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**Justification of Political Authority and the Political Position of the Non-Philosophic  
Citizen in Plato's *Republic***

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## Zadání disertační práce

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### Cíl, metody, literatura, předpoklady:

A traditional and still popular interpretation holds that ruling is the prerogative of the philosopher-rulers because only they have knowledge, and knowledge is necessary for ruling. And this knowledge is knowledge of the Good. Because this traditional interpretation is associated with the *Republic's* metaphysics, I shall call it the *metaphysical justification*. One key implication of the metaphysical justification is that the citizens are excluded from politics because they lack knowledge of the Good, and, therefore, are morally incompetent, intellectually handicapped, and politically inept. Therefore, political obligation seems to be a slavish return to the polis, together with its political authority, for the moral and political benefit it promises the citizens. These negative definite descriptions suggest that the non-philosophic citizens are slaves in Kallipolis. This is what I mean by the *political position* or worth of the citizens. In this study, I argue to reject the political position attributed to the non-philosophic citizen by metaphysical justification. I offer an alternative justification, called the *naturalistic justification*. The main claim of the naturalistic justification is that the realisability of the eudaemonistic goals of both the individual and the Kallipolis polis supervene upon the cooperative interactions between the rulers and the ruled, *qua* significant partners, relative to their natural aptitudes and epistemic competencies. The result of the study promises to show that the non-philosophic citizen is a significant member of Plato's just society.

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## Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, pursued under the supervision of doc. Mgr. Jaroslav Daneš, Ph.D., and that I duly acknowledge and reference all sources and literature I have used in this research.

Stephen Oppong Peprah  
(PhD Candidate)

Hradec Králové



Signature

Date: May 25, 2022

## **Dedication**

*To*

Dacosta Peprah, my father, for the benefit of virtuous fatherhood.

## Abstract

A traditional and still popular interpretation in Plato's *Republic* holds that ruling is the prerogative of the philosopher-rulers because only they have knowledge, and knowledge is necessary for ruling (Fine 1978; Moss 2021; Schwab 2016). And this knowledge is knowledge of the Good. Because this traditional interpretation is associated with the *Republic's* metaphysics, I shall call it the *metaphysical justification*. One key implication of the metaphysical justification is that the non-philosophic citizens, mainly the producers, are excluded from politics because are morally incompetent, intellectually handicapped, and politically inept, because they lack knowledge of the Good (Klosko 2006; Taylor 1997; Vlastos 1941). Therefore, political obligation seems to be slavish returns to the polis, together with its political authority, for the moral and political benefit it promises the citizens. These negative definite descriptions suggest that the non-philosophic citizens are slaves in Kallipolis, at least in the Greek context. The above is what I mean by the *political position* or worth of the citizens. In this study, I argue against this traditional interpretation.

I offer an alternative justification, called the *naturalistic justification*, concerning how Plato justifies political authority in his just polis and the implication of such justification to understanding the worth of the non-philosophic citizens. The main claim of the naturalistic justification is that the realisability of the eudaemonistic goals of both the individual and the Kallipolis polis supervene upon the cooperative interactions between the rulers and the ruled, *qua* significant partners, relative to their natural aptitudes and epistemic competencies. This involves accounting for ways in which the non-philosophic citizens can be said to be epistemically competent. The naturalistic justification places significant premium of value on the operation of social and moral values and principles—including partnership, friendship, harmony—in Plato's political philosophy (principles which the metaphysical justification seeks to undermine) in the *Republic*. The result of the study promises to show that the non-philosophic citizen is a significant member of Plato's just society in the *Republic*.

## Table of Contents

Dedication .....	4
Abstract .....	5
Table of Contents .....	6
Acknowledgement .....	8
Summary of Thesis .....	10
INTRODUCTION .....	15
CHAPTER ONE .....	20
The Metaphysical Justification of Political Authority .....	20
1.1 Introduction .....	20
1.2 Justification of Political Authority in the <i>Republic</i> ? .....	20
1.3 The Ethical Foundation of the <i>Republic</i> 's Politics? .....	23
1.3.1 The 'Three-Lives and Three-Pleasures' Argument .....	25
1.3.2 Plato's Psychology, Ethics and Politics .....	29
1.4 Are the Non-Philosophic Citizens Slaves? .....	37
1.4.1 Against Defence of the Metaphysical Justification .....	40
1.5 In Defence of the Moral Competence of the Citizens .....	45
1.6 Summary and Reflections .....	49
CHAPTER TWO .....	52
Plato's Naturalistic Justification of Political Authority .....	52
2.1 Introduction .....	52
2.2 The Polis and its Foundational Principles .....	52
2.3 Political Naturalism and Naturalistic Justification .....	53
2.4 Does the Polis have Ontological Superiority over the Individual? .....	56
2.5 The Polis, Man's Nature, and Morality .....	59
2.6 Is Plato a Contractarian? .....	61
2.7 Justifying Political Authority .....	64
2.8 Summary and Reflections .....	71
CHAPTER THREE .....	75
Plato's Concept of Philosopher-Rulership and Epistemic Competence .....	75
3.1 Introduction .....	75
3.2.1 The Concept of Philosopher-Rulership .....	79
3.2.2 The Best Guardians and Philosopher-Rulers: A Distinction .....	83
3.2.3 The Political Epistemic Thesis .....	85
3.3 The Value Question .....	87
3.4 How sufficient is metaphysical ἐπιστήμη? .....	88

3.4.1 Rejection of the TWT .....	90
3.4.2 Defence of the TWT .....	96
3.4.3 Against the Defenders of the TWT .....	100
3.5 Plato's Epistemic Absolutism .....	106
3.6 The Philosopher-Rulers as Painters of the Polis .....	112
3.7 Summary and Reflections .....	115
CHAPTER FOUR.....	117
The Cognitive Competence of the Non-Philosophic Craftsmen.....	117
4.1 Introduction.....	117
4.2 The Many Kinds of Knowledge Revisited.....	117
4.3 Craftsmanship and Metaphysics .....	119
4.4 Craftsmanship and Scientific Knowledge.....	122
4.5 Craftsmanship and Education .....	125
4.6 Summary and Reflections .....	131
CHAPTER FIVE .....	132
Plato's Political Philosophy in Perspective.....	132
5.1 Introduction.....	132
5.2 The Epistemic Balance .....	132
5.3 Promoting Political Friendship .....	134
5.4 Promoting <i>ὁμόνοια</i> and Argument (4).....	139
CONCLUSION.....	143
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	146

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Also, I would like to thank Frisbee Sheffield (Downing College, University of Cambridge), Adam Chmielewski (Institute of Philosophy, Uniwersytet Wrocławski), and Jakub Jirsa (Institute of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Charles University) for their suggestions and criticisms of some aspects of my publications, which appear in chapters One and Two of this work. I also had the chance to present aspects of the work at conferences and seminars, most regularly at the PhD Seminar Series at the Department of Philosophy, University of Hradec Králové. I am grateful to Ladislav Koreň and my colleague PhD candidates for their helpful critiques. Last but not the least, Kofi Ackah (Department of Philosophy and Classics, University of Ghana, Legon) introduced me to Plato's *Republic* when I served him as a teaching assistant. I owe some of my thoughts to Ackah's readings of the *Republic*. Moreover, Ackah's recommended literature for teaching the *Republic* included the works of Karl Popper, John Gould, C.C.W Taylor, and Gregory Vlastos. The main thesis of this work came to mind when I grappled with these erudites.

As stated before, this work comprises of published works. Significant parts of Chapters One and Two are based on "Reinvestigating the Political Position of the Citizen in Plato's *Republic*," *Studia Philosophica Wratislaviensis* vol. 14, (2019). Aspects of Chapters Three and Five have been published as "The Epistemic Competence of Plato's Philosopher-Rulers," *Eirene. Studia Graeca et Latina*, vol. 57, 2021 and "Re-examining the Compulsion Problem in Plato's *Republic*", *Plato Journal*, vol. 22, 2021. My view on the cognitive competence of the non-philosophic citizens appears in the following unpublished manuscript (under review) "The Cognitive Competence of the Non-Philosophic Citizens in Plato's *Republic*". Lastly, the occasional comparison I draw between Plato and Hobbes on human nature, especially in Chapter Two, is from "Active Citizenship: A Challenge to the Political Orthodoxy," *Journal*



*of Critical Thinking, Kritika & Kontext*, vol. 23, (2019). Apparently, the work has also been shaped by the critiques of anonymous reviewers, and I am very much grateful to them.

## Summary of Thesis

In the *Republic*'s politics, the non-philosophic citizens are not part of the political decision making body: they are excluded from politics.<sup>1</sup> By politics, I mean the actual business of government and the locus of political power and authority. On what basis does Plato's Socrates (hereinafter Socrates) justify this exclusion? And what are the possible implications of the exclusion for the citizens? There is a significant number of scholars, including Gregory Vlastos, John Gould, C.C.W Taylor, and Karl Popper, who are convinced that the exclusion is done on metaphysical grounds, each of them offering a variety of reasons for this claim.<sup>2</sup> But the general agreement among them remains that ruling is the prerogative of philosophers because only they have knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), and knowledge is necessary for ruling. And this knowledge is knowledge of the Good: "knowledge without which no other knowledge is possible." I shall call this 'knowledge' metaphysical ἐπιστήμη. These scholars argue variously that the citizens are alienated from politics because they lack metaphysical ἐπιστήμη. Because this traditional interpretation is associated with the *Republic*'s metaphysics, I shall call it the *metaphysical justification*. The defenders of the metaphysical justification are also committed to the view that metaphysical ἐπιστήμη is a sufficient condition for ruling, implying that the philosophers will need no other epistemic competence to rule.<sup>3</sup>

Metaphysical justification has ethical and political implications. To be ethical is to live the philosophic life – a life devoted to the pursuit of the objects of ἐπιστήμη, i.e. the Forms, without which one cannot be truly happy.<sup>4</sup> And the political implication. In Greek culture, these negative referencings are the definite descriptions of a slave. Indeed, some defenders of the metaphysical justification argue uncompromisingly that the citizens' cognitive capacity is akin

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<sup>1</sup> I shall follow convention to use 'non-philosophers,' 'producing class,' 'economic class,' 'the people' and 'citizens' and the more generic 'individuals' interchangeably. Let me state beforehand that in his constructionist account of the polis (Chapter Two) Plato, unlike Aristotle, does not create a distinction between members in the different phases of the polis, with some being just members and others being citizens, nor does he set preconditions to determine citizenship. In other words, Plato does not have qualification for citizenship, at least in the *Republic*. Accordingly, it is permissible to refer to members in Plato's primal polis (Glaucon's city of pigs) as citizens. It is as well permissible to refer to all the individuals as citizens of Kallipolis, especially when women are included in politics and when there is virtually no clear defence of natural slavery.

<sup>2</sup> Gould 1955; Klosko 2006; Popper 1945 (rpt. 2005); Taylor 1999, and Vlastos 1941 (rpt. 1981).

<sup>3</sup> I have argued in (Peprah 2021a) that this interpretation of the *Republic*'s epistemology is inadequate. For it fails to comprehensively account for the cognitive competence of the philosopher-rulers. And most importantly, it does not give conceptual space to discuss the cognitive competencies of the non-philosophic citizens.

<sup>4</sup> Kraut 1992:319, writes that "it is possible to spend a great deal of one's time on intellectual matters without ever arriving at the realization that the Forms exist. Those who study the universe and seek to explain all phenomena without appealing to Forms surely develop the reasoning side of their nature; it is not sheer emotion and appetite that leads them to their theories. Even so, they are not leading the philosophical life, according to Plato's narrow conception of philosophy, and so they don't have the best kind of life." To say the least, this reading is unnecessarily too strong.

to that of a slave. For instance, Vlastos thinks that despite the fact that the Platonic dialogues give us no equivalence of Aristotle's treatment of slavery in his *Politics*, Plato would not disagree with Aristotle's view that slavery is good for the individual "whose intellectual deficiency is supplemented by the master's superior reason."<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, the non-philosophic citizens are said to assume a slavish position in Kallipolis' political hierarchy: they are morally obtuse, intellectually incapacitated, and politically inept. Vlastos, Taylor, Klosko and others who defend metaphysical justification argue variously that Plato's political thesis bodes totalitarianism, or at best paternalism. Therefore, political obligation seems to be slavish returns to the polis, together with its political authority, for the moral and political benefit it promises the citizens. This is what I mean by the *political position* or worth of the citizens. Metaphysical justification is consistent with what Rosler calls 'service conception of political authority', according to which political authority is for the sake of the well-being of its subject.<sup>6</sup> And political obligation is morally justified: the citizens accede unconditionally to their political superiors for their own good. In essence, defenders of the metaphysical justification claim that the *Republic's* politics bodes a master-slave relationship – a relationship that underscores totalitarianism and paternalism.

This study discusses one of the central themes in the *Republic*: alienation from politics. Its central aim is to re-examine the metaphysical justification, keeping strictly in mind the goal to reject its disturbing implications for understanding the worth of the citizens. The study admits that there seems to be some ground to defend the metaphysical justification, but it believes that it is difficult to find textual evidence to support the political and ethical implications it yields. To do this, I offer another way Plato seeks to justify the political authority of the philosopher-rulers. I shall call this the *naturalistic justification*. Naturalistic justification does not deny that metaphysical ἐπιστήμη makes the philosopher-rulers cognitively superior to the non-philosophic citizens. But it claims two main things. First, the cognitive superiority of the philosopher-rulers must only be understood in a relativistic sense. Thus, it can be argued that the philosopher-rulers can also be said to be cognitively inferior in areas they lack competence, e.g. in the field of medicine. Second, naturalistic justification denies that Plato's metaphysical epistemology even plays a role in his reasons to exclude some citizens from politics. So, I assume that the sense in which the *Republic's* epistemology fits in Plato's political project has not been well understood.

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<sup>5</sup> Vlastos 1981:160-161.

<sup>6</sup> Rosler 2005:178.

Naturalistic justification takes seriously Socrates' constructionist account of the polis. Socrates' constructionist account of the polis begins from Book II; the account emphasises the two natural principles he thinks initially make a society possible: (a) *mutual needs*—individuals are not self-sufficient and need to live together (*Rep.*, 369b-d); and (b) *difference of aptitude*, namely, that different people are good at different things, and it is best for all that each concentrates on developing what each is good at doing (*Rep.*, 370a-b). These two principles hold that each individual in Kallipolis is endowed with some natural aptitudes and qualities a development of which conduces to the person's good and that of the political community at large. This is consistent with Plato's social justice, namely, that each person must perform functions that their natural aptitude and education can enable them to perform efficiently and optimally. Plato's social justice defends the worthiness of every person in Kallipolis. More importantly, naturalistic justification does not challenge the intuitive idea that some citizens in any organised society must need external moral agency since all cannot live the virtuous life. Instead, it argues that the ethical and political implications of metaphysical justifications cannot be sustained.

In defence of the naturalistic justification, therefore, I advance four logically connected theses: (1) *all* citizens are to focus on professions in which they can function optimally. Therefore, if ruling is the prerogative of philosopher-rulers it is precisely because they can function optimally in governance. (2) Similarly, the other citizens are excluded from politics because their natural aptitudes and training enable them to attain efficiency in their respective professions. (3) One's ability to function optimally in a given profession depends on one's natural aptitude and cognitive competence. This involves showing how Plato conceives the cognitive or epistemic competencies of the non-philosophic citizens.<sup>7</sup> (4) Therefore, the realisability of the eudaemonistic goals of both the individual and the polis supervene upon the cooperative interactions between the rulers and the ruled, relative to their natural aptitudes and epistemic competencies. As to whether such realisability is possible or not is not germane to our discussion (cf. *Rep.*, 540d). Thesis (4) opposes the claim of the metaphysical justification that Plato's politics bodes some kind of absolute political determinism, namely, that the rulers are to determine every aspect of the citizens' life. I shall argue that the *Republic's* political hierarchy does otherwise; that it does not threaten the realisability of individual happiness.

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<sup>7</sup> In defence of this claim, I am aware that Plato did not explicitly designed education system for the non-philosophic citizens. But in showing the cognitive competencies of the non-philosophic citizens and how they are developed, I shall argue that Plato has a possible view on what we must call scientific knowledge, which treads on the traditional Greek way of acquiring knowledge, i.e. learning a craft from a parent. I discuss this issue in Chapter Four.

Thus, if the citizens must rely on the cognitive superiority of their rulers for their happiness, it presupposes that the ruler's cognition is either a necessary or sufficient condition for their happiness. This seems to determine the content of the citizens' happiness. As we shall see in Chapter One, Plato sometimes seems to argue along this line, but I shall argue in Chapter Two that he is not committed to it, stressing that the rulers are not to determine the content of happiness.

In essence, I hope to show that Plato desires some kind of a *symmetric* relationship between the philosophic and non-philosophic citizens, relative to the realisation of the good of the individual and Kallipolis. Socrates says that the rulers call their citizens "providers of upkeep and wages" and the citizens, in turn, call their rulers "preservers and auxiliaries". These positive co-referencing expressions contrast with what rulers in other cities call their citizens: "slaves" (*Rep.*, 463a3-b12). This symmetric relationship opposes the view of defenders of metaphysical justification that the political hierarchy creates an *asymmetric* dependency culture, wherein the citizens must solely depend on the philosopher-rulers for their wellbeing. Socrates is explicit that the non-philosophic citizens are not slaves, but defenders of metaphysical justification claim otherwise. This shows that they lack textual evidence to support their claim. In speaking about the good of the polis and the individuals, *qua* happiness, I shall follow R. D. Mohr, who argues that "Plato sees a *kind* of happiness as concomitant to social justice, that is, as attaching to one's fulfilling of one's social function. A Platonic happiness is something quite close to what we would call job satisfaction or a sense of our actualizing ourselves through work."<sup>8</sup> Moreover, some scholars, including Robert Hall and Marek Piechowiak, have defended the

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<sup>8</sup> The view that Plato sees a kind of happiness concomitant to social justice helps to make the following prefatory point. It is true that the citizens are excluded from politics and anything related to it. This suggests that Plato goes against what, for instance, an Athenian considered to be the core of civic honour (τιμή): political participation and military service. But the Greek society has a range of political systems and communities beyond the democratic polis, such that Athenian democracy and citizenship cannot be used as a standard of measuring the reception of Plato's political programme (see Brock and Hodkinson 2001; also Balot 2006). Thus the success story of non-democratic poleis, like Sparta and Corinth, gives us some haven to speak confidently about the moral and political worth of the non-philosophic citizens in Kallipolis. More importantly, the ordinary Athenian engaged in politics sometimes not necessarily because he wants to secure honour but for gain livelihood, or so Aristophanes attempts to show us in his *Wasps*. Philocleon's obsession with his job as a juror was mainly because Cleon raised the pay of jurors. In general, the confrontational relationship between the oligarchic class and the poor in democratic Athens was mainly caused by material acquisition. Aristotle's solution to such hostility in Book IV of his *Politics* was to propose a 'mean' class among these two extreme economic classes. On his part, Plato's solution to the problem was to exclude the ruling class from owning any property; the rulers must be content with basic necessities (*Rep.*, 416d-417b). The offshoot is that the novelty of Plato's solution to the problem of *stasis*, caused by the tension between the rich and the poor, lies, I think, in his redefining the concept of civil honour. In Plato's Kallipolis I assume that social worthiness measured not in terms of one's material possession but one's ethical disposition to act justly in all relevant situations and also one's willingness to do what he or she is cognitively capable of attaining excellence, relative to his/her profession. I say this to implore us to refrain from trying to understand Plato's politics with an Athenian democratic political lens; after all Plato allowed women to engage in politics, a feat Athens never thought of.

intellectual and moral capabilities of the citizens. This means that some groundwork for the defence of the naturalistic justification has already been laid out, even though I do not share some of the details of their respective expositions. What remains unexplored, in my view, is the worth of the citizens in terms of their material contribution to Kallipolis, given their cognitive or epistemic competencies. This unexplored thesis shall be the focus of this study.

