

ἀληθῆ λέγεις: Speaking the Truth in Plato's *Republic*

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Plato's dialogues abound with response formulae. The interlocutors reply to one another in a myriad of ways. ἀνάγκη, πῶς γὰρ οὐ, πάνυ γε, οὐδαμῶς: these are but a few examples of formulae of assent and dissent selected at random from the *Republic*. The scholarly community has not entirely overlooked these formulae. To date, however, they have appeared in the literature only indirectly¹ or as data in studies of Platonic chronology.² There have been virtually no inquiries into their potential dialectical and dramatic functions.³ Moreover, Plato's translators have occasionally suppressed or misconstrued the formulae, apparently considering them awkward intrusions, inexplicable lapses in Plato's otherwise refined authorial manner.⁴

I intend to examine response formulae in the *Republic*. I shall make no attempt to study these formulae in all their variety, however, which would be an undertaking beyond the scope of a single article. I shall instead concentrate on one specific kind of formula, namely, what I shall call formulae of the λέγεις-type.⁵ These formulae constitute a distinct class, for they alone specifically characterize speech. With this formula the interlocutors communicate their evaluations of one another's words—and the *Republic*, which purports to record a conversation, is very much about words. The discussants themselves constantly call attention to the fact that they are *speaking*: when Polemarchus encounters Socrates at the beginning of the dialogue he entices the philosopher to join his group with the promise of philosophical conversation (διαλεξόμεθα, 328a9); the city they discuss throughout the evening is constructed in speech (λόγω, 369a6; compare 501e3 and 592a10); Socrates' defense of the philosopher-king is similarly conducted τῷ λόγῳ (474a3); and in the final summation of the dialogue Socrates

¹ Smith 1995 comes close to directing our attention to the responses themselves. Yet Smith ultimately has other ends in view.

² For a general overview of this work, see Brandwood 1990.

³ The one near exception is Benardete 1963. Yet Benardete attributes to the formulae no dramatic function whatever, which really is no surprise considering that he restricted the bulk of his evidence to two late dialogues that, as he himself notes, contain few dramatic elements. Other scholars, Robert Brumbaugh for example, attend in their studies to the *form* of the dialogues, including the *Republic*. Yet in their work I detect no evidence of recognition specifically of the response formulae themselves as anything more than transmitters of relatively straightforward assent or dissent.

⁴ Consider Cornford trans. 1945 and Reeve trans. 2004. Note, among many available examples, Cornford's omissions or mistranslations of the formulae at 612b5, 613c8, and 613e4 and Reeve's at 338b5-6 and 613e4.

⁵ The λέγεις may be expressed or implicit. All citations refer to the edition of Slings 2003.

employs variations of λέγω five times (613c9-e3), and Glaucon's reply specifically acknowledges the merit of Socrates' words (613e4).

The λέγεις-type formula, then, is something of a natural kind. Variations within the class are limited by the small supply of modifiers with which Plato modulates the expression. His regular practice is to couple the λέγεις with καλῶς, ὀρθῶς, or ἀληθῆ. He uses other words as well, εὖ and μετρίως for example. The first three, however, occur far more often than any others. Yet this class is not entirely uniform; there is at least one variation that should perhaps be designated a distinct species. As is evident from the examples above, Plato typically forms the λέγεις-type formula by modifying the verb with an adverb: 'You speak correctly'; 'you speak well'. When he couples λέγεις with ἀληθῆ, however, he alters this usage: ἀληθῆ is not an adverb; it is an adjective (neuter plural accusative). The expression ἀληθῆ λέγεις means, literally, 'you speak true things'.⁶ This word, ἀληθῆ, is not the only word Plato couples with λέγεις in its adjectival form.⁷ It is, however, the only word that he *consistently* uses in this way.

Perhaps the most striking fact about this formula and its variants as they appear in the *Republic* is their relative distribution among Socrates and the other characters.⁸ Socrates' interlocutors direct this formula to him over eighty times.⁹ Socrates himself employs the formula without qualification only three times.¹⁰ More often he embeds variations of the formula in indirect statements, indirect questions, or conditionals. The distribution in itself is suggestive: Socrates speaks the truth far more often than his interlocutors.

But there is more to the matter than relative rates of distribution. The ἀληθῆ λέγεις formula and its variations tend to reinforce the dialectical, rhetorical, and dramatic development of the narrative. In the course of this study, I will canvass this formula's many different functions by highlighting Socrates' deployments of ἀληθῆ λέγεις and its variations as well as those of his interlocutors' uses of the formula that play a significant role in the course of the dialogue's progression.¹¹

⁶ The occurrence of the adverbial form of ἀληθῆς in a variation of the λέγεις-type, as at 416d3 (καὶ ἀληθῶς γε φήσει), is a rare exception.

⁷ The final response formula of the dialogue is δίκαια λέγεις, which employs the adjectival form of δίκαιος. I discuss this formula below.

