POLUPRAGMOSUNE AND "MINDING ONE'S OWN BUSINESS": A STUDY IN GREEK SOCIAL AND POLITICAL VALUES

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ALMOST thirty years ago Victor Ehrenberg published an admirable major article[1] on the subject of *polupragmosune.*[2] The purpose of the present article is not to query Ehrenberg's findings, but to add comments on the subject of *ta hautou prattein* and *polupragmosune* from a somewhat different point of view: I wish to discuss *polupragmosune* at home rather than abroad, though I shall consider the question of Athens' foreign policy; and I wish to consider the socio-political overtones of these words.

Ehrenberg says of *polupragmosune* (p. 46), "There is no 'idea,' there are only psychological facts, in 'busybodiness.' " He adds that "the 'busybody' is indeed a type which, though little loved, is deeply rooted in the English mind, and this is undoubtedly the legitimate translation of *polupragmon.*" This is qualified: "Though this translation may be adequate in some passages of Greek literature, it is only too apt to conceal the full implications of the word"—implications which in the remainder of his article he proceeds to draw out. However, for the most part Ehrenberg confines himself, as "psychological facts" would suggest, to the idea of "being a busybody." My primary concern in this article is to discuss the reasons for *being said to be* a busybody; and these are likely to reside as much in the attitudes of the user of the word as in the "psychological facts" or behavior of the person said to be a busybody. I shall, however, also consider the motives which might lead different types of person to pursue courses of action which others might characterize as *polupragmosune,* and the motives which might lead others to *apragmosune,* to *ta hautou prattein,* to "minding one's own business."[3] Having examined these reasons and motives in the context of the later fifth and earlier fourth centuries, I shall then consider the extent to which the idea of *polupragmosune* serves as the same kind of constraint on certain members of Athenian society as had earlier been supplied by other words with religious connotations and overtones; and I shall inquire what changes in practice result from the apparent democratization and secularization of Athens in the later years of the fifth century.

I shall begin by discussing *ta hautou prattein* and *polla prattein*[4] in Plato.

1. "Polypragmosune: A Study in Greek Politics," *JHS* 67 (1947): 46 ff. Hereafter referred to as Ehrenberg.

2. I have throughout the article transliterated important, untranslatable Greek words and phrases, as an alternative to printing them in Greek. I am aware that some scholars find transliterated Greek distasteful; but I think it worthwhile to attempt to render such discussions as this as accessible as possible to the Greekless student of ancient history and philosophy.

3. Literally, "doing one's own things."

4. *Polla prattein, polupragmonein,* and *polupragmosune* seem to have precisely the same range and "flavor": any of them may be opposed to *apragmosune* and *ta hautou prattein.*

Plato, as I shall try to show at the end of this article, is endeavoring to draw upon certain deep-seated attitudes and prejudices in society in the interests of his own political proposals; so that to begin here will serve to bind the discussion together.

Plato, in the *Republic* (433A–B), puts the following words in the mouth of Socrates:

> Καὶ μὴν ὅτι γε τὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν καὶ μὴ πολυπραγμονεῖν δικαιοσύνη ἐστί, καὶ τοῦτο ἄλλων τε πολλῶν ἀκηκόαμεν καὶ αὐτοὶ πολλάκις εἰρήκαμεν. . . . Τοῦτο τοίνυν, . . . ὦ φίλε, κινδυνεύει τρόπον τινὰ γιγνόμενον ἡ δικαιοσύνη εἶναι, τὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν.

Justice is said to consist in *ta hautou prattein* and avoiding *polupragmonein.* Two conclusions may reasonably be drawn: first, that the phrase *ta hautou prattein* is in common use as a commendation ("we have heard this from many other people"); and second, that the phrase is being used in a somewhat unusual manner (*τρόπον τινὰ γιγνόμενον*), which is likely, since the usage is closely linked with the structure of Plato's *Republic* state, and later (443D) with the tripartite "soul." But how unusual is the political usage here, and what was usually commended thereby? In the *Charmides* (161B5–6) Charmides, under pressure from Socrates, says *ἄρτι γὰρ ἀνεμνήσθην—ὃ ἤδη του ἤκουσα λέγοντος—ὅτι σωφροσύνη ἂν εἴη τὸ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν.* That *ta hautou prattein* is in the *Republic* a definition or account of justice, in the *Charmides* of *sophrosune,*[5] is a discrepancy, but a discrepancy unimportant for my present purpose: it suffices that quiet, "cooperative" behavior is being thus characterized. (It may be significant, as will appear, that Socrates immediately assumes that Charmides must have acquired the definition from some wise or clever man, possibly Critias.) The Socrates of the *Charmides* treats the definition simply as material for the elenchus; it has no positive role to play in the philosophy. Similarly, in *Alcibiades I* (which, though almost certainly not by Plato, is fourth-century work and reflects Platonic usage and thought), *ta hautou prattein* (127B5–6) is attacked by Socrates as not capable of producing a condition in which cities are well administered, since *philia* (cooperative activity, "friendship") will not be possible under such circumstances; and it is defended by Alcibiades. The exact use made of the phrase in the argument of *Charmides* and *Alcibiades I* is not important here: it is evident from the context in each case that the phrase is used to commend a state of affairs in society; a reasonable inference that Critias, Charmides, and Alcibiades represent the kind of persons who use such a mode of commendation; and evident that, for whatever reason, Plato wishes to portray Socrates in these early dialogues as taking the opposing view.

There are illuminating usages elsewhere in Plato. In the *Timaeus* (72A) it is said that those who are in a state of mantic possession are, while in that state, in no condition to evaluate their own utterances: "people have long done well to take the view that *ta hautou prattein* and 'knowing oneself' are

5. *Sophrosune* spans "moderation," "self-control," and "prudence." No English word adequately renders it.

the mark of the *sophron* alone." Here once again we have *ta hautou prattein* linked with *sophrosune* and with "knowing oneself" (*sauton gnōnai*), as an old and well-known view. The reference is clearly to the famous Delphic maxim, and hence to the traditional pattern of early Greek values. I shall discuss the relevance of this at the end of the paper.

On one occasion in Plato, *ta hautou prattein* is reprehended. In the *Politicus* (307E) the Stranger refers to those who are excessively *kosmioi*, "orderly," and fond of a quiet life, qualifying them as "keeping themselves to themselves" and indulging in *ta hautou prattein* in relationships both within the city and with other cities. As a result of this they become unwarlike and pass from being free to being slaves. The Stranger contrasts the condition of excessive *kosmiotes* with excessive *andreia*, manliness, a quality which was traditionally the work of the *agathos*, the most admired type of man,[6] and of *arete;* whereas *sophrosune* was not traditionally an *arete* at all, and so not one of the most highly admired characteristics.

In *Laches* 179C Lysimachus complains that his (and Melesias') parents performed many "fine" (*kala*) deeds both in war and peace, "managing the affairs of the allies and of this city" (*διοικοῦντες τά τε τῶν συμμάχων καὶ τὰ τῆσδε τῆς πόλεως*).They themselves, however, have achieved nothing similar, and find fault with their parents because they did not supervise them properly as children, but "managed the affairs (or transacted the business) of the rest": *τὰ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων πράγματα ἔπραττον* (179D) is a phrase evidently directly opposed to *ta hautou prattein.* Thus is reprehended a life of active politics in the service of the Athenian Empire, the life for which Protagoras, as portrayed by Plato (*Protagoras* 319A), promised to equip his pupils: he fitted them to manage the affairs of their own households and also saw to it that they should be most capable of transacting the business of the city both by action and speech (*ὅπως τὰ τῆς πόλεως δυνατώτατος ἂν εἴη καὶ πράττειν καὶ λέγειν*). There is in the *Laches* a contrast between quietly educating one's children and taking an active part in politics, presented as being mutually exclusive ways of life; and Alcibiades in the *Symposium* (216A) makes a not dissimilar point, saying that Socrates compels him to admit that though he is himself deficient in many ways he neglects himself and transacts the business of the Athenians: *ἐμαυτοῦ μὲν ἀμελῶ, τὰ δ' Ἀθηναίων πράττω.*

It seems clear from these passages of Plato that *ta hautou prattein* commends—or on one occasion decries—quietly busying oneself with the affairs of one's *oikos*, household; while the *Politicus* passage indicates that the idea is opposed to traditional *arete*, which is manifested in action in the warlike defense of one's city. *Polupragmonein*, however, is not generally admired in the writers of the period; yet it too is opposed to *ta hautou prattein*, and might be expected to bear some resemblance to the admired

6. For discussions of *agathos*, *arete*, *kakos*, *kakia*, and other terms used rather than discussed in the article, see my *Merit and Responsibility* (Oxford, 1960) and *Moral Values and Political Behaviour in Ancient Greece* (London, 1972), passim. (These works are accessible to the Greekless; hereafter, they are abbreviated *MR* and *MV*.)

arete. The rest of this paper will be devoted to examining the reasons for this apparent anomaly.

Inactivity is a fairly simple idea; but "busybodiness" can be exercised in a variety of fields. I propose to divide my material by discussing (1) *polupragmosune* between equals (or in circumstances in which the question of status does not arise) in a *polis;* (2) *polupragmosune* in circumstances where there is a difference in status; (3) *polupragmosune* as manifested by politicians and others in the public eye; and (4) *polupragmosune* as manifested by the *polis* itself. All these aspects of *polupragmosune* will be set against the ideal of *apragmosune*.