## INTRODUCTION

In this prefatory section, I offer a logical articulation of the chapter components and the conceptual order the thesis will take, and address some methodological and interpretation issues about the *Republic*.

The study aims to examine the political worth of the citizens, in terms of their contribution to the realisability of Kallipolis. But it begins on a familiar controversy: their moral worth. Chapter One critiques the dominant literature on Plato's justification of political authority in the *Republic* and the implied concept of political obligation. Even though the discussion will seem to align sympathetically with the prevailing understandings, the aim is to conclude that a more plausible justification of the worth of the political citizens is absent from such accounts. As a show of sympathy, albeit a defensive strategy, the chapter begins on a note that some defence for metaphysical justification can be found in the dialogue, that *some* but not *all* of the non-philosophic citizens will surely need the moral guidance of the philosopher-rulers. Hence, there is a *prima facie* legitimate basis to assert that the citizens must follow the philosopher-rulers for their moral guidance. But it rejects three main claims of defenders of metaphysical justification: (1) that the citizens are excluded from politics because they lack knowledge of the Good; (2) that they must need knowledge of the Good so they can attain moral excellence, and (3) that the moral function of the rulers is premised on Plato's belief that the citizens are slaves due to reasons (1) and (2). I shall show that there is hardly any textual evidence to support this interpretation.

I do so in two main ways. The first is to stress that Plato attributes the capacity to live ethically to all citizens in the *Republic*, i.e., the possession of the tripartite soul (a claim Hall and Piechowiak have well defended). Second, I shall follow the works of scholars, including Santas, Hall, and Piechowiak, to stress a Platonic mode of attaining ethical excellence, *practical ethical reasoning*, which does not *necessarily* require the possession of knowledge of the Good (even though it presupposes it) to live a just, happy life. The plan is to reveal that a theory of ethics grounded in Plato's grand metaphysics, on the one hand, and ethics originating from Plato's psychology (which reflects Socratic ethics), on the other hand, are evident and defensible in the *Republic*. That if the non-philosophers are to meet any ethical standard to attain happiness, a Socratic standard suffices – a standard of ethics wherein one is expected to subject one's decision-making grounding beliefs and principles to daily elenctic

scrutiny without necessarily having metaphysical commitments.<sup>9</sup> The chapter, however, ends on a note that the blinkered emphasis on morality by both admirers and critics of Plato to understand the worth of the non-philosophic citizens does less to account for such worth in Plato's political philosophy, and also misses out a great deal on the justificatory bases of the political authority of the philosopher-rulers. For instance, it shall become evident that there are economic and social considerations in the justification of the political authority of the philosopher-rulers.

In Chapter Two, I defend the naturalistic justification by way of providing a more satisfactory account of Plato's justification of political authority without the attempt to pin him down as defending a particular modern conception of political theory. In the light of his conception of the polis and the salient principles he appeals to, I shall identify and examine Plato's argument for justifying political authority, including partnership and friendship. It shall become evident that Plato conceives citizenship in conditions of positive references: the citizens are *partners*, presupposing their positive value in the overall social and political hierarchy. Crucial to the discussion in this chapter is Plato's concept of social justice and the constitutive conditions of the polis. This chapter will prepare us for a defence of my main claim, namely, that for Plato, the eudaemonistic goals of both the individual and the polis supervene upon the cooperative interactions between the rulers and the ruled, relative to their natural aptitudes and epistemic competences.

I defend this main claim in Chapters Three and Four. In Chapter Three, I shall grapple with a popular and still influential claim that only the philosophers possess knowledge, i.e. metaphysical *ἐπιστήμη* and that it is impossible to acquire knowledge in the perceptible world. I argue that Plato holds no such view. A rejection of this popular interpretation of the Republic's epistemology gives room to defend the claim that it is possible to acquire knowledge in the perceptible world. In essence, I challenge the sufficiency of metaphysical *ἐπιστήμη*, arguing that the philosopher-rulers cannot rule if they only have this kind of knowledge. What is true is that they must have practical knowledge and experience about governance. This will prepare us to appreciate my argument that Plato gives room for what I shall call 'scientific knowledge', i.e. a kind of knowledge which involves observation of concrete phenomena, thorough study of the observed phenomena, and drawing deductive or inductive conclusions in the perceptible world. In Book IV, at *Rep.*, 428b3-d5, Socrates

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<sup>9</sup> Vlastos 1991 strongly defends this Socratic ethical thesis. For Vlastos, Socrates is not an epistemologist, physician or metaphysician; he is simply an ethicist.



acknowledges that there are many kinds of knowledge in the polis (πολλὰ δὲ γε καὶ παντοδαπαὶ ἐπιστήμαι ἐν τῇ πόλει εἰσὶν). In this passage, he draws a distinction between the guardians' knowledge and other kinds of knowledge of other crafts, including farming and carpentry. I shall propose that observational, practical and experiential kinds of knowledge fall under the rubric of scientific knowledge.<sup>10</sup>

In Chapter Four, I shall argue that the various ἐπιστήμαι of non-philosophic citizens (or most of them) plausibly constitute scientific knowledge, and their cognitive competence should be defined in terms of this kind of knowledge. From this perspective, I shall argue that if the philosopher-rulers must acquire practical knowledge and experience in the phenomenal world, then Plato does not claim that metaphysical ἐπιστήμη is the only cognitive achievement. In arguing thus, I shall try to show the conceptual affinity between the cognitive competencies of the philosophic and non-philosophic citizens, relative to scientific knowledge in the sense specified.

Chapter Five concludes and reflects on the entire study. Here, I shall reflect on important issues like the relationship between the *Republic's* strict political hierarchy and the pursuit of happiness, the political hierarchy and political friendship.

### **Interpreting Plato**

Now, I shall attend to four main methodological and interpretative issues concerned with working on Plato. First, Plato's works have roughly been divided into periods, according to a purported gestation of his philosophical thoughts from 'early', 'middle' to 'matured' periods. There are two main opposing scholarly groups on this interpretative issue. The first group is committed to what is conventionally called the 'diachronic and developmentalist view', according to which Plato's dialogues must be divided into groups based on a rough order of their composition: early, middle, and late period dialogues.<sup>11</sup> The opposing group holds a 'synchronic and unitarian view', according to which the dialogues must be read as a unitary

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<sup>10</sup> I wish to specify that by saying that Plato has a concept of scientific knowledge, I do not claim that he paid attention to it, nor did he design an educational system to develop it, at least in the *Republic*. Nevertheless, it is plausible that he takes for granted the traditional Greek non-institutional mode of education before the advent of the sophists. For instance, in Book V, he speaks of how the children of potters, for example, assist and observe for a long time before actually making any pots. He then asks Glaucon: And should these craftsmen take more care in training their children by appropriate experience and observation (ἐμπειρία τε καὶ θέα) than the guardians? (*Rep.*, 466e3-467a6). I shall argue that experiential and observational kind of knowledge underwrite what I want to call scientific knowledge.

<sup>11</sup> Perl 2014: 21-22. For detailed discussion, see Erler 2005:60-64; Klosko 2006:14-29; Piechowiak 2019:28-31; Schofield 2006:2-3;; Söder 2017: 27-33, and Vlastos 1991:46-47.

whole with the flexibility to quote from anywhere to support a discussion in another dialogue.<sup>12</sup> I shall side with this second group. In agreement with them, I find it plausible the suggestion that Plato would have been satisfied with his early writings and the main theses they seek to advance, even though he may only be correctional of some of his previous view. This is a common phenomenon in modern authorship. Also, there are thematic consistencies and recurrence of leitmotifs in the so-called early, middle, and late dialogues. For instance, Plato never compromises the traditional idea that ‘injustice is bad and shameful’ throughout the dialogues. That said, I need to point out that I shall remain focused on the *Republic* in advancing my theses. But I shall freely quote passages from other dialogues if it becomes necessary and appropriate to do so. Moreover, the artificial categorisation of the Platonic corpus sometimes compels one to make statements like “the Socratic idea”, the “Platonic idea”, etc. For this study, I shall freely make use of these locutions without commitment to their underlying artificial categorisation thesis.

Second, the attribution of any idea or thought to Plato is at present controversial. Some scholars, as Perl states their view, believe that ‘Plato never speaks to us through his own voice but rather presents his philosophy in the form of dramatic dialogues, which must therefore be read dialogically, rather than as treatises from which doctrinal statements may be excerpted, and dramatically, with full attention to factors such as setting, context, the characters of the various interlocutors, and their interplay and development in the course of the dialogue.’<sup>13</sup> For this reason, some scholars find it pernicious the ascription of mental representational locutions like ‘Plato says’, ‘Plato thinks’ etc. The claim that Plato’s philosophy should be read dialogically and dramatic may be unmistakable. However, I take side with Perl, and few other scholars, that this way of reading Plato’s philosophy need not be taken as that he has no definite ideas to express or thesis to explore.<sup>14</sup> That ‘the entire history of Plato interpretation demonstrates [that] the views by the leading speaker, however, interpreted, have almost always been regarded as Plato’s views.’<sup>15</sup> Thus, even though ‘Plato never speaks directly in his own voice, we may nonetheless be justified in using convenient locutions like ‘Plato says’, ‘Plato thinks’, in quoting the dialogues.’<sup>16</sup>

Third, and relatedly, Plato’s philosophy can be read dialogically and dramatic with full attention to factors such as setting, context, the characters of the various interlocutors. Hence,

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12 Perl 2014:21.

13 Perl 2014:19

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 ibid

occasional references to some socio-political and historical incidences outside the dialogue may illuminate understanding of some of its issues. I am not in denial that ‘political life itself sets the main problems for the political theorist, causing a certain range of issues to appear problematic, and a corresponding range of subjects to become the leading subjects of debate.’<sup>17</sup> Plato was an Athenian and, as he tells us in the *Seventh Letter*, the political life of Athens influenced his political theorising. And I share the conviction that the *Republic*’s political thesis can be read as providing a conceptual response and guidance to addressing the political ills of the Greek polis. Nevertheless, I advise that, as some scholars will agree, we do not read the *Republic* as a historical treatise or ‘a straightforward outcome of their social base,’<sup>18</sup> but, rather, as a philosophical work. The aim of this study is not limited to historical concerns, nor are they of primary importance to us. Suffice to say that I shall cling to the hermeneutic method of *sola scriptura* against strict adherence to *structuralism*. Nevertheless, I shall make occasional references to socio-political and historical events in Greek culture, which might have shaped Plato’s political thought.

Fourth, some scholars are reviving ‘the Straussian’ allegation that Plato is not serious about his political programme in the *Republic*.<sup>19</sup> More recently, Piechowiak states categorically that ‘in writing the *Republic* [Plato] was actually concerned with understanding the individual and not the state.’<sup>20</sup> That the *Republic* should be read as a tractate of the individual and not the state. That this suggestion is ill-advised is evident in the fact that we miss out on one of the major focuses of the dialogue: Plato’s political thesis as a conceptual response to the political ills of societies. While a study of Plato’s views on the non-philosophic individual is of crucial importance, it does not call for a rejection of his views about the state. The ancient world did not receive the *Republic* in a way Strauss and Piechowiak encourage. Aristotle thought he understood Plato’s political views, at least enough to criticise him in his *Politics*. Cicero makes copious references to the *Republic* and the *Laws* in writing his political writings, and his admiration for Plato is mainly because the latter proposed that philosophers should rule. In essence, the fact that Plato uses the polis as a thought experiment to defend justice writ large should not deter us from taking his political ideas seriously. In this study, I take it for granted that Plato is serious about his political engineering in the *Republic*.

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17 Skinner 1994:11

18 Ibid.

19 On the Straussian allegation, see Klosko 1986 who has a very insightful response to this allegation.

20 Piechowiak 2019:90.

## CHAPTER ONE

### The Metaphysical Justification of Political Authority

#### 1.1 Introduction

A traditional and still popular interpretation holds that the non-philosophic citizens in Plato's Kallipolis are excluded from politics precisely because they lack knowledge of the Good – knowledge without which no other knowledge is possible.<sup>21</sup> This is the main claim of the *metaphysical justification*. One key implication of this interpretation is that the citizens assume an insignificant political position or worth, namely, that they are slaves because they are morally obtuse, intellectually incapacitated, and politically inept. Consequently, the supposedly unreflective, unenlightened citizens must follow the philosopher-rulers' guidance for their moral and political wellbeing. Hence, political obligation seems to be a slavish return to the polis for the moral and political benefit it promises the citizens, and the relationship between the rulers and the ruled must be understood in these negative senses. The overall aim of this chapter is to agree with scholars, including Hall and Piechowiak, to argue against metaphysical justification. It aims to show that the non-philosophic citizens possess the *potential* to be virtuous. But I shall conclude on a note that the moral debate does less to enable us to understand the full force of the political position of the non-philosophic citizens. This will prepare us to explore, in the next chapter, an alternative justification, the *naturalistic justification*, which, I claim, Plato is more committed to.

#### 1.2 Justification of Political Authority in the *Republic*?

Did the ancient Greeks ever show concern about concepts like justification of political authority? The ancient Greeks accepted that life outside the polis is unthinkable. This is best captured in Aristotle's famous datum that man is a political animal, in that it is only in the political community that a Greek considered life to have any sort of meaning. As we shall explore in the next chapter, the Greeks generally believe that the political community bears the imprint of man's willingness to socialise his talent for common use and his eirenic disposition to live harmoniously with each other. But also, and for Aristotle, the political community has laws to mould the bestial nature of man to be civilised: "for man, when perfected, is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all" (*Pol.* 1253a29-31).

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21 For instance, Fine writes that for Plato 'only philosophers should rule, since only they have knowledge, and knowledge is necessary for good ruling. Only philosophers have knowledge...because only they know Forms, knowledge without which no other knowledge is possible.' Fine 1978:122.

It follows that man, for the Greeks, has a moral duty to obey the polis and its political authority – entities which guarantee his existence and civilisation (see section 2.3). Questions about political obligation and justification of authority may not have directly been the concern of the ordinary Greek citizen. Finley is certain about this: “It is generally accepted that the good life was possible only within the framework of a city-state. For most people the test was a pragmatic one; they did not concern themselves with such abstract notions as legitimacy or political obligation....”<sup>22</sup> Finley is, however, unconvincing to have added that Greek political theorists did not also concern themselves with the question of political obligation and justification of political authority.<sup>23</sup> Rosler has recently explored, in much detail, Aristotle’s conception of political obligation and authority and their justification. On the other hand, the metaphysical justification has taken the centre stage—it seems to be the only known justification—of Plato’s possible view on political authority.

Plato also took the justification of political authority seriously. For instance, Socrates says in Book IV: “But you meet with the desires that are simple, measured, and directed by calculation in accordance with understanding and correct belief only in few people who are born with the best natures and receive the best education” (*Rep.*, 431c4-7). This passage, together with many others, refers unambiguously to the philosopher-rulers; they are the few with the best natures and best education. Furthermore, Socrates says that “if indeed the ruler and the ruled in any city share the same belief about who should rule, it is this one [Kallipolis].” Why must this be? Socrates indulges Glaucon: “Take a look at our new city, and you’ll...say that it is rightly called self-controlled, if indeed something in which the better rules the worse is properly called moderate and self-controlled.” So, the answer for the why-question is that the ruled concede that their leaders are of superior moral disposition in Kallipolis (*Rep.*, 431c-d). The context for these Book IV passages is about Socrates showing *moderation* in Kallipolis. The context is how Socrates, *qua* lawgiver, demonstrates how to attain political and social harmony (ὁμόνοια) in the polis. The initial idea we get from these passages is that if the non-philosophic citizens are to have a share of understanding of who should rule, then the question about justification of political authority is germane to the discussion of Plato’s political engineering in the *Republic*. But a more crucial point is that if the non-philosophic citizens have a say or must *merely* have an idea about who should rule them, we can further agree that political consensus is crucial in the discussion of justification of political authority in the

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<sup>22</sup> Finley 1982:2; Schofield has argued recently that Cicero, and not Plato or Aristotle, was the first to account for political legitimacy (Schofield 2021).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

*Republic*.<sup>24</sup> In any case, the non-philosophers are not daft upon whom a certain political regime is imposed to exact from them moral rectitude.

But one may wonder: on what basis is there such a general agreement between the rulers and the ruled? Obviously, the basis for the political consensus is not democratic political participation (as in democratic Athens) or *contional* assemblage (*contio*) especially in late Republican Rome.<sup>25</sup> Rosler suggests that Aristotle's view on political authority is consistent with what is now called the "service conception of political authority", according to which political authority is for the sake of the well-being of its subject, and that "[a] general way of showing the rationality of political obligation is to prove that political authority serves the real interests of its subjects." Hence, the onus lies on the claimant who justifies political authority in this way to prove that "the alleged subjects are better off by complying with political authority than by acting always on their balance of reasons."<sup>26</sup> Both the naturalistic justification and the metaphysical justification agree that Plato's conceives of political consensus to have a utilitarian thrust in the manner Rosler imputes to Aristotle. The difference between the two opposing modes of justification consists in, I show, what constitutes the "well-being" or interests of the subjects. The naturalistic justification shall argue that the basis for political consensus in Kallipolis is the polis' social justice, such that what constitutes the interests and wellbeing of the subjects is accounted for in the context of how everyone in Kallipolis seeks to attain their potential and the favourable political environment for that purpose. This means that the justification of political obligation, I shall argue, has more to do with social justice than attaining moral excellence.