⁸ The expressions I take to be variants of the formula will become evident through the course of this article. To mention just three examples here, I count as variants the expression ἀληθῆ εἶπες, ἀληθέστατα λέγεις, and indirect occurrences such as συνεχώρησα ἀληθῆ σε λέγειν.

⁹ I include in this number (obtained through the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*) such close variants as ἀληθέστατα λέγεις, or ἀληθῆ and ἀληθέστατα without the λέγεις.

¹⁰ This number includes two iterations of ἀληθῆ λέγεις (372c5 and 467b7) and one of ἀληθέστατα λέγεις (430c1). On one occasion Socrates uses a more distant variation of the formula, namely, ἀληθῆ εἶπες (338b5-6).

¹¹ After careful consideration of every ἀληθῆ-response in the *Republic*, I have concluded that none is utterly vacuous. Some, however, are more interesting than others, or more relevant to this or that line of inquiry; and there are far too many such formulae to cover in an article such as this. I have accordingly omitted consideration of the response formulae as they appear in the discussions of poetry in books 2, 3, and 10, which, though fertile ground for investigation and indubitably relevant

For now I emphasize only the following: no matter who directs the formula to whom, the end result is to Socrates' advantage. Socrates' interlocutor may simply affirm that what Socrates says is true, which allows the philosopher to develop themes related to or implied by the point thus confirmed (as, for example, at 429a4 and 612b5). If someone resists Socrates' initial position and generates an argument against it, then during the ensuing discussion this same character will affirm the truth of a proposition that later turns out to be a premise in a refutation of his own argument or a direct proof of Socrates' original assertion (as at 374a7). When the situation is reversed, and Socrates affirms the truth of something said by his interlocutor, the philosopher will himself develop the point at length. But—and this is typical of Socrates' method—he will do so in a manner that provides him the opportunity to elaborate and defend his own position (as at 338b5-6 and 372c5). This technique may even be refined, as on those occasions when Socrates affirms the truth of an objection raised against him. Here, again, he not only affirms the objection, he expands upon it. In doing so, however, he simultaneously develops his original point in a manner that disarms the objection by exposing its dependence upon a superficial understanding of the issue (as at 487d9).¹²

In all of this we see two variations of a function that may be classified under the general heading of dialectical peripeteia. Socrates' dialectical partners regularly affirm the truth of those of his propositions that expose the falsity of their own positions. When Socrates affirms the truth of objections raised against him, he does so only to develop the objection into an elaborate justification of the truth of a suitably refined version of his original position. In short, no matter whose words are declared true, in the end the declaration works in Socrates' favor.

To this account of the functions of the response formulae I add a final, more speculative suggestion: with the strategic deployment of ἀληθῆ λέγεις Plato does more than direct the course of the discussion within the dialogue. The phrase simultaneously influences a reader's understanding and interpretation of that discussion. Whenever one of Socrates' interlocutors pronounces his words true, we ourselves utter this response, if only silently to ourselves. Thus, in composing his characters' dialogue, Plato simultaneously composed *our* internal dialogue. We may therefore regard the response formulae as Plato's means of indirect communication with his readers. They enable him to manipulate the ideas, not only of his characters, but of his audience as well.¹³

My reader will note that the functions of the response formulae summarized

to the overall project of the *Republic*, lead away from the main trajectory of the argument I intend to track, namely, Socrates' direct attempt to refute Thrasymachus' defense of the unjust life (as well as Glaucon's and Adeimantus' *arguendo* support thereof).

¹² All of these examples, and others as well, are included in this study.

¹³ If the above sketch of the functions of ἀληθῆ λέγεις is sound, we might expect similar results from an examination of the functions of καλῶς λέγεις and ὀρθῶς λέγεις. Having conducted a detailed examination of all three formulae in *Republic* i, as well as preliminary examinations of their occurrences in *Gorgias*, *Protagoras*, and *Symposium*, I am confident that all three response formulae are indeed worthy of further examination.

above have their parallels in other features of the dialogues. In other words and in short, the general claim that the course of a dialogue's conversation concludes in the end to Socrates' advantage is not a novel point. What is new, however, is the suggestion that textual components as seemingly insignificant as response formulae contribute to (the readers' recognition of) Socrates' success. Their function usually is more rhetorical than substantive, but they fulfill this function in a variety of ways, some of them quite surprising. Let us, therefore, start from the beginning and examine the response formulae in detail.

Book 1 includes many instances of Socrates' practice of altering the standard formula for a variety of rhetorical and dialectical purposes. Most of these occur during his encounter with Thrasymachus, whom Socrates taunts as much by his manner of manipulating the formula as by more direct methods. Socrates first provokes Thrasymachus by concluding his discussion with Polemarchus with the observation that whoever said it is just to help one's friends and harm one's enemies is not wise, for οὐ...ἀληθῆ ἔλεγεν (335e5). When Polemarchus affirms, in the most emphatic form possible (ἀληθέστατα...λέγεις, 336a8), Socrates' attribution of this opinion to proverbial examples of tyrants or villains, Thrasymachus can no longer restrain himself. He simply cannot brook the implication that advocates of this venerable definition of justice—advocates such as himself—fail to speak the truth when formulating their definition.

