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Feminizing the City: Plato on Women, Masculinity, and *Thumos*

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Abstract

This paper responds to two trends in debates about Plato's view of women in the *Republic*. First, many scholars argue or assume that Plato seeks to minimize the influence of femininity in the ideal city, and to make guardian women themselves as "masculine" as possible. Second, scholars who address the relationship between Plato's views of women and his psychological theory tend to focus on the reasoning and appetitive parts of the tripartite soul. In response to the first point, we argue that the idea that Plato seeks to masculinize/de-feminize the city oversimplifies his treatment of Greek gender norms. Although he does want to eliminate some traditionally feminine qualities from the city, he also seeks to eliminate many masculine qualities as well. Moreover, while he tries to make guardian women more like men in some respects, he simultaneously aims to make guardian men more like Greek women in important ways. Regarding the second point, we argue that this project of reimagining gender norms is illuminated by Plato's psychology, but instead of emphasizing reason and appetite, we show how his views are connected to his account of the third, "spirited" part of the soul, *thumos*, and its dual hard/soft or aggressive/gentle nature.

In book 5 of the *Republic* Socrates outlines the social, political, and lifestyle policies that define the guardian class of the Kallipolis. Contrary to the Athenian conventions of his time, he argues that some women, like some men, are naturally suited to serve as warriors and rulers, and that men and women alike, therefore, should be included in the guardian class. They should all receive the same education and training, share a communal lifestyle and raise their children together, and serve alongside one another as fellow warriors and philosopher kings and queens. Commentators hoping to discern Plato's views on women in the *Republic* have naturally enough tended to focus on this discussion, and in particular on the fact that Socrates attributes positive psychological qualities to women and defends their participation in activities that are traditionally considered "masculine" or reserved for men by Greek cultural standards. Conversely, many commentators also draw attention to corollary remarks throughout the dialogue

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that condemn negative behavior as “womanish” and that criticize the character and conduct of many women.¹ This dual emphasis has left many scholars with the impression that Plato’s aim is to promote or allow “manly” traits and pursuits in the guardian women, while discouraging “feminine” ones in men and women alike. That impression, in turn, has informed a wide range of otherwise divergent interpretations of Plato’s position. From an early modern perspective, for example, Jean-Jacques Rousseau writes of Plato, “In his Republic ... having removed private families from his regime and no longer knowing what to do with women, he found himself forced to make them men” (1762/1979, 362–63).² Many recent scholars offer similar assessments, whether they characterize Plato as a proto-feminist or progressive of his time, or instead as a misogynist or reactionary. On the one hand, commentators who judge Plato’s views more favorably, such as Gregory Vlastos, tend to do so on the basis of his willingness to “include” women in men’s spheres from which they had previously been excluded,³ and the main challenge has been to square that interpretation with the critical comments on women and femininity that appear in the dialogue.⁴ At the same time, many scholars are critical of the perceived “masculinization” of women. Penelope Murray writes, “I cannot help feeling that what is required of the female guardians is that they should simply turn themselves into men” (2011, 176). Likewise, Arlene Saxonhouse claims that the female guardian of book 5 is “destroyed as woman” and “de-natured” (1976, 202), and Marina McCoy finds, “[Women] are included only insofar as they take up the activities of men and do so in a masculine way. ... Women must become like men” (2015, 156–57).⁵ Debates about Plato’s views of women, then, have largely been shaped by the idea that Plato seeks to minimize the influence of femininity in the ideal city, and to make guardian women themselves as masculine as possible.

Our first goal in this paper is to show that this assessment oversimplifies Plato’s treatment of the Greek masculine/feminine dichotomy in the *Republic*. First, although Plato does seek to eliminate some traditionally feminine qualities from the city, he also, and arguably with even greater vehemence, seeks to expurgate a number of traditionally *masculine* qualities and behavior from the city as well. Furthermore, while he tries to make guardian women more like men in some respects, he also simultaneously aims to make the guardian men *more like women* in important ways. He does not aim to eliminate *all* expressions of traditional femininity from the city, then, but actually emphasizes the positive moral value of many of them. Finally, at the same time that Plato is “including” women in the traditionally masculine world of the city, he is also *reimagining Greek standards of what it means to be masculine*, as well as what the public or political realm looks like.⁶

Our second goal is to show that Plato’s project of reevaluating gender roles is connected to and illuminated by the three-part theory of the soul that he introduces in the *Republic* (435a–441c), and in particular by his conception of the spirited part of the soul, or *thumos*. This connection has been underappreciated by scholars, who typically focus on the other two parts of the tripartite soul: reason or *logos*, which is associated with mind and the desire for truth and wisdom; and appetite, which is responsible for irrational desires connected to biological processes like nutrition and reproduction (especially hunger, thirst, and *erōs*). In the context of Platonic views of women, debates tend to be framed in terms of the opposition between mind/body, rational/non-rational, *logos/erōs*, and reason/appetite, especially given Greek cultural associations of men with the first terms in each of these binaries and women with the second.⁷ On the one hand, this framework dovetails with the tendency to view Plato as trying to masculinize women. Philosophy and virtue, the idea goes, involve

cultivating the “masculine” mind and reason while at the same time denying, controlling, or minimizing the influence of “feminine” bodily contingency and desire (Saxonhouse 1976, 196; Canto 1985, 279–81; McCoy 2015, 156). At the same time, however, the focus on reason and appetite is also evident even among the minority of scholars who, like us, challenge the simple masculinization/de-feminization picture. Commentators like Wendy Brown and Page DuBois draw attention to the fact that, at the same time that Plato valorizes *logos* and the pursuit of wisdom, he also uses feminine-coded language associated with the body and appetite to characterize that pursuit: both truth and philosophy itself are personified as women; the philosopher’s love of wisdom is a form of *erōs* and the experience of seeing truth is ineffable (hence *a-logos*); he repeatedly uses metaphors of sexual intercourse, pregnancy, reproduction, and childbirth to illustrate philosophical endeavors; and virtue itself requires engagement with our embodied appetites (DuBois 1994; Brown 1988).⁸ As Wender comments, “For all of Plato’s railing against the appetitive or desirous ... he does not and cannot jettison these parts of our being” (1973, 603).

Framing Plato’s treatment of gender solely in terms of the reason/appetite dichotomy, however, leaves out a central factor in the *Republic*’s characterization of the guardians’ psychology. As we will see, Plato defines their nature largely in terms of qualities of *thumos*, and his educational, social, and economic proposals for them are heavily informed by consideration of their spirited desires and emotions. In Plato’s tripartite psychology, the spirited part occupies an ambivalent status in both the rational/irrational and masculine/feminine binaries. Like appetite, spirit is non-rational and can exert a vicious influence in the soul when untutored and uncontrolled, but when properly trained it is the “ally of reason” and can, like the rational part, draw the individual toward virtue (and away from vicious appetites). Similarly, Plato’s theory of *thumos*, like the Greek literary tradition and popular culture on which he draws, strongly associates spirit with emotions, virtues, behavior, and domains from *both* sides of the masculine/feminine dichotomy. In the *Republic*, we aim to show, Plato seeks to instill virtuous forms of both masculinity and femininity in the spirited part of the guardians’ souls, while discouraging vicious forms of both as well.

We first provide a brief overview of *thumos* and its relationship to Greek conceptions of masculine and feminine and related dichotomies. (For the purposes of this paper, we use the terms “masculine” and “feminine” and their synonyms to refer to things that are gendered or “coded” as such by Greek cultural norms.) Then we show how Plato’s *Republic* aims to eliminate vicious masculinity from the city, rework what it means to be masculine in the first place, and instill virtuous forms of femininity among the guardians. Finally, we conclude by addressing the implications of our interpretation for assessing Plato’s views of women more generally. Our interpretation shows that some criticism (and, for that matter, praise) of Plato is based on oversimplifying characterizations of his position. However, we emphasize that our arguments are not intended to make of Plato any sort of feminist, and that in general they do not in themselves constitute a defense against charges of sexism or misogyny.⁹

Thumos and the masculine/feminine dichotomy

Greek culture ascribed different social functions to men and women and applied distinct sets of norms and expectations concerning their virtues, emotions, psychological qualities, and behavior. In speaking of “Greek” culture, we mean in particular the *Athenian* culture of Plato’s time, which was shaped by influences from throughout

the Greek world spanning several centuries, and which was representative of many prominent trends in Greek thinking about gender more broadly. Note, however, that Greek culture was not entirely homogeneous, and there were important exceptions to the general trends we highlight (as for example in Sparta, where gender norms diverged in some important ways from those in Athens). With that caveat in mind, consider the following preliminary sketch.¹⁰

Greek conceptions of masculinity demanded effective participation in the agonistic world of politics and warfare. The social domain of Athenian men was the public realm or *polis*. Men were expected to fight to defend their city against its enemies and to participate actively in the internal affairs of the city by engaging in civil debate, voting in the Assembly, serving on juries, taking part in lawsuits, holding civic offices, and generally striving to gain power, public honor, and influence over political matters.¹¹ Closely connected to this norm of civic engagement was a man's obligation to acquire wealth, resources, and status for his own private household or *oikos*. Men were supposed to participate in the affairs of the *polis* largely in order to compete with one another for the social and political capital that could be used to secure material assets and prestige for the *oikos*. In light of these social functions, men were expected to possess psychological qualities that were conducive to success in warfare and politics. Most obviously, this included *courage*, which was the cardinal virtue of Greek masculinity.¹² Indeed, the most popular term for "courage" among Plato and his contemporaries is *andreia*, which literally means "manliness" (from the Greek word for "man," *anēr*), while cowardice was associated with effeminacy. Likewise, men were expected to have various masculine-coded emotions and traits related to courage, such as boldness, daring, fearlessness, assertiveness, endurance, toughness, anger, hate or enmity, savageness, aggression, and the desire for vengeance.¹³ Similarly, men were expected to possess a cluster of desires that express ambition (*philotimia*) and competitiveness (*philonikia*), because such drives motivate them to pursue the glory, honor, victory, and power that signify martial and political excellence.