Now, the central thesis of metaphysical justification resonates with 'the service conception of political authority' in the following way: the non-philosophic citizens—lacking metaphysical *ἐπιστήμη*—must accede, perhaps unconditionally, to the authority of the philosophers-rulers for their happiness. Consequently, there seems to be an obvious strong connection among Plato's ethics, metaphysics, and metaphysical justification. For defenders of the metaphysical justification, then, political authority and political obligation must be justified in terms of this connection. The naturalistic justification agrees with metaphysical

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<sup>24</sup> See my criticism against Piechowiak in section 1.5

<sup>25</sup> On the nature of the *contio*, see Vasaly 2013

<sup>26</sup> Rosler 2005:178. Rosler has lengthily discussed the propriety of attributing the concepts of political authority and obligation to classical Greek philosophers, especially Aristotle. Rosler takes on scholars, including Kraut, who are convinced that Aristotle does not raise the question of political obligation. For instance, Kraut writes that "Aristotle assumes throughout his political writings that a citizen can be called upon to obey the law and serve his political community in many different ways, and he almost never pauses to offer a justification for this far-reaching assumption. Perhaps that is because he believes that such a justification is already contained in the doctrine that each citizen is a part of a whole that is prior to him." Kraut as cited in Rosler 2005:178.

justification that the philosopher-rulers have an essential moral duty to perform; their task is to set the polis on an ethical trajectory. Naturalistic justification denies, however, that Plato excludes the citizens from politics on metaphysical grounds. We shall find out that there is no textual evidence to support this view.

Nevertheless, I begin to explore the metaphysical justification by situating the discussion within the general context of the *Republic's* central ethical thesis. Famously, Socrates wants to defend his claim that justice is better than injustice; that one is better off being just than unjust (*Rep.*, 357a4-b1; 358a1-3).<sup>27</sup> Socrates uses both the individual soul and the polis as illustrative instruments to defend his thesis. Ostensibly in Book IV, Socrates claims that every individual soul possesses three parts: the philosophic or reason part, the spirited part, and the appetitive part. And he concludes that justice in an individual soul consists of a harmonious relationship between its three parts, wherein each part performs its peculiar function. On its part, the polis is used as a larger illustrative instrument to defend justice writ large. Accordingly, a similar tripartite division of the citizenry in a polis is as follows: the philosopher-rulers, the auxiliary, and the craftsmen. Socrates assumes that a happy and just soul parallels a happy and just polis. In both the tripartite soul and polis, Socrates concludes that the philosophic life is, at least, a necessary condition for genuine happiness (εὐδαιμονία): to attain happiness, reason ought to rule the entire soul, and philosophers ought to rule the polis. Plato's concept of happiness in the *Republic* is defined within the context of his notion of psychical and socio-political justice.

### **1.3 The Ethical Foundation of the *Republic's* Politics?**

We admitted above that we need not deny—and cannot even deny—that Plato thinks that the philosopher-rulers possess superior morality. Nevertheless, we must be guided by the following conviction as we explore the moral competence of the ruled: “if indeed the ruler and the ruled in any city share the same belief about who should rule, it is [Kallipolis].” And when the citizens agree in this way, moderation is in both (*Rep.*, 431e). Moderation, then, is a kind of harmony. The sense of harmony here is unambiguously political consensus. Socrates justifies: “moderation resembles a kind of harmony...[b]ecause, unlike courage and wisdom, each of which resides in one part, making the city brave and wise respectively, moderation spreads throughout the whole. It makes the weakest, the strongest, and those in between—whether in regard to reason, physical strength, numbers, wealth, or anything else—all sing the same song together. And this unanimity, this agreement between the naturally worse and the

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<sup>27</sup> Important discussion of this claim includes Kraut 2006; Annas 198.

naturally better is to which of the two is to rule both in the city and in each one is rightly called moderation” (*Rep.*, 431e-6-432a).

As we shall see, defenders of the metaphysical justification (see section I.4) argue that the non-philosophers are slaves to the guardians because they are morally obtuse and intellectually handicapped since they lack knowledge of the Good. Therefore, even if we grant that there is some sort of consensus between the rulers and the ruled, Socrates says that the latter is inferior to the former. After all, the metaphysical justification has some support: there is a superior-inferior political relationship. Should defenders of the naturalistic justification be worried? I advise we do not. When Socrates mentions that all others except the rulers are naturally weak, he refers to desires and pleasures. The naturally weak are those preoccupied with material acquisition and honour seeking. This resounds a familiar theme in Socratic ethics: that material acquisition does not guarantee true happiness. So, we can grant that the moral superiority of the rulers in the Book IV passages quoted above is grounded in a fundamental understanding of the Platonic ethical thesis, which is also fundamentally Socratic, namely, that virtue is necessary and sufficient for happiness.

Based on this ethical thesis, we can grant that the soul-body dichotomy in the other Platonic dialogues, like the *Phaedo*, collapses into the tripartite soul in the *Republic*.<sup>28</sup> Specifically, the appetitive and spirited parts assume the desires and pleasures of the body, while the monistic soul is represented by the rational or philosophic part. Nevertheless, the ethical thesis underlying both the monistic soul and the tripartite soul remains unchanged: virtue alone is sufficient to guarantee the philosopher the truest pleasures possible (see below). On the other hand, contemplating goodness while pursuing material goods is the surest way to secure genuine happiness. Accordingly, there is no significant difference between Socrates’ imploration of his fellow Athenians to live the philosophic life—care for their soul—as they pursue material and reputational goods, on the one hand, and what Plato would want the citizens to care about in Kallipolis, on the other hand. But I shall argue that Plato’s concern in his political engineering in the *Republic* has less to do with exhorting the citizens of Kallipolis to live a virtuous than capitalising on all available resources at the disposal of the political community to attain the just polis. That is, the test for virtuous citizenship in the *Republic* has more to do with how one can do best for oneself and consequently for the polis than how one can attain ethical excellence.

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<sup>28</sup> For a discussion, see Trabattoni 2016.



Meantime, Socrates takes the argument concerning the superiority of the philosophic life over other lives in Book IV to Book IX. There he seems to ditch his ‘naturalistic’ argument of the superiority of the philosophic life—that the philosophers are of the best natures, hence naturally superior—to claim that the philosophers have superior desires and pleasures. The counterargument of the non-philosophers—the money-makers and honour-lovers—is worth exploring. The aim is to show that the superiority of the philosophic life does not remain unchallenged; the money-makers and honour-lovers have reasons to pursue what they do other than philosophising. Therefore, it cannot be taken for granted that the non-philosophic life necessarily leads to a miserable life.

### **1.3.1 The ‘Three-Lives and Three-Pleasures’ Argument**

As mentioned above, Plato grounds the moral superiority of the philosopher-rulers in his concepts of pleasure and desire. Each of the three parts of the soul has some desire directed at fulfilling some pleasures. For instance, we are told in Book V that whoever desires something does not love only part but must love all of it (*Rep.*, 474c7-9). Accordingly, the desire of the spirited part aims to fulfil all kinds of reputational goods such as honour and glory as well as victory and domination over others. Moreover, insatiable appetites, including sexual pleasures and money-making, are fulfilments peculiar to the erotic desires of the appetitive part. Socrates likens the philosopher’s erotic predisposition to love the whole to that of some men’s full erotic inclinations towards boys in their bloom; wine lovers who love all kinds of wine; and honour-lovers who, if they cannot be military generals or be honoured by people of dignity, put up with being honoured by insignificant and inferior people because they desire the whole of honour (*Rep.*, 474d2-475; 485b2-4).

Consistently with his extensive discussion of the tripartite soul in Books IV and V, Socrates is emphatic in Book IX about the differences between these three pleasures and desires (*Rep.*, 581c3-e4). Here, Socrates argues that there are three primary types of people corresponding markedly with the pursuit of these three pleasures: philosophic, victory-loving, and profit-loving. In this Book IX passage, he recalls the argument in Book IV about the moral superiority of the philosopher. However, the philosophic life is not simply assumed to be superior. Socrates’ aims to answer the main question that justice guarantees the happiest life, but injustice the most miserable life. But compared to his discussion in the previous books, he is more democratic in Book IX. The two other lives are made to compete with philosophy for what constitutes the happiest life.

Socrates says that each type of three persons prioritises his pursuits and looks askance or contemptuous at the other pursuits. If you ask three such people to tell you which of their lives is most pleasant, each will give you the highest praise of his own (*Rep.*, 581d-e). The money-maker says that the pleasure of being honoured and that of learning are worthless if he gets no money from them. The honour-lover thinks that the pleasure of making money is vulgar and that the pleasures of learning—except insofar as it brings him honour—is a cloud of smoke and nonsense (*Rep.*, 581c-d). On their part, the philosophers think that the pleasures money-makers and honour-lovers crave are far from genuine pleasures. Socrates admits that “there’s a dispute (ἀμφισβητοῦνται) between the different forms of pleasure and between the [three] lives themselves, not about which way of life is finer or more shameful or better or worse, but about which is more pleasant and less painful....” (*Rep.*, 581e5-8). The important point to make of this argument is that happiness involves pursuing desires that generate more pleasantness than pain – a thesis that later becomes an important thrust of Hellenistic philosophy. Accordingly, Socrates’ ‘three-lives and three-pleasures’ argument indicates that if each person desires to pursue some sort of pleasure (and each pleasure is what each takes to constitute happiness), then the philosophic life competes with other pursuits taken sufficiently by others to constitute happiness.

That is, the money-lovers and the honour-lovers, just like the philosopher, consider their pursuits as sufficient for their happiness, and each has legitimate reason for their choices. For the money-lover and honour-lover, then, philosophy does not really matter! In this light, we can imagine the response the Athenians would give to Socrates over his following concern: “Good Sir, you are an Athenian...are you not ashamed of your eagerness to possess as much wealth, reputation and honours as possible, while you do not care for not give thought to wisdom or truth, or the best possible state of your soul?” (*Apol.* 29e). Now, what is at stake here is the strength of autonomy each personality possesses to make decisions about the relative merit of their eudaemonistic choices. Personal autonomy here is closely intertwined with reason and agency: the argument grants that each of the three classes can determine what kind of pleasure is suitable. Accordingly, it is not that everyone is unaware of philosophy, together with it claims to offer genuine happiness, but that some individuals see it as an unnecessary venture. For instance, Callicles admonishes Socrates: “To partake of as much philosophy as your education requires is an admirable thing, and it is not shameful to practice philosophy while you’re a boy, but when you still do it after you’ve grown older and become a man, the thing gets to be ridiculous, Socrates!” (*Gorg.* 485a). And the rich Cephalus sees the need for philosophy when the physical pleasures are no more: “Socrates...you ought to come here more

often, for you should know that as the physical pleasures wither away, my desire for conversation and its pleasures grows” (*Rep.*, 328d).

Therefore, Socrates’ superior-inferior dichotomy in Book IV (*Rep.*, 431a-432a) needs to be understood with significant care. In the Book IX passages, as we have seen, the thrust of Socrates’ argument is that the triadic division of desires and pleasures corresponds with three psychological types of personalities. The division also suggests that Socrates acknowledges three kinds of happiness corresponding markedly with these personalities. Moreover, the kind of reasoning that goes into each personality’s hedonistic calculus is mainly utilitarian. As we saw for instance, the honour-lover thinks that the pleasure of learning—except insofar as it brings him honour—is smoke and utter nonsense (*Rep.*, 581d). Therefore, when Socrates says in Book IV that in Kallipolis the desires of the inferior many are controlled by the wisdom and desires of the superior few (*Rep.*, 431c-d), we must approach it carefully, because the honour-lovers and the money-lovers, who make up the inferior-majority, also consider the activities of the philosophers as useless enterprise.<sup>29</sup> Plato obviously does not envisage his Kallipolis to be founded on inimical ground, as when each class looks askance at each other and their pursuit. There surely needs to be another ground to justify political authority. The alternative I offer is the naturalistic justification.

That said, Plato seems to have a hypothetical accuser in the Book IX passage under consideration to provide justification as to why the philosophic life is preferable. A consideration of Plato’s justification is needed for our discussion of the cognitive competence of the non-philosophic citizens. As mentioned above, Plato has a typical Socratic response to the accuser: virtue is at least a necessary component of genuine eudaimonia’s calculus and armamentarium. But it is not mentioned anywhere that all those who pursue these two desires, and care less about philosophy, *lack* the capacity to reason or live virtuously. After all, the money-lovers and honour-lovers consider themselves as pursuing certain kinds of virtue. In any case, the fact that Plato attributes the tripartite soul to everyone means that every person has the capacity to live the reflective life, in that everyone has reason or the philosophic part capable of ethical reasoning.<sup>30</sup>

However, Plato is saying that what significantly differs between the philosopher and the money-lover is the desire and motivation for happiness. To the hypothetical accuser, the response is that the desire of the philosophic part—even if it is excessive—never generates any

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<sup>29</sup> In Chapter Three we will consider the prosecutors of philosophy.

<sup>30</sup> Hall 1963.

harmful consequences for the entire soul and can secure one true happiness. How? After acknowledging that there is a dispute between the three different forms of desires, Socrates claims that “There’s a big difference between” the philosopher and the other two personalities, and the criterion for ascertaining the truth of what each person says is true happiness is dependent on how each person judges correctly (*Rep.*, 582a3-5). Socrates specifies that it is by experience, practical wisdom, and argument (ἐμπειρία τε καὶ φρονήσει καὶ λόγῳ) that one judges well (καλῶς κριθήσεσθαι) and argues that the philosopher has superior cognitive achievements in all these three modes of cognition than the other two lives. For instance, he says in relation to experience: “A philosopher has of necessity tasted the other pleasures since childhood, but it isn’t necessary for a profit-lover to taste or experience the pleasure of learning the nature of things that are and how sweet it is” (*Rep.*, 582b2-8). Moreover, the philosopher alone has gained his experience of pleasures in the company of reason (*Rep.*, 582d3). The evaluative criterion to determining the genuineness of happiness is epistemic: the philosopher has tasted all three pleasures, and his clinging to philosophy is based on an explicit comparative evaluative judgement: it is the best among the three pleasures. But the money-maker can only judge the merit of the pleasures of philosophy from afar, because they lack experience of it. Socrates concludes:

**T1** Therefore, those who have no experience of reason or virtue, but are always occupied with feasts and the like, are brought down and then back up to the middle, as it seems, and wander in this way throughout their lives, never reaching beyond this to what is truly higher up, never looking up at it or being brought up to it, and so they aren’t filled with that which is and never taste any stable or pure pleasure. Instead, they always look down at the ground like cattle, and, with their heads bent over the dinner table, they feed, fatten, and fornicate. To outdo others in these things, they kick and butt them with iron horns and hooves, killing each other, because their desires are insatiable. For the part that they’re trying to fill is like a vessel full of holes, and neither it nor the things they are trying to fill it with are among the things that are (*Rep.*, 585e5-586b4).

What readily comes to mind when Socrates mentions “looking up to what is higher or being brought up to it” is knowledge of the Good and the Forms. A similar passage is in Book V. There, Socrates strikes a distinction between philosophers and the lovers of sights and sounds. He argues that “the lovers of sounds are very strange people to include as philosophers, for they would never willingly attend a serious discussion or spend their time that way, yet they

run around to all the Dionysiac festivals, omitting none, whether in cities or villages, as if their ears were under contract to listen to every chorus” (*Rep.*, 475d). Also, the lovers of sounds can “only be *like* philosophers.” But who are true philosophers? Socrates’ answer is not surprising: “Those who love the sight of truth” (*Rep.*, 475e). The sense of truth in this passage anticipates the distinction Socrates later draws between knowledge and opinion, truth and falsehood, and the Good and its particulars.<sup>31</sup> Hence, defenders of the metaphysical justification can count on **T1** as supporting their position.<sup>32</sup>

However, while Plato argues that the philosopher is morally superior to the lovers of sights and sounds, and the money-lovers and honour-lovers, we have also noted that Plato does not argue that these individuals *necessarily* lack autonomy to even reject the philosophic life. Their autonomy is closely intertwined with their agency to evaluate and distinguish which pleasurable pursuits are pleasant or painful: they love money and honour because they evaluate such material goods to be those that generate greater pleasures. For his political project in the *Republic*, as we shall see, Plato’s disposition toward the money-lovers and honour-lovers is more invitational than condemnation and rejection. That is, Plato aims to achieve organic unity among the three main desires rather than to reject the other lives (*Rep.*, 431e-6-432a).

Moreover, Plato’s political project, as shall become evident, does not prescribe any mode of happy life to the non-philosophers. Socrates tells Glaucon that they must leave into the hands of nature the determination of how each class will be happy in Kallipolis (*Rep.*, 421b, see also section 2.4). This is different from saying that the philosopher-rulers, like any government, have the responsibility to enforce morality in the polis. Moreover, it is difficult to find any textual evidence in the *Republic* which states that the non-philosophers must emulate the philosopher-rulers in terms of moral rectitude; it is an expectation that the philosophers set good moral standards with their behaviours, but it is not mentioned anywhere that the non-philosophers must become philosophers or even live the philosophic life. For the realisation of Kallipolis, Plato, I shall argue, puts significant weight on the activities of the money-lovers and honour-lovers.

### 1.3.2 Plato’s Psychology, Ethics and Politics

Defenders of the metaphysical justification may concede that Plato allows that the money-lovers and the honour-lovers exercise some degree of rationality regarding pleasure. But the

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<sup>31</sup> Peprah 2021.

<sup>32</sup> Thus, the connection between Plato’s ethics and epistemology is robust. See my discussion of Moss’ view on this in Section 3.4.3).

conclusion that follows from Socrates' discussion of the three-lives and three-pleasures still supports their thesis that the non-philosophers must follow the philosophers for their moral and political wellbeing. Before we investigate the conclusion, we defenders of the naturalistic justification are also convinced that the money-lovers and honour-lovers consider the pleasures from philosophy as "clouds of smoke and nonsense", and Plato's political system would be founded on shaky foundation if such inimical relationship exists between the philosophers and non-philosophers. Anyway, Socrates concludes:

**T2:** ...when the entire soul follows (ἐπομένης) the philosophic part, and there is no civil war (στασιαζούσης) in it, each part does its own work exclusively and is just, and in particular, it enjoys its own pleasures, the best and truest pleasure possible for it. But when one of the other parts gains control, it won't be able to secure its own pleasure and will compel the other (ἀναγκάζειν ἄλλοτρίαν) parts to pursue an alien and untrue pleasure. And aren't the parts that are most distant from philosophy and reason the ones most likely to do this sort of compelling? [Glaucón] They are more likely (*Rep.*, 586e3-587a8).