But Thrasymachus is precisely the sort of man whose words regularly fall short of the truth, which fact Socrates soon has occasion to demonstrate. During his diatribe against Socrates, Thrasymachus claims that the philosopher habitually learns from others without giving them anything in return. To this Socrates replies that in saying that he learns from others Thrasymachus spoke the truth (ἀληθῆ εἶπες, 338b5-6). In saying that he gives nothing in return, however, Thrasymachus speaks falsely (ψεύδη, 338b6). This exchange illustrates Socrates' tactic of turning an affirmation of another's words into a rejection of the overall position those words were meant to express.

Soon after this exchange Socrates employs another variation of the formula to set up another rejection of Thrasymachus' position. Immediately following Socrates' characterization of him as a speaker of falsehoods, Thrasymachus announces his own definition of justice, namely, that justice is the advantage of the stronger. When Thrasymachus concludes his explanation of this extraordinary assertion, Socrates responds by embedding the words ἀληθῆ λέγεις in a longer response that suggests that he *doubts* the truth of Thrasymachus' account. 'It is clear', he says, 'that this must be investigated, [namely] *whether* ἀληθῆ λέγεις' (339b4-5). That Socrates never seriously entertains the possibility that Thrasymachus is speaking the truth is demonstrated by the fact that he effortlessly produces a refutation that baffles Thrasymachus and arouses an excited discussion among those present.

When Thrasymachus later changes tack and insists that the life of the unjust man is stronger, more capable, and more profitable than the life of the just man, Socrates again varies the response formula as a prelude to refutation. As before,

he alters the force of the formula by embedding it within a longer locution, the thrust of which implies that Thrasymachus is *not* speaking the truth. Socrates first invites Glaucon to choose whose account of justice seems to be more truly spoken (ἀληθεστέρως...λέγεσθαι, 347e6). When Glaucon chooses the account supporting the life of the just man, Socrates asks whether they should try to persuade Thrasymachus that οὐκ ἀληθῆ λέγει (348a5). After developing an argument that injustice produces internal faction and thereby renders its host ineffective, Socrates concludes by remarking that when he and Thrasymachus claimed that a group of unjust men could accomplish anything in common, οὐ παντάπασιν ἀληθὲς λέγομεν (352c2-3).

In all this we see how in Socrates' mouth ἀληθῆ λέγεις and its variations become expressions of irony. Socrates' only direct affirmation of the truth of Thrasymachus' words functions as a confirmation of a compliment addressed to himself: 'It is true; I do learn from others.' But this same affirmation is coupled with his rejection of the remainder of Thrasymachus' sentence. Moreover, it implies an invidious characterization of the man himself: 'Thrasymachus, you speak falsely.' In this way Socrates transforms an intended insult into praise, while simultaneously turning the insult against its author.

The irony is more subtle, and hence more cutting, in Socrates' other variations of the formula. As we have seen, each expression is indirect: two are addressed to someone other than Thrasymachus; a third is addressed to Thrasymachus himself in the form of an indirect question. Their functions are similar, the first two asserting and the third implying the falsity of Thrasymachus' position. In a sense, Socrates treats Thrasymachus like a child:¹⁴ he discusses his case with others while the man himself is present. Moreover, what he says about Thrasymachus either implies or explicitly levels a criticism of the harshest kind: in their search for the truth, Thrasymachus insists on speaking falsely. A dialectical partner could hardly behave more objectionably. This criticism is severe in itself; Socrates' indirect method of assertion adds to the severity of his criticism an irony tinged with contempt.

Socrates' encounter with Thrasymachus in book 1 is preliminary to the *Republic's* central argument; the actual investigation commences in book 2 when Glaucon and Adeimantus revive Thrasymachus' account. Socrates responds to the brothers by constructing in speech a city that, although small, is sufficient to provide its citizens with life's necessities. Yet Glaucon objects, complaining that the men in this city feast without relishes (ἄνευ ὄψου...ἐστιωμένους, 372c3-4). In reply Socrates employs, for the first time, an unqualified ἀληθῆ λέγεις (372c5). He admits that the citizens should eat salt, cheese, desserts, and other such fare as contributes to their health. But Glaucon had been speaking metaphorically: his reference to feasting on relishes was intended to evoke an entire lifestyle, a lifestyle best represented by the contemporary symposium.

