in which collective and individual interests interact through cooperative necessity, erōs imposes a necessity of its own which is experienced more as anankē-bia than the anankē of cooperative necessity between citizens. Just as the non-citizenship of the slave is expressed in terms of his subjection to bia, so the cooperative necessity by which a city with a healthy ethical culture might hope to channel and control a citizen’s self-interest is overthrown in the lover. Erōs crashes through these social controls, even against the lover’s understanding of his self-interest. Rather than a city of noble warriors, a city of lovers would be a city of slaves.
The intuitions of Phaedrus about the connection of *erōs* and *philoiimia*, and of Pausanias about the insatiability of *erōs* and the location of its lasting object in the soul rather than the body, are confirmed by Diotima’s account of *erōs*. She explains, however, that rather than sites of virtue and stability, the forms of *erōs* they eulogize simply point beyond themselves. Through the language of *erōs* and beauty we have seen that she explains how there are resources within an almost universal human experience to begin to climb out of the world of mere sense experience towards philosophical knowledge – which is the only site of permanence and source of true virtue. The experience of *erōs* towards beauty is one that ultimately points beyond the contingent, multiple and partial realm of sense experience because it contains within itself fundamentally contradictory purposes. The pursuit of immortality through love of something fragile and temporary suggests that the soul knows how it is to move, but misperceives its proper direction of travel.

The case of Alcibiades and his love for Socrates suggests ways in which this misdirection of the soul is explained by our own mistaken sense of what we lack. We saw in the *Republic* that injustice crept into the city when its citizens were unable to judge what was truly necessary. By following the language of need here too we can trace Alcibiades’ path to his glimpse of the beauty of Socrates’ soul. The dependency of the lover that is at the heart of *erōs* – his ultimate, unrecognized reliance on the memory of others in his pursuit of immortality – confirms the connection of *erōs* to *anankē*. Just as birth is the source of a powerful existential form of *anankē* so, it seems, is *erōs* a source of the most powerful compulsions. Like existential *anankē*, however, it is indifferent to the claims of interest. Where existential *anankē* made this claim in terms of justice,
though, *erōs* trumps interest at the level of emotional force. The *anankē* of *erōs* differs clearly from the qualities we have come to associate with a properly functioning cooperative necessity: where compulsive desires might be bounded and constrained by the punishments and rewards of life in the city, truly erotic desires tend always to transgress even these boundaries.

We see the conflict between *erōs*, ordinary self-interest and citizenship enacted in Alcibiades’ account of his love of Socrates. Alcibiades epitomizes those cool-headed ambitious young men Adeimantus describes in *Republic* 2. Not only does he stand above emotional manipulation by the skilled rhetoricians whose techniques he understands and emulates (215d), he is well aware of the other demands of cooperative necessity in Athens. He demonstrates this awareness when, because of *erōs*, he is about to oppose its demands. He will, he says, put all of his resources – of beauty, friends and money – at the disposal of Socrates – even though he knows that the Athenians will heartily disapprove of his choice of lover (218c). He will both sacrifice those things for which he is ordinarily rewarded and embrace that for which he expects to be punished. This passage confirms for us his *autarkeia* in the terms of Athenian politics, for when Alcibiades switches roles – from playing the *eromenos* to pursuing Socrates like an *erastes* – he is able to offer the kind of exchange that a lover might put before a beloved. It is obvious at this point that he already has a full hand of all of the goods that the *eromenos* might normally receive from the *erastēs*: wealth, political connections and, we know from Thucydides, considerable political skills – both as a rhetorician and as a soldier and strategist. As an ambitious young citizen of Athens he is singularly well-equipped. He is, in fact, self-sufficient in the terms of the classical *erastēs-eromenos* exchange presented by
Pausanias. He is self-sufficient in terms of the cooperative necessities of Athens and is, in this way, positioned for great power. His love of Socrates has the power to divert him from a well-planned path to political power via the recognition and manipulation of cooperative necessity. We need not view this diversion, however, as a renunciation of his sense of beauty. Rather, we have seen that he may actually hope, by learning the secrets of Socratic distinctiveness and of his irresistible speeches, to transcend cooperative necessity completely and produce in the Athenians the kind of slavelike agreement that Socrates has produced in him (216a-b).

Once we have understood this we look at the other speakers on love in a different way. For Phaedrus erōs supplies military virtue by means of aidōs; for Pausanias it supplies an education in civic virtue and political goods like alliances and connections through exchange. In all of this we must bear in mind Diotima’s genealogy of Erōs, his birth from the union of poverty and resource. Erōs is ugly and ignorant because he is characterized by the lack of things, but is able to pursue the things he lacks because of his resourcefulness (202a-202c). The sense of beauty that determines our particular form of erōs depends upon our sense of what it is we most lack. Those who lack bravery or civic virtue or resources may well seek these things in an erotic style – with earnest intensity. For some, perhaps, this is literally through the means of erotic relationships, as it was for Phaedrus and Pausanias. On the other hand, desires to become courageous or politically skilled may themselves be pursued with erotic passion – directly, as it were, as ambitions in themselves.

A figure like Alcibiades, who is most the master of the cooperative necessities of Athens, who believes himself of all young men least in need of anything, stands in a
position where he may see most clearly the path beyond these other loves of life in the city. Self-sufficiency, coupled with an sudden experience of lack in perceiving the soul of Socrates, may seem to open him up to recognize his own need for philosophy. What we see, on the contrary, is that Alcibiades desires to make his autarkeia complete by transcending the cooperative necessities of the city that constrain him, even as he is best prepared to manipulate them. He wishes, as it were, to move from the kind of power enjoyed by Glaucon’s unjust man of just reputation whose success is, nonetheless, dependent upon the self-interested cooperation of his fellow citizens, to that of Gyges who stands aloof from the ordinary consequences of his actions. Alcibiades wishes, however, to enjoy precisely that prestige and notoriety denied to the ring-wearer in Glaucon’s story. He wishes to persuade people with speeches of the kind that Socrates alone can muster that, evoking powerful emotions, are experienced as a kind of welcome subjection. Alcibiades wishes, in this way, to be an object of irresistible erōs.

It is in this light, I believe, that we should read those passages in which Alcibiades laments the transformation in his view of himself after his glimpse of the philosopher’s soul. By refusing to give him what he knows and share with him his distinctiveness, Socrates has humiliated Alcibiades by scorning the beauty he offered in exchange (218e-219a).275 He is humiliated also, by the power that the philosophers’ speeches retain over him, a feeling made worse, no doubt, because their secret is inaccessible to him. His shame at both his subjection to this power and the critique of himself that they contain combine to render hollow the satisfactions of political life. He may not be ashamed, in

275 Ironically, the distinctiveness of Socrates cannot be replicated without becoming, of course, no longer unique. Even if Socrates were able, as he denies he can to Agathon, to transmit his knowledge by osmotic contact, he would simply be reproducing himself in Alcibiades. This adds a layer, no doubt, to Alcibiades’ frustration!
fact, at the correctness of Socrates’ criticisms, but at the defeats in argument through which they are delivered, the larger rejection they represent and the frustrated ambition that his understanding of Socrates’ power both inspires and frustrates.

For I know within myself that I am incapable of contradicting him or of saying that what he commands must not be done; and whenever I go away, I know within myself that I am doing so because I have succumbed to the honor I get from the many. So I have become a runaway and avoid him; and whenever I see him, I am ashamed of what has been agreed upon (216b).

In summary, Socrates reminds him that “it was not worth living in the way I am” (215e), not because his ambition to power is unjust, but because the greatest power is permanently inaccessible.