The essential idea here is that for Plato, psychic happiness is psychic health. That is, there is an inherent conflict among the parts of the soul, such that the entire soul's true happiness supervenes on the competitive strength of the philosophic part to dominate the competitive strengths of the spirited and appetitive parts (see also *Rep.*, 444b-445b5). This indicates that reason, the philosophic part, is active even in a mind dominated by the appetitive and spirited part; reason can only be suppressed. Why must the philosophic part dominate? As discussed above, Plato thinks the philosophic part aims at fulfilments that are objectively good and have a certain eternality about them, compared to the fulfilments of the other two which oscillate between good and bad and can only guarantee ephemeral satisfaction. When the philosophic part dominates, the two other parts serve the interests and purposes of reason. Knowledge is a form of reason risen to domination; the resulting convictions or judgements about what is good and bad are like a dye that cannot be washed out by the powerful detergents of material pleasures, pain, or fear (*Rep.*, 429d4-430a). In essence, Plato argues that the just and happy life is the philosophic life, wherein the philosophic part becomes the victor over the other parts. In contrast, injustice in the soul is a psychic disharmony, which manifests in the potency of the desires of the two other parts, i.e., the appetitive and spirited, to grow beyond what is necessary for true happiness.

Thus, psychic disharmony is a psychic crisis. Throughout the dialogue, Plato seeks to maintain that the genuine philosopher is the justest and happiest individual. In Book IX, he is specific that the philosopher rules like a king over himself, and his pleasures are 729 times more than those of the tyrant (*Rep.*, 587e1-2). Plato exaggerates the number and does not offer a detailed account of the content of the philosopher's colossal amount of intellectual hedonism. But he wants us to believe that the philosophic life constitutes a sufficiently happy life for the philosopher. This is precisely because the objects of the philosophers' desire, i.e., goods of eternal nature and of enduring satisfaction, are unconditionally good and incomparable to any other good believed to secure true happiness.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, the distinction between true happiness and any other kind of happiness is important for Plato. In particular, he exhortatively presents us the choice to vouch for the philosophic life over money-making and the pursuit of reputational goods. We can clearly observe that Plato's argument on happiness in the *Republic* shares thematic content with his views on the subject in the *Euthydemus*, *Meno*, and *Gorgias* and other dialogues.

In these so-called Socratic eudaemonistic dialogues, Plato believes that we all want to secure true happiness, and we act for the sake of this intended end (*Euthy.* 278e-282d, *Men.* 87d-89c, *Gorg.* 467c-468b).<sup>34</sup> Acting for the sake of this end presupposes our commitment to being truly happy. This eudaemonistic axiom is premised on what has come to be known as "intentional teleology of action", which basically holds that 'an agent's intentional doings are often taken to be those for which a certain sort of teleological explanation is available.'<sup>35</sup> X does y for the sake of z, thinking that z is good and can secure happiness. In the *Gorgias*, Socrates asserts that "it's because we pursue what's good that we walk whenever we walk; we suppose that it's better to walk. And conversely, whenever we stand still, we stand still for the sake of the same thing, what's good" (*Gorg.* 468b1-2). It is sensible to agree with Aristotle that (a) decision is the source of action, and that the sources of decision are desire and the *logos* that determine what the end is, and (b) consequently, there cannot be a decision without intelligence and thought, nor without an ethical nature (*NE.*, 1139ba15).<sup>36</sup> Plato and Aristotle agree, thus, that our happiness supervenes upon the quality of the decisions we make. So, Plato is saying in **T2**

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33 The happiness of the true philosopher is sharply contrasted with, the tyrant (the person with the worst of human moral dispositions). Socrates asserts vehemently that "...the tyrant is really a slave, compelled to engage in the worst kind of fawning, slavery, and pandering to the worst kind of people...he is envious, untrustworthy, unjust, friendless, impious, host and nurse to every kind of vice, and his ruling makes him more so" (*Rep.*, 579d8-580a6).

34 For a discussion of the passages, see Klosko 1987:251-264; Vlastos 1991:200-232.

35 Hanser 1998:381; also, Payne 2017.

36 Broadie 2020.

that the desires of the philosophic part, when secured, provides objective bases for sound decision making (see **T5**).

Conversely, Plato thinks that the erotic desires of the other two parts can only guarantee a façade of happiness. Socrates refers to the appetitive part as the “most godless and polluted” which pitilessly enslaves and benumbs the philosophic part and leads it to more terrible destruction (*Rep.*, 589d4-590a2). In Book IV, the appetitive part is also characterised as the rebellious part and “is by nature suited to be a slave” (*Rep.*, 444b1-7). It also coerces the spirited part to engage in flattery and become a slave, accustoming it from youth on to being insulted for the sake of the money needed to satisfy its insatiable desires (*Rep.*, 590b4-10). Furthermore, Socrates says that one who is committed to satisfying the desires of the spirited part becomes envious so much so that his love of victory makes him violent, so that he pursues the satisfaction of his anger and desires for honours and victories without calculation and understanding (*Rep.*, 586c5-d2). Plausibly, the conclusion is that those in whom the appetitive and spirited desires dominate are most likely to employ defective, egocentric principles in decision making. Therefore, for the sake of securing the “truest pleasure possible”, i.e., genuine happiness, Plato’s psychology proposes that it is natural for the other two parts to follow the philosophic part. This ‘naturalness’ of following the philosophic part within oneself presupposes individuality, and consequently a certain individual moral obligation to develop the rational part within oneself. In other words, since every individual has the tripartite soul within himself, it is plausible to assert that *every* individual has what it takes—reason or philosophic part—to live the good and just life.<sup>37</sup> Here, we see a clear connection between Plato’s ethics and politics: the claim that reason should rule the other parts of the individual is mainly because of the ethical preoccupation with reason.

Accordingly, the relationship between the ‘service conception of political authority’ and Plato’s ethics should not be difficult to spot if we pay close attention to the expression ‘follows’ (ἐπομένης) in **T2**. Grube translates ἐπομένης as ‘follows’. In his *Lexicon to Pindar*, Slater similarly lists ‘follows’ as one of the main senses of ἐπομένης. In addition to this, Slater lists ‘heed, obey’ and we can add ‘subject to’ as possible meanings of ἐπομένης.<sup>38</sup> Slater’s ‘heed and ‘obey’ support the claim that, for Plato, one can become genuinely happy if one subjects the entire soul to the rule of the philosophic part. A text preceding **T1** supports this claim:

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<sup>37</sup> This is foundational to the thesis of Piechowiak 2019.

<sup>38</sup> For instance, in Pindar’s frag. 131b1, we are told that “The body of men is subject to mighty death (σῶμα μὲν πάντων ἔπεται θανάτῳ περισθενεῖ).” Slater 1969:191.



**T3:** .... those desires of even the [profit-loving] and [victory-loving] parts (φιλοκερδῆς καὶ τὸ φιλόνηκον) that follow (ἐπομέναι) knowledge and argument and pursue with their help those pleasures that reason approves will attain the truest pleasures possible for them, because they follow truth, and ones that are most their own, if indeed what is best for each thing is most its own..." (*Rep.*, 586d4-e2).

Getting to the end of Book IX, Socrates asks Glaucon why the condition of a manual worker is despised. Socrates quickly adds that he could not think of any other reason than that the philosophic part is weak in the manual worker, such that he cannot rule the beasts within him but can only serve them and learn to flatter them (*Rep.*, 590c2-5). Socrates admonishes:

**T4:** Therefore, to ensure that someone like that is ruled by something similar to what rules the best person, we say he ought to be the slave of that best person who has a divine ruler within himself. It isn't to harm the slave that we say he must be ruled... but because it is better for everyone to be ruled by the divine reason, preferably within himself and his own, otherwise imposed from without, so that as far as possible all will be alike and friends, governed by the same thing. This clearly is the aim of the law, which is the ally of everyone. But it's also our aim in ruling our children, we don't allow them to be free until we establish a constitution in them, just as in a city, and—by fostering their best part with our own—equip them with a guardian and ruler similar to our own to take our place. Then, and only then, we set them free (*Rep.*, 590c9-591a1).

Defenders of the metaphysical justification usually appeal to passage **T4** to support their position. However, this passage, when properly interpreted, provides weak support to their argument. The manual labourer has a divine reason, i.e., the philosophic part, within himself, although the strength of his appetitive and spirited desires *may* seem to be the strongest such that they swamp up the former part. Socrates says that it is “better for everyone to be ruled by the divine reason, preferably within himself and his own...” The passage indicates that there are two main agents of morality: internal and external. By the internal agent of morality, I mean that the individual has the cognitive capacity to potentially live a good life, i.e., to live justly.<sup>39</sup> In Book IV, Socrates explains the operation of the internal agency:

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<sup>39</sup> Thus, I agree with Piechowiak that the problem of justice is at the core of Plato's philosophy; that “the most significant question that Plato aims to answer concerns how to be a good man, how to lead a good life. The simplest answers he supplies to these questions are that to be good means to be just; to lead a good life means to act justly.” For Piechowiak, “It seems that the whole of Plato's philosophy is developed with a view to giving

**T5:** And in truth justice is, it seems, something of this sort [i.e., the doing of one's own]. However, it isn't concerned with someone's doing his own externally, but with what is inside him, with what is truly himself and his own. One who is just does not allow any part of himself to do the work of another part or allow the various classes within him to meddle with each other. He regulates well what is really his own and rules himself. He puts himself in order, is his own friend, and harmonises the three parts of himself like three limiting notes in a musical scale—high, low, and middle. He binds together those parts and any others there may be in between, and from having been many things he becomes entirely one, moderate and harmonious. Only then does he act. And when he does anything, whether acquiring wealth, taking care of his body, engaging in politics, or in private contracts—in all these, he believes that the action is just and fine that preserves this inner harmony and helps achieve it, and calls it so, and regards as wisdom the knowledge that oversees such actions. And he believes that the action that destroys this harmony is unjust, and calls it so, and regards the belief that oversees it as ignorance. (*Rep.*, 443c8-e).

This passage is particularly convenient and crucial for deliberations on the view that everyone has the divine reason to live the good life. The passage bears the imprint of the Socratic mode of ethical reasoning. To my mind, it shows that Plato's psychology is committed to individualism of a sort. Plato's just person chooses ends after reflections or deliberations about means to achieve the end, and reason by and large is the ultimate arbiter of choice of ends and selection of appropriate means to the securing of these ends.<sup>40</sup> In other words, the just person 'binding together', 'regulating well', and 'putting himself in order' are mental representational expressions that indicate how the person gives forethought before action. It confirms what I said Plato and Aristotle agree on: practical wisdom, desires and decisions are prior to taking actions, such that our happiness supervenes upon the quality of the end we pursue – an end which is the product of the employment of right principles of conduct, appropriate desires and the quality of our decision-making. In all his pursuits, the just person shows genuine concern for the inner harmony and unity of his soul: caring for the soul is the utmost priority of the Platonic just person.

On the other hand, we see in **T4** that where the individual fails to cultivate his inner harmony, i.e., where reason has been allowed to atrophy, and where the failure leads to

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rational consideration to these questions. Both ontological and epistemological issues are subordinated to reflection on practical ones”

40 See Hall 1963:10.

punishable consequences for the individual or the society, or both, there must be external compelling agents, including the law and parenting, to foster and exact moral rectitude. Thus, the responsibility and power to nurture good character also rest with parents, laws and political authority. It is for the sake of the good of the morally defective individual that he is compelled to follow external rules and principles meant to direct him to make right choices and to secure the truest pleasures possible. This is precisely the moral duty of the philosopher-rulers, *qua* external agents. They are vested with the power to make laws, apart from what the lawgiver hands over to them (*Rep.*, 425c8-e). Accordingly, the primary function of the law is to promote the just life in individuals in whom the philosophical part is weak. There is nothing extraordinary about this moral function. Governments, regardless of the name or political system, must deal with criminals of all kinds whose activities threaten the communal good. However, the central question is whether this moral function maintains or increases the power of the polis and its authority for its own sake. As we shall see in the next section, some scholars believe that it does, while others deny it. But to take a position on this matter, I need to spell out the plausible answer to the question.

As passages **T2-T4** indicate, the non-philosophic citizens—in whom the two other psychic parts are dominant—ought to follow the philosophy to secure the truest pleasure possible. To be genuinely happy, here, means to achieve the full potential of being human. Here I agree with Kraut that Plato thinks that human beings are not just appetitive and timarchic creatures who are predisposed to satisfying only insatiable but ephemeral desires; we also have the innate capacity and interest in learning, and if this aspect of our nature is underdeveloped or allowed to atrophy our lives become narrow and impoverished.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, Piechowiak asserts that Plato conceives the aim of the law and the state to be understood in utilitarian terms: “The benefit to an individual, his happiness, is not simply safety and preservation of life, which are goods apprehended easily on the basis of sensual experience, but also consists of being as great as possible.”<sup>42</sup> For Piechowiak, ‘being as great as possible’ means that the happiness of the individual “goes beyond that which is visible and concerns acquiring and practising virtues, most of all justice.”<sup>43</sup>

Therefore, to the extent that some but not all men can be morally upright on their own accord, one of the main theses of metaphysical justification—that the citizens need moral guidance to live the good life—can be taken for granted. Thus, given that Plato attributes the

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41 Kraut 1992:318.

42 Piechowiak 2019:26-7.

43 Ibid.

tripartite soul to every human, his main ethical thesis is that each member of society must ideally have a mental constitution and a character dominated or controlled by the philosophic part. But when the philosophic part is weak, an authority must be imposed from without, so that under such authority one may realise the full essence of his or her beingness. Two such external agents to promote morality, as noted above, are the laws and quality political leadership. The practical aim of legislations of the philosopher-rulers is, therefore, not to condemn the philosophically weak but to empower them to be deeply and fully human more than they could realise by themselves. And the practical aim of quality political leadership is to formulate and implement laws meant to uplift the morally weak and set them on ethical trajectory. Plato seems to say something like this in Book V of the *Laws*: “The whole point of our legislation was to allow the citizens to live supremely happy lives and the greatest possible mutual friendship” (*Laws* 743c5-6). Plato does not conceive philosophical rulership to take a semblance of tyranny, wherein the citizens are subject to the arbitrary will of the tyrant, the most morally corrupt.<sup>44</sup>

One implication of our discussion so far for understanding ‘the service conception of political authority’ is that the individual’s happiness, i.e., realising the full potential of his or her beingness, provides the most important justificatory basis for the existence of laws. Therefore, when the non-philosophic citizens accede to the political authority of the philosopher-rulers, they do so because they want to realise the full essence of their beingness. The morally weak must surely need external moral agency. However, I shall argue in the next chapter that Plato’s justification for political authority is far more nuanced than the obvious fact that some morally weak individuals need guidance. I shall argue that the money lover needs a peaceful environment to transact his business and he counts so much on the security afforded by the polis.

From the foregoing, the following points are worth repeating before we review scholarship on the political position of the non-philosophic citizens. (1) We have seen that the philosophic life competes with other modes of life others consider generating happiness; not everyone—in fact most people—appreciates the philosophic life. (2) Plato does not false the philosophic life on anybody. As we saw that in Book IX, the competing pleasures present Plato’s audience with choices, based on their evaluative conclusion regarding which pleasures are more pleasant and

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44 Wild writes: “[Plato] believed that all men possess a partly rational nature in common, and that this nature includes basic tendencies which must be cooperatively realised if human life is to be lived. To understand these essential tendencies is to grasp the moral law. Plato’s guardians are not arbitrary rulers at all, but guardians of the law, who try first to understand it, then apply it for the benefit of the whole community, including themselves, and finally to preserve it through the flux of varying circumstance.” Wild 1963:114-5.

less painful. (3) Plato's ethical thesis in the *Republic*, at best, recommends the virtuous life as a necessary condition to the non-philosophers. Plato's argument threads on a simple Socratic admonition that the unexamined life is not worth living; hence, the money-lovers and honour-lovers should endeavour to live the philosophic life. (4) Even if we grant that the non-philosophic citizens are morally weak like Thrasymachus' tyrant, and, therefore, need serious moral counselling, Plato's reason for saying so, as we have seen, is less metaphysical than it is about one's choice of pleasures and desires. (5) Plato does not envisage Kallipolis as a polis of only virtuous citizens. Instead, his disposition toward those characterised as morally weak is invitational rather than condemnation. The realisability of Kallipolis, I shall argue, supervenes upon the cooperative interaction between the guardians and producers, i.e., between philosophers and non-philosophers.

It is, therefore, baffling how some commentators easily grant that the citizens are slaves largely because they cannot grasp the Good. Metaphysical justification is deeply rooted in a long traditional interpretation of Plato's political thought in the *Republic*, strengthened by Popper. Famously, Popper argues that Plato is a forerunner of modern totalitarianism, that the good or happiness of the citizens is entirely subordinated to the good of the polis; that the citizens are *literally* slaves, *qua* cogs, in a totalitarian political machinery.<sup>45</sup> In Greek culture, two of the definitive qualities of the slave are that (i) he is subject to the arbitrary will of his master and therefore lacks self-determination and personal autonomy; and (ii) is a propertied entity who can be sold and be bought. Is this how Plato conceives the worth of the citizens in Kallipolis? There are at least two extremely opposing answers to this question. I consider them in the next two sections.