Socrates construes Glaucon's remarks as a request that they examine what he

¹⁴ As Thrasymachus had treated Socrates as a child at 343a3-8.

labels a luxurious and inflamed city. Although he does not regard this to be the *true* city (ἡ...ἀληθινῆ πόλις, 372e6), he agrees that it might help them to discover justice and injustice.¹⁵ When he proceeds to reason that this city, because it exceeds the boundary of the necessary, must expand its territory through warfare and, thus, according to their previous agreement that one man cannot practice many skills well, must include a body of men exclusively devoted to the practice of war, Glaucon affirms the argument with his own ἀληθῆ λέγεις (374a7). His response is significant, for it affirms not only the introduction to the city of a warrior class, but also an inchoate formulation of the definition of justice.¹⁶

This section, then, introduces the main *logos* of the *Republic*, and ἀληθῆ λέγεις plays a key role in its progress. Socrates' affirmation of Glaucon's objection leads immediately to the expansion of the city beyond the bounds of necessity. This in turn leads to the introduction of a warrior class and an inquiry into the nature and proper education of warriors, which development Glaucon affirms. The main argument of the dialogue unfolds from these very themes. This entire complex follows Socrates' ἀληθῆ λέγεις in response to Glaucon's objection to the self-sufficient city, and it culminates in Glaucon's own ἀληθῆ λέγεις that affirms the terms that introduce the dialogue's main *logos*. In short, Socrates employs a locution that on its surface affirms an objection to his account as a device to develop and defend that account. And it is by means of this expanded account that the participants in the conversation finally discover the truth of Socrates' position—the position represented by the *Republic* as a whole.¹⁷ This, on a grand scale, is paradigmatic of Socrates' method.

Socrates next employs a variation of ἀληθῆ λέγεις during his search for the virtues in book 4.¹⁸ Glaucon readily accepts Socrates' definition of wisdom, which he affirms with the superlative response formula, ἀληθέστατα...λέγεις (429a4). This formula indicates the successful resolution of their search. The fact that Glaucon employs so emphatic a response formula may also mark the facility with which they arrived at the definition of wisdom in contrast to the difficulty they encounter in their search for courage. Socrates begins this search optimistically, declaring that this virtue is not very difficult to see (429a9). Courage, he says, is a power that preserves the correct opinion regarding what is and what is not terrible. We might expect Glaucon to affirm this definition as readily as he previously affirmed Socrates' definition of wisdom, but he does not. He does not understand. Socrates clarifies his meaning through the analogy of the process necessary to prepare cloth to receive and preserve a dye. Glaucon now under-

¹⁵ We return to this section below.

¹⁶ This implicit principle of justice, as we might call it, was first introduced during Socrates' exchange with Adeimantus (370a-c).

¹⁷ We shall see below that Socrates' penultimate and ultimate utterances of the ἀληθῆ-formula in book 10 explicitly recall this very section, which is introduced by his first unqualified use of the formula.

¹⁸ I refer to the next time *Socrates* employs the formula, not to the next time the formula or one of its variations appears.

stands, which he demonstrates by proclaiming courage rightly conceived to be a result of education, and by adding that the actions of the uneducable should be called something other than courageous. Socrates affirms Glaucon's summation with the superlative response, ἀληθέστατα...λέγεις (430c1).

This usage of the response formula is typical in that although Socrates addresses it to another, its function is to affirm the truth of Socrates' own account. But this is not its only function. It concludes the account of courage, as Glaucon's use of the same formula concluded the account of wisdom. It serves, then, as permission for the men to proceed to their search for the virtue of moderation.¹⁹ Socrates' account of moderation, which follows his emphatic affirmation of Glaucon's understanding of his definition of courage, does not conclude with an ἀληθῆ λέγεις. Yet this formula does appear twice in this section (431b8, 431c8). These instances occur, moreover, in a passage that raises the question whether the soul is divisible into three distinct parts, which very question is taken up in the next section, so the two ἀληθῆ responses here draw attention to the subsequent object of inquiry. The definition of justice that immediately follows the account of moderation is not marked by any variation of ἀληθῆ λέγεις. However, after stating the definition Socrates reminds Glaucon that they have been seeking the virtues in the city with the intention of learning about the virtues of an individual. He then restates the definition of justice, this time applying it to the individual, and in summary mentions that the other three virtues similarly apply to an individual. At this point Glaucon responds ἀληθῆ (435b8). The definition of justice is affirmed after all—and since the definition is expressed here in company with the other three virtues, Glaucon's response simultaneously marks the successful conclusion of this part of their investigation. It also calls attention to the parallel between the virtues in the city and in the individual. By implication, therefore, it raises the question of the parallel between the structure of a city and the structure of the human soul. This, in turn, introduces the question concerning the soul's divisibility, to which the conversation then turns.