The interpretive possibilities offered by Alcibiades’ speech at first seemed twofold. In glimpsing the philosopher’s soul, it seemed, Alcibiades may have been turned to acknowledge the necessity of philosophy and that when he admits that “it was not worth living in the way I am” (215e), he meant that his pursuit of power and fame was futile. This possibility, however, left open the very great questions of why the younger man continued to pursue the political life and to flee Socrates in shame and humiliation. Certainly shame could suggest a recognition of the standards of justice Socrates revealed, but it is also explicable as his response to unaccustomed and intolerable defeat. His continued pursuit of his political ends, however, cannot be otherwise explained than as suggesting that Socrates was correct when he warned Alcibiades that he had mistaken the nature of the beauty of his soul. The shame Alcibiades feels is not because he has adopted the standards of Socrates, according to
which he falls short, but because, in suffering defeat and rejection at the philosopher’s hands, he has fallen short of standards he already possessed and which he had previously taken pride in fulfilling.

One might hope, perhaps, that Alcibiades’ story suggests the possibility of a truncated path to philosophy, a kind of instant recognition of one’s need for it through a glimpse at the beauty of the soul it produces. As such the philosopher’s soul might have acted as a kind of orienting image, surpassing other desires and guiding emulation. Philosophic friendship, however, does not seem to have worked this way in the Symposium since the many lovers of Socrates either mimic him in his guise as Silenus or chafe under unwelcome subjection to his power. None, however, are able to make themselves philosophers on the basis simply of their familiarity with him. The story of Alcibiades suggests above all that the basic direction of erōs, one’s sense of beauty, is not altered in this way. In Socrates he finds instead the possibility of an even greater satisfaction of the same basic erōs for power and distinctiveness. This is suggestive of the basic correctness of Diotima’s view that it is only through the recognition that an object of erōs does not provide satisfaction that it may be transcended by a new kind of desire.

The connection of erōs and mimesis is unmistakable in the Symposium, exemplified as it is by Apollodorus and Aristodemus, and by Alcibiades’ desire to make himself a likeness of Socrates for his own, very different, purposes. This mimesis, however, differs from that of the Spartans in their philia for the fathers or the guardians with their careful replication of cultural models. The desire of Alcibiades to possess the distinctiveness and power of Socrates does not entail complete, but only partial mimesis and reveals erōs in both its transgressive and poetic aspects.
iv) Eros and the Polis: poiēsis and transgression

We have considered the aesthetic element of regimes which, like that of the Spartans, Kallipolis and the Corinthian empire, invoke robust orienting images as objects of contemplation and, sometimes, mimesis. Such images are elevated as objects of reverence and reference in such a way that the complexity, including ethical complexity, of life in the realm of becoming is overlayed by an apparently clear and authoritative order. Contingency, change and complexity are, it is hoped, removed from politics when political life has this point of certain orientation. As we considered the orienting image in light of the aesthetic theory of the Republic we concentrated on this cognitive aspect – the orienting image as a solution to the change and movement that always threaten political orders and the goods that attend them. When we consider this political solution in the light of erōs, however, we are forced to examine its affective role which, it turns out, is one of the suppression or, at times, unification and direction of erōs.

Erōs is a threat to political stability in a number of ways. As we have seen repeatedly, the diversity and power of individual erōs poses problems for the city. The anankai of desire – honor, fear and self-interest – that were such disordering forces in Thucydides’ narrative were redescribed by Plato in the Republic in terms of erōs. The increasing diversity of the erotic objects which dominated the souls of its citizens drove the disintegration of Kallipolis through regimes descending towards tyranny. The chaos of competing and wildly divergent desires in democracy produces injustices that are only exceeded by the injustice of the tyranny that succeeds it which makes the powerful erōs of the tyrant the center of the regime. Kallipolis, a city of utmost contemplation and mimesis is opposed, in this way, by the regime of utmost erōs. Erōs is not absent in
Kallipolis, however, but there it is directed in ways that are useful to the city. Their education is supposed, it seems, to make the guardians “pregnant” with fame – that is, the desire to engender their own immortal fame through great deeds. The city is structured so that this desire works in service of the city’s defense, rather than being directed towards destructive internal competition. Pericles pursues a similar strategy in his funeral speech by trying to stimulate in the Athenians erōs towards fame and offering the empire as an arena in which it can be pursued without cost to the internal peace of the city. If trained and directed properly individual erōs and its drive towards immortality can, it is hoped, be reconciled with the success of the city. These attempts to reconcile citizenship and erōs are efforts to avoid the problem of the uncoordinated pursuit of individual loves of wealth or honor which, as we saw in the Corcyrean stasis, destroy the possibility of achieving either when cities lack any shared and overarching erotic object.

Such solutions attempt to bring erōs inside the orienting image that guides the city, to make space for it within a vision of citizenship. We will see, however, that such solutions do not address the fundamental tension between citizenship and erōs if we consider the connection between erōs and poiēsis – making. By attempting to subsume erōs beneath the orienting image, such domestications of love try to contain within the confines of a counterfeit form the aspect of the soul most in touch with becoming. The cognitive aspect of the orienting image, its replacement of lived complexity and diversity, with a false unity, simplicity and certainty, is connected to its anti-erotic aspect in fundamental ways. The experience of erōs is both a response to complexity and

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276 Yet if the erotic object is determined by our sense of what we most lack, the guardians would seem in greatest danger of being lovers of wealth – as, indeed, in their degeneration, some of them are revealed to be. It is true also, however, that honor is an inherently scarce commodity such that, especially in a society of honor loving souls, it must always seem to be something we lack.
revelatory of its extent. That is, *erōs*, as Socrates learns from Diotima, is the most vulnerable point of entry for awareness of complexity and multiplicity because, as a response to individual mortality, it is the greatest point of contact with our location in a realm of becoming rather than being. Awareness of our own mortality is our primary experience of becoming.

The fundamental tension between *erōs* and regimes of orienting images is apparent if we contrast the aesthetic experiences that characterize them. The orienting image relied on a certain kind of aesthetic experience that emphasized stability and permanence through contemplation and mimesis. *Erōs* has a distinct aesthetic mode that begins in responsiveness to beauty which is, itself, not a matter of contemplation but to *poiēsis*, and with generation, self-assertion and newness. This is what Diotima means when she says that *erōs* is not of beauty, but of engendering in the beautiful. Desire is buried deep in the heart of the sense of beauty, in fact, which is in turn derived from the sense of deficiency we have already discussed. The universal human deficiency is our mortality, and it is this that underwrites our eros. That this most universal deficiency of mortality is experienced in isolation is the reason that *erōs* stands at odds with citizenship so profoundly. In *erōs* we are both most alone and most dependent. We are alone in the mortality that gives rise to it, yet dependent in all our attempts to transcend that mortality through remembrance. The myth of Er in the *Republic* highlights this existential isolation.

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Alexander Nehamas has explored this erotic aspect of *erōs* fruitfully in his critique of the stance of philosophical aesthetics towards beauty which takes it to be, above all, something from which everything of desire has been abstracted: “Suspicious of passion, [philosophy] limited itself to a kind of beauty to which desire seemed inappropriate – the beauty in great art and the wonders of nature, concentrated in museums and national parks. And so the beauty that mattered to philosophy, to criticism, and often to the arts themselves, if it mattered at all, was separated from the beauty that mattered to the rest of the world, to whom it seemed irrelevant and empty: the higher and more refined its pleasures, the less like pleasures they seemed”. *Only a Promise of Happiness*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p2. By contrast beauty and desire are, as we have seen, inseparable to Greek thinking, pp6-7, p55.
of mortality by stressing the individual’s ultimate responsibility for the course of his own life. This stands in contrast, of course, to the myth in the *Republic* that concerns birth. The myth of the metals stresses the inescapability of the community in Kallipolis, since even in birth the guardians are never alone, never in private, but experience and feel as one. The erotic myth of death is in this fundamental way at odds with the orienting image of the guardians’ myth of birth and highlights the inadequacy of those solutions that attempt to bring *erōs* into the tent of politics.