The social domain of Greek *women*, by contrast, was inside the *oikos* itself. Athenian women were expected to serve as submissive daughters, wives, and mothers, and their social functions were defined in terms of those roles within the household.¹⁴ Conversely, they were expected to *avoid* the masculine sphere of politics and warfare outside the home and were denied the rights of participation in government that were granted to male citizens.¹⁵ Plato's contemporary Aristophanes captures this idea in his *Lysistrata*, where the title character describes her husband's response whenever she tries to discuss Athens' military policies with him: "Right away he glares at me and tells me to get back to my loom ... saying, 'War will be the business of men'" (lines 519–20).¹⁶ As this passage suggests, Greeks especially associated women with the skills of sewing and weaving, but Athenian women's domestic responsibilities extended significantly beyond that task as well. Simply put, they were charged with supervising the *oikos* and the people and possessions within it: bearing and raising children, taking care of the family, and watching over and managing the household's finances, food supplies, and other material assets. This function is often characterized as a form of watchful guardianship (*phulattein*) or safekeeping (*sōzein*). As Aristotle succinctly states, "The household functions of a man and of a woman are different: his business is to acquire (*ktasthai*) and hers is to watch over (*phulattein*)" (*Pol.* 1277b24–25). Likewise, Plato's *Meno* explains to Socrates:

A man's virtue consists in being able to engage in the affairs of the city and in doing so benefit his loved ones and harm his enemies. ... If you want the virtue of a woman, it is not difficult to describe: she must manage the home well (*tên oikian eu oikein*), safeguard (*sōzousan*) what is inside it, and be obedient to her husband. (*Meno* 71a)¹⁷

In line with this socially assigned role, Athenian women were encouraged to have only those qualities deemed appropriate for daughters, wives, and mothers. The primary virtue of Greek femininity was *sōphrosunē*, which is often translated as “moderation” (as we will do in what follows), but which bore a complex range of interrelated meanings and could also encompass or be identified with traits like chastity, self-control, modesty, and a sense of shame, as well as quietness, discretion, and obedience to superiors.¹⁸ Women were also supposed to have (and assumed innately to possess) emotional qualities that made them well-suited for motherhood and care of the family. They were expected to be soft-hearted, warm, gentle, affectionate, friendly, loving, nurturing, peaceful, cautious, and protective toward their children and other members of their household. In his *Economics*, for example, Xenophon's Ischomachus explains, “Knowing that he had made women's nature for, and imposed on her, the rearing of newborns, the god meted out to her a larger portion of affection (*stergein*) for them than to the man” (*Economics* 7.24).¹⁹

The masculine/feminine dichotomy, then, corresponded to a number of other binaries in Greek culture, such as public/private, city/household, war/peace, courage/moderation, toughness/gentleness, enmity/friendship, and so on. These dichotomies, in turn, were closely connected in Greek literature with the psychological concept of *thumos*, the namesake for Plato's spirited part of the soul. *Thumos* was the most common psychological term in Homer (occurring over 700 times) and was used prolifically in poetry leading up to the fourth century. By contrast, Plato's contemporaries used the term relatively infrequently in colloquial speech, which meant that in his time it had something of an archaic or lyrical ring to it. This is significant because it means that in naming the middle part of the soul after *thumos*, Plato invokes the term's rich connotations in earlier literature. In particular, Plato's conception of the spirited part draws heavily on the epic and poetic tradition of using *thumos* to refer to the source, seat, or subject of emotions and other related psychic qualities. Therefore, in order to understand the kind of character Plato seeks in his guardian men and women—who are selected, educated, and socialized largely with the spirited part of their souls in mind—it is necessary to consider how *thumos* is related to conventional Greek ideas about masculinity and femininity.

Greek literature makes *thumos* responsible for emotions, virtues, and qualities that appear on both sides of the masculine/feminine binary. This point is correlated with the fact that *thumos* is often characterized in quasi-corporeal terms.²⁰ Most importantly for present purposes, *thumos* is often described using language related to the opposed physical qualities of hardness and softness. It can be hard, firm, compact, tight, and obdurate, or it can be soft, unstable, loose, flexible, and pliant, and this dichotomy corresponds with the gendered division of psychological qualities. A “hard” *thumos* is responsible for masculine-coded emotions and traits, and a “soft” *thumos* for feminine ones.²¹ Social norms and moral expectations, therefore, required that men possess a spirit that is relatively harder and firmer, and women one that is softer and more yielding.

Consider a few representative examples relevant to our discussion. To begin with, in epic and poetic literature an unbending *thumos* is required for the manly resolve

involved in vigorous martial exertion and the courageous pursuit of honor, fame, and glory. In such contexts *thumos* is often described approvingly using synonyms for “hard” or metaphorical language that likens it to a strong, solid metal. Determined soldiers, for example, can be described as having “iron-hearted (*sidērophrōn*) *thumos* burning with manly courage (*andreia*)” or a “stout” (*alkimon*) *thumos*.²² By contrast, an unstable, supple, or liquescent spirit is associated with weakness and cowardice; the term “soft” (*malakos*) can mean both “cowardly” and “effeminate”; and “softness of spirit” (*rhaithumia*) can be used to characterize a contemptibly easygoing, feminine, or languid *thumos*. Indeed, any perceived excess of “soft” emotions in a man, including even a positive one like paternal love, is eligible for reproach in gendered terms:

And now, my son, give your hand to your father’s touch, and fare well. Restraint forbids me from warmly embracing (*aspazomai*) you to excess. For it’s an unwise man who shows the *thumos* of a woman. (Euripides, fr. 362.33–34)

While a man is expected to have some affection for his friends and loved ones, it is a sign of censurable femininity to feel or display such emotion with undue intensity.

Compare the terms in which women are criticized in Greek literature. On the one hand, they are not subject to the same kind of blame as men for cowardice or weakness, or for displaying emotions that express soft-heartedness or strong attachment to others, such as pity, grief, sorrow, longing, or love. Even where such things are admonished in women, they are attributed to the predictable flaws and excesses of their nature. Conversely, precisely because women are expected to be soft-hearted, loving, and affectionate, they are subject to criticism *as women* when they fail to show the appropriate warmth and tenderness to their family members. When Penelope, for example, is finally reunited with her husband Odysseus after 20 years, she is initially skeptical of his identity and aloof, for which she is scolded by their son Telemachus:

My mother—hardly a mother!—whose *thumos* is unbending (*apēnea*), why do you shrink away from my father and not sit by his side? ... No other woman would harden (*tetlēoti*) her *thumos* as you do ... but your heart (*kradiē*) is always harder (*stereōterē*) than stone (*lithoio*). (Homer, *Odyssey* 23.97–103).²³

By failing to welcome her husband with the spontaneous uxorial affection characteristic of a soft and womanly *thumos*, Penelope violates the norms of femininity: she is “hardly a mother” and acts as no other *woman* would on account of her hard, masculine spirit. Her emotional reconciliation with her husband takes place only after Odysseus proves his identity and Penelope’s spirit is finally “softened”: her *thumos* is “persuaded” and her heart “melts” (23.205, 230).

Euripides’ *Medea* provides another illustration. Throughout the drama Medea’s plot to kill her children out of revenge against her faithless husband Jason is attributed to her angry *thumos* and “savage” (*agrion*) nature (98). The Chorus argues that she would have to be “a stone or a piece of iron” to go through with her plan:

How will you summon up the boldness (*thrasos*) or the resolve in hand and heart (*kardia*) to dare (*tolman*) this dreadful deed? ... When your children fall as suppliants at your feet, surely you will not drench your hands in their blood out of hard-hearted (*tlēmon*) *thumos*. (856–65)

When Jason finally discovers her heinous deed, he condemns her: “No Greek woman would have dared (*etlê*) to do this ... You are a she-lion, not a woman, with a nature more savage (*agrioteran*) than Scylla the Tuscan monster!” (1323–43). Medea, then, is criticized on two interrelated grounds that are both attributed to her adamant *thumos*. Not only does she fail to treat her children with appropriate motherly love and protection, but she also shares in masculine qualities like boldness, daring, savageness, and anger that are incompatible with the soft and gentle nature expected of women. Accordingly, the charges against her are framed in sharply gendered terms: she is *no woman at all*, but an unfeeling rock or a vicious beast.

In the early Greek tradition, then, masculine virtues and psychological qualities are associated with a “hard” *thumos*, and feminine ones with a “soft” one, and this dichotomy is closely connected with the different social expectations of men and women. In the next two sections, we discuss how Plato draws on and reworks these dichotomies for his own ethical and political purposes.

Plato’s critique of vicious masculinity

In the *Republic* Plato’s critical assessment of the traditional conception of masculinity is evident both in his characterization of contemporary Athenian society, as well as in Socrates’ positive account of the psychology, education, and lifestyle of the guardians of the Kallipolis. In both cases, moreover, Plato pays special attention to spirited psychology. As we will see, two connected points of concern emerge. First, psychological qualities that both Plato and the Greek literary tradition attribute to an overly tough and masculine *thumos* (like anger, envy, hostility, truculence, and hatred), as well as the behavior that follows from them (like fighting, rivalry, and revenge), are morally bad for individuals and politically ruinous for cities. And second, the popular morality that prevails in places like Athens inevitably promotes, and is intertwined with, an ideal of virility that fosters precisely such hyper-masculine traits and behavior among its citizens.