But we return to Socrates' emphatic affirmation of Glaucon's summation of the definition of courage, deferred from the previous paragraph: in the section covering the virtues, all the affirmations are uttered by Glaucon with the exception of Socrates' ἀληθέστατα λέγεις. Why this exception? And why does Socrates employ the superlative form of the formula? We may find a clue to the resolution of these questions in Glaucon's initial confusion regarding Socrates' definition of courage. This is the only definition about which he expresses perplexity. The explanation may lie in Glaucon's belief that courage is manifested most directly in physical activity, particularly in martial combat. Socrates himself most likely contributed to Glaucon's misunderstanding by associating courage, physicality, and combat, which he did when he asserted that the guardians must be gentle to their own and harsh toward enemies. To this Glaucon

¹⁹ Socrates' response has other uses as well, consideration of which we defer to the next paragraph in order to continue uninterrupted our coverage of the response formulae in this section dealing with the virtues.

responded ἀληθῆ (375c5). In short, until book 4 courage was understood according to contemporary conventions. Socrates' new account articulates a more sophisticated appreciation of courage, according to which the condition of the warriors' souls (i.e., their πολιτικὴ ἀνδρεία [430c3]) is more important than the condition of their bodies (i.e., their physical ἀνδρεία). It is Glaucon's understanding of this point that Socrates affirms with his ἀληθέστατα λέγεις. Having noted this, however, we must not forget that Socrates is in the end affirming his own words. The progress he praises in Glaucon is progress toward his own position.

Socrates employs the formula ἀληθῆ λέγεις once again in book 5, this time during the digression on war that interrupts his struggle with the three waves. This response formula does not introduce the sort of elaborate associations we have discovered in the others. It is not, however, altogether devoid of significance. Just as Socrates is poised to determine whether the community of women and children is possible—which determination involves the introduction of the philosopher-king—he raises the apparently unrelated matter of the citizens' conduct of war. Glaucon wonders whether it would not be risky for the city to allow its children to accompany their parents into combat, for if they should be defeated, the children themselves might be killed. To this observation Socrates responds ἀληθῆ...λέγεις (467b7). Yet with this formula he does not affirm the force of Glaucon's objection. He affirms, rather, the facts to which Glaucon objects. We have seen Socrates employ this technique before, during his first exchange with Glaucon (372c5). As on that occasion, Socrates uses the present affirmation as a means to develop his position at greater length. In short, his affirmation of Glaucon's objection is not a concession to it; it is a prelude to an elaboration of the assertions Glaucon finds objectionable. This, in turn, leads to a prolonged examination of military matters that allows Socrates to delay the introduction of the philosopher-king.

This occurrence of ἀληθῆ λέγεις is perhaps the most straightforward of the instances of Socrates' use of the formula. Still, it differs considerably in function from his interlocutors' uses of this same formula. With it Socrates does not affirm an original contribution from Glaucon. He affirms, rather, an implication of one of his own ideas. The occurrence of the formula at precisely this point in the argument is significant as well. For by affirming this consequence of his position Socrates provides himself the opportunity to expand it. His original proposal that children accompany the adults into battle was already a divergence from the primary object of inquiry; by focusing on an implication of this idea he withdraws still further from the central argument. This is his real mission, for he takes advantage of the digression to complete his description of the nature of the philosopher, which he must do if his proposal of the philosopher-king is to be credible.

Socrates introduces the philosopher-king in book 5. When Adeimantus objects that most people will insist that the majority of those who study philosophy turn out to be vicious, and that those who escape corruption are utterly useless to their

city, Socrates has yet another opportunity to defer his argument in favor of the rule of philosophers. In fact, he encourages this deferral by three times responding to Adeimantus' objections with a variation of the formula ἀληθῆ λέγεις.

Socrates affirms Adeimantus' objections from the moment the young man raises them. He begins by saying that those who express doubts about the virtues of the philosopher seem to him to speak truly (ἔμοιγε φαίνονται τᾶληθῆ λέγειν, 487d9). This introduces his comparison of the true philosopher with the true sea captain. In other words, his affirmation of Adeimantus' objection provides him the opportunity to clarify the nature of the true philosopher. Having developed his analogy, Socrates urges Adeimantus to teach the man who claims that philosophers are useless to the many that τᾶληθῆ λέγει (489b3). Thus he affirms yet again the assertion that philosophers are useless to the city. Yet he immediately adds that Adeimantus must also teach this man that uselessness is not inherent to the philosophers, but is rather a result of the ignorance of the many. So Socrates' affirmation of the objection is itself an objection to the men whose actions justify it: their objection is true only as a result of their own objectionable behavior. The many speak the truth when they claim that philosophers are useless, but their own ignorance is responsible for this. By affirming their words Socrates condemns their deeds. The truth they speak is a result of their ignorance of the truth. Here is a superb example of Socrates' ironical manipulation of the response formulae.