These two contrasting myths, of birth and death, encapsulate the conflict between the attempt to create political authority and unity through a shared orienting image and the individual’s pursuit of his own path through life that we saw exemplified in the conflict between Corinth and Corcyra. This conflict reveals a fundamental tension between the city’s own claims to permanence, its own desire for immortality, as it were, and those of individual citizens. The creation of an orienting image – for example, the motherhood of the city – renders the city immortal only so long as the “children” continue to honor the mother above all others and do not forget her. As we have seen in the battle between Corinth and Corcyra, however, children do not remain subservient forever, but grow up into obligations and households of their own. This growth, of course, signals becoming and hence also mortality. The problem is inescapable because children will feel *erōs* of their own and seek to engender their own offspring in pursuit of their own immortality.²⁷⁸ The assertion of authoritative maternity by the Corinthians is, in this way, an all or nothing matter: rather than trying to domesticate *erōs*, they try to suppress or deny it altogether. It is a useful example for considering the fundamental

²⁷⁸ Part of the success of Sparta’s attempt at forestalling movement is that this tension between memory and poiēsis, image and eros, is resolved by the partial collapse of multiple generations into one.
tension, then, because it highlights exactly what it is that erōs opposes: that which is given.

The rejection of Corinth by her colony, in reflecting the rejection of the authority of the given that underwrote “existential necessity”, is emblematic of the transgression that is connected to erōs. In the *Symposium* Pausanias tells us that fathers are at odds with lovers (183c) and that the pursuit of the beloved impels the lover to trangress all normally accepted standards (183a-b). Two major sites of the given, the authority of the household and its ascribed philia, as well as the customs and laws of the city, are thus threatened by erōs. It is precisely devotion to the ascriptive philia of the oikos that Pericles, in his funeral speech, rejects: it is an invocation of erōs that was significant for calling up a force capable of overthrowing the loyalties of family and home. Pausanias, by arguing that Uranian erōs does, in fact, have a place within these laws and customs because it upholds such established values as the opposition to tyranny and the importance of strong and lasting associations, hopes to rescue erōs from this transgressive reputation (182b-d). Attempting to include the useful aspects of erotic practice within the image of the good citizen and thus making them objects of reverence and imitation does not recognize the way in which erōs regards its object, not with the contemplative and mimetic gaze bestowed on an orienting image, but with an entirely different stance that reveals that erōs is unavoidably transgressive.

A comparison between the gaze of the lover and the reverant one of the citizen contemplating an orienting image explains that erōs sets the lover in a kind of motion that is indifferent to the limits that are set for him. Orienting images are hoped to work, I have argued, through a narrowing of the gaze that is inherent in the activity of
representation. Features of a complex world are selected and put together with an eye to coherence. This simplifying quality of representation is summed up in the two dimensionality of paintings and the stillness of statues. The world is rendered “still” for the person who lives in thrall to an orienting image, its institutions permanent and unassailable, and his own actions are guided by reference to the reveranced image. The gaze of the lover, on the other hand, is narrowed in a different way and it is not the world but he himself who is rendered still by looking. On perceiving the beauty of the beloved the lover is rendered still, “thunderstruck” (ekpleegnumi).\(^{279}\) This frozen state gives way, though, as the lover, his world now transformed to revolve around the beloved, is thrown into frantic motion in pursuit of this new object, to be, indeed, enslaved by this pursuit.

The orienting image, by contrast, requires contemplative attention because it renders the world itself still. It is a foreclosing of attention that frames out the complexity and movement that, if embraced, threaten the disintegration of order. As the center of attention the orienting image does not render its viewers awestruck and still, but allows them to move only within the limits it sets down. It is contemplative in the sense that those who are oriented by an image do no more than refer to it to guide their action. We have seen how reference and reverance are closely tied in these situations, reverance isolating and elevating the orienting image as the center of attention, reference allowing it to dictate the style of mimetic movement. Erōs, on the other hand, does not render the world still, but simply irrelevant. Insofar as we could call erotic attention contemplative, it has a much narrower gaze than that directed towards an orienting image. The lover is aware of the world, and that the world may stand in contradiction to his love, but it is the world, not his love that will be upended by this revelation. This change in orientation

\(^{279}\) cf Symposium 215d, 216d. “To be panic-struck, amazed, astonished”. Liddel & Scott.
towards the world and its shared standards is the source of the lover’s complete preparedness for transgressive activities. We see this exemplified in the preparedness of Alcibiades to incur the displeasure of the Athenians by embracing Socrates as a lover. (That \( \text{erōs} \) leads to transgression in this case is true whether Alcibiades is truly in love with Socrates as a philosopher or with Socrates as an image of the qualities of distinction and power that he most desires). By contrast, the admission of facts that contradict the orienting image and reveal its contingency threaten to destroy the reverence with which it is held and its authority as a point of reference.

\( \text{Erōs} \) moves quickly beyond contemplation: it is active and, while it also constrains the movement of the lover, it does so not by limiting his sense of possibilities, but by limiting his concern to those that lead to possession of the beloved thing. This combination of passionate movement and obsessive concentration is what makes the attempt of Pericles to focus the Athenians on a shared erotic object a brilliant solution to the need to muster both cohesion and support for the empire. Political unity and cohesion in pursuit of a project requires the ability to set aside and ignore all other concerns, to refuse to be distracted by the pleasures and pains one feels along the way. In his narrow focus and single-minded movement the lover possesses these necessary qualities. His preparedness to transgress all boundaries and ignore all accepted standards were also invoked in Pericles’ calls for the disregard of oikos and land, but these qualities also point to the massively disruptive and destructive aspects of both empire and \( \text{erōs} \). This indifference to justice is of the essence of the lover’s transgressive qualities and is reflected also in his \( \text{poiēsis} \). When Pericles urges the Athenians onwards on their imperial path the lasting monuments he promises them will be due to acts of both harm and good
(Th. Pel. 2.41). Erōs seeks remembrance and may not be concerned with its cause. To pursue this thought further we must consider the drive of erōs towards poiēsis.

While the lover is “thunderstruck” by the beloved his attention is not simply reverential and, in his motion, he does not simply refer to the model of the beloved. Rather, the lover’s soul wants to move beyond itself and the beloved, towards immortality through acts of poiēsis. Erōs is, finally, content neither with contemplation of the beloved, nor with his imitation. Instead eros points towards poiēsis: the lover seeks immortality by a creative response to his own looming demise. Diotima sees artisinal “making” for this reason as of the essence of the erotic activity. When she is seeking to extend Socrates’ understanding of erōs she makes this point:

You know that ‘making’ has a wide range; for, you see, every kind of making (poiēsis) is responsible for anything whatsoever that is on the way from what is not to what is. And thus all the productions that are dependent on the arts are makings, and all the craftsmen engaged in them are makers (205b-c).

In physical reproduction and the pursuit of fame through deeds, and in the building of political constitutions, human beings set in motion a force in opposition to that natural one that is responsible for the movement of things from what is to what is not. In Plato’s terms this is the passing away of everything sensible, and in those of Thucydides, the constant movement towards disintegration and destruction. It is a countervailing force set against the movement of everything towards nothingness.

As we have seen, it is Diotima’s view that human beings seek immortality through remembrance and we can see now that it is memory above all that erōs makes. We finally pass out of existence, then, not through physical demise but by being
forgotten. For Plato, as we see in the *Republic*, political regimes last and are destroyed by the same means. The political courage of the guardians was measured in terms of the tenacity of their memory of their education in the standards and customs of the city. Diotima gives room in her account of *erōs* to this kind of remembrance also when she refers to Solon and Lykourgos. These two legislators are, for her, exemplars of those who are pregnant in terms of soul and find immortality in the creation of the political orders that instill virtues in their citizens (209d). We can, indeed, see the orienting images that attempted to guide and constrain political and personal activities in Corinth, Sparta and Kallipolis as examples of a form of this general erotic *poiēsis*. Like all the lovers Diotima cites, the creators of these images seek immortality for themselves through the most immortal offspring. A culture of an orienting image, however, while the offspring of *erōs* itself, is profoundly at odds with *erōs* within itself because of the transgressive urges of erotic *poiēsis*.