#### **1.4 Are the Non-Philosophic Citizens Slaves?**

Stressing knowledge of the Good as a sufficient condition for political participation, Vlastos, together with the following scholars, argue that Plato holds the polis and its political authority

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45 This returns us to the issue of 'Athenianising' Greek political thought, namely, that Athens' democratic experience becomes the yardstick to assess all other Greek poleis. At least, a Corinthian or a Spartiate who was not part of the decision-making process never considered himself a slave. As Finley writes: "The essential point that is not to be lost sight of is that the Athenian peasants were full members of the community, full citizens. In other poleis, those like Corinth which were not democratic, their political rights were restricted, but there were still citizens" Finley 1982:4. It is true that Plato's political structure will appear to be an enslavement of the populace by an Athenian democratic standard, but it certainly would not appear same to all Greeks. And to his credit, Plato did not institutionalise or legalise slavery in the *Republic*; he also argued for the due recognition of the worthiness of women.

superior over the non-philosophic citizen because the latter lacks such knowledge. Vlastos argues:

Plato thinks of the slave's condition as a deficiency of reason. He has *doxa*, but not *logos*. He can have true belief, but cannot know the truth of his belief. He can learn by experience (*empeiria*) and external prescription (*epitaxes*). But he can neither give nor follow a rational account. He is therefore susceptible to persuasion.... Now it is an axiom of Plato's political theory that the only one fit to rule is he who possesses *logos*. The good ruler must rule for the good of the state. He can only do this if he knows the form of the Good, and then uses the necessary "persuasion and coercion" to order the state accordingly. Thus government is good for the governed, but does not require their consent. It follows that the absence of self-determination, so striking in the case of the slave, is normal in Platonic society. The fully enlightened aristocrats are a small minority of the whole population.... All the rest are in some degree *douloi* in Plato's sense of the word: they lack *logos*; they do not know the Good, and cannot know their own good or the good of the state; their only chance of doing the good is to obey implicitly the commands of their superiors.<sup>46</sup>

Along Vlastos' line of reasoning, Popper understands, albeit disapprovingly, Plato's political programme as totalitarian. Popper finds Plato's metaphysical doctrines as almost erroneous and their political consequences as antithetical to proper scientific attitude and of democratic government.<sup>47</sup> Popper thinks that for Plato, 'absolute knowledge cannot be known, but anyone who thinks that he knows it will inevitably attempt to impose it on everyone else.'<sup>48</sup> The *Republic's* politics, Popper alleges, rests upon Plato's historicist assumption that existing states and forms of government, including democracy, are a decayed form of a pre-existing perfect polis. Plato's proposed solution to tackle the decay, therefore, is to establish a perfect state, hoping to arrest all change.<sup>49</sup> The *Republic's* political theory is nothing but "utopian social engineering," which bodes totalitarianism: "*The criterion of morality is the interest of the state. Morality is nothing but political hygiene.*"<sup>50</sup> The most disturbing consequence, argues Popper, is that the non-philosophic citizens are reduced to cogs fixed in the totalitarian political

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46 Vlastos 1941:290-291. Vlastos wrote a postscript to his 'Slavery in Plato's Thought' when the paper appeared in *Slavery in Classical Antiquity* edited by M. I. Finley in 1960. Vlastos made some corrections in his first edition but never changed the central thesis of the paper on the political position of the non-philosophic citizens.

47 Thorson 1963:10

48 Ibid.

49 Popper, *Open Society*, (2003):113

50 Ibid

machinery.<sup>51</sup> Along with the metaphysical justification, Popper imputes the following to Plato: “Plato’s idea of justice demands, fundamentally, that the natural rulers should rule and the natural slaves should slave.”<sup>52</sup>

Most of Popper’s erroneous assumptions have soundly been refuted.<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, some contemporary contributions to the debate on the political position of the citizens get even with Popper and Vlastos. Against Popper, C. C. W. Taylor admits that Plato’s political theory is totalitarian, but it is not the “extreme” form of totalitarianism that Popper alleges, namely, a political system in which the purposes and wellbeing of the individuals are *totally* subordinated to those of the state. Conversely, the *Republic* political thesis, Taylor argues, is “paternalistic”, namely, that the “function and aim of the state is simply to promote the welfare of its citizens....”<sup>54</sup> There is nothing wrong with this claim. But Taylor adds: “Citizens of a state of this kind are subjected to totalitarian authority for their own good; the justification for that subjection is their inability to achieve the good for themselves, whether through intellectual incapacity, individual weakness of character or collective political ineptitude.”<sup>55</sup> Consequently, Taylor agrees with Vlastos to impute a paternalistic political thesis to Plato:

The goal of the *polis* is the production of as much individual *eudaimonia* as possible. But the majority of people are not capable of *eudaimonia* on their own; since they are incapable of grasping the Good, they cannot provide for themselves that impetus towards it which is a necessary condition for psychic harmony. Left to themselves they will be a prey to their lawless lower impulses, and will therefore sink into an uncoordinated chaos of conflicting desires. The nearest they can get to *eudaimonia* is to submit to direction by the intellect of someone else. The best state for an individual is, of course, to be able to provide this direction for himself; but failing that (as it does fail in most people's case) it is better for him to submit to another's direction towards the good than to succumb to the tyranny of his own undisciplined desires.<sup>56</sup>

Taylor agrees with Popper and Vlastos that the citizens cannot grasp the Good; hence, they must submit to the authority of the philosophers for their moral and political wellbeing. Taylor sustains the claim that the citizens lack self-determination, and his submission equally relies

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51 Ibid: 114

52 Ibid: 127

53 On various criticisms, see Cleary 2005; Grant 1954; Klosko 1996, and Taylor 1997.

54 Taylor 1997:33

55 Taylor 1997:34

56 Taylor 1997:42

on a literal reading of passage **T3**. Klosko also adds his voice to emphasise the enslavement of the citizens to the philosopher-rulers:

With the introduction of the philosophical system of the middle dialogues, Plato moves on to a very different conception of what it is to care for one's soul...virtue in the middle dialogues is bound up with balance and harmony, the direct rule of reason and control of appetite. Because the individual can achieve this condition only through intensive conditioning, the Socratic ideal of each individual caring for his own soul must be cast aside. The introduction of the theory of Forms also leads Plato to oppose Socrates' belief in the limited power of human knowledge. According to the epistemological views of the middle dialogues, the most exalted truths are accessible to man, but only to the highly privileged few. Since only the philosopher can reach such heights, the many must be enslaved to the few if they are to partake at all of divine intelligence.<sup>57</sup>

Klosko goes on to say that even though "the ideal state is organised around a three-class system, a more significant distinction for Plato's moral psychology is that between the rulers and the two other classes. For only the rulers possess knowledge and so the highest form of virtue. Their virtue can be seen to differ in crucial respects from that of the auxiliaries, and while little can be said with assurance about the virtue of the lowest class, it seems that this would be close to that of the auxiliaries."<sup>58</sup>

#### **1.4.1 Against Defence of the Metaphysical Justification**

As we can see, the shared narrative among these scholars considered above is only a sample of the many views and commentaries which entrench such erroneous view about the worth of the non-philosophic citizens. In what follows, I point out the reasons for considering the metaphysical justification as erroneous. The main reason under which many other reasons result is that the metaphysical justification overemphasises or exaggerates the moral neediness of the non-philosophic citizens. This exaggeration results in many distortions of what the textual evidence says.

For instance, a key point in Vlastos' position is that the relationship between political authority and obligation cannot be consensual precisely because the citizens lack the knowledge to enter into any sort of social contract.<sup>59</sup> The citizens' intellectual incapacity

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<sup>57</sup> Klosko 2006:176.

<sup>58</sup> Klosko 2006:82.

<sup>59</sup> But if the citizens call their rulers preservers and auxiliaries and the rulers, in turn, refers to the citizens as providers of upkeep, then it is not true that the latter lacks any sense of appreciating what is good for them,



indicates that they lack any utilitarian disposition to appreciate the good life the philosopher-rulers can offer them; it is the philosophers who must convince them, through persuasion and coercion, to appreciate the good life.<sup>60</sup> From our previous discussions, we can clearly see that Vlastos is wrong on many grounds. First, his insistence that the citizens “lack” *logos* seems more radical than what Plato seeks to say, especially in **T4**. Vlastos does not take account of moderation in the polis, which establishes a kind of political consensus between the rulers and the ruled. If nothing at all, the ruled have an understanding about who should rule them. Such understanding on the part of the ruled is not an admittance of inferiority but a matter of cooperation. Second, if the two parts in the ordinary soul can follow the philosophic part to attain the truest pleasures possible, it presupposes that the citizens have what it takes to attain such pleasures. And Plato’s radical stance on the manual worker’s moral incapacity is softened by his assertion that “it is better for everyone to be ruled by the divine reason, preferably within himself and his own.” This statement is outright nonsense if the manual worker and all non-philosophic individuals lack *logos* to self-determine their lives. Third, we have seen, but Vlastos fails to account for, that the money-makers and honour-lovers, the supposedly naturally weak, consider the desires of learning as utter nonsense if it doesn’t generate any pleasure commensurable with theirs.

Fourth, it is important to also note that Socrates uses “slave” metaphorically in **T3** to contrast that of Thrasymachus. In Book 1, Thrasymachus argues that the tyrant is the happiest and wisest because he practices injustice with impunity; the tyrant has the power to reduce his citizens to literal slaves and exploit them for his self-interests. In contrast, Socrates believes that a manual labourer can be morally virtuous. But when a manual labourer, just like everyone, develops questionable rectitude, then he must need the intervention of an external compelling agent, i.e., authority. The role of the philosopher-rulers involves legislating to regulate behaviours and social interactions (*Rep.*, 425c8-d5). And I have repeatedly mentioned that the

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including the functions of their rulers. As I see it, between the rulers and the ruled, there is a strong sense of social and political recognition; there need to be some grounds for such positive recognition.

<sup>60</sup> Before Vlastos, Archer-Hind has argued similarly. He argues that the highest moral achievement the non-philosophic citizens can aspire to gain is demotic moral excellence (*ἀρετὴ δημόδης*); this morality is inferior to philosophic excellence. Archer-Hind thinks, condescendingly, that the non-philosophic citizens will even need the guidance of the philosophers to attain such demotic excellence. He argues: “since it is worth the philosopher’s while to pause in his study of the truth, that he may implant it in the hearts of me: it is indeed the highest that the great mass of mankind can hope to attain.... Again this is no longer an ethical code which the multitude frame for themselves; it is one which the philosopher frames for them: nor does he construct it on utilitarian grounds: they receive it, not because they know why it is good, for they are without knowledge of the good, but because the philosopher convinces them that it is for their advantage to do so; that by submitting to its restrictions they avoid great evils. As they hold it, therefore, it is utilitarian; as he conceives it, not so.... Plato acknowledges that the morality of the multitude must be utilitarian, since none other is attainable save by the highly trained metaphysicians.” Archer-Hind 1894, as cited in Gould 1955:121.

philosopher-rulers play a crucial role in moulding good moral characters; that is one of their major functions. However, it is not true that all the citizens must invariably rely on them for their moral wellbeing, nor do they need to grasp the Good to secure happiness. It has been mentioned that the just life is the philosophic life. In Book IV, Socrates enumerates the “ordinary cases” of injustice: temple robberies, thefts, betrayals of friends in private life or of cities in public, untrustworthiness in keeping oath or other agreement, adultery, disrespect for parents, and neglect of the gods. Socrates then concludes that the just person is he who does not engage in any of these ordinary cases of injustice precisely because “every part within him does its own work, whether it’s ruling or being ruled” (*Rep.*, 442d4-443a10). Why must the citizens need to grasp the Good before they can refrain from, for instance, temple theft or any of these ordinary cases of injustice?

After the philosopher-rulers complete their fifty years of education, Socrates’ command to them is simple: “And once they’ve seen the good itself, they must each in turn put the city, its citizens, and themselves in order, using it as their model” (*Rep.*, 540a6-b1). If the rulers are also required to put “themselves in order”, despite their comprehensive education, it signals that Plato does not take it for granted that merely seeing the Good itself makes the philosophers morally adept. This is not to say that metaphysical ἐπιστήμη does nothing to make them moral; in fact, it does.<sup>61</sup> However, we will recall that at the end of Book III there are laws that restrain the best guardians to possess material properties beyond what is necessary (*Rep.*, 416d3-417b). When the best guardians become philosophers, such moral laws do not become obsolete. The point here is that Plato does not conceive the moral worth of the philosopher-rulers in such a hubristic manner, as these scholars think. Fifth, Taylor’s claim that the aim of the polis is to produce as much happiness as possible for the citizens, we have seen, is not supported by any textual evidence. Nature is to determine the content of happiness. The polis can only create enabling conditions for the pursuit of happiness.

The five reasons against the metaphysical justification make it necessary to return to the above question: are the non-philosophic citizens slaves? The answer is definitely no. First, our discussions in the previous sections confirm an important observation Santas makes about the relationship between Plato’s ethics and epistemology: that it is entirely possible to account for how one can be morally rational, without recourse to the theory of Forms or knowledge of the

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61 This is another interesting scholarly debate about Plato’s ethics and epistemology in the *Republic*. I shall attend to it in Chapter Three.

Good.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, one does not become slave just because one does not possess knowledge of the Good.

Second, defenders of the metaphysical justification tend to disregard the possible tensions that exist between Plato's soul-polis analogies. One such tension is that according to the soul-polis analogies, the money-makers represent the citizens, mainly the producing class. Plato is willing to refer to the appetitive part as "a natural slave" and "the most godless and polluted". But he does not attribute such negative references to the citizens. Otherwise, an affirmative answer to the grave question as to whether the citizens are slaves implies, at least in Greek culture, that they are subject to the arbitrary will of the philosopher-rulers and that they lack self-determination and autonomy, and that they are to work as serfs to advance the interest of the polis. This contradicts Plato's belief that the main aim of the laws of the state is to guide the citizens to realise their full potentials, i.e., "to live supremely happy lives and the greatest possible mutual friendship". Slavery and the realisability of full humanity are contradictions in terms. Thankfully, a crucial passage in the dialogue rejects such an affirmative answer. In Book V, Socrates compares Kallipolis to other poleis and concludes that his rulers call their citizens "providers of upkeep and wages", and the citizens, in turn, call their rulers "preservers and auxiliaries". These positive co-referencing expressions contrast with what rulers in other cities call their citizens: "slaves" (*Rep.*, 463a3-b12). In Book V, Plato says that Kallipolis is a Greek polis, and because of this, the citizens will indeed "be good and civilised" (*Rep.*, 470e). Hence, the soul-polis analogy fails to establish an appropriate comparison between the appetitive part and the producing class.

That is, if one reads the soul-polis analogy *literally*, as Vlastos and others do, it will follow that Plato holds conflicting views about the non-philosophic citizens. Besides, it will mean that Plato is excessively pessimistic about the moral capabilities of the citizens. But the fact that he recognises that everyone has divine reason within him invites us to keep a balance between an excessive optimism about the moral capacity of man and an excessive pessimism about their potentialities.<sup>63</sup> Commenting on the need for a balanced understanding of human moral capabilities, Hallowell writes that "A view of man that regards him as totally depraved is as one-sided and distorted as is the view which regards him completely well-intentioned. A balanced view of man will emphasize both his propensity to do evil and his capacity to do good; it will not overestimate his motives, but it will not underestimate his potentialities."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Santas 2001.

<sup>63</sup> Hallowell 1963:143.

<sup>64</sup> Hallowell 1963:145.

Plato is not too pessimistic about the non-philosophic citizens, nor is he overly optimistic about the moral abilities of the philosophers. To my mind, Plato holds a balanced view of human nature. His project to advertise philosophy to others, relative to living the happiest life or attaining the truest pleasures possible, would have been entirely useless if the target of the project lacked what it takes to lead the philosophic life.

Moreover, defenders of the metaphysical justification disregard the distinction between the internal and external agencies of morality in Plato's ethics. This problem has historical underpinnings. Most of these scholars, mostly liberals, come to the *Republic* with liberal presumptions (and prejudice) to implicate Plato as an aristocrat with a profound contempt for the working population.<sup>65</sup> That Plato is an aristocrat is undeniable. But the allegation that he holds the working class in contempt without qualification needs to be dismissed. If Plato showed contempt for the Thirty Tyrants for the shortcomings of the antidemocratic revolution in Athens because they could not restore Athens to its past political glory, and if he could say in *Letter VII* that "as I watched them they showed in a short time that the preceding constitution [democracy] had been a precious thing", then he disdained not only the jingo democratic majority who contributed to the ruins of Athens but also the unconscionable aristocrats who exacerbated Athens' political plight. At least, he rejects tyranny with all his might. Again, in *Letter VII* he tells us his utmost interest: "I thought that they were going to lead the city out of the unjust life she had been living and establish her in the path of justice" (*Lt.* 324d4-6). Therefore, if Plato had issues with both democratic and antidemocratic regimes alike for their blatant disregard for justice, then he was not so much concerned about the locus of political power nor the regime type, but how such power is used to foster social harmony or concord (ὁμόνοια) in the polis. Organising the polis around justice has been pivotal in his political thought, and the *Republic* provides a test case for such ambition. In essence, one needs to exercise caution in readily imputing only antiliberal views to him.<sup>66</sup> It is for this reason that Cross and Woosley issue the following precaution: "it must be acknowledged that Plato is not

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65 Crossman writes that even when Plato realised that the Thirty Tyrants behaved even worse than the demagogues of the proletariat to restore Athens to political sanity, "this did not alter his profound contempt for the working population. Plato remained aristocrat, convinced that the peasant, the craftsman, and the shopkeeper were incapable of political responsibility. Government was the prerequisite of the gentry, who did not need to earn a living and could therefore devote their lives to the responsibilities of war and politics." Crossman 1963:19. See also Balot 2006.

66 I, therefore, agree with Wild that "Plato's impatience with social corruption and his zeal for reform may have led him at times to make statements which seem to imply an approval of militant means to achieve what he conceived to be worthy ends. Such statements cannot be defended when separated from their contexts" Wild 1963.

entirely consistent in his view of the individual as subordinate to the state.”<sup>67</sup> I agree with Cross and Woozley on this point, though not in the way they thought about it.

### **1.5 In Defence of the Moral Competence of the Citizens**

Whiles Popper, Vlastos, Klosko and others offer an excessively pessimistic account of the citizens’ moral worth and capacity, and therefore reject any possible view of Platonic individualism, several works come to defend Plato against the charge of anti-individualism and antiliberalism. In a collected volume in which they all contributed, John Wild and John Hallowell offered a strong defence for Plato against the liberal criticisms of Crossman and Pooper.<sup>68</sup> Wild and Hallowell argue variously that there are some democratic underpinnings in Plato’s political thought.<sup>69</sup> I also turn to two main works which directly attempt to offer a positive account of Plato’s conception of the moral worth of the citizens. I have in mind the respective but thematically related works of Robert Hall and Marek Piechowiak. Hall notes that defenders of metaphysical justification impute “a second class morality and happiness to the non-philosophical individual. The morality and happiness of the non-philosophic citizens is but a pale, insubstantial shadow of the incandescent morality and blissful happiness of the philosopher.”<sup>70</sup>

Hall has in mind Gould, who in turn cites Archer-Hind in support, to distinguish between the morality of the philosophers and non-philosophic citizens. As noted above, Archer-Hind thinks that it was not a contemptible thing for Plato to strike a distinction between the morality of the average man (demotic excellence) and philosophical excellence.<sup>71</sup> On the contrary, Hall rightly thinks that this interpretation only has an important repercussion on Plato’s claim to be one of the first significant ethical thinkers. He writes:

In dealing with human conduct Plato would of necessity extend his analysis of the two fundamental concepts of ethics, the right and the good, to all individuals. Of course, he never did single out these two concepts as the fundamental principles of ethics, as would have to

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67 Cross & Woozley 1964:78.