Socrates next adverts to the second half of Adeimantus' objection, namely, the viciousness of those who profess to practice philosophy. He effects the transition by recalling Adeimantus' first mention of the popular complaints regarding the viciousness and uselessness of philosophers. At that time, Socrates reminds him, he agreed that Adeimantus spoke truly (ἐγὼ συνεχώρησα ἀληθῆ σε λέγειν, 489d6). Now that they have accounted for the uselessness of philosophers, they can address their reputation for viciousness. The ensuing conversation, during which Socrates distinguishes philosophers from sophists (the people's failure to distinguish them explains their belief that philosophers are vicious), culminates in Socrates' claim that it is possible for philosophers to rule. In the course of developing this theme, Socrates turns to Glaucon to ask whether the many will reject this arrangement if they perceive that in describing the philosopher's nature, ἀληθῆ...λέγομεν (500d11-12). He does not ask *whether* they are speaking the truth; he takes for granted that they are; the question concerns how the many will respond to this fact. In this way, Socrates simultaneously concludes his response to Adeimantus and indirectly affirms the truth of the broader argument he began when Glaucon first confronted him with the three waves.

In the course of his discussion with Adeimantus Socrates employs variations of ἀληθῆ λέγεις to generate an investigation that is both significant in itself and preliminary to an investigation of matters of even greater import. As we have seen him do before, he affirms his interlocutor's objections only as a pretext to develop further his own position. On more than one occasion during his exchanges with Glaucon he effected this by affirming, not the young man's

objections, but the facts to which he objected; he then explicated these facts in a way that disarmed the objection. During his exchange with Adeimantus, on the other hand, Socrates affirms the truth of the objections themselves: most philosophers are indeed useless; some of those who pass as philosophers really are vicious. Yet these facts do not negate the possibility of some small class of men escaping corruption, dedicating their lives to genuine philosophy, and eventually benefiting their fellow citizens. In short, Socrates affirms the truth of Adeimantus' objections concerning the nature of the philosopher precisely in order to correct the popular misconceptions that generate them.

Having covered the central sections of the *Republic*, we turn now to its close. The response formulae employed at the end of the dialogue's *logos* insistently recall its beginning, bringing the argument full circle; they particularly return a reader's attention to Thrasymachus, the man who, as a speaker of falsehoods, contrasts most starkly with Socrates as a speaker of truth.

In book 9 Socrates formulates three proofs that the life of the tyrannical man is inferior to the life of the man of reason. The second of these proofs assumes the tripartite nature of the human soul, the proof of which was introduced by Glaucon's ἀληθῆ at 435b8. The problem, as Socrates formulates it, is to determine whether the man ruled by desire, the man ruled by *thumos*, or the man ruled by reason ἀληθέστατα λέγει (582a1) when he pronounces his own life most choiceworthy. Socrates maintains that the man most competent to judge the dispute is the man with experience of all three lives who is also prudent and skilled in argumentation. Glaucon agrees: the things this man praises, he says, are necessarily ἀληθέστατα (582e9). But this is the lover of wisdom—and since the lover of wisdom praises his own life, the life of reason is superior to the lives of pleasure and honor.

The superlative affirmation stands out in this proof. Socrates' ἀληθέστατα introduces their search for the criterion of truthfulness; Glaucon's ἀληθέστατα concludes it. The ἀληθέστατα, which so emphatically affirms the *logos* of the lover of wisdom, embraces Socrates' own *logos*. This sets up an association, we might say even an identification, between the two men: Socrates is himself the lover of wisdom whose *logos* is most true.²⁰

Socrates' proofs culminate in the image of the soul as a compound of hydra, lion, and human being. From this image, and the proofs that precede it, Socrates draws the lesson that a man extolling just things would speak the truth, whereas a man extolling unjust things would speak falsely (ὁ μὲν τὰ δίκαια ἐγκωμιάζων ἀληθῆ ἂν λέγοι, ὁ δὲ τὰ ἄδικα ψεύδοιτο, 589b8-c1). With respect to the relevant criteria, he adds, the man who praises justice speaks the truth; he who blames it says nothing healthy and is ignorant (ὁ μὲν ἐπαινέτης τοῦ δικαίου ἀληθεύει, ὁ δὲ ψέκτης οὐδὲν ὑγιὲς οὐδ' εἰδὼς ψέγει ὅτι ψέγει, 589c2-4). But as we know, and as the ἀληθέστατα-responses covered in the previous two para-

²⁰ In the course of the dialogue Socrates' interlocutors affirm his words as ἀληθέστατα a total of thirty times.

graphs suggest, Socrates is the lover of wisdom who extols and praises justice while blaming injustice, which is precisely what Glaucon and Adeimantus requested that he do when they revived Thrasymachus' argument in book 2 (ἐγκωμιαζόμενον, 358d3; βούλομαι καὶ σοῦ ἀκούειν ἀδικίαν μὲν ψέγοντος, δικαιοσύνην δὲ ἐπαινοῦντος, 358d6-7; τὸ δίκαιον...ἐπαινεῖν...τὸ ἄδικον...ψέγειν, 367b8-c1). As we also know, and as Socrates himself previously noted, Thrasymachus is the man who blames justice and praises injustice (δικαιοσύνην...ὑπὸ Θρασυμάχου...ψέγεται, ἀδικία δ' ἐπαινεῖται, 357d4-358a8). Thus Socrates and Thrasymachus turn out to be the subjects of Socrates' conditional statements. Throughout the dialogue Socrates has extolled and praised justice. Therefore, according to the conditional, he has spoken ἀληθῆ. Thrasymachus, according to the same conditional, has spoken ψευδῆ. By reformulating the expression ἀληθῆ λέγεις as the apodosis of a conditional statement, Socrates finds yet another way (which is also another *indirect* way) to affirm the truth of his own words while simultaneously condemning Thrasymachus as a purveyor of falsehoods.²¹