The figures of Brasidas, Pericles and Alcibiades characterize an erotic *poiēsis* that stands in contrast to that of the political legislators. These are men whose own *erōs* for fame threatens to overthrow the customs, laws and orienting images of their cities. For Pericles this overthrow meant trying to turn the citizens from dutiful sons, or lovers of profit, into lovers of the imperial city. For Brasidas this meant a love of personal honor and distinction that Thucydides says prevented an earlier peace and which also reshaped Hellenic expectations of the Spartans. Alcibiades stands at the extreme of this group of lovers, as the Socrates of the *Republic* does in that of the political legislators. In his pursuit of distinction he wishes to exceed even the erotic *poiēsis* of Pericles and Brasidas, who seem to have heroic forebears, by transcending all such mimesis. Alcibiades wants
to overthrow not only all cooperative necessity but all cultural models as well. Martha Nussbaum noted the frequency of references to statues in the *Symposium* and connected this to the accusations against Alcibiades that held he was responsible for mutilating the Hermae. The act itself suggests a desire to overthrow the boundaries and limitations of the city for which the statues are symbols. We might, indeed, speculate that the Hermae that are in the background of the *Symposium* inform the statues which stood for the counterfeit forms of representation in the *Republic*. The Alcibiades who mutilates the Hermae of Athens foresees his own image at the center of Hellenic attention. The desire to destroy these symbols of cultural mimesis, however, points to the nature of Alcibiades’ *erōs* which is, indeed, the purest manifestation of *erōs* in its transgressive and poetic aspects. In his desire to transcend all imagery and all mimesis Alcibiades embodies the opposition of *erōs* and orienting image, of *poiēsis* and mimesis. Like Pericles in his indifference to the ethical quality of the deeds that win fame for the Athenians, Alcibiades, we know, puts little store by the obstacles thrown up by law or custom.

Part of Alcibiades’ quest for distinctiveness is an attempt to transcend these concerns entirely and to produce for himself not only complete *autarkeia*, but also complete domination. In reaching out for the greatest power and the greatest fame he aims to force on the world his own remembrance. As we have seen, we are ordinarily dependent on others for the immortality that comes with remembrance and this is the part of *erōs* that is experienced as slavery and force. The kind of distinctiveness Alcibiades seeks, though, is one which will be experienced as force by others: those who hear and see him so that he is released from dependency on them in his assuredness of remembrance. The ability of Socrates to render his listeners awestruck and force from

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them agreement appeals to Alcibiades for this reason. The dependence on others for whatever immortality one can expect is the final cooperative necessity. Alcibiades in his love of fame and power is a thorough-going erastēs pursuing his immortality, yet he wishes to avoid the enslavement to the agreement of the Athenians that this implies: he wishes also to be for them the eromenos who is able to invoke in them a state of awestruck fascination. He wishes, in this way, to combine the power of the eromenos with the immortality of the lover and to avoid the lover’s enslavement and the obligation of the eromenos to offer gratifications in return.

This interpretation of the eros of Alcibiades and the attribution to him of a desire to share in the secret of Socratic speeches in order to satisfy his eros for power and fame, contains, of course, a deep irony. If Alcibiades were able to speak like Socrates he would, after all, not have transcended all models, but would have won a distinctiveness that, in the manner of Pericles or Brasidas, was merely mimetic. It is an imitation, however, that would show up in negative. This mirror image, indeed, characterizes the relations of Socrates and Alcibiades in the Symposium. Especially if we keep in mind the role of legislator Socrates takes up in the Republic, we can group him with Solon and Lykourgos as one whose erotic poiēsis lies in engendering virtue in others, while Alcibiades clearly belongs with the negative images of these legislators, Pericles and Brasidas – those who do not add to the virtue of the city, but endanger it with their poetic drive. Alcibiades is similarly distinctive: just as Socrates is without model, so he in his own category, wishes to be. Just as Socrates appeared at first as a lover to Alcibiades and was transformed into an eromenos, Alcibiades wishes to play both roles towards the Athenians. In this he displays something of the characteristics Aristophanes attributes to human beings who
are the severed halves of the early circle people who are always searching for their missing part. Alcibiades, wishing to play both parts, seeks a kind of wholeness and self-sufficiency that, nonetheless, he can never find.
Conclusions
The last chapter ended with the suggestion that in his erōs for fame and distinction Albiciades seeks to transcend all mimesis and all cooperative necessity. Instead of replicating received models or having to win the support of others through political means, he wishes to force remembrance of himself upon the world without, at the same time, being dependent upon that world. He pursues, in effect, a radical autarkeia of a form similar to that articulated by the Athenian envoys in their picture of the Athenian empire that shares also in the Periclean desire for a forced memory that transcends dependence on all particulars. In this light it may be partly due to the nature of Alcibiades’ fantasies that Socrates seems to appear in the guise in which Nussbaum depicts him in her rich and imaginative study of the Symposium. For Nussbaum:

> It is not without reason that Alcibiades compares Socratic virtues to statues of the gods. For, as we have seen, Socrates, in his ascent towards the form, has become, himself, very like a form – hard, indivisible, unchanging. His virtue, in search of science and of assimilation of the good itself, turns away from the responsive intercourse with particular earthly goods that is Alcibiades’ knowledge.

> It is not only Socrates’ dissociation from his body. It is not only that he sleeps all night with the naked Alcibiades without arousal. There is, along with this remoteness, a deeper impenetrability of spirit. Words launched ‘like bolts’ have no effect. Socrates might conceivably have abstained from sexual relations while remaining attentive to the lover in his particularity. … But Socrates refuses in every way to be affected. He is stone; and he also turns others to stone. Alcibiades is to his sight just one more of the beautifuls, a piece of the form, a pure thing like a jewel.\(^{281}\)

These are serious concerns. They suggest a lack in Socrates of a capacity for genuine concern either as a lover or a friend. Nussbaum’s objection is that Socrates does not

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\(^{281}\) Nussbaum (1984), p195.
“explore the world that the openness of the other makes available,” and that it is towards this openness that love of Socrates transforms Alcibiades when he changes from an eromenos (also, conventionally stony and self-sufficient) to an erastēs. For Nussbaum this tale of Socrates and Alcibiades tells us that we must make a choice between love for unique particulars and the ability to see beauty in the world on the one hand, and goodness and truth on the other. In this she takes Diotima’s account of philosophy as the contemplation of beauty itself to be a complete account of the philosopher’s activities. On this view of philosophy, she argues, distinctions within the world of particulars merge, against this standard, into “a boundless sea” of things that fall short of the contemplated perfection. Against this background what seems unique and irreplaceable to a lover like Alcibiades appears indistinct, uniform and replaceable to the philosopher.

It has been suggested that within the Greek concept of aretē lurked an ideal of self-sufficiency that ultimately informs the notion of the philosophical life of contemplation and sees it as an escape from both dependence on other and from friendship, because “one can practice theōria without philoi”. Ordinarily, by contrast, one needs friends to lend their strength and one is inevitably led into reciprocal relations with them. Philia and dependence, on this view, stand on one side and autarkeia and

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285 Adkins, (1963). Adkins connects contemplation to self-sufficiency. In ordinary circumstances he notes, “no man can do without philoi. But if one could by some means be self-sufficient without philoi, there seems no need to have any... Ordinarily, this is impossible: no man can become so agathos or so eudaimōn

286 Nussbaum (1984), pp.180-181; “We realize through [Alcibiades], the deep importance unique passion has for ordinary human beings; we see its irreplaceable contribution to understanding”, p.197.
287 Nussbaum (1984), pp.180-181; “We realize through [Alcibiades], the deep importance unique passion has for ordinary human beings; we see its irreplaceable contribution to understanding”, p.197.
aphilia on the other, with contemplation proving the key to the latter kind of life. Nussbaum’s account of the contemplative philosophy which she attributes to Socrates fits this pattern – and we have seen enough evidence from Thucydides to affirm that this was, indeed, something of a Greek cultural fantasy.