Thumos makes its first appearance in the dialogue in book 2. After determining that the city will need a dedicated class of warriors, Socrates and Glaucon consider the kind of natural character that makes people fit for such a role. According to the tripartite theory Socrates formally introduces later in book 4, spirit corresponds to the city’s warrior class in the dialogue’s city-soul analogy (while reason and appetite correspond to its philosopher-rulers and productive class, respectively), and the character of the warriors and rulers themselves, it turns out, is defined largely by their spirited psychology. Socrates first explores this idea by likening good guardians to good guard *dogs*, because both must be “courageous” and capable of “fighting well.”²⁴ He asks, “And will a horse, a dog, or any other animal be courageous if it isn’t spirited (*thumoeidês*)? Or haven’t you noticed just how invincible and unbeatable spirit (*thumos*) is, so that its presence makes the whole soul fearless and unconquerable?” Here Socrates initially identifies a familiar positive use for manly courage and qualities associated with it. For the purposes of waging war and protecting the city against its enemies, soldiers must have a firm and savage *thumos* that makes them pugnacious, competitive, and resilient. However, Socrates immediately points out the dangers inherent in those same masculine traits. Spirited aggression, while useful against outsiders (*allogroioi*), is a destructive force within the city itself. A tough and masculine *thumos* is conducive to anger, rivalry, fighting, and violence, yet those very behaviors are inappropriate among citizens and incompatible with

civic unity and stability. If their warriors apply the same hard-hearted asperity toward one another that they do toward enemies, Socrates worries, “they won’t have to wait around for others to destroy the city, but will do it themselves first” (375b–c).

This worry is subsequently reflected in his account of early education. Having determined that the ideal *nature* of the guardians must not be characterized by an overly savage or “masculine” *thumos*, Socrates now warns about the kind of *nurture* that can produce the same undue aggressiveness. On the one hand, Socrates insists that physical training or gymnastics is an important component of early education because it stimulates and exercises the spirited part and thereby makes a person tough and courageous. However, excessive or single-minded devotion to gymnastics is ethically harmful. It “overtightens” *thumos*, so that it becomes “hard” and “harsh” and the person becomes “savage” and “more courageous” (*andrioterōs*)—literally, *manlier*—than they should be. As a result they “no longer make any use of persuasion, but bull their way through every situation by force and savagery like a wild animal” (410e–11e). This criticism calls to mind the ruthless spirit of Achilles after he deserts his fellow soldiers in indignation at having his “prize” Briseis taken away from him by Agamemnon. Although his beleaguered friends beg for his return, they are unable to “persuade the *thumos* in his breast” (*Il.* 9.587), and Ajax complains that Achilles’ *thumos* is “proud,” “unbending,” and intent on “savageness” (*agrimon*), and he has no regard for the friendship of his own comrades (*Il.* 9.628–42). Similarly, just as Achilles is impervious to the pleas of his friends and hence incapable of reconciling with them on account of his calcified spirit, Plato’s Socrates warns that overhardening *thumos* through physical and martial training produces individuals who are emotionally unfit to cooperate with one another and participate in peaceful human relationships and communities. Later Socrates surveys additional moral flaws that he attributes to an excessively competitive and aggressive spirited part: unchecked love of honor (*philotimia*) and love of victory (*philonikia*) give rise to violence, irrational anger, and the socially poisonous emotion of envy (*phthonos*), while stubbornness and irritability are correlated with a “swollen” and “tense” *thumos* (586c–d, 590a–b).²⁵

Socrates’ proposals for the guardians’ upbringing and the culture of the Kallipolis more generally are also designed to discourage masculine-coded spirited qualities and actions that Plato considers morally pernicious. Of special note, Socrates purges traditional poetry of content that promotes enmity, hostility, and strife among citizens. Consider two outstanding examples. First, Socrates explains, “If we want the guardians of our city to think that it’s shameful to be easily provoked into hating one another, then we mustn’t allow any stories about gods warring, fighting, or plotting against one another.” This includes tales of “battles” among the gods, as well as any stories of the immortals “hating their families and friends” (378b–d). Second, Plato is especially eager to condemn the Homeric depiction of *Achilles*, who is the paragon of both manly courage and implacable spirited rage for the Greeks. Socrates refuses to accept poetry that portrays Achilles’ brutality and arrogance toward gods and humans, including his disrespectful words to Apollo, his attempt to “fight” the river god Scamander, his gory massacre of 12 Trojan youths as a sacrifice for his fallen friend Patroclus, or his vengeful defilement of Hector’s corpse, which he ruthlessly drags around behind his chariot for days (389e–91c).²⁶ Conflict, fighting, hatred, gratuitous acts of violence and revenge—these are all masculine-coded behaviors that emanate from an unyielding *thumos*, and Plato insists upon expelling them from the Kallipolis as vicious types of manliness that threaten political harmony and the virtue of its citizens.²⁷

The potential for spirited aggression to have destructive moral and political effects also features prominently in Plato's critical analysis of Athenian culture. As we have seen, contemporary norms required that men compete effectively in the public realm to obtain resources for their private households. For Plato, however, this ideal reflects and reinforces a value system that is toxic for individuals and cities alike. The prioritization of personal gain pits citizens against one another as competitors for limited goods, thereby promoting "manly" spirited rivalry and contention that undermine justice and civic unity. Plato's assessment becomes evident early in the dialogue through the joint speeches of Glaucon and Adeimantus. In book 2 the brothers present an extended case for Thrasymachus' earlier claim that "justice is the advantage of the stronger." According to their account, the unjust life is *in itself* happier than the just life, and everyone knows that, but people pretend to believe otherwise in order to enjoy a reputation for justice and avoid the usual penalties of injustice. Glaucon explains:

People honor justice not as good but because they are too weak to do injustice with impunity. Someone who has the power to do this, however, *and is truly a man* (*aletheiōs andra*) wouldn't make an agreement with anyone not to do injustice in order not to suffer it. ... The reason for this is the desire to get more than others (*pleonexia*), which is what everyone's nature naturally pursues as good, though they are forced by law into the perversion of treating equality with honor. (359a–c)

For Greeks, "getting more" or *pleonexia* refers to the greedy and limitless pursuit of more than one's fair share of wealth, property, power, and other worldly resources at the expense of one's enemies and rivals. According to Glaucon, this desire for "more" is the deepest and most natural human motivation, which is why it is *by nature* just and right to take whatever one can get away with taking. *Pleonexia* is thus inherently opposed to human laws and "conventional" justice, which demand fairness and equality and set artificial limits on how much people can acquire and by what means they can acquire it.

The crucial feature of Glaucon's account for present purposes is that he identifies the ability to get away with injustice with masculine virtue. A "real man" is someone with the "power" to acquire resources unlawfully through deception, persuasive speech, or the use of violent force. Such men rely on their "manly courage" and "strength" (361b), while those who are unable or unwilling to commit injustice are either "weak" or "foolish" (361d). Adeimantus corroborates his brother's point, concluding, "No one is just *willingly*. Through unmanliness (*anandria*) or old age or some other weakness, people do indeed cast blame on injustice. But it's obvious that they do so only because they lack the power to do injustice" (366c–d). Their message is clear and emphatic: successful injustice in the service of *pleonexia* is a sign of manly strength, courage, power, and intelligence, while the inability or unwillingness to violate the law for material gain is a sign of unmanly weakness, cowardice, impotence, or irrationality.

The significance of this point is amplified by the dialectical function of the brothers' speeches, which present the account of human nature, justice, and happiness to which the rest of the *Republic* constitutes a response. In other words, *the Greek conception of masculinity is inextricably connected in Plato's mind with the worldview he seeks to combat in the dialogue*. Here it is useful to pause to consider the social and political climate of Plato's age. He grew up during the height of Athenian imperialism and the decades-long Peloponnesian War that devastated his city's population and brought its empire to

an end. During that time Athens was filled with competing factions that brought perpetual unrest and led to multiple bloody civil wars. Rivalries and private ambitions among political leaders had destabilizing effects on the city, and the use of political power, lawsuits, and public retaliation against one's perceived enemies within the city was ubiquitous.²⁸ The *Republic* is, among other things, Plato's attempt to diagnose, and offer an alternative to, those volatile political realities. What the speeches of Glaucon and Adeimantus show, therefore, is that Plato took *pleonexia* and the acquisitive ideal of manliness to be interconnected components of the prevailing ethical orientation that serves as the dialogue's foil.²⁹ Athenian popular morality produces a conception of "true men" that encourages them to pursue and seize whatever resources it is in their power to acquire—even when doing so conflicts with justice or the public good.³⁰ Outside of the *Republic*, we find corroboration of this assessment in Plato's portrayal of the character Callicles in the *Gorgias*. Callicles argues that "strong" and "powerful" men are naturally entitled to "get more" than others, and that it is right for them to use their "manly courage" and resourcefulness to do so. Indeed, he claims, it would be "shameful" for them to exercise "moderation" or restraint of their appetites and pleasures, qualities that most people praise only because of their own "weakness" and feminine "softness" (*malakia*). Callicles chides Socrates, moreover, for his undue devotion to philosophy, which makes a man "unmanly" (*anandros*) by interfering with his participation in civic life and making him powerless to protect himself, his family, and his property in civil disputes (483a–86a, 491a–92c). Importantly, moreover, despite Callicles' own clear sense of superiority to the masses, Socrates describes him as echoing the popular views of the Athenian *demos*. In Plato's mind, a position like Callicles' or Thrasymachus' follows naturally from the values that most people hold and live by (whether they admit that they do or not).³¹