This evaluation of the relative merit of the men's words confirms what we have known all along. By this point in the dialogue Socrates' words have been affirmed as ἀληθῆ or ἀληθέστατα over seventy times. As for Thrasymachus' words, Socrates himself previously implied that they are false. We recall his raising the question whether Thrasymachus speaks the truth (339b4-5), which question preceded his asking Glaucon whether they ought to try to persuade him that he fails to do so (348a4-5). These remarks followed Socrates' pointed statement that Thrasymachus does not in fact speak the truth (338b6). By this point in book 9 he has already presented three proofs to this effect. Thrasymachus, to whom he directly refers while explicating the hydra-image (590d2-3), is the primary example of a man who praises injustice and thereby fails to speak ἀληθῆ.

Socrates next employs a variation of ἀληθῆ λέγεις when, looking back over the course of the *logos*, he insists that throughout their investigation of the soul εἵπομεν...ἀληθῆ (611c5). Immediately following this he employs an elaborate analogy to recall the beginning of the *logos* in book 2. Likening the soul upon which they have concentrated their investigation to the sea creature Glaucus, he explains that the corrupt soul is deformed by its association with the body and the many evils it accumulates through 'feasts that are said to be happy' (ὑπὸ εὐδαιμόνων λεγομένων ἐστιάσεων, 612a2-3). Only by removing these excrescences would one be able to investigate the soul's true nature (τὴν ἀληθῆ φύσιν, 612a3). Socrates' language explicitly recalls Glaucon's Thrasymachaeon objections to the city of necessity in book 2 (372c3-4), which objections Socrates affirmed as ἀληθῆ; it also recalls the philosopher's observation that the city Glaucon would have them construct is not a true city. Glaucon's feasts spoil the city's true nature.

²¹ Socrates varies ἀληθῆ λέγεις by expressing it within a conditional on two other occasions (597a6-7 and 610c5-d4).

When Socrates proceeds to declare that they have at last demonstrated that the just life is best in and for itself, Glaucon replies with the most emphatic response formula possible, ἀληθέστατα...λέγεις (612b5). This affirmation permits Socrates to begin to bring the investigation to a close by reintroducing the earthly consequences of justice. In this section—the final section before the myth of Er—Socrates employs for the last time a variation of ἀληθῆ λέγεις. As we shall see, this formula both concludes the final stage of the argument and recalls another part of Glaucon’s revival of Thrasymachus’ defense of injustice at the beginning of the *logos*.

Socrates’ final variation of ἀληθῆ λέγεις concludes his summary of the earthly rewards enjoyed by the just man in contrast to the punishments suffered by the unjust. The subject matter recalls the beginning of the dialogue, when Glaucon related the opinion of those who defend injustice by describing the torments inflicted on the just man who appears to be unjust (360e–362d). But there is more here than the subject matter to draw our minds back to book 2: Socrates employs an ἀληθῆ-response to refer explicitly to Glaucon’s earlier remarks. In describing the torments inflicted on the just man, Glaucon had asked Socrates to keep in mind that his rather crude speech was not his own but the speech of those who praise injustice over justice (κἂν ἀγροικότερως λέγεται, 361e1). Now, in book 10, Socrates refers to these torments and remarks that in labeling them ἄγροικα Glaucon was speaking the truth (ἀληθῆ λέγων, 613d9–e1). By recalling the beginning of their conversation in this way Socrates rounds off the circle of their investigation, and he simultaneously turns the words of the defenders of injustice against themselves. Appropriating language that in book 2 was presented as a justification of the unjust life, he employs it here in book 10 as a condemnation of that life: it is not the just, but the unjust who will suffer the horrors of being flogged (μαστιγώσεται, 361e4–5; μαστιγούμενοι, 613d9), racked (στρεβλώσεται, 361e5; στρεβλώσσονται, 613e1), and burned (ἐκκαυθήσεται τώφθαλμῷ, 361e5; ἐκκαυθήσονται, 613e1). Socrates’ final pronouncement of the truth of his interlocutor’s words encapsulates the dialectical progress of the entire dialogue: the initial assessment of the lives of the just and the unjust man has been reversed.