68 Thorson 1963.

69 Verzenyi 1971 provides a brilliant response to critics who charge that Plato was against democracy, arguing, on sound reasons I think, that Plato is even more democratic, relative to his contribution to consolidation of democratic institutions, than his liberal critics.

70 Hall 1963:2. By saying this, Hall says he does not “insist on the propriety of terming Plato a holder of individualism, even a latent individualism, for the ancient Greeks had not term for individualism. The term itself is unimportant, although I believe that there is a sort of individualism in Plato’s thought. The fundamental concept or principle of individualism is the priority in value or worth of the individual over all else, especially over the social institutions and the state itself.” Hall *ibid.* 10.

71 Gould 1955:121; Archer-Hind 1894.

be the case today; nonetheless they clearly appear in his thought. But insofar as Plato is supposed to have confined the extension of his interpretation of the right and the good (justice and happiness) to only those few who have realized their philosophic capabilities, his claim to consideration as an ethical philosopher must indeed appear incongruous. To exclude most of mankind from the possibility of securing the right and the good is, of course, possible, but hardly consistent with an analysis of the principles of human conduct which ethics purports to be. If Plato does maintain that only the philosophically gifted few can be moral, he has surely violated the elementary principle of ethical thought, which is that there is a universal extension among men of these two fundamental concepts of the right and the good.<sup>72</sup>

Hall admits, in agreement with my view, that some grounds for metaphysical justification can be found not only in the *Republic* but also in other dialogues, including the *Phaedo*. However, he thinks “that Plato had a profound concern for the ordinary man, and that the most important goal of the *polis* of his thought was to ensure that every individual might realise the morality appropriate to man. This morality, whether it be the justice of the *Republic* or the temperance of the *Laws*, is not inferior to that which is the form of man.”<sup>73</sup> Consequently, Hall draws a sharp distinction between the morality or excellence of man and the excellence of the philosopher to argue that “The ordinary man cannot hope to attain the knowledge possessed by the philosopher. But this in no way deters him from securing the justice which constitutes man’s particular excellence or *arete*.... The excellence of man, in short, is not that of the philosopher.”<sup>74</sup>

Hall thinks that “Plato’s moral thought analyses the means by which each individual can achieve the *arete* of that defining function to man. The specific application of this Platonic concern for the individual to the nature of man’s *arete*...is that *arete* is inherently valuable for itself as the excellence of man’s function rather than for its consequences.”<sup>75</sup> In arguing for this claim, Hall strikes a distinction between what he calls the ‘*single-unity* conception of the soul’ in the *Phaedo* and “the *differentiated-unity* of the soul” in the *Republic*. According to Hall, the *Phaedo*’s body-soul dichotomy makes it difficult to defend the moral worth of the individual. On the other hand, Plato’s view in the *Republic* that everyone has the philosophic part, as mentioned earlier, indicates that he attributes the potential to be morally virtuous to every man,

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72 Hall 1963:2

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid. 3

75 Ibid. 3

such that the *Republic* rejects “knowledge of the forms as a *sine qua non* of *arete* (which in the *Republic* is justice)...any man by nature potentially can acquire justice. By living in the ideal polis of the *Republic*, he himself can acquire his own perfection or *arete*. The philosopher ruler may help the individual by providing the proper environment and education, but the actual acquisition of justice is the individual’s own task and responsibility.”<sup>76</sup> Hall’s positive view of the citizens is clear enough and is consistent with my argument that one does not necessarily need knowledge of the Good to be moral. However, it is not clear to me that since all the citizens, *qua* humans, possess the philosophic part in the *Republic*, it follows that they all can live the good and just life. Given passages **T2-T4**, all that follows from Hall’s view, I think, is that some individuals in whom the philosophic part is weak will surely need external compelling agents to coerce them to live the just life. Nonetheless, although Hall does not look directly into the issue of justification of political authority in the *Republic*, his optimistic view about the worth of the citizens gives us support to reject the implausible views of defenders of metaphysical justification. Hall says that his argument is not meant to pin down Plato as a “holder of individualism, even a latent individualism, for the Greeks had no term for individualism.”<sup>77</sup> He rather thinks that the term is unimportant, although he believes there is a sort of individualism in Plato’s thought, namely, that the “fundamental concept or principle of individualism is the priority in value or worth of the individual over all else, especially over the social institutions and the state itself.”<sup>78</sup>

Also from a legal and dignitarian standpoint, Piechowiak has recently argued to defend Hall’s position (even though he does not cite this very important work of Hall). Piechowiak directly attacks Popper, Taylor and Vlastos for their shared view on the supremacy of the polis and its political authority over the citizens. He claims that the concept of dignity did not elude Plato, as far as the moral worth of the citizens is concerned. By dignity, Piechowiak has in mind the Kantian a being-as-an-end-in-itself thesis: “the possessor of dignity is an end in itself, an autotelic end, and can never be treated purely instrumentally.”<sup>79</sup> But he makes a case that “If the concept of dignity...expresses something inherent (innate, inborn, intrinsic) which is not created by culture, then it is to be expected that the reality encompassed within the concept of dignity should also have been considered in the past.”<sup>80</sup> As something inherent and universal, the concept of dignity, argues Piechowiak, predates Kant; the Medieval and Renaissance

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76 Hall 1963:163-4.

77 Ibid. 9

78 Ibid.

79 Piechowiak 2019:18

80 Piechowiak 2019:19

philosophers and pamphleteers, including Gianozzo Manetti and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, reflected on the concept, including its recognition as the basis for personhood and for the normative status as its holder. He argues that “A very important consequence of recognition of the inherence and inviolability of the dignity is its impact on how we understand the relationship between an individual, the law, and the state: the aim of laws founded upon recognition of dignity and human rights, and the aim of a state based on such laws, is the goodness of the individual; thus, individuals are not meant to serve the state and the laws, but rather, the state and the law are meant to serve the individual.”<sup>81</sup> Thus, in following the traditional debate, Piechowiak takes an extreme position to counteract the claims of Vlastos, Popper and Taylor.

The starting point of Piechowiak’s argument is the phrase in **T4**: “and in truth justice is...” He argues that this phrase draws attention to why Socrates “asks his audience to treat with caution some crucial conclusions about justice that are reached in the consideration about the hypothetical state, saying explicitly that justice ‘isn’t concerned with someone’s doing his own externally’ [*Rep.*, 443c-e].”<sup>82</sup> True justice is the justice in the individual; the justice in the hypothetical state is but a phantom. Piechowiak cites Eric Havelock in agreement that if Socrates repudiates the conception of justice as doing one’s own externally, and “‘if justice does not apply to outward actions, it becomes an inner and private condition, a morality of the self and not the society.’”<sup>83</sup> On this basis, Piechowiak argues that “The model of the hypothetical state cannot be treated as a paradigm for a political project and there is no isomorphism between justice for the city and justice for the individual.”<sup>84</sup> Consequently, Piechowiak believes that the overall narrative introduced by Plato in the *Republic* clearly indicates that his deliberations about the state serve first of all to understand an individual’s striving for fulfilment such that “Discrepancies in the possibilities for applying certain claims to both an individual and the community should therefore be resolved in favour of the individual.”<sup>85</sup>

That is, Piechowiak argues that Plato’s emphasis on the inner harmony and unity of the individual in **T4** is the basis of attributing positive worth to every individual: all humans, including Kallipolis’ non-philosophic citizens, are ontologically and inherently complete in themselves, such that their complete beingness is not determined by any external agency,

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81 Ibid. 18

82 Ibid.

83 Havelock 1978:322 as cited in Piechowiak 2019: 24.

84 Piechowiak 2019:24

85 Piechowiak 2019:24, 33.



including the polis and its laws.<sup>86</sup> The trait of inner unity and harmony makes apparent Plato's recognition in human beings something which is inherent, equal, and positively distinguishes them in such a way that they should be treated as aims in themselves.<sup>87</sup> Consequently, Piechowiak further holds that the problem of justice is at the core of Plato's philosophy such that the most important question that Plato aims to answer concerns how to be a good man, and how to lead a good life, and that the simplest answer he supplies is to these questions is that to be good means to be just.<sup>88</sup>

Becoming a good man requires wisdom, and wisdom is knowledge. But "the knowledge that constitutes this wisdom is acquired by a given individual. It is not something learnt from someone else."<sup>89</sup> That is, "If wisdom is knowledge which is individually acquired, then it cannot be understood as the content of legislation produced by rulers."<sup>90</sup> In connection with this, Piechowiak dismisses the charge that knowledge of the Good is a requirement for the citizens to live the philosophic life, and consequently asserts that "the just person is guided by himself and not by a small group of sages."<sup>91</sup> We see clearly that Piechowiak, like Hall, is also excessively optimistic about the individuals' moral capacity and potentialities. However, just as I said about the position of Vlastos, Popper, and Klosko, Plato does not hold such an excessively optimistic view about the non-philosopher. I shall take sides with Hallowell to advance a balanced view of human nature, a *tertium quid* position between the two extremes, which seems more consistent with Plato's psychology. The balanced view appeals to me basically on this ground: even the most virtuous person can sometimes become the evillest person and vice versa.

## 1.6 Summary and Reflections

As far as the worth of the non-philosophic citizens is concerned, two extreme positions have been advanced in the *Republic*. On one end of the spectrum, some scholars believe that the Republic's politics bodes totalitarian and paternalistic political theory. One major thesis of this reading is that the citizens accede unconditionally to the authority of the philosopher-rulers for

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86 Piechowiak argues "that Plato, while considering the basis of the special status and special treatment of human souls, reaches ontological questions of inner unity as the foundation of immortality and of continuing existence. [That] which is constitutive of dignity Plato sees in existential aspects of beings and not in qualities they are endowed with. This allows dignity to be recognised as being inherent, independent of the changeable characteristics of each human being." Ibid. 29.

87 Piechowiak 2019:22

88 Ibid. 23.

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid. 82-83.

91 Ibid. 33

their moral and political wellbeing. This is because, they argue, the citizens lack knowledge of the Good – the only knowledge possible. This reading imputes an extremely pessimistic view to Plato about the worth of the non-philosophic citizens. Against this extreme position, I have shared the view that Plato attributes the capacity for moral competence to every individual, and therefore acknowledges the individual’s potential to live the good life, i.e. the just life. On the other hand, even though the philosophic part is in everyone, the obvious fact is that some individuals cannot live the just life and must need the intervention of external compelling agency. Thus, the potential to live the morally virtuous life does not, in some individuals, automatically translate into an actuality; such individuals surely need external compelling agency to live the virtuous life. Scholars who argue this way impute an extremely optimistic view of human nature to Plato. But Plato was not oblivious about the human propensity to do evil despite the existence of punishable moral laws. In essence, I have agreed with Hallowell’s view that Plato holds a balanced view of human nature: man has the propensity to be both evil and good. The moral duty of the polis and its political authority is, therefore, to make laws “to allow the citizens to live supremely happy lives and the greatest possible mutual friendship.” This is precisely my basis for claiming that Plato remains noncommittal to any of these extreme views about human nature.

Like Hobbesian contractarianism, metaphysical justification overemphasises man’s moral weakness. But suppose all men are morally virtuous, would they need political authority?<sup>92</sup> Obviously, metaphysical justification will find it difficult to answer this question. But naturalistic justification will readily answer in the positive, that political leadership goes beyond providing moral guidance. This leads me to account for naturalistic justification of authority Plato is more committed to. As I argue, naturalistic justification accepts Plato’s balanced view of human nature, and that this view undergirds his justification of political authority. Naturalistic justification maintains the moral function of the philosopher-rulers

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92 Rosler originally asked this question in his account of Aristotle’s justification of political authority. Rosler imputes to Aristotle the claim that “even the morally perfect agents would still have significant practical disagreements with each other” Rosler 2005:195. Thus, even though Aristotle seems indifferent “to the precise details of the deliberative, judicial, and administrative structure of his ideal city, [it] should not make us oblivious of the fact that even in ‘the isles of the blessed’, whose citizenry will be composed of fully rational and moral agents, there would still be work to be done, opinions to be reconciled, decisions to be made.” Hence, Aristotle thinks that political authority is needed to regulate behaviours even among the virtuous persons. Could this be the reason Plato’s virtuous person would need political authority? I shall show that Plato offers a different answer. Intuitively, a polis consisting only of the most ardent philosophers cannot be an actuality for the simple reason that the life of contemplation does not produce food, shelter, clothing, and other material necessities. The philosophers must surely need to depend on others for their survival. This is the basis for Macintyre’s belief that man is naturally dependent rational animal; like all men, the most just will surely need a polis with political authority to, at least, import products other poleis have comparative advantage in producing (see Section 5.2).

without compromising the important position the non-philosophic citizens assume in Kallipolis. Also, the naturalistic justification demonstrates how knowledge of the Good is not part of the justificatory bases of the exclusion of the non-philosophers from politics. Most importantly, it shows how Plato involves the supposedly morally depraved in his conception of a just society.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Plato's Naturalistic Justification of Political Authority

#### 2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I have argued that Plato does not have a condescending disposition toward the non-philosophic citizens. Defenders of the metaphysical justification who readily impute the opposite negative view to him usually express their liberalistic misgivings about his political project and are far from convincing if they refuse to engage texts which challenge such a position. In this chapter, I explore naturalistic justification as a mode of justifying political authority Plato is more committed to. I use the expression 'naturalistic justification' to mean that everyone in Kallipolis possesses some kind of natural aptitude, and developing it conduces to the person's good and that of the political community at large. I explore this claim in connection with a nexus of interrelated themes, including Plato's view on man's nature, his justification of the polis and the foundational principles of the polis. Here, I defend two of my theses: (1) *all* the citizens are to focus on professions in which they can function optimally, given their distinctive kinds of natural aptitudes and education. Therefore, if ruling is the prerogative of philosopher-rulers, it means precisely that they are those who can function optimally in governance. (2) Similarly, the other citizens are excluded from politics precisely because their natural aptitudes and training enable them to attain efficiency in their respective professions.

#### 2.2 The Polis and its Foundational Principles

The contention between Socrates and Thrasymachus in Book I sets the political tone of the *Republic*. For instance, Socrates' claim that governance is a profession with its own assessment, i.e., how the citizens feel well, underscores his defence of the exclusion of others from politics. Nevertheless, I contend that Plato justifies the political authority of the guardians (τῶν φυλάκων) in Book II, specifically at *Rep.*, 374a7-e4. In this Book II passage, Socrates mentions the guardians as undifferentiated entities. He later divides them into the best guardians and auxiliaries (ἐπικούρους) in Book III: Socrates says "it is truly most correct to refer to [the best guardians] as guardians in the fullest sense, fighting against our enemies from without and looking after friends within, so that the latter will not wish and the former will not be able to cause harm, and the young men whom we are now calling guardians will be the auxiliaries who will assist the governors and implement their decrees" (*Rep.*, 414b1-6). Later in Book VI, Socrates is specific that "those who are to be made our guardians in the most exact

sense of the term must be philosophers” (*Rep.*, 503b3-5). By the “most exact sense of the term”, Socrates is explicitly referring to the best guardians in Book III. In Chapter Three, I shall discuss Socrates’ reason for the distinction between the best guardians and the philosopher-rulers. Here, the essential point is that the emergence of the fevered polis or Glaucon’s ‘city for pigs’ in Book II sets the political agenda for the rest of the dialogue. I say this to prepare us to appreciate later in the discussion that the authority of the best guardians, who later become the philosophers, is justified on non-metaphysical grounds. That it is untenable to argue that Plato excludes the citizens from politics because they lack knowledge of the Good. Also, since the origin of the political authority of the guardians and the polis are justified on the same grounds, it is strategically necessary to begin the account of the former by first exploring the latter.

### **2.3 Political Naturalism and Naturalistic Justification**

Political naturalism posits that the polis originates from nature and can, therefore, be naturally justified.<sup>93</sup> Aristotle explores this view in Book I of his *Politics*. The thrust of political naturalism is that individual humans are by nature not self-sufficient (οὐκ ἀτάρκης) and, therefore, need to live together. That is, man’s insufficiency undergirds the coming to be of the political community. The naturalistic justification derives its strength from Plato’s view on human neediness grounded in the principle of insufficiency (οὐκ ἀτάρκης) and its intimating two principles in Book II. In Book II, Socrates begins his constructionist account of the polis by assuming that there are two natural principles which make society possible: (a) *mutual need*, namely, that individual humans are not self-sufficient (οὐκ ἀτάρκης) and need to live together (*Rep.*, 369b6-8);<sup>94</sup> and (b) *difference of aptitude*, which means that different people are good at different things, and it is best for all that each concentrate on developing what each is good at (*Rep.*, 369b9-370b). Socrates tells us: “I think a city comes to be because none of us is self-sufficient, but we all need many things” (*Rep.*, 369b7-10).<sup>95</sup> Two things are important about principles (a) and (b). First, these principles are not stating ideals but biological facts, and they ground what I call naturalistic justification. Second, they ground Plato’s social justice, which

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93 See Duke 2019. This section and section 5.3 benefit greatly from a term paper I wrote and submitted as a Master’s student at the Faculty of Classics, Cambridge: “The Political Value of Friendship in *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE 1155a22-28).” The paper has been graded and I thank the two anonymous examiners for their critical comments and suggestions.

94 In Plato’s *Protagoras*, the dialogue’s namesake character similarly presents a speculative account of the origin of the polis through mutual interdependence and social cooperation (Prt.322b-c); he, however, gives a divine twist to his account. Henderson 2013:161, is right that this speculative account of the origin of the polis was common in fifth-century political thought.

95 As Russon 2021:29, says: “At its root, the *polis*—here meaning something like “society”—is a collaborative effort of living together, in which we contribute to the accomplishment of a whole that exceeds any of us singly and that provides for each of us an essential, supportive context for our individual lives.”

posits that everyone must do his or her work that he or she can function optimally, relative to their natural aptitude.