Pleonexia, according to this picture, is inextricably bound up with a prevailing conception of manliness that validates and encourages internecine expressions of *thumos* for the sake of private pleasures and advantages for the individual and their household. Passages throughout the *Republic* confirm this idea,³² but two further examples from Socrates' account of degenerate types of cities and individuals in book 8 stand out. The first is his description of the process by which a virtuous man's son, one who shares his father's good nature, is corrupted in a badly governed city like Athens so that he becomes an honor-loving "timocrat" ruled by the spirited part of his soul. The father himself "avoids honors, ruling offices, lawsuits, and all such meddling in other people's affairs" and "is even willing to get less (*ellatousthai*) than others." However, Socrates explains:

[His son] listens to his mother complaining that her husband isn't one of the rulers and that she gets less (*ellatoumenēs*) than other women as a result. Then she sees that he's not very concerned about money and that he doesn't fight back (*machomenon*) when he's insulted, whether in private or in public in the courts, but tolerates everything of that sort in a soft-spirited (*rhaithumōs*) way. ... Angered by all this, she tells her son that his father is unmanly (*anandros*) and too yielding (*aneimenos*). ... And the household servants of men like that ... say similar things to the son in private. When they see the father failing to prosecute someone who owes him money or has done him injustice in some other way, they urge the son to take revenge (*timōrēsetai*) on all such people when he grows up and to be more of a man (*anēr mallon*) than his father. The boy hears and sees the same kind of things when he goes out: those in the city who do their own work

are called fools and considered nobodies, while those who meddle in other people's affairs are honored and praised. (549c–50a)

Once again Socrates characterizes prevailing ideals of manliness in terms of participation in the culture of competitive *pleonexia* for the sake of the *oikos*. Among the members of his household and his peers, the father's willingness to "get less" and "do his own work" is considered (just as in Callicles' account) a failure of virile obligation, and he is contrasted with real "men" who successfully "meddle in others' affairs" by taking part in agonistic public life.³³ Importantly, his abhorrently flexible and "yielding" behavior is attributed to an unduly feminine or "soft *thumos*." Other language Plato uses here is also telling. The term "get less" or *ellatousthai* is the Greek contrary of "getting more" or *pleonexia*, and "doing one's own work" and "meddling in others' affairs" are exactly the phrases with which Socrates has earlier defined justice and injustice, respectively, in response to Glaucon and Adeimantus' challenge (433a–b, 443c–44a). Plato is signaling, therefore, that the life popular opinion deems feminine and soft-spirited in a society like Athens is in fact indicative of virtue, while the so-called manly life of agonistic public engagement exemplifies exactly the kind of "meddling" behavior that Plato identifies with political injustice. This passage, then, reinforces that, for Plato, traditional norms of masculinity are at the heart of a value system that undermines justice at the personal and political levels. The public sphere in which the young man is encouraged to participate is characterized by mutual insult, fighting, duplicity, injustice, and revenge among citizens, and the effect of social pressure from his family and friends is that he chooses a life of spirited ambition rather than the quiet, just life of his father. The culture of manliness corrupts the young person's soul and fills the city itself with conflict in the name of private gain for the *oikos*.

The second passage is from Socrates' description of how the son of a self-controlled oligarchic man becomes a "democratic" youth who values the freedom to pursue pleasure and satisfy his appetites above all. One of the pivotal factors in his development is the influence of associates and arguments that denigrate self-control, shame, orderliness, and moderation, which they call "unmanly cowardice" (*anandria*) or "slavishness," while praising self-indulgence, violence, lawlessness, and shamelessness, which they give names like "freedom" and "manly courage" (*andreia*) (560c–e). This rhetoric parallels Callicles' defense of *pleonexia* in characterizing traditionally positive qualities as feminine-coded vice, and traditional vices as laudable virility. It also echoes Thucydides' account of Greek political culture during the Peloponnesian War and the civil conflicts associated with it:

The words applied to actions had to change their usual meanings. Reckless audacity came to be thought of as comradely courage (*andreia*), while far-sighted hesitation became well-disguised cowardice (*deilia*); moderation (*to sophron*) was a front for unmanliness (*to anandron*); and ... wild aggression was a mark of manhood (*anēr*). (3.82.3–4)

Similarly, in the public speeches and debates that Thucydides records throughout the text, then Athenians (whom he describes as motivated by "private profit and private ambition," 2.65.7) pride themselves on their manly courage and often characterize acts of imperial aggression as expressions of admirable qualities like daring, power, and spirited zeal (*prothumia*).³⁴ Conversely, speakers who advise policies of peace and caution are always in danger of being charged with womanly passivity or cowardice

by their critics.³⁵ Socrates' remarks on the democratic youth confirms that Plato shares Thucydides' general evaluation of late fifth-century Greek politics. Significantly, the perverse value system that corrupts the democratic young man also features in the downfall of the constitution he resembles. Democracy is ruined by its own "insatiable appetite for freedom," which breeds lawlessness, lack of shame, contempt for obedience, and angry indignation in response to self-control. This discussion, therefore, provides additional evidence that Plato took the acquisitive ideal of masculinity to be an essential, and politically toxic, feature of democratic and Athenian culture.

Plato's dual concerns (a) that competitive and aggressive expressions of *thumos* easily become ethically and politically toxic, and (b) that Athenian pleonectic culture promotes precisely such spirited competition and aggression among citizens, converge in his positive lifestyle proposals for the guardian class. Socrates' social and economic policies for the guardians are explicitly designed to prevent the kind of spirited aggression toward one another that characterizes the culture of "manly" acquisitiveness. The key element of Socrates' proposals is his elimination of the private *oikos*, and with it men's social function of acquiring private resources and prestige for it. The guardians will not be allowed to possess their own households, nor any of the private property, food, and money that it encompasses and contains. Otherwise, Socrates explains, they will become "hostile masters" of the other citizens instead of their guardians and "allies": "They'll spend their whole lives hating and being hated, plotting and being plotted against, more afraid of internal than of external enemies, and they'll hasten both themselves and the whole city to almost immediate ruin" (417a–b). Later Socrates extends this policy even to private *families*. None of the guardians is to have their own private wives (or husbands) or children.³⁶ If different people each had their own separate sense of what is privately theirs, it would "tear the city apart," as "one person would drag into his own house whatever he could take away from the others, and another would drag things into a different house to a different wife and children" (464c–d). By contrast, because almost nothing will be private among the guardians, lawsuits and mutual accusations of injustice will virtually disappear among them, and "they'll avoid all the conflict that arises between people because of the possession of money, children, and families" (464d–e). Socrates concedes, however, that at least *one* thing will necessarily continue to belong to each individual—their own physical bodies—and the unavoidability of even that small element of privacy among them will mean that there is still *some* potential for minor personal insults or injuries. However, they will be encouraged to defend themselves against slander or assault and thereby to discharge any feelings of aggression that might develop before they become politically disruptive: "If someone who became angry (*thumoito*) vented their angry spirit (*thumos*) in this way, it would be less likely to lead him into more serious disputes" (465a).

The logic of these passages makes it clear that eliminating the private *oikos* is designed to occlude a range of emotions and behavior associated with spirited aggression and masculinity: hatred, rivalry, and public competition for private goods. Socrates' point about venting *thumos* in rare trifling cases involving the body is the exception that proves the rule: it shows that the kind of aggression he wants to forestall *in general* is precisely the sort he had in mind when he first introduced the concept of spirit in book 2. A hard and tough *thumos* is conducive to the "manliness" that makes people and animals fight, and that is precisely why it is inappropriate among citizens. Perhaps more shockingly for his Greek audience, Plato even discourages violent confrontation with *other cities*: war is not a priority for the warriors, but a last resort.

The disciplined citizens of the Kallipolis will have no need or desire to instigate wars for the sake of the material resources and power that other cities fight for (422c–23b), and even when it becomes necessary to defend itself against other cities, the guardians are to conduct themselves “moderately” and treat fellow Greeks “gently,” like natural friends temporarily gone astray, rather than as enemies (469b–71b). The most striking social, economic, and foreign policy proposals of the *Republic*, therefore, are largely conceived as a way of divesting the city of vicious expressions of traditional masculinity and the culture of *pleonexia* it supports. The guardians of the Kallipolis by design have little or no opportunity, whether at home or abroad, to participate in the agonistic rivalries and aggression that emanate from a hard-hearted *thumos* and typify men’s behavior in places like Athens.