Thus Socrates’ final variation of ἀληθῆ λέγεις. His uses of this formula and its variations in the conclusion of his argument form a network of associations and references that weave the disparate parts of the dialogue into a unified whole. Yet the fabric of interconnections is complex and difficult to take in at a glance. In sum, then, the pattern is as follows: the ἀληθῆ λέγεις with which Socrates responds to Glaucon’s objection to the city of necessity in book 2 (372c5) points forward to the εἶπομεν...ἀληθῆ in book 10 (611c5), which in turn looks back to affirm the truth of the *logos* (the *Republic* itself, in fact) that the earlier formula had introduced. This εἶπομεν...ἀληθῆ occurs in a section that introduces the final stage of the argument, which stage culminates in Socrates’ final variation of the formulae—the ἀληθῆ λέγων at 613d9–e1—which in turn explicitly recalls Glaucon’s revival of Thrasymachus’ argument in book 2 (361e1ff.). In short,

Socrates' deployment of the response formulae joins the beginning of the *logos* to its end and the end to its beginning.

Having examined Socrates' final variation of ἀληθῆ λέγεις, we conclude by noting Glaucon's final two response formulae, for they too affirm the conclusion of the main *logos* of the *Republic*. At 612b1-4 Socrates utters his final words concerning the intrinsic value of justice. Referring directly to Glaucon's introduction of the problem in book 2, he says: 'Justice itself is best for the soul itself, and just things (τὰ δίκαια) must be done by the soul, whether it has Gyges' ring or not, and, in addition to such a ring, Hades' cap.' Glaucon, Socrates' indefatigable dialectical partner, is finally convinced. Assenting to Socrates' conclusion without qualification, he emphatically affirms the philosopher's summation with the superlative response formula, ἀληθέστατα...λέγεις (612b5).

The very man who revived Thrasymachus' argument and thereby initiated the conversation of which the *Republic* is the record pronounces the dialogue's primary *logos* 'most true'. Socrates has successfully defended the just life against a challenge he once thought himself incapable of rebutting (368b). Having delivered himself of this ἀληθέστατα λόγος, Socrates rounds off his argument by revisiting the concession he made at the beginning. He had consented to defend a life of justice without reference to consequences merely for the sake of argument. In truth, however, justice is rewarded in this life as surely as injustice is punished. These rewards and punishments, distributed by gods and men alike, Socrates now enumerates. Having done so, he asks Glaucon whether he accepts what he is saying. 'Indeed', the young man replies, 'for δίκαια λέγεις' (613e4). This is the final response formula of the *Republic*. It is also the text's sole example of a λέγεις-type formula that employs the adjectival rather than the adverbial form of δίκαιος. Socrates does not simply speak justly; he says just things. Though this expression marks the final summation of Socrates' evaluation of just and unjust lives, it applies most directly to those of his comments that recall the beginning of the *logos* in book 2. In this way Glaucon's response encompasses Socrates' overall argument. His entire *logos* has been one long expression of just things.

This characterization of Socrates' *logos* is accurate in two senses: Socrates has *spoken* just things *about* just things. The double meaning is possible because Glaucon's δίκαια λέγεις, which most directly characterizes the quality or form of Socrates' speech, and which thereby functions as an adverb, recalls the many previous occurrences of δίκαια as the content or direct object of the interlocutors' speech. Much of the conversation in book 9 concerned τὰ δίκαια as the object of praise or blame. There we learned that Socrates is the man who speaks ἀληθῆ by praising τὰ δίκαια. We have just mentioned Socrates' argument that since justice is good in itself the soul must do τὰ δίκαια; we noted also Glaucon's reaction to this argument: ἀληθέστατα...λέγεις. Here, near the end of their long conversation, Socrates is still praising justice, and in doing so he continues to speak the truth. When we come to the end itself, the final conclusion of the argument just prior to the myth of Er, Glaucon responds to Socrates' remarks with the unique, and uniquely pregnant, δίκαια λέγεις. By praising τὰ δίκαια

Socrates has spoken ἀληθῆ, ἀληθέστατα, and, finally, δίκαια. Socrates is the man who says just things about just things; in speaking thus he speaks true—indeed, the truest—things.

These, then, are Glaucon's final judgments regarding the *Republic's* central *logos*. Regarding the matter from beyond the parameters of the dialogue, these are the response formulae with which *Plato himself* chose to have Socrates' primary interlocutor offer his final evaluation of the philosopher's *logos*. More, by assigning these words to Glaucon, Plato assigns them to his readers as well. We recall from our introductory remarks that there is more to a Platonic dialogue than the characters' words and deeds, that there is also the author's presentation, and the reader's encounter with the text. From this perspective, we may attribute the expression ἀληθέστατα λέγεις to Plato rather than to Glaucon—or rather to ourselves by way of Plato's authorial activity. This we may do if we take seriously the consequences of the fact that the dialogue is a text whose lines the reader is meant to speak, if only to himself. We are the performers of the text Plato has written; Glaucon is an intermediary. In the end, it is the reader who brings the words to life, including the response formulae that insistently declare Socrates' words ἀληθῆ and ἀληθέστατα. It is we who declare Socrates' *logos* true—indeed, most true.²²

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