I have endeavored to suggest, however, that because this fantasy is shared by Alcibiades, his love for Socrates may not be a matter of openness and mutuality so much as a heightening of desire for autarkeia through his recognition of both an unexpected dependence and an unimagined means of escape from all inter-dependence. Setting aside Socrates’ apparent indifference to the body and its pleasures, his refusal of Alcibiades may actually be an entirely appropriate response to the unique person he is. To have yielded to him and let him remain satisfied with the power of his youth, beauty and other “resources” would have been to have failed to make him feel his dependence, indeed to suffer from it, to a degree sufficient to make him recognize its significance. Of course, Alcibiades refuses as far as possible to make this recognition: by avoiding Socrates, by stopping his ears to him. The philosopher, however, has certainly got his attention, and won the power to affect Alcibiades deeply – in ways, indeed, that his more devoted followers do not seem to feel.

This matter of dependency is, I think, one of the key characteristics of human life that is captured in the language and practice of philia – including erōs, where it is certainly felt most keenly. Before considering whether or not Socrates can be a friend, or is self-sufficient and stony as Nussbaum says he is, I want to explore the quality of

as to be entirely self-sufficient; but if fortune grants prosperity in a new and unusual sense, and a man becomes capable of theoría, the situation is different”, pp.44-45. Adkins argues that the problem applies to Plato also, although he “does not acknowledge” it, p.45, n.1.
dependency as it is reflected in political *philìa* through a brief reexamination of some of its uses in the works discussed here.

We have seen all along that the language of *philìa* was significant for invoking considerations that override the pressures of self-interested desires, those *anankai* of prestige, fear and self-interest that the Athenians listed to explain their imperialism. Despite the Athenian protestations that subjection to these compulsions explains all ordinary human behavior, we see in the use of the language of *philìa* a challenge to this view. *Philìa* requires that we endure the pressures of these *anankai* of desire, at times actively sacrificing our self-interested concerns and even, as the Corinthians assert, submitting to injury and humiliation for its sake.

It is important to address an objection that may have formed in the reader’s mind long ago concerning the relationship between political *philìa* and these *anankai* of desire. One can argue, the objection might go, that the language of political *philìa* merely embodies the observation that it is through respect for political institutions that we are best able, ultimately, to satisfy our desires. Shouldn’t we view political invocations of *philìa* simply as attempts to channel and coordinate the diverse desires of citizens in directions that are useful to the city, providing a shared and distant goal whose satisfactions promise to override the temptation of intermediate concerns? Is this not just the viewpoint of a citizen with a sense of enlightened self-interest dressed up with emotionally charged language? We can see the Periclean invocation of civic *eros* in this light, certainly, expressing the hope that a kind of self-restraint could be produced by this promise of greater satisfactions in the future. One could argue that before the *stasis* the political institutions of Corcyra coordinated the desires of the Corcyreans in a related
way, acting as guides and limits on the pursuit of their diverse ends, even in the absence of a shared, distant goal. The destructive potential of diverse desires might, it seemed, be minimized even in the absence of individual self-restraint, so long as an institutional structure of cooperative necessity served to coordinate manifold individual projects. One of the lessons of the *stasis* was, after all, that once the attempt to bypass these institutions becomes general any advantage in doing so is quickly buried in the chaos of competing desires and all lose together the ability to pursue their own projects. Respect for institutions and the patience to use them in cooperative ways, Thucydides suggests on this view, is ultimately more fruitful than seizing a temporary advantage. In this light resistance to the *anankai* of desire for the sake of *philia* is simply won by the promise of greater satisfactions through their coordinated or delayed pursuit. On this view a prudent foresight capable of calculation would see loyalty to the city and robust commitment to the obligations of citizenship as the best way for individuals to proceed, even under the compulsions of honor, fear and self-interest.

It seems to me, however, that the language of *philia* suggests much more than this – although it is not indifferent to the great goods that citizenship in a polis alone can secure and which provide a strong argument for respecting its institutions. This is reflected in the Corinthian speech to the Athenians in book 1 of Thucydides’ work where the speakers developed their opposition between *autarkeia* and *philia* to mark the location of an essential justice that is deeply relevant for politics, for all that it is expressed in terms of the *oikos*. In this speech, it is true, they suggest that taking the stance of *autarkeia* may be radically misguided, even for a power as great as Athens, because it undermines both justice and self-interest. Such a policy lacks a truly prudent
concern for self-interest because it constitutes a radical break from the benefits that come with acknowledging the ties of cooperative necessity – those ties that are broken at Corcyra with such dire consequences and which, according to the Corinthians apply even in relations between cities. Their development of a link, in this speech, between justice and philia, however suggests the ways in which a politics of philia does not rest simply on an argument of maximized self-interest.

The political metaphors of philia which the Corinthians introduce with their notion of colonial maternity do not reflect a reasoning that begins from self-interested individuals who calculate their relative interest in loyalty or betrayal. Metaphors of philia instead reflect the fundamental inter-dependence that always characterizes political life, an inter-dependence that is, more than economic, a matter of political ontology.  

In their first speech the Corinthians mark out an opposition between autarkeia and philia, which for them is of the essence of justice. Autarkeia stands in opposition to justice because it is a renunciation of all philia – not just of one’s own particular ties, but of what philia itself represents. While cooperative necessity represents the inescapable inter-dependence of politics by pointing to our reliance on our human surroundings for the very existence of many of the goods we most desire, philia represents this dependence in a much larger and richer way. Where a concern for cooperative necessity should be respected as the best strategy, on the whole, for scratching the various itches of the anankai of desire, philia embodies aspects of human inter-dependence that are much...
more extensive. This is reflected most of all in the fundamental existential dependency of
generation. Narratives of political maternity rely on this deepest dependency to ground
authority, but also to refute claims to autarkeia and aphilia as hybristic assertions of a
self-sufficiency that goes beyond the human to claim the prerogative of the divine. The
basic inter-dependence of human life cannot be escaped simply by means of superior
force because philia and its obligations have an ontological priority that reflects
something essential about us.

The Corinthian version of political maternity, of course, was one-sided and
unwilling to acknowledge other aspects of interdependence than generation. It was, for
this reason, concerned with cities at the expense of citizenship. The myths of autochthony
internal to cities grapple better with this essential political status. The notion that the
earth of the city is the shared mother of all its citizens attempts to unite what the literal
oikos divides and points to everything the citizen owes to the city that could never be
enjoyed in an isolated household. Just as one’s life as a human being is dependent upon
biological maternity, one’s life as a citizen is dependent upon the city. To adopt a stance
of autarkeia in this situation is to claim a false aphilia: one is always already engaged in a
relationship of philia with the city and one’s fellow citizens. These relationships are, in
these terms, ascribed and not achieved ones and therefore never conditional upon one’s
sense that they offer particular benefits. Particular benefits, it is true, may be impossible
outside of the city and available because inscribed upon its institutional structure which,
by informing the cooperative necessities by which individuals can answer the anankai of
desire, constitutes one of the general goods of political life. A politics of maternal philia
is, in this way, consistent with a certain vision of the relationship between justice and
necessity that places an existential necessity that reflects dependency at the core of political life – as well as at the apex of a hierarchy of necessities, below which are arranged the cooperative *anankai* and those of desire. This was the order that the Corinthians asserted in their speech to the Athenians where they suggested that respect for existential necessity stood at the center not only of a just order, but also of one that provided the most goods and was most consistent with properly human concerns.