Plato’s promotion of virtuous femininity

Plato complements his critique of vicious masculinity by promoting virtuous forms of *femininity* that he considers morally and politically valuable. Because an overly rigid *thumos* makes people violent brutes and sows hostility among citizens, Socrates insists that manly virtues, qualities, and behavior must be combined with and tempered by feminine-coded ones rooted in a “soft-hearted” *thumos*.³⁷ Once again, this begins with Socrates’ account of the psychology and education of the guardians. In the first place, the aggressive aspect of the guardians’ natural temperament must be balanced with inborn *gentleness*. Socrates returns to his canine analogy to explain. Dogs by nature distinguish between what is “familiar” (*oikeion*) to them and what is “alien” (*alotrion*), and although a good guard dog is hostile toward strangers, it is also instinctively *gentle* and *friendly* to those it recognizes. “When a dog sees someone it doesn’t know,” he notes, “it becomes aggressive before anything bad happens to it. But when it knows someone, it warmly welcomes him, even if it has never received anything good from him” (375e–76b). It is precisely the combination of natural aggression to outsiders and gentleness to insiders that makes it a good watchdog. Likewise, effective guardians of the Kallipolis must be born with a nature that makes them not only aggressive toward the city’s enemies, but also gentle and kind toward friends and fellow citizens. The language Socrates uses in his analogy is especially significant. His favorite general term for denoting the “familiar” group to which dogs and guardians show friendly warmth, *oikeion*, literally means “belonging to the household.” To treat someone *oikeiōs*—“like a family member” or “with affection”—is to treat them in a feminine way. For example, when Aristophanes’ Lysistrata, leader of a women’s coup in Athens, attempts to instill peace by reconciling the city with its rival Sparta, she identifies women’s gentle warmth as an irenic virtue, commanding her compatriots, “Don’t handle them with a rough and tough hand, in the brutish manner our husbands used to treat us, but as women ought to, the way one would a family member: affectionately (*oikeiōs*)” (1116–18). Likewise, the term for “warmly welcomes” (or “warmly embraces”), *aspazesthai*, is the same one used in the passage from Euripides cited earlier to describe behavior that it would be censurable for a man to express toward his son because it reveals “the *thumos* of a woman.” In other words, the natural feelings of warmth, affection, care, and tenderness that Socrates demands of the guardians express precisely the sort of gentleness and protective love that a woman is expected to show toward the members of her *oikos*. The guardians of the Kallipolis must be distinguished not only by their exceptional (masculine-coded) pugnacity, but also by their exceptional (feminine-coded) capacity for cherishing others.

Socrates' program of early education reflects the same goal. Gymnastic education that hardens or tightens *thumos* and makes people courageous warriors must be balanced with musical education that softens or relaxes it, thereby promoting a more "feminine," tender, and "yielding" spirit.³⁸ Although Socrates warns that excessive music makes spirit *too* soft and leads to cowardice (just as excessive gymnastics makes it too hard and leads to barbarity), he is clear that certain forms of softness are ethically valuable and imperative. To begin with, he explains that when someone is exposed to music, "right away whatever spirit (*thumos*) he has is softened, just as iron is tempered, and from being hard and useless, it is made useful" (410d–11e). Here the idea is that education requires *malleability*. An adamant spirit makes a person impervious to the influence of others and thus incapable of moral improvement. A soft *thumos*, by contrast, can be *shaped* by parents, peers, and educators like a ductile metal, and the person's emotional disposition thereby fashioned in ways that are conducive to virtue.

Moreover, the particular qualities and habits that Socrates' musical program aims to mold in citizens prominently include several that require a soft, relaxed, or yielding *thumos*. Of special note, music cultivates the virtue of moderation, which Socrates identifies as the necessary counterpoise to manly courage. Notably, when the *Laws* endorses a similar balance of "courageous" and "moderate" forms of education, it explicitly identifies the former as "masculine" (*arrenōpos*) and the latter as "feminine" (*thēlugenēs*) (802e). In the *Republic* moderation is correlated with "gentleness" and "orderliness" (410d–e), and it is on display whenever human beings interact "peacefully" or "non-violently," or when they "yield" to one another as a result of their flexibility and openness to persuasion and teaching (399b–c). Furthermore, Socrates' musical program is designed to promote three feminine-coded traits associated with moderation. First, his educational policies stress, arguably more than any other single emotion, the cultivation of a sense of shame. The young guardians must be habituated to experience spontaneous feelings of contempt toward disgraceful conduct and people, as well as respectful regard for the opinion of their peers and superiors, with the result that they would be ashamed to engage in morally vicious behavior themselves and hence will act with appropriate discretion and restraint.³⁹ Second, the young guardians and warriors must also practice quiet obedience to the city's rulers. Stories of silent submission to authority will be used to encourage them to accept their subordinate socio-political position and to defer to the superior judgment of their leaders (389d–90a). And third, contrary to the pleonectic ideal that valorizes the ruthless pursuit of one's desires, the guardians of the Kallipolis must be taught to exercise self-control and mastery over appetites for pleasure and money (390a–e). Socrates takes special note that this should include a form of chastity. They must restrain their erotic desires, never allowing lust to overcome them, and two of the most common venues for sexual gratification among Athenian men are forbidden or substantially regulated: courtesans are not permitted (404d), and pederastic relationships must be limited to the forms of physical intimacy a father would show his own son (403a–c).⁴⁰ Education of the guardians, therefore, emphasizes the inculcation of several traits that are considered defining virtues of Greek womanhood.⁴¹ Shame, obedience, and control of appetites, moreover, are all psychological qualities and behavior that have roots in the spirited part of the soul on Plato's theory.⁴²

Music also aims to nurture the guardians' inborn spirited gentleness by promoting peace, friendship, filial respect, familial love, and mutual care among them. Early education must inspire them to "honor the gods and their parents and not take their

friendship with one another lightly” (386a), and its success is measured largely by the intensity of the guardians’ friendship and “care” (*kēdos*) for the *polis* and one another (412c–d).⁴³ The crowning proposal of Socrates’ program is the “noble lie,” which teaches that everyone in the city is born autochthonously from the earth, and that the local land itself is therefore their “mother” and all citizens “brothers” to one another (414d–15e). The social arrangements of the city, meanwhile, are designed to reinforce this myth. The corollary of Socrates’ abolition of private households and families is his proposal that the guardians all live, dwell, and dine together, and that “wives and children” be “shared” or “common” among all (416d–17a, 457c–d). Through various clandestine measures, the guardians will not know the identities of their biological offspring, but will instead consider *all* young people of certain ages their sons and daughters, and their children in turn will consider all relevant adults their parents. The same will be true of other familial relationships. Because biological consanguinity will be kept secret, all members of the guardians class will consider one another to be siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, and so on, depending on their relative ages (459d–61e). By contrast to other cities in which people think of some of their fellow citizens and rulers as “outsiders” (*allogrioi*) to their private circles and homes, every guardian will consider all others to be family or “household members” (*oikeioi*) (463b–c).⁴⁴ As a result, they will not only “mouth the names of family” but also “do all the things that go along with the names”: caring for one another, acting with a sense of shame, being obedient to parents and elders, protecting their young and watching over their education, and sharing one another’s “pleasures and pains” or joys and sorrows (424c–d, 463c–64b, 465a–b). In other words, once again, the social arrangements of the city are designed to exploit, instill, and intensify emotions and habits that are strongly associated with women and their role of exercising protective love and care over the household and their *oikeioi*.

All of this is underscored by some terminological considerations. As we saw earlier, Greek authors in Plato’s time regularly use specific, almost quasi-technical language to distinguish between men’s and women’s roles with respect to the household. The masculine function of gaining resources for the *oikos* is described as “acquiring,” *ktasthai* (or in the popular mind, “getting more,” *pleonektein*), and the feminine work of caring for and protecting family members and resources within the home is standardly characterized using two key terms: *phulattein*, which means “to guard” or “watch over,” and *sōzein*, which means to “preserve,” “keep safe,” or “safeguard.” Significantly, Plato selects exactly these terms to designate the guardian class and its defining virtues and activities. Most obviously, *phulattein* is the very word Plato uses to name the guardians: they are called *phulakes*, and their job is to *phulattein*. In addition, Socrates identifies the masculine virtue of courage itself as a form of *sōzein*. More specifically, it is the psychological “preservation”—or what we might think of as a kind of resilient “retention”—of correct belief or knowledge. At the civic level, the warrior class is uniquely responsible for the virtue of *andreia*, which Socrates defines as the “safeguarding of the belief that has been instilled by the law through education,” and “not abandoning it because of pains, pleasures, desires, or fears” (429a–d). Likewise, at the individual level, the virtue of courage is identified with the psychic function of *thumos* in the tripartite soul. The person is courageous “when the spirited part safeguards, through pleasures and pains, the declarations of reason about what is to be feared and what is not” (442b–c). In other words, individuals share in courage when *thumos* keeps their lawful and rational beliefs “safe and sound,” so to speak, by protecting them against the influence of their vicious appetites, which threaten to make people change their minds about moral matters and consequently act badly. On this view, courage as feminine *sōzein*

turns out to bear conspicuous family resemblance to the virtue of moderation understood as self-control. And indeed, Socrates even illustrates his conception of courage by likening it to the process of dyeing wool. Just as an effective dye ensures that colors stay fast against soaps and cleansers, courage ensures that virtuous judgments remain intact in a person's soul and are acted on even when exposed to the "detergents" of irrational impulse (429d–30b).⁴⁵ Socrates, then, not only defines *andreia*—manliness itself—using a common term for the domestic activity of "safeguarding," but even invokes a textile metaphor that calls to mind the feminine-coded tasks of producing and laundering clothing.⁴⁶