1. "POLUPRAGMOSUNE" BETWEEN EQUALS IN A "POLIS"

Reluctance to interfere, lest one may be thought to *polupragmonein*, was a motive in Athenian social life even when the action might have been regarded as helpful, as may be seen in the orators. In Lysias' first speech another woman, jealous because she has lost her lover to Euphiletus' wife, comes to tell Euphiletus of his wife's adultery, saying (16), "Do not suppose I have come to you out of any *polupragmosune;* for the man who is committing outrages (*hubrizōn*) against your wife and yourself is a personal enemy (*echthros*) of mine." Were the other man not a personal enemy, to go beyond the bounds of one's *oikos* and interfere in the affairs of one, or two, other *oikoi* might be interpreted as *polupragmosune*. To harm one's enemies, however, was an admired pursuit, and a requirement of *arete;* so that here *motive* seems to determine whether an action is a manifestation of *polupragmosune* or of *arete*. Here, of course, the speaker is assigning her own motives; in other cases not the agent but the observer will decide whether or no the agent *polla prattei*. I shall discuss in the remainder of this paper the observer's likely reasons for judging an action to be a manifestation of *polupragmosune*.

"Butting in" where one is not wanted is *polla prattein:* when Trygaeus says (*Peace* 1058), "You *polla pratteis*, whoever you are," he merely means, "Stop meddling with my private affairs." And when Dicaeopolis utters the much-discussed "May *polupragmosune* return upon my own head" (*Ach.* 833), it seems likely that he is stigmatizing his accidental use of language distressing to the Megarian as *polupragmosune*, and wishing that the distress may return upon his own head—a type of imprecation no doubt common in a society in which such offense was apparently so readily given and taken. Much in late fifth-century Athenian life gives the impression that the city was still to a surprising extent in sentiment and values a collection of virtually autonomous households; and this aspect of the concept of *polupragmosune* reflects that situation. It was of course the general pre-existing dislike of "meddling" that rendered *polupragmosune* so useful a word of abuse in Athenian politics. What constituted "meddling" was, as we shall see, largely determined by the general values of Athens at the time.

2. "POLUPRAGMOSUNE" OF SOCIAL OR POLITICAL INFERIORS

In other passages, the deference expected by superiors from inferiors plays a part. In Sophocles' *Antigone*, Ismene decries *peritta prattein:*[7] τοῖς ἐν τέλει βεβῶσι πείσομαι. τὸ γὰρ / περισσὰ πράσσειν οὐκ ἔχει νοῦν οὐδένα (67–68). The values of Greek tragedy are the values of contemporary Athens: the poets had neither the desire nor the ability to portray the values of the monarchical period of Greece (which might in any case, democracy or no, have had surprising resemblances to the values of later fifth-century Athens). Accordingly, when Ismene says that she will obey "those in authority," and opposes such activity (or inactivity) to *peritta prattein*, we may infer that, in contemporary Athens, one might *peritta prattein* precisely by not obeying the authorities. It is not immediately clear how the situation should be evaluated: Ismene is faced with a tyrant, and she is a woman—and a very docile one. In this situation, to resist the tyrant, even in the interests of a moral or religious claim—the circumstances in which Ismene finds herself—is evidently likely to be regarded by the tyrant as *peritta prattein* or *polla prattein;* and a quietist like Ismene accepts his evaluation and thinks of resistance as mere folly. Now if the analogous situation in democratic Athens is resistance to the democratically passed laws, and we treat the moral and religious claim as something peculiar to the situation of the *Antigone*, then doubtless *peritta prattein* is to be deprecated; but I shall argue that this is not the case.

Further evidence is supplied by a passage in Euripides' *Heracles*. The Chorus says, κἄπειτα πράσσω πόλλ' ἐγώ, φίλους ἐμοὺς / θανόντας εὖ δρῶν, οὓ φίλων μάλιστα δεῖ; (266–67). They are attempting to defend the children of Heracles against Lycus, who has threatened their life; and they suppose that their action will be, or has been, interpreted, at least by Lycus, as *polla prattein*. Once again we have the anomaly that a requirement of *arete*, helping one's friends, seems in this case to constitute *polla prattein*. Lycus' words (248 ff.) make the position clearer:

> οὐ μόνον στενάξετε
> τοὺς Ἡρακλείους παῖδας, ἀλλὰ καὶ δόμου
> τύχας, ὅταν πάσχῃ τι, μεμνήσεσθε δὲ
> δοῦλοι γεγῶτες τῆς ἐμῆς τυραννίδος.

The Chorus realizes that Lycus in using these words has accused them of *polla prattein;* and they know that it may appear to be *polla prattein*, because he has more status and power than they, since they are elderly citizens of Thebes, mere slaves in his eyes. True, Lycus is a tyrant and there are no tyrants in Athens; and Euripides evidently does not accept that helping one's friends against powerful members of society is *polla prattein*. But it seems ever more likely that action which discommodes one's social superiors is characterized by those superiors in this manner.

7. *Peritta prattein*, "to do too many, more than sufficient, things."

Other passages of Greek tragedy make it clear that for a social inferior to contend against a social superior in defense of his own, or a friend's, rights was difficult in Athens even in the second half of the fifth century. A striking passage occurs in Sophocles' *Ajax* (1120 ff.):

ΜΕ. ὁ τοξότης ἔοικεν οὐ σμικρὸν φρονεῖν.
ΤΕ. οὐ γὰρ βάναυσον τὴν τέχνην ἐκτησάμην.
ΜΕ. μέγ' ἄν τι κομπάσειας, ἀσπίδ' εἰ λάβοις.
ΤΕ. κἂν ψιλὸς ἀρκέσαιμι σοί γ' ὡπλισμένῳ.
ΜΕ. ἡ γλῶσσά σου τὸν θυμὸν ὡς δεινὸν τρέφει.
ΤΕ. ξὺν τῷ δικαίῳ γὰρ μέγ' ἔξεστιν φρονεῖν.

Teucer is socially at a disadvantage: Menelaus is a king, while Teucer is the son of Telamon, a Greek *agathos*, and a foreign queen given to Telamon as war booty; he is not, as Ajax was, a legitimate son of Telamon, and he is armed with a bow, a (socially) inferior weapon. The last line taken in isolation might suggest that to have justice on one's side gives one a claim that the *arete* of the *agathos* cannot override; but Teucer has already argued that his *techne* is not banausic—as are the crafts of artisans—and that Menelaus is such a poor fighter that he could defeat him even though he is himself not armed as a hoplite. Furthermore, Teucer emphasizes elsewhere (1299 ff.) not only that his father was an outstanding warrior, but that his mother was a queen in her own land. If a man is a good and brave fighter, not engaged in banausic craft, then, even if he is not a hoplite, the sense of the justice of his cause may give him confidence even to answer back to an *agathos*. Were he engaged in banausic craft, or an ineffective warrior, he might well have difficulty in obtaining justice; and even Teucer regards his behavior as *mega phronein* (a phrase which we should sometimes render "being haughty"), not as a mere expression of undoubted rights. Now Sophocles is not on Menelaus' or Creon's side, nor is Euripides on Lycus'; but these passages taken together suggest that action which inconveniences a social superior is likely to be regarded by him as *polla prattein*.

Certain passages of Xenophon are illuminating. Ehrenberg[8] finds no interest in Xenophon's usage, and the passages certainly throw no light on *polupragmosune* in foreign policy; but they furnish evidence for the aspect of *polupragmosune* under discussion here.

In *Hellenica* 1. 6. 3 the Spartan admiral Lysander claims, on handing over to his successor Callicratidas, that he has superiority over the Athenians at sea and has won a naval victory. Callicratidas tells him to sail from Ephesus past the Athenian fleet at Samos and hand over his command there; *then* he will admit that Lysander has superiority at sea. Lysander refuses to *polupragmonein* now that Callicratidas is in command. Again, in the *Polity of the Lacedaemonians* (13. 5), we are told that two of the ephors accompany the Spartan king to war, but do not *polupragmonein* at all unless the king asks them to do so. In *Cyropaedia* 8. 6. 3, we find the following put into the mouth of Cyrus: "Friends, we have garrisons and their commanders in the

8. Pp. 56 ff.

captured cities. . . . On my departure I bade them '*polupragmonein* nothing else' (ἄλλο μὲν μηδὲν πολυπραγμονεῖν) but to protect the walls. I shall not deprive these men of their commands, since they have honorably (*kalōs*) carried out orders." The setting is Persian, but the values and aspirations are of course Greek: the portrait of Cyrus represents Xenophon's ideal ruler. (We may remember in passing that both Xenophon and Plato, like others of their class, admired Sparta, and recall the passages from Plato discussed at the beginning of the article.)

From these passages of Xenophon it is clear that one might *polupragmonein* by disobeying the orders or usurping the functions of a superior. The examples I have quoted from tragedy suggest that any aspiration by an inferior to "get above himself," or above what the superior regards as the inferior's appropriate position, may be regarded as *polupragmosune*, as failing to *ta hautou prattein*. A general dislike of "meddling" experienced by all members of society may be used by social and political superiors in an endeavor to prevent their inferiors from performing actions which would be inconvenient for the superiors, even when (as in *Heracles* 266 ff.) the inferiors' action is one commended by the values of the society; and fear of "meddling" may in fact sometimes deter them.

3. "POLUPRAGMOSUNE" IN DOMESTIC POLITICS AND IN THE LAW COURTS

We may now turn to domestic politics and activity in the courts in Athens. *Polupragmosune* can undoubtedly be displayed in these fields. A passage of the "Old Oligarch" (ps.-Xen. *AthPol.* 2. 18) is illuminating. The writer claims that the Athenian common people do not allow anyone to "comedize" the whole *demos:*[9]

> They bid the poets to "comedize" individuals . . . knowing well that for the most part the person "comedized" is not one of the *demos* or of the masses but a man of wealth, birth, or influence (πλούσιος ἢ γενναῖος ἢ δυνάμενος). Only a few of the poor and *demotikoi* are "comedized," and those only for *polupragmosune* and "seeking to have more than the *demos*." As a result, the common people do not take it amiss when such people are "comedized."