Note that Socrates presents the principle of insufficiency (οὐκ αὐτάρκης) as a received opinion and secures the assent of Adeimantus that the principle is exhaustive of the foundational principles of organised society. The idea is that the principle was commonplace in Greek political thought. Mayhew writes that Herodotus and Thucydides have similarly intimated οὐκ αὐτάρκης as the foundational principle of society and the chief determinant of international relations.<sup>96</sup> In Book I of his *Politics*, Aristotle lengthily discusses οὐκ αὐτάρκης. His following point is important for us: “The proof that the state is a creation of nature and prior to the individual is that the individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficing; and therefore, he is like a part in relation to the whole. But he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is no part of a state” (Arist. *Pol.* 1253a25-125a29).<sup>97</sup> Wheeler is right that “The importance which it attached to the aim of achieving “autarkeia” is one of the most striking and distinctive features of the Greek city-state.”<sup>98</sup> The lesson of the principle of human insufficiency is simple: individual agency is central to the coming into being of the polis, and “[t]here is a deep complementarity between individual agency and social arrangements.”<sup>99</sup> Thus, it is for the sake of our human neediness that individuals communise and socialise their talents and natural aptitudes, given that each person has something worthwhile to contribute to the communal good. This lesson, I claim, is the driving force of Plato’s political thought in the *Republic*. But it is a lesson that has not been learned, especially in relation to the moral and political worth of the citizens. Even scholars, including Piechowiak, who speak favourably about the moral worth of the citizens fail to explore the basis of such morality, as something grounded in the principle of οὐκ αὐτάρκης.

Now, based on the principle of insufficiency, Socrates says that if members of society “share things with one another, giving and taking, they do so because each believes that this is better

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<sup>96</sup> In *Herodotus* 1, 32, Solon tells Croesus the following: “Now it is impossible for one who is human to gather together all these things (i.e. goods), just as no land is fully sufficient, providing everything by itself, but it has one thing, while it needs another. But the [land] that has the most things, this is best. And so too, no one human is self-sufficient, for he has one thing, but is in need of another.” As cited in (and translated by) Mayhew 1995:489. And in his *Funeral Oration*, Pericles states that the Athenians have organised their city in such a way that it is completely self-sufficient both in war and in peace. Mayhew approvingly cites Gomme 1956:105-6, who correctly remarks that by this statement Pericles does not mean to say that Athens provides everything it needs but that it is in a position of power to get all that it needs, given its commerce and industrial buoyancy.

<sup>97</sup> Translated by Jowett 1991.

<sup>98</sup> Wheeler 1988.

<sup>99</sup> Sen 1999:12.

for himself...” (*Rep.*, 369c5-7). The expression *better for himself* presupposes that the individual has a sort of rational capacity to conceive the relative merit of an action, i.e., he believes that a particular course of action can generate consequences better for him than another action (in this case cooperating with others to benefit from the survival security a communal life could afford). At the communal level, the principle of οὐκ αὐτάρκης encourages a kind of intersubjective cooperation among the members, even if such cooperation is rudimentarily construed. This is because by partnering, sharing and helping one another, each comes to understand the other as a being striving or endeavouring to attend to his existential needs. Hence, I propose that for Plato the political community is evidence of man’s natural tendency to live a shared life, predicated on the assumption that humans possess different talents and capacities, which generate assets that can, nevertheless, be considered common to be collectively shared.<sup>100</sup>

Two implicit ideas are noteworthy: (i) man is instrumentally the artificer of his life, including his conception and execution of his rational and teleological ambitions.<sup>101</sup> (ii) For the Greeks, a polis is a product not of human helplessness in a so-called state of nature (*contra* contractarianism) but a result of human rational and productive capacities.<sup>102</sup> For instance, Aristotle confirms in Book VIII of the *Nicomachean Ethics*: “...men journey together with a view to some particular advantage, and to provide something that they need for the purposes of life; and it is for the sake of advantage that the political community too seems both to have come together originally and to endure...” (*NE* 1160a10-13). Rational capacity, because man can think of and strive to attain something “better for himself” and can also empathise with those who equally strive for something better for themselves; and productive, because such thought process could result in institutional establishments, a society. In particular, the result is a kind of political community (κοινωνίας πολιτικῆς), wherein the moral watchword is mutual interdependence. Immediately, the aim of the polis, upon its inception, then, is both instrumental and teleological, i.e., improving the good of its members. Thus, I contend that if we take the principle of οὐκ αὐτάρκης and its corresponding implications seriously, it becomes clear that the polis is conceived less as an entity that pursues its ends than it serves the ultimate ends of the members.

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100 Gyekye 2013.

101 Aristotle tells us that “A social instinct is implanted in all men by nature... [that is, man] is equipped at birth with arms meant to be used by intelligence and excellence which may be used for the ends” Accordingly, both Aristotle and Plato hold the balanced view of human nature: “For man, when perfected, is the best of animals, but when separated from law and just, he is the worst of all...” (Arist. *Pol.* 1253a29-125a34).

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In connection with this last point, Verzenyi's view is important: "Although the state, in a sense, is an artificial body, our need for the state is not artificial but natural: it is our natural need and desire for self-fulfillment."<sup>103</sup> For this reason, Verzenyi believes that Plato offers "a purely instrumental-functional-teleological account" of the polis. That is, the polis is said to be good for the fulfillment of the individuals who compose it such that it cannot pursue any other end apart from this core mandate. Verzenyi is, therefore, right that for Plato the polis "has a certain generally recognized purpose and end, a definite function to fulfill in the lives of men, [and] every political decision becomes a decision about what particular policy the state should adopt and pursue (as a means) in order to fulfill and attain its agreed upon end."<sup>104</sup> However, I take issue with Verzenyi's attempt to make the relevance of the polis stand in relation only to how it promotes the citizens' good. Lack of self-sufficiency is not limited to the individual; it also involves inter-poleis relations. That is, while the polis' core mandate is to care for its citizens, including importing products that cannot be manufactured or produced locally, it must also be in economic good standing with other poleis, including exporting goods it has a comparative advantage in producing. Thus, we can say the same thing Gomme asserts about Pericles' view on οὐκ αὐτάρκης: Plato shares the view that a polis cannot be self-sufficient in the context of indigenously producing all its needs; it must need to import products it is comparatively disadvantaged in producing locally and export products to satisfy the needs of other poleis. Socrates tells us: "Therefore our citizens must not only produce enough for themselves at home but also goods of the right quality and quantity to satisfy the requirements of others" (*Rep.*, 371a3-6).<sup>105</sup>

#### **2.4 Does the Polis have Ontological Superiority over the Individual?**

At this point, it is important to recall the controversy about whether the good of the polis overrides the good of the individual or vice versa. Recall that the defenders of the metaphysical justification, including Popper, Gould, Taylor and Vlastos, argue variously that Plato conceives the good of the polis to have ontological priority over the good of the citizens. To say the least, this is a mistaken view. Instead, I argue that the good of the individual is irreducible to any

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103 Versenyi 1971:224.

104 Ibid.

105 Russen 2021:30, has recently articulated this point more forcefully: "In general, society has an internal integrity of its own: it is a self-defined, basically self-sustaining community. Like a natural organism, it is an organized system of constitutive member-parts, but again, like an organism, it also participates in a larger world with others, and though its internal form is normative for itself, that form is not automatically normative for others: the society needs to protect its own organisation, since those outside with whom it is in contact need not care about the preservation of its organization. The protection of its integrity is thus one of the needs that must be met in the city."



further good. I claim that the good of the polis is solely instrumental and is meant to further the good of the individual. To argue thus, the following basic question is important: what is the good of the polis? Given its internal and external complex functions, it should be clear that the polis assumes a good of its own which is irreducible to the good of the individual. Plato tells us this in the *Laws*: “The state is just like a ship at sea, which always needs someone to keep watch at night and day: as it is steered through the waves of international affairs, it lives in constant peril of being by all sorts of conspiracies. Hence the need of an unbroken chain of authority right through the day and into the night and then onto the next day, guard relieving guard in endless succession” (*Laws* 758a). This would suggest that aside from the polis’ descriptive features (including territory, population and government), Plato shares the view that ‘permanence’ and ‘stability’ are the two most vital defining features of the polis—its good—and the politics of the *Republic* is concerned with their development and sustainability. In other words, the polis’s good is entailed in its ability to create and sustain internal and inter-poleis ‘unanimity’, ‘concord’ or ‘socio-political harmony’, marked by the expression *ὁμόνοια* (*Rep.*, 432a). The lawgiver aims at *ὁμόνοια* as an instrumental way of securing the polis’ good i.e., its permanence and sustenance.

It needs stressing, however, that the care for the good of the polis does not swamp the good of the individual. Given the fact, namely, that the polis assumes a good of its own, in the sense specified, to sustainably fulfill its core mandates, including creating an arena for the individual to identify and advance his good, it is a plausible view that for Plato the rational and teleological aims of man and the polis do not conflict but coincide.<sup>106</sup> The polis’ mandate begins on a note of creating enabling environment to foster the members’ good. It is mainly for this reason that I agree with Verzenyi that the polis’ good can only have instrumental value. For Plato will agree with Aristotle that the polis is a creative expression of man’s rational thought, guided by his social instincts, to explore means to satisfy his ends; it is evidence of man’s intelligent and excellent usage of his arms he is equipped at birth to pursue good ends.<sup>107</sup> Consequently, the very existence of the polis, together with its sustainability, is what properly constitutes the ‘common good’ for all members. Therefore, the polis’ good constitutes the common good. On the other hand, the individual’s good is his happiness broadly construed, and since it is for the

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106 Even the polis’ international duty has an instrumental value for promoting the individual’s good. Socrates tells us: “we’ll have to seize some of our neighbours’ land if we’re to have enough pasture and ploughland. And won’t our neighbours want to seize parts of our lands as well, if they too have surrendered themselves to the endless acquisition of money and have overstepped the limit of their necessities?” (*Rep.*, 373d).

107 Here, I agree with Popper that Plato has a profound view about the nature of man’s sociality, its development and conditions of sustenance (Popper 2013:36). However, I do not share the details of Popper’s view about this important subject.

sake of his good that he enters partnership with others just so he can attain it, it implies unambiguously that his good does not have instrumental value: it is an end in itself. In essence, the principle of insufficiency (οὐκ ἀτάρκῆς) makes it clear that the individual's good is prior to the good of the polis, and it is precisely for the furthering of the former's good that the latter has any relevance.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, to respond to the controversy as to whether the good of the individual is reducible to the good of the polis, I propose that the right thing to say is that it is only man's natural aptitude, and not his happiness/interest/good, that has instrumental value. That is, it is only man's natural aptitude that he socialises for his own happiness and that of others, including the polis' good.

On the last statement, recall our argument in the previews chapter that Plato does not prescribe any mode of happy life for the non-philosophic citizens (*Rep.*, 421b); and even if he does, the money-makers and honour-lovers remain unconvinced that the philosophic life can secure them the truest pleasure possible. Therefore, I find it unconvincing that Plato subordinates the individual's good to the good of the polis. Plato makes it clear that happiness cannot be the content of human legislation. Based on this conclusion, I take issue with the following position of Piechowiak. I agree with Piechowiak that the happiness of the state is recognised as an aim of laws. It deserves mention that even though the polis is a product of human nature, it makes sense that the lawgiver can determine the content of its good through legislation, since the good of the polis is not natural. But since the good of the individual precedes the coming into being of the polis and is natural, and no human legislation can claim to capture the full sense of what constitutes human happiness, it cannot be the content of legislation.

Thus, it is not for an aridly polemical reason that Socrates says that "with the whole polis developing and being well governed, we must leave it to nature to provide each group with its share of happiness" (*Rep.*, 421b). On the other hand, I think Piechowiak's reading of passages *Rep.*, 423 and *Rep.*, 421b is problematic. He thinks that when Plato says that it is not the aim of the law that any of the classes in the polis becomes supremely happy but contrives to bring this about in the whole polis, Plato means that the wellbeing of the polis is given ontological superiority over the happiness of the individual. I think that the only reason why Plato does not determine the content of the individual's happiness but leaves it to nature is precisely what I

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108 Having justified the political community on the principle of human insufficiency, Aristotle is wrong to have said that the polis is prior to the individual (*Pol.* 1253a25-27). His mereological argument in this sense is illogical.

just said earlier that no lawgiver can determine the content of human happiness. This again stresses why I think Plato is less committed to metaphysical justification.

## 2.5 The Polis, Man's Nature, and Morality

The respective arguments of Hall and Piechowiak to defend the moral competence of the non-philosophic citizens depends chiefly on Plato's tripartite soul: all the citizens are capable of moral virtue because Plato attributes to each of them the tripartite soul. While agreeing with these scholars, I wish to draw attention to a far more important but less recognised way of understanding the moral capacities of the all the citizens.

Socrates' exposition of man's sociality and creative potential is followed by a discussion of how man interacts cooperatively with others to fend for his needs: partnership (κοινωνία). From *Rep.*, 369b10-c7, Socrates describes such cooperative interaction: "And because people need many things, and because one person calls on a second out of one need and on a third out of a different need, many people gather in a single place to live together as partners and helpers." Such cooperative interaction is evinced, first, in the satisfaction of biological needs: food, shelter, and clothing. Thus, based on the principles of mutual needs and difference of aptitude—further principles intimated by the principle of οὐκ ἀτάρκης—a simple polis will have five economic classes: (a) agro-industrialists, (b) merchants, (c) shipbuilders, ship-owners, captains and sailors, (d) retailers (for people least physically fit), and (e) wage-earners (for those who are physically strong for manual labour). The economic result is a higher quantity and better-quality consumables, and this is good for all members of the polis (*Rep.*, 370a-c). Initially, there is a rudimentary sense of what is now theoretically referred to as a market economy, wherein the means of production and decisions are regulated by market interactions and not any centralised system. The second phase of the cooperative interaction is evinced, second, in the satisfaction of wants (following Glaucon's rejection of the simple, agrarian polis as a city of pigs).

From the foregoing, let us note the following important points from our discussion. First, Plato's view on the origin of the polis, together with its corresponding grounding principles, intimates one thing: that the general conditions for organising a polis are naturally and objectively founded: they are grounded in human nature.<sup>109</sup> Consequently, if the polis results from man's intelligent and excellent usage of his arms he is equipped at birth, it only means that the polis begins and ends with man's thinking capacity. In this regard, caring for the good

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109 See Piechowiak 2019:88.

of the polis depends solely on man. Second, Plato will agree with Aristotle that, among other animals, “it is a characteristic of man that he alone has a sense of good and evil, of just and unjust, and the like, and the association of living beings who have this sense makes a family and a state” (Aris. *Pol.* 1253a14-17). Plato’s agreement can be seen in his view on partnership. For instance, in the *Gorgias*, we are told that “an undisciplined man could not be dear to another man or a god, for he cannot be a partner (κοινωνεῖν γὰρ ἀδύνατος), and where there’s no partnership there’s no friendship. [For] wise men claim that partnership and friendship...hold together heaven and earth, and gods and men, and that is why they call the universe a *world order* and not an undisciplined world-order” (*Gorg.* 507e-8a). If the inception and destruction of any organised human society depend solely on man, then it is true that Plato, like Aristotle, holds a balanced view of human nature.

As we noted in the previous chapter, Plato’s balanced view of human nature has counteracting implications for the defence of metaphysical justification. Here, it needs stressing that the instrumentality of man’s intelligence and excellence in the conception of the polis outrightly challenges the metaphysical justification of political authority, wherein *all* the non-philosophic citizens are said to be morally obtuse, lack self-determination, and are in constant need of moral guidance and counselling from the philosopher-rulers. Here, we can appreciate that the naturalistic justification of political authority of the philosopher-rulers is an antithesis to metaphysical justification, in the context of the moral and intellectual capacities of the citizens. Without a felicitous appreciation of the foundational principles of politics in the *Republic*, evinced in the biological and evolutionary facts about man, one would—as defenders of metaphysical justification do—hurriedly claim that Plato has a condescending disposition toward the non-philosophic citizens. As we have seen, members in this primal, agrarian polis have the rational capacity to enter a partnership to attend to their existential needs, out of which the polis comes into being. This means that even before the introduction of the tripartite soul and the defence of philosophy in the subsequent books, Socrates grants in Book II that members of the primal society possess rational capacities to calculate and communicate relative gains and losses.

However, one may object that these individuals mainly possess and use prudential rationality, wherein the emphasis is on self-preservation as each of them thinks about how to satisfy his immediate needs. But we can attribute to them a minimum moral sense of rationality. In modern parlance, we will say that each of them seems rationally capable to recognise his fellow member as a social and rational being, that the quality of their relationship determines their wellbeing. With a genuine sense of recognition for the ‘other’, moral rationality

instrumentally engenders and cements social and ethical values like sharing, friendship, cooperation and partnership. In describing the behavioural proclivities of members in the agrarian polis, Socrates tells us: “And they’ll live in peace (τὸν βίον ἐν εἰρήνῃ) and good health and when they die at a ripe old age, they’ll bequeath a similar life to their children” (*Rep.*, 372d1-2). Unlike Aristotle, Socrates does not tell us whether the primal polis is a synoecised entity, consisting of families or villages. But the idea of living in peace presupposes that the members in the primal polis have, at least, a minimal conception of socio-political disorder as well as a sense of harmonious and cooperative life. Moreover, the view of Aristotle and Plato about man’s nature (in its pristine origins) seems to share something in common with that of evolution biologists, that humans are the only animals who “not only understand others as intentional agents but also put their heads together with others in acts of shared [and collective] intentionality, including everything from concrete acts of collaborative problem solving to complex cultural institutions.”<sup>110</sup> On this score, I propose that Plato conceives the polis not as a mere aggregation of individuals but a functional constitutive entity, wherein each member of the polis is a significant constituent member, a leitmotif repeatedly mentioned in the *Statesman*. And to understand our classical philosophers’ thoughts about human nature in terms of expressions and concepts familiar with contemporary biology and evolution is not anachronistic, for they express precisely how these philosophers, especially Aristotle, tend to understand man’s natural proclivities.

## 2.6 Is Plato a Contractarian?

Vlastos says that “anything like a contract theory of the state strikes Plato as a pernicious error.” Vlastos’ reason is not that Plato does not have a concept of a contractarian ‘state of nature’ but that the non-philosophic citizens are incapable to enter into a contract with the philosophers: Vlastos queries: “How can men who do not know the nature of justice establish a just state by common agreement? The only way to get justice is to recognise the fact that “some men are by nature fitted to embrace philosophy and lead the state, while others are unfit to embrace it and must follow the leader (*Rep.* 474c).”<sup>111</sup> However, because of the principle of οὐκ ἀντάρκης and its implications, Vlastos is wrong. Of course, Plato is not a contractarian but for the following different reason.