Conclusion: Plato's views in context

According to a long history of interpretation, Plato's treatment of women in the *Republic* operates on two relatively straightforward principles: eradicate femininity from the city as much as possible and make guardian women more like men. From a psychological perspective, moreover, debate about his position has been shaped by emphasis on the dichotomy of *erōs/logos* or appetite/reason. We have shown that these approaches are incomplete and sometimes misleading, however, for several reasons. First of all, focusing exclusively on the appetitive and rational aspects of human nature omits the spirited part of the soul, which plays a central role in Plato's treatment of guardian psychology and the gender norms implicated in popular ethics and politics. Secondly, Plato does not want to get rid of *all* conventionally feminine traits, but only a subset of them that he considers vices. Indeed, Plato actually places positive ethical value on many qualities associated with femininity and a tender *thumos*—like moderation, shame, and deep affection for one's *oikeioi*—and he is eager to instill those qualities in guardian men as well as women. Third, while Plato does want to discourage certain traits associated with femininity that he considers vicious, he is no less keen to eliminate masculine qualities and pursuits that he attributes to a savage *thumos* and finds morally and politically toxic. In fact, he is even *more* insistent on combatting vicious ideals of manliness because he takes them to be salient and defining features of the pleonectic worldview he challenges in the *Republic*. Finally, at the same time that Plato includes women in traditionally masculine spheres, activities, and virtues, he is also reworking what those spheres and activities are and what it means to have those virtues in the first place. The life of a warrior is no longer defined by the slaying of enemies on the battlefield, but first and foremost by loving watchfulness over one's fellow citizens.⁴⁷ The virtue of courage or "manliness," likewise, no longer requires the ruthless pursuit of resources and honor in war or politics, but rather the safeguarding of lawful belief out of obedience to rulers and reason. A "tough" *thumos*, likewise, is no longer used primarily for fighting off external enemies, but rather for combatting the *internal* enemy of irrational desire in order to achieve something very much like the feminine virtue of moderation or self-control. The nature of the traditionally masculine activity of political participation itself, meanwhile, is fundamentally altered as the city is transformed into a public *oikos*: the work of both women and men guardians alike is ultimately to be done, in an important sense, *within the household*. In short, relative to his contemporary norms, Plato does not merely seek to masculinize women in the Kallipolis, but also to feminize men. Or, more accurately, he challenges traditional Greek conceptions of masculine and feminine and their associated domains and blurs the boundaries between them by instilling an androgynous psychology and way of life in the guardians that he thinks is conducive to human virtue.

None of this, it should be emphasized, entails that Plato is any sort of unqualified feminist, proto-feminist, or opponent of sexism and inequality. Although our arguments show that some prominent lines of criticism oversimplify Plato's position, important issues remain that caution against characterizing him as a champion of women or nascent feminist ideals. In the first place, we concur with the majority of scholars that it would be anachronistic and misleading to apply the term "feminist" itself to Plato. As many commentators have pointed out, Plato's revolutionary proposals are not motivated by any concern for women's *rights* (he has no interest in or concept of "rights" for *anyone*), nor does he place any positive value on things like liberation, freedom of choice, or bodily autonomy in any meaningful modern sense.⁴⁸ On the contrary, Plato is concerned only with creating "just" cities that allow exceptional individuals, men and women alike, to achieve their full potential for human virtue and wisdom,⁴⁹ and his conception of justice is compatible with, or rather *requires*, significant deception of citizens and limitations on their personal freedoms.⁵⁰ The phrase "exceptional individuals" is also crucial. Plato's Kallipolis is a rigorously socially stratified society, and his reformist ideas for women apply, at least explicitly, only to the guardian class of warriors and rulers.⁵¹ As Julia Annas puts it, "The ideal state might contain many discontented potters' wives wanting to be potters" (Annas 1976, 315).⁵² Indeed, although there are hints in the *Republic* that Plato believes women in the producer class should be able to work as craftspeople according to their talents and desires,⁵³ it is certainly not his priority to insist upon that. Plato is nobody's egalitarian, and his concern is primarily for the elite. Finally, feminist scholars have criticized Plato on several counts that simply fall outside the scope of this paper to address and are not necessarily affected by our arguments.⁵⁴ Our own considered view, then, is that Plato holds women and femininity (as Greeks understood it) in *higher* esteem—and is much more critical of men and masculinity—than most of his contemporaries and peers,⁵⁵ and in ways that scholars have generally underappreciated, but that is certainly compatible with the presence of sexism and ideas fundamentally at odds with feminist principles in his work.⁵⁶ Nothing we have said, in other words, settles the question of how to assess Plato's views of women. It only shows that for those interested in doing the assessing, there is more to take into account than has ordinarily been considered.

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Notes

1 Socrates characterizes excessive displays of grief as "womanish" (387e–88a, 605c–e; cf. 398e and *Phaedo* 117c–e), as well as certain military behavior (469d–e; see n. 26 below), and women's behavior is cast in a negative light at 431b–c, 549c–e, and 557c–d. For critical discussion of these remarks, see Wender 1973, 80–82; Spelman 1988, 28–30, 195 n. 16.

2 Rousseau goes on to criticize Plato for this policy on the grounds that "man and woman are not and ought not to be constituted in the same way in either character or temperament." In a not dissimilar spirit, modern commentators such as Allan Bloom and Walter Soffer, following the work of Leo Strauss, argue that Plato's policies on women are "ironic," or a deliberately comedic parody, on the grounds that they require (and Plato knows they require) an impossible and undesirable denial of the immutable "nature" of women and a "forgetting" of the body (Strauss 1964; Bloom 1968, 380–83; Soffer 1995). Natalie Bluestone, who examines the history of sexism in scholarship on Plato's views of women, provides a trenchant criticism of this line of interpretation (Bluestone 1988, 35–38, 45–50). See also responses to the Straussian approach in Okin 1977, 353–54, 358; J. Smith 1983, 598–99; Scaltsas 1992, 128–29; and Deretić 2013, 161–64.

3 Gregory Vlastos highlights several legal and political rights extended to guardian women in the Kallipolis that were denied to Athenian women and concludes, “Plato’s affirmation of feminism within the ruling class ... is the strongest ever made by anyone in the classical period” (1994). Martha Nussbaum similarly writes, “Plato has a good claim to be called the first feminist philosopher” (1986, 4 n.). Most scholars who characterize Plato as a progressive for his time stop short of calling him a feminist, however. Amy Coplan, for example, argues that Plato may come the “closest” to a feminist position among the ancient Greeks, but that he was nonetheless “not a champion of feminism, nor fairness, nor equality of any kind” (Coplan 1996, 75). For broadly similar assessments, see also N. Smith 1980, 1983; J. Smith 1983; Brisson 2012; Deretić 2013, Harry and Polansky 2016; and our comments in the conclusion.

4 For discussion of the dialogue’s disparaging passages on women by interpreters who emphasize aspects of his progressivism or proto-feminism, see esp. N. Smith 1983, 470; Vlastos 1994, 17–18; Coplan 1996, 69–74; and Harry and Polansky 2016, 262. The most relevant point for our purposes is stated succinctly by Coplan: “Socrates is criticizing women as they are in contemporary Athens and not on the basis of their inherent nature. ... They apply to the common run of women who Plato believed, along with the common run of men, to be perverted and misshapen by their corrupt society and not by their intrinsic natures” (Coplan 1996, 74).

5 Morag Buchan concurs that the *Republic* “educates women to think and behave like men and accept masculine principles and a masculine view of the world” (Buchan 1999, 152). Similar remarks appear in Spelman 1988, 32–33; Tuana and Cowling 1994, 257; McKeen 2006, 543. Julia Annas argues that “Plato the feminist is a myth” in a canonical critique of Plato’s position (Annas 1976). Others who deny Plato’s feminism, criticize his treatment of women, or otherwise question the extent of his progressivism include Pomeroy 1974; Spelman 1988; Buchan 1999; Mallory 2001; Şerban 2014. Dorothea Wender defends the mixed position that Plato was “the nearest thing to a systematic feminist produced by the ancient world” but was nonetheless a “misogynist” (Wender 1973, 75).

6 Cf. Okin 1977, 368; Salkaver 1990, 174–78. Michael Kochin provides the most detailed account of Plato’s reevaluation of Greek gender norms, and our interpretation is aligned with (and indebted to) his on several key points, although his focus and arguments are different (Kochin 2002).

7 Many interpreters take Plato’s egalitarianism to be rooted in the idea that the immortal reasoning part of the soul is genderless, whereas the body and desires associated with it distinguish men from women. Elizabeth Spelman explains, “Plato could see beyond someone’s sex [because] ... while one’s body can be an obstacle to the proper functioning of a philosopher, a woman who is a philosopher will by her nature avoid the ensnarements of her body” (1988: 24). Cf. Forde 1997, 559–61, 666; Brisson 2012, 131; Şerban 2014, 1067.

8 See also Saxonhouse 1976, 204–5; Tuana and Cowling 1994.

9 In addition to the disparaging remarks about (at least some) women and “womanish” behavior noted above (cf. n. 1), two main lines of textual support are commonly cited as evidence of Plato’s sexism or conservatism in the *Republic*. First, Glaucon claims that, although many individual women are “stronger” than many men in many activities, as groups men are “stronger” than women in nearly everything. Socrates evidently approves, claiming, “Women share by nature in every way of life just as men do, but in all of them women are weaker than men” (455c–e). This is the basis for criticism in Annas 1976, 309; Buchan 1999, 141; and McKeen 2006, 534–43. For replies and controversy over the meaning of “weaker,” see Calvert 1975, 241–43; Lesser 1979; J. Smith 1983, 600–05; Coplan 1996, 69; Blair 2012, chap. 5; Harry and Polansky 2016, 264–67. Second, Plato uses androcentric language to describe the guardian class: the men are described as “sharing” or even “possessing” wives in common, and more frequent sexual intercourse with women is used as a “reward” for exceptionally brave male soldiers, with no explicit indication that the reverse will be true as well (460a–b). See discussion in Pomeroy 1974, 33–34; Okin 1977, 349. For responses, see Fortenbaugh 1975; Vlastos 1994, 15–16.