The Old Oligarch is marked by spleen and shrewd observation: he is an intelligent *agathos*, whose attitudes are characteristic; and he judges that it is for *polupragmosune* and for "seeking to have more than the *demos*" that the poor and "demotic"—evidently not wealthy, of good birth, or influential as the Old Oligarch interprets these matters—are "comedized." (I shall discuss later what is meant by "not wealthy, of good birth, or influential.") Such *polupragmosune* which sets one above the general run of the *demos* must surely consist in taking a prominent part in the public life of the city, possibly as a politician, possibly as a prosecutor in the courts, a "sycophant." The last word leaves an evil taste in the mouth; and certainly such people

9. I translate κωμῳδεῖν by "comedize" rather than "attack in a comedy," lest the rendering appear tendentious; but it would be difficult to maintain that "attack" is not the appropriate characterization of Aristophanes' portrait of a Cleon.

are frequently attacked in comedy. However, all the literature of the period was written by *agathoi*, and therefore all the complaints about "sycophants" were written by *agathoi*. Xenophon (*Hell.* 2. 3. 12) says that the Thirty Tyrants began by killing[10] those who "lived by being sycophants and were a nuisance (*βαρεῖς*) to the *kaloi kagathoi*." Being a nuisance to the *kaloi kagathoi*, the "gentlemen" of Athens, might well be a sufficient condition of being held by them to be a "sycophant," a term which defies exact definition:[11] its emotive charge is powerful, its descriptive meaning vague. It gives a general impression of decrying accusers for making false accusations (I shall discuss this in a moment), but seems also to be available to decry any behavior which the writer regards as scoundrelly in a legal context. Now since the days of Solon[12] any citizen who wished ("the *boulomenos*") had had the right to prosecute any wrongdoer, and in certain types of case the reward offered to the successful prosecutor was high, certainly high enough to attract anyone who was both poor and unscrupulous to attempt false accusation.[13] On the other hand, a prosecutor who failed to win one-fifth of the votes was fined a thousand drachmas and debarred from bringing a similar type of case again; and this provision must have acted as a deterrent. Doubtless false accusers existed, and we may be inclined to suppose that these, and these alone, were "sycophants"; but the question requires further examination.

I have just observed that Greek literature was written by *agathoi*, and this is certainly no less true of Old Comedy than of other works which have come down to us. Nevertheless, a certain kind of comic attack incidentally records the values and point of view of the attacked; and such an attack occurs in Aristophanes' *Plutus*. The Sycophant is complaining of his treatment, and says (899 f.), *οἴμ' ὡς ἄχθομαι / ὅτι χρηστὸς ὢν καὶ φιλόπολις πάσχω κακῶς*. Dicaeus treats his claim to be a "good" and patriotic citizen with incredulity; he establishes by questioning that the Sycophant is not a farmer (the Sycophant expresses revulsion from the very idea), nor yet a merchant (though he pretends to be, when it suits him), nor yet a craftsman; and when Dicaeus asks him how he makes a living if he does nothing, the

10. The *boule* condemned these sycophants, but it was a *boule* selected by the Thirty themselves (Xen. *Hell.* 2. 3. 11).

11. See R. J. Bonner and G. Smith, *The Administration of Justice from Homer to Aristotle*, vol. 2 (Chicago, 1938), p. 42.

12. *Administration of Justice*, 2:39 ff.

13. The types of prosecution were notably *phasis* and *apographe*. *Phasis* was the term applied to cases such as breaking regulations related to trading and mines, and mismanagement of wards' property by guardians. A successful prosecutor was rewarded with half the fine exacted or property confiscated. In *apographe*, the prosecutor listed property allegedly due to the *polis* which had been improperly retained by the accused. In such cases the prosecutor, if successful, received three-quarters of the property thereby recovered. Evidently the prosperous were more likely to be in a position to commit such offenses, and certainly offered "the *boulomenos*" more inducement to prosecute them. (The *euthuna* gave "the *boulomenos*" an opportunity to prosecute *any* democratic politician at the end of his period of office; but whether an *agathos* would have regarded prosecution of a politician of whom he disapproved as "sycophancy" is perhaps open to question.) The scale of rewards clearly indicates that the intention was to deter others from committing crimes prosecutable under *apographe* rather than to recover the property for the *polis* on this occasion. See *Administration of Justice*, 2:50.

Sycophant's reply leads to an exchange which is worth quoting at length (907 ff.):

ΣΥ. τῶν τῆς πόλεώς εἰμ' ἐπιμελητὴς πραγμάτων
καὶ τῶν ἰδίων πάντων. ΔΙ. σύ τί μαθών; ΣΥ. βούλομαι.
ΔΙ. πῶς οὖν ἂν εἴης χρηστός, ὦ τοιχωρύχε,
εἴ σοι προσῆκον μηδὲν εἶτ' ἀπεχθάνει; 910
ΣΥ. οὐ γὰρ προσήκει τὴν ἐμαυτοῦ μοι πόλιν
εὐεργετεῖν ὦ κέπφε καθ' ὅσον ἂν σθένω;
ΔΙ. εὐεργετεῖν οὖν ἐστι τὸ πολυπραγμονεῖν;
ΣΥ. τὸ μὲν οὖν βοηθεῖν τοῖς νόμοις τοῖς κειμένοις
καὶ μὴ 'πιτρέπειν ἐάν τις ἐξαμαρτάνῃ. 915
ΔΙ. οὔκουν δικαστὰς ἐξεπίτηδες ἡ πόλις
ἄρχειν καθίστησιν; ΣΥ. κατηγορεῖ δὲ τίς;
ΔΙ. ὁ βουλόμενος. ΣΥ. οὐκοῦν ἐκεῖνος εἰμ' ἐγώ,
ὥστ' εἰς ἐμ' ἥκει τῆς πόλεως τὰ πράγματα.
ΔΙ. νὴ Δία πονηρόν γ' ἄρα προστάτην ἔχει. 920
ἐκεῖνο δ' οὐ βούλοι' ἄν, ἡσυχίαν ἔχων
ζῆν ἀργός; ΣΥ. ἀλλὰ προβατίου βίον λέγεις,
εἰ μὴ φανεῖται διατριβή τις τῷ βίῳ.

This is, of course, character assassination rather than portrayal, as befits a comedy. To introduce anyone as a "sycophant" already prejudges the question of the respectability of his activities, but it is interesting to note what points are made by the Sycophant and by Dicaeus. The Sycophant says that he takes care of the affairs of the city and all private affairs, too; that he benefits the city to the utmost of his strength; and that he helps the established laws and does not allow anyone to break them. Thus far we may reasonably believe that Aristophanes has put into the mouth of the Sycophant the kind of justification that a real-life prosecutor, taking advantage of Solon's permission to "the *boulomenos*" to prosecute, might have given. Aristophanes, who has established him as a "sycophant" (879), does not expect us to accept the prosecutor's evaluation of his own behavior; but unless one takes the extreme view that all political or public activity is actuated by the basest of motives, there seems no reason to doubt that *some* such prosecutors prosecuted those whom they believed to be guilty, and for public-spirited motives. (Aristophanes' final ascription of motive, "It would be a sheep's life if I don't have any amusement," is, of course, character assassination again.) But to what extent are Dicaeus' complaints directed against scoundrelly false accusers in particular? He says in effect (909), "How can you be *chrestos*[14] if you do what 'is none of your concern,' 'does not befit you,' *σοι προσῆκον μηδέν*? ('Απεχθάνει, "you bring hatred upon yourself," may be a mild *para prosdokian* for "you act in this manner.") Now the fact that it "is none of his concern," "does not befit him," does not mean that the Sycophant is acting in an unjust manner, merely in a manner which Dicaeus and those for whom he speaks find *inappropriate*. The Sycophant reasonably asks whether it is "inappropriate" to benefit one's

14. "Good," virtually a synonym for *agathos*. By being a "sycophant," one would fall far short of the behavior desiderated by and from *agathoi;* and, of course, "sycophants" were not of the necessary social class, either.

city; and Dicaeus replies, not "You are making false accusations from base motives," but "Is *polupragmonein* benefiting?" Once again the implication is simply that the Sycophant is meddling in matters which do not concern him; and Dicaeus' reply to his claim that he is helping the laws is similar: are there no dicasts to do that? But dicasts are not prosecutors: "the *boulomenos*" prosecutes, as the Sycophant naturally points out; and all that Dicaeus can say is that the Sycophant is a "bad" (*poneros*) champion of the city. He does not say or imply that the Sycophant is making false accusations for base motives here either, since *poneros* has strong social overtones and also implications of "miserable specimen": the Sycophant is simply a wretched champion.

All of Dicaeus' complaints are equally relevant to the situation of a prosecutor actuated by the highest motives, provided that one believes that "the *boulomenos*" should not meddle with accusations at all, since it does not befit him, since the matter does not concern him. (As we shall see, it is difficult to determine whether the complaint is against "the *boulomenos*" in general or "the *boulomenos*" of a certain social status and certain political sympathies: it is evident that those attacked by Aristophanes have that status and those sympathies, however, and it is possible, for reasons discussed below, that an *agathos* would in general shun the role of "the *boulomenos*" accuser.) Indeed, not only prosecutions may be in question: the first two lines quoted (907 f.), which depict the Sycophant as taking care of the city's business, may allude to a type of person who made a living—or is alleged by Aristophanes to have made his living—by public service and political activity in a wider sense.