Beyond all concern for particular benefits that may be objects of desire, or even institutional arrangements that make it possible to pursue these objects, the plurality of political life reflects dependence of a more thorough-going sort. We see this more clearly, perhaps, in the Spartan *philia* for the fathers than in the politics of maternal *philia*. The compactness of Spartan institutions, the very lack of scope for the pursuit of diverse desires reveals an aspect of human interdependence which is not that of an interwoven diversity, but is reflective instead of the solidarity of the phalanx. This is an interdependence that underwrites survival in battle, but also victory and the prestige that attends the city, and hence each of the *homoioi* also. The very “necessity” of Spartan education and all of the institutional arrangements that support and require it points to this fact: no Spartan could be as he is but for his Spartan birth and raising, or without the city of the Spartans. The *philia* of the Spartans for their fathers, which is a devotion to the precise replication, even embodiment, of those who have gone before, is a form of politics that puts this dependence of each upon the city at the very center of life. A city governed by an ethic of complete mimesis in this way is one in which inter-dependence is so total that individual citizens approach a level of anonymity, so lacking are opportunities by which to assert anything new or unique. Political *philia* then, represents
not just the benefits that accrue to individuals in the polis, but also all of the very specific ways in which individuals are shaped by their cities.

The two are, indeed, linked very explicitly in Thucydides’ Archaeology where both the great goods that resulted from the rise of the polis and the contingency of that rise are stressed. That the Greeks of Thucydides’ time are, in fact, utterly dependent upon that history for their very Greekness is indicative of a radical lack of self-sufficiency in terms of any of the most important aspects of life. That the history of Hellas points both to human dependency and to the contingency of the institutions on which we depend for specific goods and fundamental identity, points, though, to something strange about some of the political metaphors of philia at work in Thucydides’ history. Metaphors that refer to ascriptive forms of philia deny the possibility that anything new could or should arise from within (or without) the city. Rather than pointing simply to everything that is shared in a city and the inextricable bonds of interdependence that join the citizens, these invocations of philia refuse to allow that there is anything beyond these ties. The specific goods of this city at this time become the authoritative goods of politics generally and inter-dependence becomes total dependency.

The metaphors of political philia invoked by Corinth and Sparta rest in ascriptive relationships – the relations of children and parents – which are especially prone to these kinds of one-sided assertions. While these metaphors stress very strongly the dependence of citizens upon the city, they attempt to utterly obscure the contingency of this relationship and its demands. While the opposition between philia and autarkeia reflects the inescapable plurality of human life, what it does not suggest in its essence is the identity of the relevant plurality, which is merely contingent and historical. In the
Archaeology Thucydides puts the case powerfully that human groups grow and shrink, are absorbed and scattered, and are never permanently or inevitably bounded. Where metaphors of political maternity or paternity fall short, then, is not in highlighting the benefits and inevitability of the interdependence attendant upon citizenship, but in casting the ultimate location of this dependence backwards in time and utterly beyond the reach of living generations. This is, variously, historically untruthful or strategically unwise. Myths of autochthony rest on claims of shared and knowable beginnings that are, according to Thucydides, usually neither. Similarly, the practice of paternal philia requires for each decision and response an authoritative model from the past and is unable to cope with, or even acknowledge, the radically new. It is as if acknowledging that the contingency of institutions utterly undermines their claims of justice over us. Both metaphors are so concerned to stress the benefits that the current generations owe to those of the past, or that the colony owes to the mother city, that the possibility that the living or subordinates may contribute many good things to the association on their own terms is denied. Why should this denial be so insistent, though? The contingency of our political institutions or group identity should not affect our need to recognize our interdependence.

Thucydides gives us no example of a city that is able to reconcile these two crucial facets of political life. Cities which rely on orienting images of ascribed philia devote themselves to the denial of contingency by stressing the impossibility of change. In this human inter-dependence is ellided with historical necessity. What a politics of ascriptive philia points to, in fact, is an insistence not just that human inter-dependence be recognized, but also that a particular arrangement of it be accepted as authoritative
and, usually, that one set of contributions be honored and rewarded above all others. It is this arrangement that is reflected in the static orienting images of phiia that describe the form of the city’s interdependence and the nature of the contributions and benefits belonging to each citizens. The image provides reassurances that reciprocity between citizens approaches a just exchange.

At one level such claims help to avert the conflicts between polis and oikos, or between faction and city that reflect the relevance of sub-political forms of philia. One concern seems to be to remove from view any possibility that one’s membership is grounded in or justified by advantages that can be calculated – and perhaps, improved upon. The lack of such apparent advantages, or the sense that they may be better satisfied elsewhere, might underwrite a view that citizenship is a conditional identity. Maternal metaphors attempt to put the obligations of citizenship beyond the reach of such calculations by insisting that the status is radically lacking in choice and hence beyond the reach of all calculation. Once achieved philia is admitted as a principle of association a tendency emerges, as we see in Corcyra, to seek out that cluster of people that seems best able to provide the goods we desire. This does, indeed, undercut those benefits we might, each of us together, derive from membership in a large city. It is by avoiding these fractures that a politics of ascribed philia avoids stasis. We see the ground prepared for the Corcyrean stasis in the aggregative rather than plural account their speakers give the Athenians of the basis, not just of military power, but of the city itself. This aggregative view that sees achieved philia in the light of conditional strategic alliances quickly reveals the disintegrative potential of an approach to politics that stresses the contingency of human associations so strongly.
Even a concern for justice, which is much more deeply involved in the acknowledgement of reciprocity, throws up difficult questions of conflicting obligations to those different groups to which one belongs and to which one is indebted for various of life’s goods and, indeed, for aspects of one’s identity. That these questions are not easily answered is reflected in the radical attempt of the Spartans to remove them altogether by the collapse of spaces in which they might arise. Thucydides too settles things in favor of the polis if we are to take the Archaeology and, especially, the final speech of Pericles as statements of his views. The *oikos* and other sub-political associations either fail to provide such great or such constitutive goods as the city, or are themselves inconceivable without the city. In both places the logic of the Corinthian claim about the obligations that flow from ontological priority is coupled with the logic of cooperative necessity that points towards respect for political institutions as the source of the greatest satisfactions.

And yet the obligation of citizens to the city does offer a partial answer to the problem of movement and rest with which Thucydides begins his work. Or, one might say, the visions of obligation put forward by the advocates of political metaphors of ascriptive *philia* do not fully understand the nature and limits of that obligation, but offer one-sided views of it. The false historical perspective of such metaphors obscures the essentially dynamic aspect of the goods of life. It is not clear that there is for Thucydides as there is, for example in Aristotle and in Plato, a sure commitment to the *polis* as the *telos* of human life. Whether it is in the synoikistic model of Athenian growth, or the claim that the war affected the greatest number of Greeks and barbarians, or the emphasis upon the historicity of Hellenism, Thucydides does not acknowledge clear limits for the scale of human interdependence. While, of course, the Athenian empire and the war that
engulf it, while affecting the greatest number of people, cannot be seen as the source of
great goods for those they affect, they conform to the pattern of growth out of great
movements that Thucydides lays down in his Archaeology.