10 For further discussion of the issues and dichotomies covered in this section, see esp. Adkins 1960, chap. 3; Salkaver 1990, chap. 4; Hobbs 2000, 68–74; Kochin 2002, chap. 1; Murray 2011, 182–85; Taylor 2012, 78–80.

11 Thucydides’ Pericles boasts of his fellow Athenians, “We alone regard the man who fails to participate in public affairs not simply as someone who minds his own business, but as worthless” (Thucydides, *History* 2.40.2).

12 In the *Iliad*, e.g., Nestor rouses his comrades’ *thumos* for battle by appealing to the masculine duty to protect the *oikos*: “My friends, *be men (aneres este)* ... and remember, each one of you, your children and

wives, your possessions and your parents. ... For the sake of those who are not here I implore you to stand firm” (15.661–66). Although the political system and structures in Plato’s Athens differed from those of Homeric times, in the main “the Athenian *oikos* of the fifth and fourth centuries would have seemed perfectly familiar to the original audiences of Homer.” (Osborne 2008, 149),

13 While these various attributes were not considered virtuous in all contexts and could be subject to criticism when perceived to be inopportune or excessive, they were all considered natural features of a man’s psychological profile and were generally assumed to contribute in positive ways to his success.

14 There were important exceptions to this point (priestesses and courtesans, for example), but the general claim applied widely and had a strong grip on Greek conceptions of womanhood, as reflected by the range of sources surveyed in this section. Cf. Taylor 2012, 78 n. 4.

15 Michael Kochin writes, “The radical separation of Greek gender roles is often described spatially: Men work and act outside; women, inside. The entire sphere of political life belongs to the outside: Merely to be mentioned in public is compromising of women’s honor” (Kochin 2002: 18). Hence Thucydides’ Pericles claims that “feminine” (*gunaikeia*) virtue and respectability belongs to those “of whom there is least talk among men, whether in blame or praise” (Thucydides, *History* 2.42).

16 This passage echoes Hector’s instructions to his wife Andromache at *Iliad* 6.486–93. Cf. Plato, *Alcibiades* 126e–27a, where weaving and military strategy are characterized as paradigmatically feminine and masculine branches of knowledge, respectively.

17 See also Xenophon’s Ischomachus, who explains that whereas his job as a husband is to “gather” things from outside the home to bring in, his wife is supposed to keep “watch” (*phulakē*) over those things and “safeguard” (*sōzoi*) them once they are inside (*Economics* 7.39–40)

18 Cf. North 1966, 1 n. 2, 21; Okin 1977, 351; Balot 2004, 92. This list of feminine virtues is informed by the Greek assumption that women were physically weaker and more emotional than men. Because they were believed to be highly susceptible to the influence of impulses like fear, grief, lust, and the desire for bodily pleasure and luxury, women were supposed to display chastity and self-control as a defense against adultery, wasteful expenditure of household resources, and other disreputable behavior. For discussion of the relationship between Greek views of women’s social roles and contemporary views of their biology and physiology, see Dean-Jones 1994, 41–45, 56–58, 85–86, 108–09, 243–47; Brisson 2012, 129–30.

19 Note the comparative claim here. In general, men were expected to have *some* share in traits like moderation, a sense of shame, and affection for their loved ones, and they could be blamed accordingly for being deficient in them, as the example of Achilles in the main text will illustrate. However, women were always expected to have a *greater share* of those qualities than men. As Aristotle writes, “Moderation and courage are different in a man and in a woman. For a man would be thought a coward if he were only as courageous as a courageous woman, and a woman a chatterer if she were only as modest as a good man” (*Pol.* 1277b20–25). Furthermore, as will be discussed, men who exhibited qualities like moderation and shame were always at risk of being accused of feminine weakness by their critics. Cf. Kochin 2002, 19–24.

20 In Homer *thumos* is not unlike a kind of vital breath that is expired from the body at the moment of death. It has spatial location within the body, tending to be localized in the chest area, and it is strongly associated with the heart and lungs.

21 The opposed English terms “hard-hearted” and “soft-hearted” capture something similar.

22 Aeschylus, *Seven against Thebes* 52 and Callinus, fr. 1. For additional examples see Wilburn 2021, 49–50.

23 Odysseus likewise tells her she has a “heart that cannot be softened (*kēr ateramnon*),” that her *thumos* is “hardened” (*teitlēoti*), and that she has “a heart of iron in her breast” (*sidēreon en phresi ētor*) (23.166–72).

24 The parallel between guardians and guard dogs continues throughout the *Republic* and recurs in Socrates’ discussion of women in book 5, where he alludes to the fact that female dogs are no less suited by nature to the activities of hunting, guarding, and so on than males (451d–e). Indeed, Socrates’ argument for the existence of the spirited part of the soul in book 4 actually appeals to a passage from Homer that likens the *thumos* of Odysseus to that of a *mother* dog ferociously protecting her young (441b; cf. Homer, *Od.* 20.14–18). For various perspectives on the role of the watchdog analogy in book 5, see Wender 1973, 76; Annas 1976, 308; Deretić 2013, 154; Forde 1997, 559.

25 Note that Plato’s Socrates attributes his own trial to the ambition (*philotimia*) and envy (*phthonos*) of his critics (*Apology* 23c–24b, *Euthyphro* 3c–d)

26 One of the pejorative uses of “womanish” in the *Republic* is applied to the defilement of corpses for which Socrates criticizes Achilles (469d–e), which is striking: parading the bloody corpses of one’s

slaughtered enemies was hardly a model of feminine behavior for the Greeks, to say the least, and Achilles himself was an exemplar of masculinity. Although Socrates' use of the term "womanish" as a reproach is itself misogynistic, therefore, it is significant that he is using it to denounce behavior associated with *men*, not women. As Michael Kochin shows at length, this reflects a general strategy Plato employs in the dialogue of using gendered rhetoric "to turn male prejudice against itself. ... We must continually recall that Socrates attacks the pretensions of masculinity before an all-male audience. His occasional use of sexist language is a concession to the limitations of his audience before his speeches have done their work" (Kochin 2002, 40–41). Another example of this technique is Socrates' depiction of the tyrannical man of book 9 as weak and effeminate—he "lives like a woman, mostly confined to his own home" (579b–c)—contrary to the tyrant's status in the popular imagination as the exemplar of masculine pleonectic achievement (Kochin 2002, 78–79; Pringle 1993, 140–42). By emasculating a morally corrupt figure in this way, Plato subversively divests a vicious way of life of the masculine coding that might otherwise make his audience, socialized as they are in Athenian gender norms, inclined to admire it as a model of virility. For a more critical assessment of Plato's use of rhetoric to appeal to the men in his audience, see Hobbs 2000, 246–47.

27 Penelope Murray argues that Plato's treatment of poetry is designed to exclude the *feminine* from the Kallipolis, on the grounds that tragedy is associated with "feminine" weeping or lamentation for the Greeks, and that its performance often involved men impersonating women (Murray 2011). Her account elucidates important aspects of Plato's attitude toward tragedy and imitation, but from the perspective of our interpretation, it ultimately ignores both Socrates' insistence on eradicating *masculine*-coded excesses from poetry, too, as well as his emphasis on using of music and poetry to instill many feminine traits in the guardians.

28 See, e.g., Thucydides, *History* 2.65.7–11. For a general discussion of rivalry and enmity among citizens in classical Athens, see Rhodes 1998.

29 For discussion of the relationship between ideals of masculinity and *pleonexia* in Athenian culture, see Balot 2007, 2016.

30 This masculine ideal in turn reinforces pleonectic values themselves, inasmuch as contending for money, wealth, and power serves as a way of signaling and affirming their value.

31 Note that duplicity is built into Plato's account. As Glaucon points out, people will publicly praise a just man, while privately believing him wretched and stupid, in order to deceive one another and discourage potential injustice against themselves (360d; cf. 366d). In general, the goal is not to *be* just, but to *pretend to be* (361e–62a). Hence it is consistent with Plato's assessment of Athenian culture that people sometimes *publicly* condemn expressions of agonistic masculinity. From his perspective, such criticism is belied by people's actions when their own interests are at stake and they have the ability to exploit political or legal advantages for their *oikos* and friends.

32 Socrates explains, for instance, that in most cities people are "hungry for private goods" and "enter public life thinking that the good is there for the seizing," but that in such places "the well-governed city is impossible, for then ruling is something fought over, and civil and domestic war destroys these people and the rest of the city as well" (520c–21a). Cf. 373d–e, 586a–b.

33 Note that in this passage women are disparagingly depicted as excessively concerned with material resources in their role as stewards of the household's treasury and supplies. Marina McCoy and Helen Pringle both suggest that Plato here identifies the women in question as the cause of the downfall of the ideal *city*, but that cannot be right (McCoy 2015, 158; Pringle 1993, 146). Their interpretation conflates the political and individual cases of corruption that Socrates describes in book 8. In this passage he is explicitly *not* explaining the fall of the Kallipolis itself, but rather how the son of a virtuous man can be corrupted in a *flawed or non-ideal city like Athens*. In other words, the passage does not describe the behavior of women in the just city, but rather women who have been shaped by the actual Greek norms Plato challenges in the dialogue.

34 For select examples, see 2.39.4, 2.43.1–6, 6.18.1–7, and 6.83.1.

35 In his advice against embarking on the ill-fated Sicilian expedition, for example, the general Nicias tells the Athenians, "Do not feel embarrassed that in voting against war you might be thought soft (*malakos*)." Cf. discussion in Balot 2004, 85–94.