But who is being attacked? Dicaeus and Aristophanes, and the Old Oligarch, contrive to give the impression that such *polupragmones* and "sycophants" were drawn exclusively from the poorer citizens of Athens, and that the other members of the *demos* disapproved so much of their activities that they would have tolerated their being "comedized" by the comic poets. However, Cleon, for example, undoubtedly falls into this category (and the portrait of the Sycophant in the *Plutus* suggests that a merchant might be a "sycophant"); and Cleon seems to have been no journeyman tanner, but the prosperous owner of a tannery. When such figures as these are regarded as "jumped-up members of the *demos*," the prejudices of our sources become clearer; and it also becomes less likely that the *demos* as a whole disapproved of the activities of men whom they presumably regarded as their champions against injustice. When Aristophanes portrayed the Landlady in the *Frogs* shouting (569), "Go and fetch me Cleon the *prostates* (champion, protector)," he could doubtless rely on an unfriendly laugh from some of the audience; but he incidentally testifies to the fact that appeal could be made to a Cleon or a Hyperbolus to right injustices on behalf of those less able to defend themselves. Such men must have been prominent citizens and by no means poor—indeed, a Cleon is likely to have been more prosperous than some *agathoi*[15]—but

15. For a similar situation in a different city at a different time, cf. Theognis, e.g., 57 ff., 183 ff., 315 ff., 865 ff. See also *MR* and *MV*, indexes s.vv. "Theognis" and "Cleon."

they were not *agathoi* in the eyes of the traditional *agathoi*, particularly in the context of active politics and public life. Accordingly, though some "sycophants" and *polupragmones* may have been poor, and some may have been dishonest, we need not allow our *agathoi* sources to persuade us that all were, since anyone who, while not an *agathos*, presumed to take part in public life or make accusations as "the *boulomenos*" in the courts would have been stigmatized as "sycophant" and *polupragmon*, whether or no he in fact relied on such activities for his livelihood. I shall return to this point in section 5.

4. "POLUPRAGMOSUNE" IN FOREIGN POLICY

At this point we may turn to Athens' foreign policy. Ehrenberg shows definitively[16] that *polupragmosune* was used of the democratic, active foreign policy pursued by Pericles and his successors; and, since it is a pejorative term, it was evidently used by the opponents of that policy, at home and abroad. Here, too, I wish to inquire into the implications of using this particular term to decry it.

Two well-known passages are evidently relevant. In Euripides' *Supplices*, Theseus, king of Athens, is proposing to enter Theban territory in order to assist the Argives to recover their dead, killed in battle by the Thebans, although the Thebans are unwilling to give up the bodies. The Theban herald asks Theseus (574), *ἦ πᾶσιν οὖν σ' ἔφυσεν ἐξαρκεῖν πατήρ;* and the following dialogue ensues (575–77):

> ΘΗ. *ὅσοι γ' ὑβρισταί· χρηστὰ δ' οὐ κολάζομεν.*
> ΚΗ. *πράσσειν σὺ πόλλ' εἴωθας ἥ τε σὴ πόλις.*
> ΘΗ. *τοίγαρ πονοῦσα πολλὰ πόλλ' εὐδαιμονεῖ.*

Theseus proclaims that he and the Athenians are ready for conflict with all who show *hubris*. The herald terms such behavior *polla prattein*, a pejorative term, which Theseus pointedly replaces with *polla ponein*, "to undergo much toil" (on behalf of others, in the context), and maintains that Athens has gained her great *eudaimonia*, prosperity and well-being, by so doing. He evidently regards the behavior as admirable, even if he rejects the characterizing phrases; and, as is well known, the Athenian ambassador at Camarina is portrayed as making a very similar speech. Prima facie, it is true, he uses language differently, since he is willing to term Athens' foreign policy *polupragmosune;* but he seems to be ironically adopting the expected language of his opponents.[17] Having used *polupragmosune* of Athenian behavior, the ambassador bids the Camarinans to take advantage of it, so far as it benefits them to do so, and claims that the majority of Greeks, far from being harmed by Athenian *polupragmosune*, are actually helped by it (Thuc. 6. 87. 4):

> *ἐν παντὶ γὰρ πᾶς χωρίῳ, καὶ ᾧ μὴ ὑπάρχομεν, ὅ τε οἰόμενος ἀδικήσεσθαι καὶ ὁ ἐπιβουλεύων διὰ τὸ ἑτοίμην ὑπεῖναι ἐλπίδα τῷ μὲν ἀντιτυχεῖν ἐπικουρίας ἀφ' ἡμῶν, τῷ δὲ εἰ ἥξομεν, μὴ ἀδεεῖ εἶναι κινδυνεύειν, ἀμφότεροι ἀναγκάζονται ὁ μὲν ἄκων σωφρονεῖν, ὁ δ' ἀπραγμόνως σῴζεσθαι.*

16. Passim.

17. But see p. 314.

Let smaller cities lead a life of *apragmosune* in safety and rely on the *polupragmosune* of the Athenians to defend them against would-be aggressors, who will be compelled to *sophronein* against their will (see § 7).

Two questions suggest themselves: who is likely to decry such behavior as *polupragmosune*, and who is likely to accept such an offer of protection? One point should be noted: the situations of the Argive suppliants and of the citizens of Camarina are not strictly comparable. The Argives are in distress and, in the posture of suppliants, beseech the help of Theseus and the Athenians; the Camarinans—even though they are not on good terms with the Syracusans either—and the Sicilians in general suspect that Athens is bent on conquering them and incorporating them into her empire. It is the Theban herald who holds that Theseus' action is *polla prattein;* in the eyes of the Argives it is undoubtedly *polla ponein*, and a manifestation of that *arete* for which heroes such as Heracles and Theseus were renowned. On the other hand, all the Sicilians seem to regard Athens' action as *polupragmosune*—a situation possibly acknowledged by the Athenian ambassador's use of the word himself (but see p. 314).

To understand these evaluations better, we must set them in a wider context. Hermocrates, endeavoring to turn the Camarinans against the Athenians, says (Thuc. 6. 80. 5): "Consider then and choose now either immediate slavery without hazard or, having won a victory in company with us, choose not to accept masters in a manner which is *aischron*, shameful. . . ." The choice is between immediate slavery without hazard or the chance of a victory through which the Camarinans would avoid having the Athenians as *despotai*, masters in the sense in which slaves have masters—a situation which would, of course, be *aischron*, since it is *aischron* to be a slave and have a master. We may recall Plato's words in *Politicus* 307E: those who "keep themselves to themselves and indulge in *ta hautou prattein*" become unwarlike and pass from freedom to slavery. Hermocrates threatens the Camarinans with just such a fate if they accept the Athenians' invitation to a life of *apragmosune.*

Athens' intentions are less veiled in the Melian Dialogue. The Athenians, to induce the Melians to surrender without a fight, say (Thuc. 5. 91. 2): "We shall demonstrate that this speech of ours will be made with a view to benefiting our own empire and to ensuring the safety of your *polis*. We wish to rule over you without effort, and we wish you to be saved, which will be useful to both of us." Now it is true that the Melians had no chance of defeating the might of Athens: in a hard world, capitulation offered them the only chance of continuing to exist. Yet they are not convinced; and a later exchange between themselves and the Athenians reveals the context of values which renders it impossible for them to be convinced. The Melians (5. 100) say that if the Athenians are prepared to risk so much in order to avoid losing their empire, and if their subjects—those who are already "slaves," *douleuontes*—are prepared to run great risks in order to be free, "then it would be a sign of great *kakotes* and cowardice on the part of us who are still free, *eleutheroi*, not to make every effort to avoid enslavement." The Athenians reply that the Melians will not act thus if they take a prudent

view of the situation (*sophronōs*): "For the contest is not on equal terms, concerned with *andragathia* and the avoidance of *aischune;* you should take counsel rather for your safety, and avoid conflict with those who are much stronger, more *agathoi*, than you are."

The Melians are evaluating their actions in terms of the traditional standard of *arete*, whereby death was preferable to defeat and living *aischrōs*. The Athenians argue that such values are for those who are contending on equal terms. Those who are not should bethink themselves, not of *andragathia*, the quality of *agathoi andres*, who find it *aischron* to be defeated, but rather of safety, and avoid contending with those who are much stronger than themselves. Now these are values in terms of which a *kakos* member of a city may well have conducted his life, avoiding conflict with *agathoi* citizens: after all, he had no *arete* and they had, he was an inferior specimen while they were superior specimens. But when a *polis* such as Melos was asked to evaluate its relationships with other *poleis* in this manner, the situation was far more difficult: could the inhabitants of any *polis* admit that their *polis* was *kake*? If this was unthinkable—and certainly the Melians found it so—then its *arete* must be manifested by its being free and subject to the domination of no other *polis*, and the citizens must be prepared to die in this cause. Furthermore, any degree of control—even what others at other times and in other places might have regarded merely as the cooperation of a weaker partner with a stronger—might be represented as *douleia:* those Melians who survived were enslaved in the literal sense, but Athens' subjects were far from being slaves, though their liberties were restricted in a number of ways which irked them.

It is not my purpose to discuss the rights and wrongs of the Athenian Empire, merely the manner in which it was regarded at the time and the role played in its evaluation by the idea of *polupragmosune*. We have seen that the Camarinans are suspicious of the "safety with *apragmosune*" offered to them by the Athenians, a course of action differently evaluated by Hermocrates as "immediate slavery (*douleia*) without hazard"; and that Plato in the *Politicus* also holds that *ta hautou prattein* in an "ordinary language" sense, if carried to excess, leads to slavery; while the situation of the Melians indicates the ever-present dangers for the small *polis*. But do those who condemn *polupragmosune* commend *apragmosune*, and vice versa? And why do activities which are condemned as *polupragmosune* or *polla prattein* so closely resemble the activities of traditional *arete* that Theseus' defending and assisting of suppliants, traditionally a mark of *arete*, can be decried as *polla prattein*? If we recall both the characteristics of traditional *arete* and the political situation of the later fifth century, the answer becomes clearer.