It is for this reason that *philia* and empire stand in great tension in the work. The
goods attending the inter-dependence of human life are not static and become something
to be more enthusiastically embraced over time, for being more satisfying to desire. It
must be acknowledged that these satisfactions are ultimately the product of expansive
movement and violent force. In their utter opposition of *philia* and *bia* the Corinthians
fail to recognize this fact. To treat one’s fellow citizens as though they were slaves, on
the basis of *bia* rather than *philia* is clearly a great folly and *stasis* produces nothing
useful for humanity: *stasis* does not bring anything new to shared human life. To channel
such violence outwards, however, has been from the start the source of the things that
make political life a great good. If, from this point of view, the funeral speech of Pericles
has the effect of channeling the causes of violence away from the city it may be justified
by its developmental effects. Expanding not just the goods we can enjoy through our
inter-dependence, but what we can become because of it was the logic that underwrote
the *polis*: it is not clear that Thucydides sees this historical logic as having been
completed in the city. A new Minos may always, perhaps, burst forth and change what it
means to be Greek or, indeed, to be human. This stands in fundamental opposition to the
Corinthian suggestion that to adopt a stance of *autarkeia* is to fail to respect the ethical
boundaries inscribed in *philia* and which was, we saw, ultimately a claim about the limits
of the properly human. *Philia* and empire can be reconciled, perhaps, only in a form of
philia that acknowledges interdependence, but also values the capacity of erōs to expand the boundaries of that interdependence and to make it, perhaps, more rewarding.

In the vision of civic erōs that Pericles puts before the Athenians in his funeral speech we come the closest in Thucydides’ work to seeing the reconciliation of interdependence and contingency. Rather than an orienting image that contains all the possibilities of Athenian life, for Pericles the Athenian forefathers are the builders of a foundation upon which succeeding generations will improve. At this level both dependence and contingency are acknowledged in the speech, and space left open for the continuation of each into the future. Indeed the unique benefits of shared political life are richly acknowledged in those passages where Pericles eulogizes the many institutional, cultural and material benefits the Athenians enjoy because of their citizenship: they would not each individually be as they are but for the kind of city Athens is. The openness to change that is part of a recognition of contingency is unavoidable, under Pericles’ description of the Athenians, because of the element of competitiveness that is central to the Athenian character. This agonism colors the relationship of the present generation to those of the past, and of citizens to each other. When he casts the citizens as erastai, each individually seeking the gratifications of the city, he asserts a powerful source of individuation in the midst of interdependence – indeed, it is the only individuation that he wants them to care about. In their pursuit of distinction the Athenians are allowed to assert something of their own that is not wholly owed to the city but which is, according to the vision of civic erōs, nonetheless offered up to it. The citizen who exceeds the achievements of his forefathers and peers and transcends the life of mimesis in the manner of a Minos. Such a person does not, however, ultimately
transcend his dependence on them insofar as he seeks only to win the distinctions and honors of the city. It is at this point that we see, perhaps, a fundamental tension between a political *philia* that recognizes interdependence and is prepared for reciprocity, and the *erōs* that is always a force of disturbance within established relations.

For this reason it is not, ultimately, on the distinctions and honors of the city that Pericles hangs his promise of gratifications for worthy *erastai*, but rather on the memory of those who witness the imperial city’s power. Pericles knows that it is only with reluctance and resentment that anyone is celebrated for exceeding too greatly the achievements of his peers, even in Athens. Such recognition must be, indeed, to some extent forced from them unwillingly. In calling for civic *erōs* for the imperial city, however, Pericles tries to avoid just this tricky consequence of interdependence. One consequence of the vast interdependence of those who share in a city is that they are required to make contributions as well as draw benefits. One of these contributions is to accord honor and recognition to the successes of others. So long as these successes are not unprecedented they seem, perhaps, to be merely the product of the city itself – to reflect well on all and in recognizing those who achieve them one is, to some extent, recognizing oneself. Where this contribution becomes harder to tolerate, though, is when it involves recognizing true distinction in another – those cases when the achievements of one do not seem to be just the result of the city’s virtue. This is the kind of case Socrates has in mind when he speaks in the myth of the metals of a child with a “gold” soul being born to “bronze” parents.

The empire allows the Athenians to force the immediate consequences of their agonism upon others while at the same time enjoying the expanded benefits guaranteed
by their patterns of reciprocity that the empire provides. The gratifications of the imperial *eromenos* are the product of the city’s power to force awe and memory from those who witness and suffer its actions. Were the distinctions those bestowed by the citizens in some internal arena for agonism, they themselves would be forced to give up gratifications and to play the role, as it were, of the beloved. The empire allows them each, by contrast, to strive as an *erastēs*, but to escape contributing to the city’s store of recognition. In his developmental history and the justifications it provides for empire Thucydides prepares the ground to give the Athenians something of a free pass for this solution to the pressures of their own agonism and resistance to newness in their city. What this pressure and resistance suggest, however, is the nature of the fundamental obstacles to the kind of justice advocated by the Corinthians that has to do with recognizing human interdependence.

Recognizing this interdependence can be fruitful insofar as it prevents the descent into a chaos of competing desires. Such recognition can be prompted by providing a compelling image of a just and stable pattern of reciprocity within that interdependence, one-sided and exclusionary as it may be – as is that of the Spartans, for example, towards the Helots, or that of the Corinthians towards their colonists. A form of just and satisfactory reciprocity within interdependence is suggested by the “city of sows”, the first, simple city Socrates imagines with Adeimantus in the *Republic*. Their interdependence is of a completely “balanced” kind – it is a city in apparently perfect equilibrium. The interdependence and reciprocity is so perfect that it extends to the relationship between generations: nothing changes from generation to generation, as each gives to their children what they themselves had received. (The city of sows, on the other
hand, is so simple and equal that it would be amenable to a regime of direct exchange rather than reciprocal interdependence.) In the “city of sows” after all, accurate mimesis goes along with extreme equality and simplicity of relations: it is only in such a context, perhaps, that a completely satisfactory reciprocity could even be attempted on the scale of a whole city. Notably, the city of sows lacks an orienting image to describe, explain and justify its reciprocal structure.

More even than the suspicion of unequal enjoyment of the fruits of interdependence, however, erōs is a threat to an uncomplicated vision of recognition of interdependence through an ethic of reciprocity. The precise mimesis and equality of the “city of sows” is intolerable to erōs. Like the Spartan philia for the fathers and, ultimately, the city of the guardians, this kind of justice leaves no room for individuation or distinction and, hence, for true memorability. Thucydides’ insight into the capacity of erōs to expand the boundaries of the interdependence of the city, of the fruits that it bears for its participants, is a suggestion that is captured and developed in a different direction by Plato.

We have seen that the contingency of the orienting image of imperial maternity was highlighted by the Corcyrean demand that the goods of a different plurality be recognized — that internal to individual cities. While the particularly beneficial arrangement of human plurality found in the city may be well worth upholding and recognizing, while it may indeed produce strong obligations in those who owe everything they are and have to it, it is too complex and fluid an arrangement to be contained within a single image. The tendency of erōs to uncover this complexity and contingency through its transgressions and poetic drive is, in this way, an essential complement to the philia
that concerns itself with inter-dependence. For Plato, though, erōs does not improve the condition of interdependence for its participants simply by increasing the amount of the goods that they can enjoy or by reducing their own need to contribute. Where erōs stands to help the philia of interdependence is by making it better and more just.

This is not to say, of course, that erōs is an utterly benign force. Erōs, like philia, is always in danger of carrying itself too far towards the extreme. Where philia of the guardian type tends towards a mutuality that becomes utter identity and repetition along with a deep resistance to diversity and change, erōs tends towards radical individuation, autarkeia and the utter denial of all dependence. This is, of course, exemplified in the figure of Alcibiades and his desire for a tyrannical fame that is grounded in a radical newness that defies all models. The fame he desires is tyrannical because it rests not on recognition willingly given but on that which is forced from witnesses who are slaves to his beauty. In wishing to be both the lover who begets fame, and the beloved who enslaves with his beauty (in this case, his uniqueness), Alcibiades tries to evade the fact of his own dependence and renounce all philia. His desire is for an impossible autarkeia that denies the unavoidable fact of human plurality. An erōs that denies philia to such a degree is always a threat to the city and it is not, what we see in Socrates.