36 Susan Moller Okin follows Rousseau in claiming that Plato's policies for guardian women are simply the inevitable consequence of his abolition of the private family, rather than ones he takes seriously on independent grounds (Okin 1977). For some compelling responses and alternatives to that line of

interpretation, see Jacobs 1978; N. Smith 1980, 6; Vlastos 1994; Coplan 1996, 73–4; Kochin 2002, 62–4; Murray 2011, 177; Deretić 2013, 159.

37 Many commentators make the mistake of taking *thumos* to be purely aggressive and competitive in Plato, which ignores the deep Greek tradition of its responsibility for emotions on both sides of the masculine/feminine dichotomy, as well as the clear ways in which Plato’s account of guardian psychology and education deliberately makes use of that duality. The result of this oversight is a corollary of the oversimplification of Plato’s position we are addressing in this paper, in that commentators have tended to think that making women guardians means attributing a masculine psychology to them. Hence Julia Annas writes, “*Thumoeides* appears to be a capacity for aggressive and violent behaviour, visible even in animals, but, one would have thought, notably lacking in fourth-century Athenian women. ... Unless the account of the just soul is to be done all over again for women Guardians to take account of female psychology, Plato must assume that women have the same aggressive tendencies as men” (Annas 1976, 314). Cf. Brisson 2012, 132; Hobbs 2000, 23, 246. For an extended defense of the claim that the spirited part of the soul is the source of “soft” emotions in Plato, see Wilburn 2021, chap. 2). Christina Tarnopolsky also provides an illuminating discussion of the importance of *thumos*’ “two poles of harshness and gentleness” in Plato (Tarnopolsky 2007).

38 Cf. Tarnopolsky 2007, 299.

39 For examples of the emphasis on cultivating modesty and a sense of shame, see 378c, 388d, 396c–e, and 402d–03a.

40 Susan Moller Okin insightfully comments, “Whereas the Greeks, like many other peoples, merely reserved women for the production of legitimate issue and controlled their lives accordingly, Plato has dared to suggest that the sexual lives of both male and female guardians should be controlled” (Okin 1977, 354).

41 Responding to the idea that Socrates’ program of physical training imposes a “masculine” education on women guardians, Janet Smith astutely comments, “Yet a careful reading of Plato shows that he considers the training in music and poetry equally important, to a degree that might make some contemporary men balk at being feminized” (J. Smith 1983, 606)

42 For the association of *thumos* with shame and moderation in Plato’s theory, see esp. *Phdr.* 253d–254e. Its role in submission to authority is evident in Socrates’ depiction of the honor-loving man ruled by his spirited part: one of his distinctive qualities is that he is “fiercely obedient” to superiors (549a). On the role of spirit in controlling the appetites, see the discussion of courage in the main text.

43 Giulia Sissa, who provides an insightful study of the importance of *kēdos* among the guardians, comments, “Care ... defines the role of the Guardians. The Guardians are, literally, the κηδεμόνες τῆς πόλεως, the ‘caregivers of the polis’” (Sissa 2019, 187). Sissa does not consider this point from the perspective of gender or tripartite psychology, however.

44 Note that early in the dialogue Thrasymachus inspires Glaucon’s pleonectic account of popular morality with his idea that “justice is the good of *allotriou*”—the good of another, someone else, an outsider to the *oikos* and hence a potential aggressor or competitor. In the Kallipolis there are no more “outsiders” within its citizenry; all are *oikeioi*.

45 Compare Aristophanes’ *Assemblywomen*, where Praxagora, disguised as a man and speaking to men, argues that governance should be turned over to women because of their consistency (which she contrasts with the instability of contemporary political conventions): “They dye their wool in hot water according to their ancient custom, each and every one of them; and you’ll never see them try anything new” (215–18).

46 The terms *phulattein* and *sōzein* are by no means used *exclusively* to refer to women’s role in the household in Greek parlance. Both are ambiguous and can refer to more masculine activities as well, such as literal guarding in military contexts or keeping one’s friends safe and sound in battle. However, in a sense the ambiguity is precisely the point for Plato, and he deliberately exploits it. Socrates’ interlocutors and Plato’s contemporary audience are primarily men who have been socialized in the very gender conventions Plato is attempting to challenge. His use of ambiguous terminology functions as a kind of bait-and-switch: its masculine connotations foster their openness to a conception of virtue and politics to which they might otherwise be instinctively resistant, but when the details of that conception are filled in, it is ultimately the more feminine connotations that determine its substance. (Cf. n. 26 above.) At the same time, Plato also sometimes employs the more direct strategy of using unmistakably feminine metaphors to describe, or redescribe, the activities he values most: pregnancy and childbirth are metaphors for philosophy in the *Symposium*; philosophy is compared to young a bride in the *Republic* itself;

Socrates likens himself as dialectician to a midwife in the *Theaetetus*; and political expertise is recast as a form of weaving in the *Statesman*. Stephen Salkaver also cites, as evidence of “Plato’s intention to elevate the status of women and feminine things within the discourse-world of the dialogues,” the fact that Plato’s Socrates almost exclusively identifies his own teachers as women: Diotima in the *Symposium*, his mother Phaenarete in the *Theaetetus*, and Aspasia in the *Menexenus* (1994: 174–75). Indeed, in a culture for which it was nearly axiomatic that the domain of reason and knowledge (at least, knowledge of important moral and political matters) belonged to men, this point is striking. Relatedly, Luc Brisson notes that, according to ancient sources, at least some of Plato’s own students in the Academy were women (Brisson 2012, 133).

47 Cf. Kochin 2002, 71: “The just city conceives of war as part of rearing and protecting the young (467ab). ... Socrates thus deprives the practices of war of its manly character.”

48 See relevant discussion in Annas 1976, 307; J. Smith 1983, 597; N. Smith 1983, 467 n. 5; Spelman 1988, 34; Vlastos 1994, 22; Coplan 1996, 64–65; Buchan 1999, 135, 143; Brisson 2012, 135; Deretić 2013, 164–65; Mallory 2001; Şerban 2014, 1065.

49 Some commentators, notably Julia Annas, Morag Buchan, and Silviu Şerban, claim that Plato’s policies on women are merely a means to the end of producing the best state, and that he has no independent interest in what is just or good for individual women themselves (Annas 1976, 312, 320; Buchan 1999, 135–36; Şerban 2014, 1068). This criticism misses the point that personal and public good can coincide for Plato, however, and that he is interested in promoting *both* simultaneously. If anything, he prioritizes individual virtue: the city is designed largely with the goal of making it possible for the best people to realize their full potential. Cf. Taylor 2012, 83–85; Deretić 2013, 153.

50 Some scholars criticize Plato’s policies on the grounds that suitably talented women will be *coerced* to become guardians whether or not they want to be. Julia Annas, e.g., writes “If a woman did not want to be a Guardian, Plato would surely be committed to compelling her to serve the state” (Annas 1976, 312). Cf. Spelman 1988, 25, 34; Buchan 1999, 146; Mallory 2001. However, this objection overlooks the extent to which Plato considers *desire* to be an indication of underlying nature and character. Nothing could be a surer sign that someone is unfit to be a warrior or philosopher than that they do not want to fight or pursue wisdom.

51 Notably, the institution of the private *oikos*, or something close to it, remains intact in the city’s producer class (417a–b).

52 For further criticism of Plato’s elitism and his differential treatment of women in the producer class, see Okin 1977, 361; Smith 1980, 8; Spelman 1988, 25, 33–35; Coplan 1996, 70, 75; Forde 1999, 669.

53 At 454c–d and 455e, for instance, Socrates explicitly states that some women have the “souls” or “natures” of doctors and various craftspeople in an argument that appeals to his earlier principle of specialization (370a–c) as a premise, and he claims it is necessary to assign “the same practices to the same natures” (456b). Plato never pursues the implications of this argument for the producer class, but it at least suggests he is aware of them and does not find them unwelcome. Cf. Kochin 2002, 48; McKeen 2006, 534–4; Taylor 2012, 79 n. 6.

54 See n. 9 for examples. In addition, our arguments do not directly address Plato’s account of women in other dialogues like the *Timaeus* and *Laws*. Some commentators, such as Annas (1976: 317), Buchan (1999: 149–54), McKeen (2006: 541–43), and N. Smith (1983: 473–75), argue that those dialogues either confirm Plato’s conservative and sexist attitudes toward women, or suggest a shift in that direction in his late work (Annas 1976, 317; N. Smith 1983, 473–75; Buchan 1999, 149–54; McKeen 2006, 541–3). For responses to such lines of interpretation, see Osbourne 1975, 448–50; Okin 1977, 359–68; Forde 1997, 661–63; Blair 2012, chap. 6; Deretić 2013, 160–1; Harry and Polansky 2016, 274–79.

55 Plato was certainly not alone in his criticism of traditional conceptions of *andreia* and values associated with it. Earlier fifth-century writers like Thucydides had already begun to explore the tension between so-called “competitive” virtues like courage and “cooperative” ones like justice, to express concerns about the divisive political effects of the former, and to offer revised understandings of the virtues in light of those concerns. What distinguishes Plato, however, is the *radicalness* of his criticism, his fastidious attention to the ways that conceptions of virtue were connected to ideals of masculinity and femininity, and his interest in reevaluating the gender norms that governed both men and women alike. On the evolution of early Greek conceptions of the virtues over time, see Adkins 1960; North 1966; Irwin 1977, chap. 2.

56 Cf. Brisson 2012, 129.

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