Arete, from Homer onward, had denoted and most highly commended those activites which were held to contribute most to the continued existence of the unit—*oikos* or *polis*, but even in fifth-century Athens *oikos* rather more than *polis*[18]—with which the *agathos* was most closely linked; and it

18. *MR*, pp. 226 ff.; *MV*, pp. 126 ff.

had commended "competitive" excellences, since these were held to contribute most. Such competitive excellences are conducive to civic strife, and to strife between *poleis*. (This had been realized, at least by some, in the later fifth century.[19]) However, when equals are contending with each other, some kind of equilibrium will be maintained—whether between *oikoi*, political groups within the *polis*, or *poleis*—by the competitive *arete* of the contenders, which is valued for this reason. Each contender has a sphere of influence, *oikos* or *polis*, within which he will brook no interference, since it is the mark of *arete* not to be subject to the behests of others. But suppose one of the contenders, whether individual, group in the *polis*, or *polis*, acquires greater power and resources than the others. He will be able to exercise his power and resources to meddle in the affairs of others without effective opposition. Even if such meddling causes no material damage, the person (or group) affected by it, if he supposes himself to possess *arete*, will resent it and regard it as placing him in a subordinate position, as rendering him less free (*eleutheros*); and he is likely to treat *any* encroachment on freedom as slavery (*douleia*). Free Greeks were constantly surrounded by slaves, were aware that a military disaster might render them slaves, and were very sensitive to the slightest restriction upon their freedom of action. We may find their attitude difficult to understand; but the emotional response of the Greek *agathos* to the idea of "being beholden to anyone" is very well attested,[20] and Greek cities responded similarly.

The nature of *polupragmosune* and its relationship to traditional *arete* now become clear. Anyone (or any group or *polis*) who supposed himself to possess *arete* would be likely to use *polla prattein* or *polupragmosune* to censure the activities of anyone else (or any other group or *polis*) who was acting outside his own sphere of influence in such a way as to cross the boundaries of the censurer's sphere of influence (*oikos*, group, or *polis*). The censurer is more likely to use the term if he is, for whatever reason, unable to prevent the interference; and, as I shall argue, in domestic politics he has an additional motive for using the term if the interferer has inferior social status. It seems probable also that the expression is applicable more to meddling than to actual attempts at conquest: Theseus, for example, is not attempting to conquer Thebes, but to rescue the dead Argives from the Thebans; and the usage in domestic politics suggests a similar "flavor." The term is significantly absent from the Melian Dialogue. If I am right about the connotations, then the Athenian ambassador's use of *polupragmosune* (Thuc. 6. 87) may not be merely irony, but the substitution of a weaker word, "meddling," in reply to Hermocrates' talk of aggression and slavery.

There is now no difficulty in explaining why *arete* commends, and *polupragmosune* decries, a very similar set of activities: for the agent, and for those who—never having possessed *arete*, or having lost it in a disaster—welcome his activities, the behavior is *arete*, precisely because they welcome

19. *MR*, pp. 172 ff.; *MV*, pp. 112 ff.
20. *MR*, index s.v. "Independence"; *MV*, index s.v. "Autarkeia."

and value it; for those whose *arete* and sphere of influence are infringed by the behavior, and who consequently resent it, it is *polupragmosune*. To decry *polupragmosune* is not necessarily to commend *apragmosune*, nor is to decry *apragmosune* to commend *polupragmosune:* we have here rather an Aristotelian triad, a virtue between two vices, *polupragmosune–arete–apragmosune*. No one will decry any type of activity by terming it *arete*, for *arete* is a word of powerful commendation. Of course, how much active and vigorous behavior constitutes *arete*, and how much would constitute *polupragmosune*, is a matter of personal judgment and depends on the standpoint of the person making the judgment. (Only *agathoi* are in their own eyes entitled to manifest *arete*, of course, so that all such active behavior by a *kakos* will be termed *polupragmosune* by them.)

However, we have yet to discuss why the *agathoi* of *Athens* should have held Athens' active foreign policy to be *polupragmosune*. Insofar as the *demos* of Athens was assisting the *demos* of other cities of the empire against their *agathoi*, the attitude might be explained by the fellow-feeling of one *agathos* for another. This explanation accounts for the disapproval, but not for the choice of word: why should the policy be decried as *polupragmosune* in particular, and why should the *agathoi*, the possessors of *arete*, oppose the active foreign policy which itself seems to be a manifestation of traditional *arete?* The most likely reason, apart from the fellow-feeling already mentioned, is that such behavior on the part of the *demos* and its leaders (who might themselves be *agathoi:* no one could have denied that Pericles was an *agathos*) upsets the status quo, and the traditional *arete* of the hoplite and cavalry classes derived the high esteem which it enjoyed from the circumstances of the city-state of small or moderate size. The involvement of large numbers of the *demos* in the navy, which was demanded by Athens' foreign policy, increased their contribution to the well-being of Athens. The Old Oligarch, as has often been pointed out, realizes this;[21] and, though he is not willing to term the sailors *agathoi*, and there were indeed powerful reasons why they were not termed *agathoi*,[22] the *agathos* must have felt that the claims on his *arete* were being infringed—it was he, not the *demos*, who should perform such services for the city,[23] since doing so was in the last resort the justification for his being termed *agathos*—and that he could do nothing to prevent the infringement. This is *polupragmosune;* for *polupragmosune* is exerting oneself in such a way as to impinge upon the sphere of influence and *arete* of those who are reluctant to allow one to do so but find difficulty, or fear they may find difficulty, in preventing it. This attitude is discernible in Plato's *Laws*, a work in which prejudice is not infrequently given free rein. Plato maintains that seaborne soldiers are reluctant to stand their ground rather than retreat to their ships, and adds (707A4 ff.): "Again, cities which owe their power to their fleets do not give credit to the most *kalon* part of their armed forces when a naval victory is won; for the battle

21. Ps.-Xen. *AthPol.* 1. 2.

22. *MR*, pp. 204 ff.; *MV*, pp. 119 ff.

23. I am referring to the post-Cimonian period throughout. Before 450 the domestic implications of an active foreign policy based on the fleet may not have been apparent.

is won by the efforts of steersmen, boatswains, rowers, and all kinds of rather inferior people (*οὐ πάνυ σπουδαίων ἀνθρώπων*), so that one could not give credit 'correctly' to each group. And how could one have a 'correctly' run state when this cannot be done?" When a naval battle is won, the credit goes to "rather inferior people," not to the "best people"; and how could a state be "correct" if the wrong people get the credit (*time*), an allocation which in Plato's eyes is evidently "incorrect," although they have earned it by their efforts? Again, in the *Republic*, though Plato can advance his general principle of "one man, one job" as a justification for sharply distinguishing between the craftsman class and the warrior class (*Rep.* 374B ff.), his *agathoi* readers would have had powerful political and social reasons for finding the arrangement attractive; and Plato's motives for enunciating this general principle are certainly in large part political.

The *agathoi* of Athens, then, had a powerful motive for regarding Athens' foreign policy as *polupragmosune* and (save for those who, like Pericles, made that policy) for turning their backs on it. I shall discuss in section 6 the kind of activities to which they turned,[24] and the manner in which they evaluated them. First, however, I shall consider further aspects of *polupragmosune* in domestic politics and in the courts of law. There is no reason to suppose that such a neat distinction between spheres of activity existed in the minds of those who considered the doings of democratic politicians to be *polupragmosune*, for they probably condemned all such activities together; but we may discuss different areas of activity separately for the sake of clarity of exposition.

5. MORE ABOUT "POLUPRAGMOSUNE" IN DOMESTIC POLITICS AND IN THE LAW COURTS

As we have seen (§ 3), the Sycophant in Aristophanes' *Plutus* gives an admirable "civic" justification for his behavior; but Dicaeus treats it as *polupragmonein*, whether or no the motives which the Sycophant adduces are genuine (a question to which indeed Dicaeus pays no attention), despite the fact that Solon had given the right of prosecution to "the *boulomenos*." Such a prosecution evidently constitutes *polupragmonein* whether or no the prosecutor is actuated by honorable motives, and whether or no the accused is guilty. The reason is, I suggest, twofold: first, the *agathos*—and Aristophanes writes as an *agathos*, while *agathoi* were more likely to be involved in important cases and in many ways offered more tempting targets—feels himself attacked and insecure, and is unable to prevent it; and second, such accusations, in the political situation of late fifth-century and early fourth-century Athens, are likely to be made by those whom he regards as his social inferiors. I have already demonstrated (§ 2) that this "flavor" is present in *polupragmonein* when it is used of activities within a household or city, and also that, despite the insinuations of Aristophanes and the Old Oligarch, by no means all of such social inferiors were penniless or politically obscure. We may also infer that "the *boulomenos*" accusers are for the most

24. For the manner in which some turned to philosophy, see Ehrenberg, p. 54.

part from the city rather than from rural Attica. The *Plutus* passage suggests as much, and Trygaeus introduces himself (*Peace* 190 f.) as "Trygaeus . . . a skilled vine-dresser, no sycophant and no lover of *pragmata*." An honest countryman would not indulge in such accusations. Nor does he like *pragmata*, a phrase which is now difficult to interpret: it might mean that he has no relish for taking a prominent part in assembly politics (as opposed to merely casting his vote); for the Sycophant claims to busy himself with "the *pragmata* of the city," and we need not restrict the reference of this phrase to the courts of law.