This, however, seemed to be the implication of Martha Nussbaum’s depiction of Socratic self-sufficiency. The stonily unresponsive philosopher, on this view, is incapable of mutuality or of recognizing and valuing another in their uniqueness. In this, I think, she attributes to Socrates the perspective of Alcibiades’ fantasy and takes as too complete a picture of philosophy that we hear of in Diotima’s conversation with Socrates. The vision of philosophical erōs that Diotima presents to Socrates promises, perhaps, a way
out of the bindings of interdependence. Only the divine is self-sufficient and lacking in
nothing, she says, and the philosopher who has ascended the “ladder of love” to
knowledge of beauty itself has perhaps become immortal himself (212a). This is what
Nussbaum takes to be the significance of the Symposium when she stresses the Socrates’
self-sufficiency, his indifference to the concerns of the body, as well as what she views as
his inability to engage in a relationship of true mutuality with Alcibiades. It is true that in
comparison to most human beings, Socrates is remarkably self-sufficient. His physical
fortitude and resistance to the compulsions of sex and alcohol suggest great independence
from the forces to which human beings are almost universally subject. This is in keeping
with what Socrates tells us in the Republic about the “decent man” who is “most of all
sufficient unto himself for living well and, in contrast to others, has least need of another”
(387d). The self-sufficiency here, however, is a matter of degree and not complete, just
as, even for Diotima, the philosopher can only become immortal “if it is possible for any
human being”. In light of Diotima’s picture of the philosopher we can also say that he is
not, as Alcibiades desires to be, self-sufficient at all, at least with regard to his ability to
see Beauty itself. His large degree of physical and emotional self-sufficiency is due to his
ability to train his erōs upon that beauty, rather than in the snares of dependency laid by
the beauties of the realm of becoming. On that vision of transcendant beauty, however, he
is dependent, and it is because such a vision is never possessed permanently that it
dictates his life of concern for knowledge, which must always be replenished (208a).

Nonetheless, there are also ways in which the philosopher, while he may not be
dependent upon specific human beings, is reliant upon the city. It should be clear from
the present exploration of eros and philia that human plurality has an inescapable
temporal dimension. To call the philosopher autarchic is to forget all of the steps that Diotima tells us he had to climb along the way. He emerges into the divine only by way of the human world and for that emergence he is in a way dependent upon that world, both for the objects of beauty he finds there and, perhaps, for the “guide” who helps him find his way. In the case of Socrates, however, this “guide” appears to be the daemon he speaks of in the Apology (31d), or, perhaps, the oracle of Apollo that sets him on his course of questioning the Athenians (21a) so that we cannot say that he himself is dependent upon others human beings for his philosophy. On the other hand, he is, himself, the guide for future philosophers.

He is dependent upon Athens and, especially, upon the kind of democratic city it is for tolerating his activities for so long. For such a slender benefit, we might say, Socrates repays the Athenians handsomely – this is, indeed, his claim in the Apology. Although done in private and with individuals, he performed “the greatest possible service (ōphelias) by trying to persuade the Athenians to care more for justice than their advantage, and for the city rather than the advantages it provides them (36c). His suggestion that the appropriate punishment would be, in fact, the city’s greatest rewards and honors (36d) is made to highlight the fact that the lack of any precise or appropriate exchange of benefits between city and citizen has not upended his sense of a citizen’s obligations towards the city. Nor, further, should it impede his desire to contribute to the city. Socrates, in fact, says he approached the city with a calculation, but not one about how he could best advantage himself through participating in its public life. Rather, his lack of such participation was based on a calculation that he was too scrupulous to survive political life Athens and so sought to render it benefits in private. He was a true
Athenian in this sense and did not live a quiet life (*bia hēsychia*) but was actively concerned with the city. Even though, then, Socrates does not enjoy all of the things ordinarily enjoyed by the Athenians, the opportunities for wealth, recognition or inclusion in conspiracies and factions (36b), he has not considered himself immune from the reciprocity he owes the city even for the small good they have done him in tolerating him so long. These private persuasions have been performed out of the philosopher’s own sense of the source of true advantage for the city, but he has not stinted in his formal obligations as a soldier, as we hear from Alcibiades (Symp. 219e-221c), or in his concern for the law, as we hear from Socrates himself in his description of his refusal to participate in the injustices of the Thirty (32a-b).

Part of the political *philia* of Socrates lies in this dual concern for the established structure of reciprocity in the city, for the obligations of citizenship, and his erotic drive to improve Athens. This is the alternative to the Thucydidean view of the importance of *erōs* for expanding and developing human orders. Socrates attempts at once to preserve the shared orienting image (or images) of justice at Athens, because, while counterfeit forms, they are nonetheless preferable to unleashing an approach to politics that is wholly calculating and atomistic. The erotic *poiēsis* of Socrates does not, in the manner of Pericles or, above all, Alcibiades, involve upending existing arrangements for the sake of asserting something radically new, of creating or becoming the new orienting image of the city, imposed on all alike. His *poiēsis* shares with those of Solon and Lykourgos the concern Diotima attributes to them of engendering virtue in the souls of the citizens. While Socrates plays the role of legislator in the *Republic*, however, his legislative *poiēsis* exists only in speech.
The importance of “images”, of incomplete representations of reality is, perhaps, here most apparent. The one-sided visions of *philia* put forward by the Corinthians and Spartans, for example, claimed to be adequate descriptions of the nature and sources of obligations and, while they were extremely exclusionary and contained great injustices, they were also consonant with some basic political goods such as stability and the suppression of pleonexia. To respond to such images simply by exposing their contradictions and self-interested visions of justice threatens all of these goods. The Coreycreans in their *stasis* exemplify the greatest danger when such critiques are made general, as I tried to suggest in my examination of the speeches of Glaucon and Adeimantus. The Socratic alternative that we see enacted in the *Republic* is the substitution of a vastly more complex and satisfying image which, importantly, he tries to persuade Glaucon to *treat* as an image rather than as a statue come to life. In suggesting to Glaucon that he found the city in his soul, he is offering an alternative, private image to the young man by which to guide his life. This is offered as a replacement for the images with which Glaucon began their conversation which seemed to play the role of very attenuated orienting image for many of the young in Athens. In Kallipolis he gives Glaucon an image of the city and the soul that is, by many degrees, more complex and compelling than that by which Glaucon had tried to describe the nature of our obligations of justice. By replacing, rather than destroying, the representation of justice available to Glaucon, Socrates expresses *philia* towards both Glaucon and the city and, in this way, reconciles erotic *poēsis* with that *philia*.

To the claim that Socrates is incapable of really responding to the uniqueness of others we must suggest the contrast between his treatment of Glaucon and of Alcibiades.
In offering Kallipolis to Glaucon Socrates has, as he refuses to do with Alcibiades, exchanged gold for bronze, because he has exchanged Glaucon’s poor representation of justice for a more complex and beautiful one. With Glaucon he does not insist upon a strict version of reciprocal exchange as he does with Alcibiades. This strictness with Alcibiades, however, is precisely a responsiveness to his unique character, just as Kallipolis is a response to the unique character of Glaucon. In this the *philia* of Socrates, for all that it may have political aspects, is also a deeply personal one.

This insistence on strict exchange with Alcibiades has to do with the image that has captured Alcibiades’ *erōs* – the image of the soul of Socrates. In his love of this image and his desire to escape dependence on everything human, Alcibiades is perilously close to falling in love with philosophy just as he is so distant from it. The tragedy, for both Alcibiades and Athens, is that Diotima’s account of the path philosophy may be correct: we may need to actually experience the failure of the beloved thing to satisfy *erōs* in order to transform it. It is in this difficult transformation that we find the hardest task of philosophic *philia*. 
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Translations
I have relied on the following translations in quotations, although I have altered them where it seemed appropriate.