Who, then, are the accused? At *Wasps* 1040–41 the Chorus attacks on Aristophanes' behalf the scoundrels who *κατακλινόμενοί τ' ἐπὶ ταῖς κοίταις ἐπὶ τοῖσιν ἀπράγμοσιν ὑμῶν / ἀντωμοσίας καὶ προσκλήσεις καὶ μαρτυρίας συνεκόλλων*. It was against *apragmones* that they brought all the paraphernalia of the law. Again, in the *Knights*, the Paphlagonian, complaining that he has been attacked, is thus abused by the Chorus (258 ff.):

> *ἐν δίκῃ γ', ἐπεὶ τὰ κοινὰ πρὶν λαχεῖν κατεσθίεις,*
> *κἀποσυκάζεις πιέζων τοὺς ὑπευθύνους σκοπῶν,*
> *ὅστις αὐτῶν ὠμός ἐστιν ἢ πέπων ἢ μὴ πέπων,*
> *κἄν τιν' αὐτῶν γνῷς ἀπράγμον' ὄντα καὶ κεχηνότα,*
> [you hale him into court,]
> *καὶ σκοπεῖς γε τῶν πολιτῶν ὅστις ἐστὶν ἀμνοκῶν,*
> *πλούσιος καὶ μὴ πονηρὸς καὶ τρέμων τὰ πράγματα.*

Here the accused are selected as being not only *apragmones*, but rich, not "bad," and afraid of *pragmata*, i.e., of appearing in court and possibly in the hurly-burly of politics.

Aristophanes' picture is clearly drawn: harmless private citizens, rich and not *poneroi* (and therefore, by implication, surely *agathoi*), but inactive in politics, and guiltless of any crime, are being attacked in the courts by clever and unscrupulous townees, "just for the fun of it." (In view of the emphasis sometimes laid on the mercenary motives of the "sycophant," it is interesting that Aristophanes should adduce this willful motive for his actions [*Plutus* 922 f.] and portray him as refusing to change his ways even if Dicaeus should give him "Plutus himself and Battus' silphium."[25] It is as if Aristophanes is, despite himself, constrained to admit that mercenary motives are not the most important, though in his eyes there must be *some* bad motive.) So we are to believe that in Athens prosecutors who avail themselves of "the *boulomenos*" accusations never prosecute the guilty, and always prosecute for unworthy motives; and we are to believe it despite the fact that in the *Plutus* passage, the most carefully worked-up portrait of such an accuser, the Sycophant is attacked in terms as appropriate to one who prosecutes a guilty man for public-spirited motives as to one who prosecutes the innocent for base or frivolous motives. It strains credulity.

It seems, in fact, that all accusations by "the *boulomenos*" constitute

25. Plutus was the god of wealth, and silphium (*ferula tingitana*) was a very valuable crop, the produce of Cyrene.

"sycophancy" and *polupragmosune*, and also that, if the class of people portrayed attempts to lead an active life in politics, the same labels are applied. Why? Yet again we must remember that all Greek writers are *agathoi;* that a requirement of *arete* is that one should be able to maintain the prosperity and well-being of one's own *oikos* and assist one's friends and harm one's enemies without suffering any harm at the enemies' hands;[26] and that the enemies are themselves *agathoi* for the most part, or at all events that personal enmity is the cause of the attack. Such behavior was accepted by the Athenians as praiseworthy: we may recall the jealous woman in Lysias' first speech (§ 1). To prosecute, not out of enmity at a personal or inter-*oikos* level, but out of public-spiritedness or a desire for reward, whether the accusation was false or true, was to go outside the traditional *oikos*-based values of society, to "do many things" (i.e., more or different things than traditional values required); and it was to threaten the interests and *arete* of the *agathoi* in a manner which they could not readily prevent, since "the *boulomenos*" certainly had a right to prosecute under the law of Solon. The *agathoi* had adequate means of defending themselves, since the wealthy had an advantage in the democratic courts.[27] But no one likes being taken to court, and no one is likely to admit that the accusation is true; so that, although any accusation by "the *boulomenos*" would be treated as "sycophancy" and *polupragmosune*, an aura of fraudulence hangs about such imputations in the works of the *agathoi* writers who are our sources.

The fact that, as a result of political alignments and the values discussed above, "the *boulomenos*" accuser was likely not to be a traditional *agathos*, while the accused were traditional *agathoi*, introduces the flavor of "getting above oneself" which I have already discussed. As I have shown, there is no reason to picture such accusers as ragged and poverty-stricken. Many may have been wealthy men, with money derived from commerce, like Cleon the tannery owner, whom our *agathoi* sources try so hard to present as a journeyman tanner: for such men to attempt a political career was to invite the scorn of the political families, even though they had the wealth and leisure, and in some cases the aptitude, to do so. Whether in the courts or the assembly, their behavior was in part *polupragmosune* because it went beyond their appointed status in life—a status appointed by the *agathoi*.

A Cleon or a Hyperbolus was not to be deterred by such evaluations; but they were evidently intended to deter, and are likely to have deterred, less determined individuals who were not *agathoi* in terms of the traditional evaluations. (Though, as I have argued elsewhere,[28] the sophists offered a new political *arete* to all who could afford to pay, in the form of the political skills which they claimed to teach, it is most unlikely that the traditional *agathoi* would have conceded that the products of this education were in fact *agathoi*, unless they had the traditional qualifications as well.)

26. See, e.g., Meno's definition (Plato *Meno* 71E2 ff.), discussed in *MR*, pp. 229 ff., and *MV*, pp. 131 ff.

27. *MR*, pp. 201 ff.; *MV*, pp. 119 ff.

28. *MR*, pp. 226 ff., 236 ff.; *MV*, p. 112.

6. "AGATHOS" AND "APRAGMON"?

Our *agathoi* sources are unlikely to lament the lot of any non-*agathos* who was deterred from embarking on a political career; but what of the *agathos* who was *apragmon?* Politically inactive *agathoi*—men who were *agathoi* in terms of birth, possessions, and courage exerted in hoplite fighting in defense of the city—must have existed since, though even Athens was not very large by today's standards, the number of *agathoi* was too great to permit every *agathos* to be an active politician. The "old political families" constitute a subgroup of the *agathoi.* It would, however, have been easier for an inactive *agathos* to enter active politics than for a Cleon to do so. The method approved by those who were "*kaloi kagathoi* in respect of politics" was that the young aspirant should come to them to learn ([Plato] *Theages* 126D): they naturally disapproved of the sophists as "foreigners" and rival experts.

I have used "politically active" to mean more than merely casting one's vote in the assembly, or serving on the *boule* when required to do so: it seems to me that an *agathos* who did no more than this would have been regarded as *apragmon.* However, *agathoi* who opposed the policies of the *demos* and its leaders may have been deterred from even attending the assembly, since they must have been permanently in a minority. And when it became apparent during the Peloponnesian War that the army was to play a smaller part than the fleet,[29] many of the *agathoi* may have lapsed into complete political *apragmosune* (or in extreme cases into secret plotting, which could be represented as mere *apragmosune* by a well-disposed witness). Others turned to philosophy, as did Plato later when he found the politics of Athens distasteful; but this type of *apragmosune* lies beyond the scope of the present article.[30] Such *agathoi* would not cease to regard themselves as *agathoi: arete* denotes and commends also the attributes of a social class, and they continued to be the "gentlemen" of Athens. The Old Oligarch, who freely acknowledges the importance of the fleet,[31] does not allow this acknowledgment to affect in any way his view of the identity of Athens' *agathoi* and *kakoi.* Plato, of course, however *apragmon* himself in Athenian politics, stigmatizes such *apragmosune,* as we have seen (*Politicus* 307E), as leading to "slavery": active *arete* is expected of the *agathos.*

7. TRADITIONAL CONSTRAINTS

We have seen that the idea of *polupragmosune* in domestic politics and public life served to criticize and, it was hoped, to constrain, those who sought to go beyond the bounds deemed appropriate by the *agathoi:* democratic Athens of the later fifth century was still very stratified, extreme democratic institutions existing together not only with great inequalities of wealth but also with a system of values whose implications were quite undemocratic.[32] In earlier Greece there existed ideas which served to con-

29. See, e.g., Thuc. 2. 21. 22.
30. See Ehrenberg, p. 54.
31. Ps.-Xen. *AthPol.* 1. 2; *MR,* p. 215 (6).
32. *MR,* pp. 195 ff.; *MV,* pp. 119 ff., 139 ff.

strain the aspirations of *kakoi*. I have discussed these elsewhere,[33] and will here cite only so much evidence as will serve to indicate the degree of continuity and difference as one passes from the earlier period to the later fifth century. I shall discuss *moira*, *kosmos*, *hubris*, and *sophrosune*.

In earlier Greece, *moira* was an important socio-religious concept:[34] one's *moira* was originally that share in goods and possessions, arising from one's birth into a particular position in society, which endowed one with a particular status and a set of relationships with the other members of society. Its importance may be inferred from the fact that to speak or act "in accordance with one's *moira*" or "not in accordance with one's *moira*" is to act "rightly" or "wrongly." The implications of "rightly" and "wrongly" require further discussion.

When Mentor in *Odyssey* 2 rebukes the people of Ithaca for not driving out the suitors, Leiocritus in return makes a long speech, the general tenor of which is that what Mentor has suggested is too difficult. He adds (246 ff.) that, even if Odysseus himself should return and should wish to drive out the proud suitors from his hall, he would not succeed, but would meet with an unseemly end if he were to fight with a greater number of men: Mentor has not spoken in accordance with *moira*. Now we should not suppose that Mentor had given morally wrong advice in urging the people of Ithaca to drive out the suitors. Nor, though Homeric values differ in many ways from ours, would Homer suppose this: Homer disapproves of the suitors' behavior; for there is a proper way to go wooing, and the suitors have not taken it. Accordingly, "you have not spoken in accordance with *moira*" cannot mean "you have not spoken in accordance with what is morally right" here.

Kosmos had a similar role to play. Thersites in *Iliad* 2. 212 ff., is said to "strive with the kings in a manner not in accordance with *kosmos* (*οὐ κατὰ κόσμον*)," and he is said to "know" many things of this nature. His utterances and actions are not in accordance with *kosmos;* but there is no suggestion that what he says is, in general, false, and his one recorded speech (*Il.* 2. 225 ff.) is not demonstrably untrue. Yet it is not in accordance with *kosmos;* and it is undeniably inconvenient for the kings, the *agathoi*.

I have discussed the concepts of truth, *moira*, and *kosmos* in Homer elsewhere,[35] and merely record here such of my findings as are relevant to the present question. In a competitive society, a shame- and results-culture, the utmost care is necessary to avoid giving offense even by accident, if any cooperation between *agathoi* is to be possible at all, and their inferiors are to avoid drawing down the wrath of the *agathoi* upon their heads. Words which hurt, which give offense, will be regarded in the same way by the recipient, whatever may have been the speaker's intentions; and where *arete* is, or may be, affected, *agathoi* are likely to evaluate what is said in

33. *MV*, pp. 65 ff.

34. *MR*, pp. 17 ff.; *MV*, pp. 19 ff., 88 ff.; Adkins, "Homeric Gods and the Values of Homeric Society," *JHS* 92 (1972): 1 ff.

35. Adkins, "Truth, *Kosmos* and *Arete* in the Homeric Poems," *CQ* 22 (1972): 5 ff., and the references in n. 34.

terms of its grace, charm, and pleasantness—or at least the absence of offensiveness—rather than its truth. We may add that behavior, too, will be evaluated in similar terms by *agathoi*. *Kosmos*, whose range spans what is orderly and what is ornamental, and *moira*, denoting one's "due share" in society, are words well suited to evaluate speech and behavior in this manner. What speech is or is not in accordance with *kosmos* or *moira* will be determined by the *agathoi*, whose values are accepted by all the characters in the Homeric poems: speech or behavior which the *agathoi* regard as being unbeautiful, unpleasing, inappropriate, will be stigmatized as not in accordance with *kosmos;* and where such speech infringes the status of the *agathos* and slights his *arete*, its being not in accordance with *kosmos* will override the question of its truth. An *agathos* will not, of course, be deterred from a speech or course of action demanded by his *arete* by the reflection that it is not in accordance with *kosmos*, but he will expect his inferiors to behave in accordance with *kosmos* in their relationships with him, and if they prudently desire to avoid trouble they will behave in accordance with *kosmos*.

Hubris too had its part to play among the traditional social and political constraints.[36] In the sixth century Solon (fragment 6 West) wrote:

δῆμος δ' ὧδ' ἂν ἄριστα σὺν ἡγεμόνεσσιν ἕποιτο,
μήτε λίαν ἀνεθεὶς μήτε βιαζόμενος.
τίκτει γὰρ κόρος ὕβριν ὅταν πολὺς ὄλβος ἕπηται
ἀνθρώποις, ὁπόσοις μὴ νόος ἄρτιος ᾖ.

Surfeit breeds *hubris* when much prosperity comes to those whose state of mind is not appropriate. We are likely to interpret *hubris* in a religious sense if we do not examine the context, and the fact that *hubris* is used in religious contexts is important; for it is one word throughout its usages, and the religious connotation, the feeling that the gods disapprove *hubris* per se, strengthens its power as a constraint in other contexts. But if we look at the first two lines of the quatrain we must surely conclude that the *hubris* would be manifested by the *demos* if it did not properly follow its leaders, as it might fail to do were it given an excess of freedom and well-being. (Presumably there was a following couplet which amplified μήτε βιαζόμενος: Solon is a moderate, by the standards of his day.)

In the fifth century, similar uses of *hubris* may be found. In Sophocles' *Antigone* Creon says of Antigone (477–83):

σμικρῷ χαλινῷ δ' οἶδα τοὺς θυμουμένους
ἵππους καταρτυθέντας· οὐ γὰρ ἐκπέλει
φρονεῖν μέγ' ὅστις δοῦλός ἐστι τῶν πέλας.
αὕτη δ' ὑβρίζειν μὲν τότ' ἐξηπίστατο,
νόμους ὑπερβαίνουσα τοὺς προκειμένους·
ὕβρις δ', ἐπεὶ δέδρακεν, ἥδε δευτέρα,
τούτοις ἐπαυχεῖν καὶ δεδρακυῖαν γελᾶν.

36. *MV*, pp. 84 ff., 88 ff.

Creon holds that it is *hubris* for Antigone to transgress the established laws (by which he really means his own edict that Polyneices be not buried); and also *hubris* to exult in her action and laugh. This judgment is linked to his earlier judgment that it does not befit anyone who is the slave of those about him—as Antigone is his slave, in his eyes—to "think big." Similarly, Clytemnestra in Sophocles' *Electra* (612 ff.) regards it as *hubris* for Electra to oppose her mother, whatever crimes the mother may have committed. In both cases *hubris* is shown by "getting above oneself" in a manner offensive to those in power.

The foregoing examples concern family relationships. An overtly political example occurs in Pindar's *Pythian* 4, where Demophilus is praised as a youth wise beyond his years, who has learned to hate *hubris*, for he does not strive against the *agathoi:* ἔμαθε δ' ὑβρίζοντα μισεῖν, / οὐκ ἐρίζων ἄντια τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς (284–85). (Presumably he eschews *hubris* himself as well as hating it in others.) Demophilus must have been a man of considerable means and social position (he commissioned the Fourth Pythian, the longest and most splendid of Pindar's *Odes*), though he had been placed at a disadvantage by being exiled. But the sentiment is general, and would serve to convict of *hubris* any social inferior who endeavored to assert his rights against an *agathos*. In a similar manner the Egyptians are held to be displaying *hubris* toward the Persians by revolting from them (Herodotus 7. 5).

Such concepts as *kosmos*, *moira*, and *hubris*, then, served as social and political constraints in earlier Greece. They helped to preserve the status quo; and the fact that *hubris* and *moira* are also religious terms endowed these social and political restraints with religious authority. Now it is undeniable that Athens in the later fifth century had become both more democratic, at least in institutions, and more secular, at least at the levels of society to which our documents give us access. It is, I hope, also clear that, even if bereft of their religious sanction and expressed in a different terminology, the traditional social and political constraints had not vanished from Greek life.

Here it is relevant to reintroduce the idea of *sophrosune*. *Sophrosune* is used freely both in the earlier and the later period under discussion, and helps to indicate the continuity of presuppositions and attitudes, for it is opposed in usage both to *hubris* and to *polupragmosune*. *Sophrosune* has a wide range of usage,[37] but I am here concerned only with that aspect of it which is displayed by submitting to another person who is superior in strength, power, influence, or status.

In Sophocles' *Ajax*, much is made by Agamemnon and Menelaus of the inferior status of Teucer, as we have already seen. At 1258 ff., Agamemnon thus addresses Teucer:

> θαρσῶν ὑβρίζεις κἀξελευθεροστομεῖς.
> οὐ σωφρονήσεις; οὐ μαθὼν ὃς εἶ φύσιν
> ἄλλον τιν' ἄξεις ἄνδρα δεῦρ' ἐλεύθερον,
> ὅστις πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀντὶ σοῦ λέξει τὰ σά;

37. For copious quantities of material, see Helen North, *Sophrosyne* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1966), passim.

It is a mark of *hubris* for Teucer to speak freely. He would display *sophrosune* by holding his tongue and by bringing someone of higher status to speak on his behalf. The theme occurs several times in the play. Ajax tells Tecmessa (587) not to ask questions, but rather to *sophronein:* women were expected to defer at all times. In more general terms, Menelaus says (1075 f.) that an army would not be led *sophronōs* if the men were not afraid and respectful. In *Philoctetes* 1259 f., Neoptolemus commends Odysseus' *sophrosune* when Odysseus declines to fight with him—in acknowledgment, he claims, that Neoptolemus is a better fighter. Menelaus' words may remind us of the song of the Furies in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* (517 ff.), where they proclaim that it is profitable to *sophronein* with groaning, yielding to the fear inspired by more powerful beings. The fear of divine powers is less in evidence in the later fifth century; but *sophrosune* continues to have as part of its implications the idea of submitting to one who has more strength, power, influence, or status. Like behaving "in accordance with *moira* or *kosmos*," *sophronein* requires that one shall "know one's place."

This discussion throws more light on the situation of the Melians. I have already said[38] that *arete* demands that they should not surrender to the Athenians, for surrender would show them to be *kakoi.* It now becomes apparent that a characteristic attitude of superiors to inferiors is to demand *sophrosune* of them; and that such *sophrosune* is manifested by deference and submission. A *polis* which accepts the invitation of a larger *polis* to *sophrosune* has acknowledged its inferiority, its lack of *arete;* and any *polis* would be very reluctant to do so, for where *arete* pulls in one direction and *sophrosune* in the other, the pull of *arete* is much the stronger. It is presumably for this reason that the Athenian ambassador at Camarina speaks of the aggressor whom the Athenians restrain as being compelled to *sophronein* against his will (ἄκων), while the peaceful small city merely "is saved without effort on its part." The avoidance of aggressive action by a peaceful city might well be characterized as *sophronein* in some contexts; but where the stronger and more *agathos* is trying to *persuade* the weaker, it might be injudicious to use the word of the weaker's behavior.

Enough has, I hope, already been said to make it clear that, though the terminology has changed in part, the attitudes of the *agathoi* to the rest of society, their wish to keep their social inferiors in their place, and their use of language to achieve this goal, persist in the later fifth and earlier fourth century. I shall now try to render more precise such differences as exist.

There are very striking detailed resemblances in some passages: we can discover similar situations evaluated in both older and newer terminologies by the same author. According to Herodotus, as we have seen, the Egyptians displayed *hubris* by revolting, since they rose against their superiors and disobeyed their commands (7. 5); but Herodotus also says (3. 15) that Psammenitus was guilty of *polupragmosune* (πολυπραγμονέειν) when *he* rose against the Persians. In Sophocles' *Electra,* at 612 ff. Clytemnestra treats Electra's behavior as *hubris;* but in 678 she tells her to busy herself with

38. P. 313. See *MR,* pp. 222 ff., 241 (8); *MV,* pp. 136 ff.

her own affairs, *ta sautes prattein*. The context is somewhat different, but the "flavor" is evidently the same.

Nor are these mere coincidences. The general overall resemblance is undeniable. To take only one example, the reasons why Thersites should not speak in the assembly of the Achaeans, whether what he says is true or not, are essentially the same as the reasons why a "sycophant" should not accuse as "the *boulomenos*," whether his accusations are true or not. The vocabulary changes, even in the earlier period (*kosmos* is a less important value term after Homer, and *eunomia*[39] has its day); but if one considers the apparent social changes which occurred between the period of composition of the Homeric poems and later fifth-century Athens, the degree of continuity of attitudes and presuppositions is remarkable.

There are, of course, significant differences. A Cleon in an earlier generation might have kept silence, lest his words and actions constitute *hubris* and draw down the wrath not only of his social superiors, but also of heaven. (The words and actions of the *agathos*, too, might have constituted *hubris* and attracted the disfavor of the gods, and such considerations acted as a check on the *agathos*. But the *moira* of the *agathos* was larger,[40] he had more space to maneuver, and he might well have only the reprisals of the gods to fear; whereas the social inferior had to reckon with the more immediate and certain response of his social superiors. I have, however, written at greater length on the *hubris* of the *agathos* elsewhere:[41] the subject matter of the present paper renders it more relevant to discuss the *hubris* of the *kakos*.) Any politician in an earlier period might have been deterred from pursuing so active a foreign policy, and even more from treating the inhabitants of another city as Athens threatened to treat the Mytileneans, and actually treated the Melians, lest that, too, be *hubris* and punished by heaven: at a time when Athens had high aspirations to power in the Aegean, Aeschylus makes the Chorus at *Agamemnon* 367 ff. express anxieties which have relevance beyond the context of the tragedy; and Aeschylus reflects traditional attitudes here. But in the later fifth century such constraints upon foreign policy became less effective; and a politically emancipated "tanner" could not be deterred by socio-religious threats from playing a part in public life. The use of the term *hubris* as a constraint now virtually vanishes, presumably because those whom the *agathoi* most wished to constrain no longer held the necessary beliefs to be constrained by it. It is replaced, as we have seen, by terms such as *polupragmosune*, gibes of a social character without religious overtones. Such will not restrain a Cleon either; but nothing will—or need—restrain an emancipated and prosperous individual from taking part in the politics of the extreme democracy. The Homeric hero was at an advantage, since he could not only stigmatize Thersites' utterances as "not in accordance with *kosmos*," but also beat him about the ears if he would not sit down and be quiet. The Athenian *agathoi* could not do this

39. *MV*, pp. 46 ff., 56, 84 f.
40. *MR*, pp. 20 ff.; *MV*, pp. 19 ff., 50 f., 88 ff.
41. *MV*, index s.v. "Hubris."

under the democracy, though the Thirty Tyrants began by doing it for them: they could only utter their social gibes.

These gibes might have two effects, apart from relieving the feelings of the *agathos*. The more obvious effect is to restrain those who are less prosperous and self-confident than Cleon: many mute, inglorious Cleons may have made no attempt to enter public life, accepting the evaluation of the *agathoi* that they were unworthy, incapable, in short, *kakoi*. The less obvious effect is to induce at least a proportion of social inferiors to take Cleon, and other persons who were not *agathoi* but were nevertheless active in public life (including those stigmatized as "sycophants"), at the evaluation of the *agathoi*. Aristophanes, for example, may well have been able to rely not only on the laughter of *agathoi*, but on a deferential laugh from at least some other members of his audience, when he attacked "sycophants" and others who meddled with matters which did not properly concern them since they were *kakoi*. The Old Oligarch may not be altogether incorrect in his view of the situation(§ 3 init.). If *polupragmosune* has this double effect, then the concept may well have been an even more useful tool for the *agathoi* than appears at first sight. It is, however, a tool of limited effectiveness, and its use in itself seems to indicate that very fact: as I have tried to show, the *agathos* terms as *polupragmosune* behavior which he both regards as presumptuous and also knows he cannot effectively prevent, in the hope possibly of restraining the most presumptuous to some extent, and the less presumptuous altogether. It is, however, a term of those who "know" themselves to be socially superior, and "know" that they have a right to be politically superior, but nevertheless find themselves at a serious disadvantage in the existing political situation.

8. PLATO AND "POLUPRAGMOSUNE"

It is now evident that *polupragmosune* is manifested in a *polis* by transgressing the bounds of the traditional system based on *moira*—the system which gave to each his share in society and politics, a larger share to the *agathos*, a smaller share to the *kakos*—and upsetting the status quo. We need not be surprised to find that *ta hautou prattein*, whether termed *dikaiosune* or *sophrosune*, seems to be prized by the *agathos*. He stands to gain by it, both because an absence of "meddling" will leave his share of status, position, and power larger than that of his social inferiors, and also because, when the *agathos ta hautou prattei*, "does his own things," the "things" that he "does" may include political activity: not all *agathoi* were politically active, but the active politicians were traditionally prominent *agathoi*. Now the use of *polupragmosune* and *ta hautou prattein* in Platonic dialogues other than the *Republic* is difficult to evaluate, and doubtless not too much should be built on it; but approval of *ta hautou prattein* certainly seems characteristic of such Athenians as Charmides, Critias, and Alcibiades. Charmides and Critias were extreme oligarchs, and evidently wished to confine political activity to their own, very small, group of aristocratic Athenians. Alcibiades was a popular leader, a "champion of the people," it is true; but he too was an aristocrat, and his political career demonstrates that he more consistently

supported the interests of Alcibiades than those of Athens. His opinion of a Cleon can be guessed at: the words which Thucydides ascribes to him (6. 16. 1 ff.) presumably convey his social attitudes accurately.

When we turn to the *Republic*, a less tentative evaluation is possible. In that dialogue, as elsewhere, Plato is trying to persuade the *agathoi* of Athens that his proposals, here for constructing an entire *polis* of an unusual, not to say bizarre, kind, are reasonable; and he must accordingly begin from their own attitudes or prejudices,[42] which are to a considerable extent also his own. His insistence on "one man, one job," transformed—when the guardians and later the philosopher-kings are added—into "one class, one job" so far as concerns the upper two classes in his state, deprives the lowest class of his *polis* of a share either in its defense or in its government. It is true—or apparently true—that the lowest class contains many who might have been regarded as *agathoi* in other forms of *polis*, and certainly true that the upper classes of the *Republic* state are not to handle money at all. But insofar as Plato is trying to persuade, it is surely the *agathoi*, and especially the members of those important families who had been politically active, who are most likely to be persuaded, for they are likely to suppose that they, if anyone, will pass the Platonic tests of character and intellect; and I suspect that Plato would have entirely agreed. They are also the most likely to find attractive Plato's account of *dikaiosune* and *sophrosune*. For civic *dikaiosune* is manifested, according to Plato (*Rep.* 433A), when those most competent to perform any task in the city do perform it, without interference from the unqualified; while civic *sophrosune* (*Rep.* 432A) is "agreement of the better and worse as to which should rule the other." I have argued elsewhere[43] that, despite Plato's efforts to give the impression that the civic *dikaiosune* and *sophrosune* of the *Republic* state resemble "ordinary language" *dikaiosune* and *sophrosune*, the *sophrosune* and *dikaiosune* which Plato has proved to be *aretai*, *aretai* to which all the classes of the city should conform, in fact bear no resemblance to *sophrosune* and *dikaiosune* as ordinarily understood:[44] "*Sophrosune* is the acknowledgement of the rulers that they should rule, of the defenders that they should defend, and of the rest that they should acquiesce; and *dikaiosune* is the state of affairs in which this is put into practice. The *manner* in which the rulers should rule is not indicated at all: if a political expert exploits his subjects to the utmost, and they acquiesce, both are behaving with *sophrosune* and *dikaiosune* in the sense in which these have been shown to be *aretai*, conducive to the smooth running of the state." I said in my earlier discussion[45] that Thrasymachus should have been delighted; but it is now evident that not merely Thrasymachus but any *agathos* should have been equally delighted. *Sophrosune* and *dikaiosune* are most evidently in the context being defined "from the point of view of a

42. Cf. also the manner in which Plato (e.g., *Rep.* 579E) "moralizes" the notion of the tyrant as one who depends on *kakoi* and *poneroi*. Most tyrants, as the *agathoi* knew, depended on the support of those who were socially *kakoi* (for which, see *MV*, pp. 67 ff.); and this must have increased the readiness with which Plato might expect his views to be accepted.

43. *MR*, pp. 287 ff.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

ruling political expert"; but they are more broadly being defined from the point of view of the social superior, the *agathos*, for whom one requirement of *sophrosune* was that his inferiors should know their place.[46] Plato has retained this "flavor" of *sophrosune*, and indeed has brought it into the foreground. He has linked it—and *dikaiosune*—with "minding one's own business" and avoiding *polupragmosune*. His philosophy in the *Republic* goes, of course, beyond the mere preferences of the *agathoi;* but certain fundamental characteristics of the *kind* of state which he prefers—limited in scale, militarily efficient but not expansionist, opposed to change of any kind—derive from the preferences not only of Plato himself but of *agathoi* in general.[47] Plato, and they, are yearning for the past, for a past before the disturbing changes of democratic life, when everyone knew his place and kept to it. In characterizing such disturbing behavior as *polupragmosune* rather than as *hubris*, Plato is employing the vocabulary of the later fifth century; but we have seen that both words decry and deprecate changes of the status quo, and that the desirable situations tacitly or explicitly opposed to ones in which inferiors were manifesting either *hubris* or *polupragmosune* were very similar.

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46. Pp. 322 f.
47. See also K. Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*[5] (London, 1966), vol. 1, passim.