Plato’s picture of man’s nature is starkly different from the major claim of contractarianism, especially the Hobbesian view. Hobbes understands and interprets human nature as directed

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<sup>110</sup> Tomasello 2014:x  
<sup>111</sup> Vlastos 1941:291.

neither by any of the social values the principle of lack of self-sufficiency engenders, including partnership and sharing. Famously, Hobbes thinks that man is by nature a solitary, self-centered being, who is always in a potentially deadly competition with others in search of means to satisfy his felicitous desires.<sup>112</sup> Consequently, members in the Hobbesian state of nature lack any sense of moral rationality, i.e., recognising the other as a partner: no sense of sharing, partnership and friendship, as each considers the other as a threat to his absolute liberty. In contrast, Plato understands man as naturally, to borrow an expression of Macintyre, “a dependent rational animal,” a vulnerable being.<sup>113</sup> Thus, for Plato, the need for man to be morally rational is strongly grounded in his vulnerability, his insufficiency. As we can see, Hobbes and Plato speak about human vulnerability. But the difference between them, I think, is that man’s vulnerability, for Plato, implores him to create a positive dependency culture, i.e. develop a collaborative spirit, evinced in his partnership with others, to provide for his needs and wants.<sup>114</sup> Thus even though Plato shares the view that man’s true nature is rooted in his self-interest (initiated by his instinct to satisfy his existential needs), the concern for himself implores him to live cooperatively and harmoniously with one another without *necessarily* needing laws.<sup>115</sup>

This means that what Hobbes and Locke consider to be the general proclivity of man’s true nature is, for Plato, something confined to the moral disposition of undisciplined, unjust men, as we saw in the *Gorgias* passage.<sup>116</sup> To emphasise, Plato and Aristotle accept man’s vulnerability as a basis for man’s predisposition to forming and accepting a communal life and, therefore, as a reason “for understanding individuals’ evident ability to transcend their narrow selfish concerns.”<sup>117</sup> And I agree with Pangle that this human ability, especially for Aristotle, can be understood in terms of virtues that grow out of and give natural perfection to passions of the soul, and in terms of positive social values like friendship and sharing – values rooted in

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112 Pangle 2003.

113 Macintyre 1999.

114 For Hobbes and Locke, “understanding man’s relations to his fellows to be rooted in self-interest, taught that these relations could be regulated by sensible laws and appeals to rational self-interest.” Pangle 2003:3; see also Yack 1985:102.

115 Piechowiak is right that since Plato attributes the tripartite soul to every person, and “If wisdom is knowledge which is individually acquired, then [wisdom] cannot be understood as the content of legislation produced by rulers.” Piechowiak 2019:82. This reinforces my position that the non-philosophic citizens do not rely unconditionally on the philosopher-rulers for their moral wellbeing; those who need the law to live the good life are those who fail to cultivate the rational part of the soul.

116 The comparison I draw between Hobbes and Plato on the moral foundation of the primal polis is important for two reasons. First, it reminds us that Plato is doing something serious about political philosophy, that we must reject the view that we should read the *Republic* as a tractate on the individual and not the state. Second, Plato sets the agenda for a discussion of relationship between politics and human nature in a manner that has not been appreciated enough, nor has he been duly credited for it.

117 Pangle 2003:4

the natural passion of human affection, which bridge the concern with the self and the concern with others (cf. *Pol.* 129b513-28). If these virtues and positive values emanate naturally, then it cannot be the content of human legislation. This is true in the sense that there are a significant number of people who are naturally predisposed to care for the other, i.e., act morally rational, without needing any external agency. Clearly, Plato is committed to the view that human vulnerability, in a sense, engenders positive virtues and social values. Therefore, if the citizens in the First Polis are not philosophers but can live harmoniously to the extent that Socrates refers to their mode of living as ‘true and healthy’, then it is not true that all the citizens will need philosophers before they can live the just life. In particular, Plato’s commitment to the view that man can be naturally morally rational, in the sense specified, conflicts with the wholesale allegation that the non-philosophic citizens must unconditionally accede to the authority of the philosopher-rulers for their moral and political wellbeing. It will mean that *all* the non-philosophic citizens lack any sense of morality to live harmonious with each other independently of law.

From the foregoing, I am convinced that Plato is not a contractarian for the following main reason. I agree with scholars, including Frisbee, that the true expression of Plato’s political engineering is entailed in the concept of *κοινωνία*, which is necessitated by the principles of mutual needs and differences of aptitudes, principles which are further necessitated by the principle of *οὐκ ἀντάρκης*.<sup>118</sup> For the most part, a contract functions as a normative basis for defining a certain sort of social relations and agreements and sets the rules of such agreement. Contract presupposes some sort of strict compliance with agreed upon principles between parties. On the other hand, partnership (*κοινωνία*) has some fluidity and lacks the strict compliant disposition of a contract. It is not surprising that the Greeks used partnership and friendship as hendiadys to define the polis. That said, a key problem I find with contractarianism, especially the Hobbesian version, is this. Government is never a party to but a product of the contract; government becomes the formulator and implementer of the contract’s principles. Consequently, the contract creates a *not-equal* relationship between the government and the contracting parties.

By *not-equal* relationship, I mean that there is no *common* ground which establishes a relationship between the government and the contracting parties *before* the contract.<sup>119</sup> This means that it becomes a matter of choice for the government to subject itself to the principles

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<sup>118</sup> Frisbee 2021.

<sup>119</sup> See Peprah 2019b

of the contract. And because the government is not a party to the contract its moral disposition is not factored in the contract. By the nature of the contract the government automatically assumes a superior moral authority over the citizenry. For instance, Hobbes' *Leviathan* assumes political and moral superiority over the citizenry while his identity remains obscure. Therefore, if there is any reason why I think Plato is not a contractarian it is not because the non-philosophic citizens lack knowledge of justice to enter a contract—they do. Rather, it is mainly because Plato does not take for granted the identity of the individuals who constitute the government. By identity, I mean the individual characteristics that define an entity. Hence, by the identity of government, I refer to the constitutive elements of government, including the temperament, desires, and aptitudes of the individuals who constitute the government body. The whole tenor of the *Republic's* politics centres on conceiving the best kind of government, taking into strict account the identities of the individuals who compose the government, the philosopher-rulers.

## 2.7 Justifying Political Authority

We are now in a better position to give much consideration to the political authority of the guardians. Here, I explore the view that the social and political arrangements in Kallipolis, as well as their justification, proceed from the principle of οὐκ αὐτάρκης. This is meant to prepare us to appreciate that even though the philosopher-rulers will surely perform a moral function, and they must acquire knowledge of the Good to perform this function. However, Plato's justification of their political authority has less connection with his metaphysics and ethics than is usually assumed.

Glaucon does not reject the primal polis and its foundational principles; instead, he rejects the sort of life Socrates prescribes for the members of this polis. Socrates then says that “Then we must enlarge our city, for the healthy one is no longer adequate. We must increase it in size and fill it with a multitude of things that go beyond what is necessary for a city...” (*Rep.*, 373b). Socrates only expands the primal polis to accommodate Glaucon's demands, i.e., a more aesthetic life leading to a transformation of the primal polis into a luxurious polis (τροφῶσαν πόλιν). In the light of this, Reeves has observed that the account of Kallipolis occurs in three stages, each of which describes a distinct model or paradigm polis: the *First Polis* (*Rep.*, 369a5-372d3), the *Second Polis* (*Rep.*, 372e3-471c3), and the *Third Polis* (*Rep.*, 473b4-544b3). Reeve's First Polis is what I earlier referred to as the primal, agrarian polis. I agree with him that “Plato is at work on Kallipolis from the moment he begins the account of the First Polis at



369b5.”<sup>120</sup> That “The First Polis is, to use a convenient Hegelianism, “overcome but preserved” in the Second, and the Second is overcome but preserved in the Third.”<sup>121</sup> However, it is misleading when Reeves says that “The First Polis is the Kallipolis for money-lovers. But it is not a real possibility because it includes nothing to counteract the destabilizing effects of unnecessary appetites and the pleonexia to which they give rise.”<sup>122</sup> It is misleading because Socrates speaks about the Second Polis as fevered and needs curing because of the problem of *pleonexia*, and rather refers to the First Polis as ‘true and healthy’ because the citizens subsist on basic needs, live simple lives, and bequeath similar lives to their succeeding generation (*Rep.*, 372e4-10).

Thus, the problem of pleonexia is associated with the Second Polis, when the citizens demand more than the necessities of life. Guardianship is required in this Second Polis to counteract the destabilising effects of unnecessary appetites and pleonexia to which they give rise. Reeves is ‘somehow’ right that the Second Polis is the polis for honour-lovers and money-lovers, i.e., those who want material wealth and honours beyond what is necessary and pursue them for their own sake. I say ‘somehow’ because this characterisation of the Second Polis seeks to establish ‘a difference’ between the rulers and the ruled more than it seeks to provide a common ground to pitch any kind of similarity between them. By this, I am not saying that it is wrong to understand the relationship between the rulers and the ruled based on pleonexia and its pursuit. But, as a follow up to our discussion in the previous chapter, I think it is methodologically problematic to approach the justification of the authority of the guardians from this moral angle, since such method swamps any meaningful discussion of the worth of the non-philosophic citizens. Thus, Reeves’ reason for dividing the structure of Kallipolis into three seems to reinforce the argument of metaphysical justification to create an asymmetrical relationship between the rulers and the ruled.

Moreover, Reeves makes the justification of the authority of the guardians stand in relation only to the pleonastic desires of the citizens but fails to see how Socrates also speaks about inter-poleis hostile relationship based on similar desire. I agree that the reason why guardianship is required in the Second Polis is moral. However, Socrates does not offer a moral argument to justify the authority of the guardians. Instead, he appeals to his usual craft-analogy

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120 Reeves 2006:172.

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid.

to alienate other citizens from politics.<sup>123</sup> Socrates spells out the moral need for guardianship as follows:

**T5:** And the land, I suppose, that used to be adequate to feed the population we had then, will cease to be adequate and become too small.... Then we'll have to seize some of our neighbors' land if we're to have enough pasture and ploughland. And won't our neighbors want to seize part of ours as well, if they too have surrendered themselves to the endless acquisition of money and have overstepped the limit of their necessities? (*Rep.*, 373d3-10)

Glaucon answers that such international hostility is completely inevitable. Socrates draws the following consequence:

**T6:** Then our next step will be war.... We won't say yet whether the effects of war are good or bad but only that we've found the origins of war. It comes from those same desires that are most of all responsible for the bad things that happen to cities and the individuals in them.... Then the city must be further enlarged, and not just by a small number, either, but by a whole army, which will do battle with the invaders in defence of the city's substantial wealth and all the other things we mentioned. (*Rep.*, 373e3-374a2).

Glaucon's interjection that the First Polis is a city for pigs results in the expansion of this primal polis to become the Second Polis (a fevered but luxurious polis). Our discussion so far makes it clear that the interjection is Plato's artistic way of proposing that any given polis—owing to the activities of its citizens as well as its relationship with other poleis—has a transformative capacity to either become buoyant or degenerate. And two main factors determine the destruction of the polis: civil wars (στράσις) and external hostility (πόλεμος), and both kinds of conflicts are caused by the same thing, i.e., *pleonexia*. It is not clear whether Plato's political agenda after Book II is restorative, namely, to cure the fevered polis and restore it to the First Polis; it seems quite clear that he does not even have the First Polis in mind when he speaks of a certain aristocratic polis that degenerates in Book VIII-IX. Nevertheless, I am convinced that

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123 Socrates' craft-analogy is also called the *ergon* argument. Santas also calls it the 'the functional-perfectionist theory of good. By this expression, Santas reiterates the basic claim of the *ergon* argument: functioning optimally in each profession. Socrates tells us that the "work of a horse or anything else is that which one can do only with it or best with it (352e)," restated as "...the work of a thing which it only or it better than anything else can perform (353a)" (Santas 2001:66).

the driving force of Plato's political engineering after Book II is his agenda to provide a robust solution to the problems of political conflicts – conflict caused by pleonexia. However, I think that Plato's novel solution to the problem of στάσις and πόλεμος is not so much in restating these two traditional political problems, but in how he attempts to provide a philosophical solution to tackling them.

That said, we have noted that the first political task that follows the expansion of the First Polis is the launching of offensive attacks against neighbouring poleis to seize their lands, while simultaneously protecting the resulting Second Polis from external aggressions. As said earlier, Book II arguably sets the agenda for the *Republic's* politics. Socrates' next step is to professionalise warfare, as he further claims that warfare cannot be the duty of all the citizens. His reason is simple: each must concentrate on the work their natural aptitude, education, and training enable them to function optimally. Here, I think a key concept which underwrites Plato's social justice is 'efficiency', marked by the two adverbials καλῶς and εὔ. Plato's concept of efficiency is rooted in his naturalistic account of the polis and its associated foundational principles. I explain.

Having discovered the dire need to protect the Second Polis from external aggressions or incursions, given that both kinds of hostilities emanate from pleonexia, Socrates then asks why all the citizens are not qualified to perform this crucial political task. He recalls with Glaucon that "if the agreement you and the rest of us made when we were founding the city was a good one, for surely, we agreed, if you remember, that it's impossible for a single person to practice many crafts or professions well (καλῶς)" (*Rep.*, 374a3-7). So, the main point is that Socrates never says that all the citizens cannot engage in warfare, and for that matter engage in politics. Socrates' central argument is that the important thing is not to fight but to fight *well*. Likewise, it is not about merely ruling, for any nincompoop or craven can claim to know how to rule. Instead, it is about ruling well, the same way the important thing is not just to build but to build well. One could go on in this manner, but the key watchword is *efficiency* or *optimum functionality* (*Rep.*, 421b6-c6).<sup>124</sup> Plato's emphasis on efficiency is precisely what my thesis (1) seeks to justify, that all citizens are to engage in professions they can function optimally, i.e., attain efficiency with the available resources, based on their natural aptitudes and training. Socrates is unambiguous about this:

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<sup>124</sup> Santas (2001) rightly thinks that the functional argument here also account for what he calls Plato's functional theory of good starkly different from knowledge of the Good.

**T7:** Well...don't you think that warfare is a profession? [Glaucon]: Of course. Then should we be more concerned about cobbling than about warfare? [Glaucon] Not at all. But we prevented a cobbler from trying to be a farmer, weaver, or builder at the same time and said that he must remain a cobbler in order to produce fine work. And each of the others, too, was to work all his life at a single trade for which he had a natural aptitude and keep away from all the others, so as not to miss the right moment to practice his own work well (εὖ). Now, isn't it of the greatest importance that warfare be practiced well? And is fighting a war so easy that a farmer or a cobbler or any other craftsman can be a soldier at the same time? Though no one can become so much as a good player of checkers or dice if he considers it only as a sideline and doesn't practice it from childhood. Or can someone pick up a shield or any other weapon or tool of war and immediately perform adequately in an infantry battle or any other kind? No other tool makes anyone who picks it up a craftsman or champion unless he has acquired the requisite knowledge (τὴν ἐπιστήμην) and has had sufficient practice. If tools could make anyone who picked them up an expert, they'd be valuable indeed. Then to the degree that the work of the guardians is most important, it requires most freedom from other things and the greatest skill and devotion (τέχνης τε καὶ ἐπιμελείας μεγίστης δεόμενον) (*Rep.*, 374b5-e3).

A central point in Socrates' justification of the exclusion of others from politics is the following. The condition of time. Time explains why people must concentrate on what their natural aptitudes could enable them to attain optimum functionality. The suggestion is that the more one spends time on any given profession, the greater the dexterity in the acquisition of the relevant knowledge and the quality of performance of the said craft or profession. But the luxury of time does less in this case to establish the grounds for authority or expertise in any profession. There is a possibility that one can have the luxury of time but still fail to perform optimally in his or her profession. The second condition is crucial: one must acquire the necessary knowledge associated with one's profession. The idea is that every profession, including guardianship, has its own epistemic demands such that one can claim expert knowledge about such a profession if and only if one has acquired the relevant knowledge in the said profession. But one can only pick tool, train and become adept in whatever enterprise if and only if one has the natural abilities to become train to attain optimum functionality. Therefore, since it is clear that nature precedes nurture (natural ability precedes training and education) in the pre-distribution of communal responsibilities, I take it that naturalistic justification is firmly grounded.

In the light of these two conditions, a key point in **T7** is that Socrates shares the common Greek understanding that politics involves the art of warfare. The crucial point is that Kallipolis' social justice—which is also a moral thesis—derives its sense from passages like T7: the valid moral creed is about functioning optimally in one's given profession. Accordingly, Socrates is clear that warfare is a political τέχνη of some sort and executing it requires the greatest devotion and attention; that politics, like all other crafts, have some agreed-upon ends and purposes which guide the decisions of the guardians. Hence, if the good of the polis is only instrumentally valuable for the very existence of the citizens, it follows necessarily that the decisions of the guardians about the polis equally have instrumental value, i.e., promoting the good of the citizens. I point this out to stress my agreement with Verzenyi that Plato does not conceive of politics to serve ultimate ends and purposes, i.e., advance the interest of the polis as something valuable, but to serve only instrumental ends, i.e., serving the interest of the citizens.

Now, the fact that Plato professionalises politics is well-known and needs no further comment.<sup>125</sup> However, I contend that such professionalization is Plato's *only* justificatory reason to exclude other citizens from politics. Thus, I think that *the only reason given in the Republic to exclude the non-philosophic citizens from politics is precisely that politics does not fall within the domain of their natural aptitude and cognitive competencies*. To reiterate, for Plato governance is a profession with its standards of achievement that can be assessed (i.e., how it promotes the good of the citizens), and, therefore, requires satisfaction of a complex set of preconditions for its optimum functionality. The nature of these preconditions and their satisfaction derive from, as well as depend solely on, Plato's concept of education. He argues that education is a critical solvent of all socio-political problems and has a positive cumulative effect. Plato argues that education is the most effective instrument for creating a sustainable pool of efficient political leaders, and for building a happy, just and cohesive society. What is noteworthy, however, is that Plato's preconditions for good leadership, which includes the pursuit of music, literary studies, gymnastics, and dialectics (culminating in the acquisition of knowledge of the Good) are completely different from the way and manner he justifies the authority of the guardians. In essence, there is no place in his political theory that the non-philosophic citizens are excluded from politics because they lack knowledge of the Good. Otherwise, since the preconditions for efficient and good governance involves music training, one can as well argue that the exclusion of the citizens from politics is based on their lack of

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125 Schofield 2016.

knowledge of Plato's concept of music, or his censored literary education, or any of the contents of his education. That is, to single out knowledge of the Good as the basis of the exclusion—which is not true anyway—is to undermine the many other important preconditions for good governance.

From the foregoing, I have tried to argue that Plato's conception of political authority is premised on the core natural principles which also ground the polis. Moreover, Plato's social justice is grounded in these natural principles. The lesson of Plato's social justice is simple: each must concentrate on the task they are naturally fitted to do, given cultural and social interventions (i.e., education and training). Consequently, if there is a way to challenge Plato's conception of guardianship, it must surely not be about denying the naturalistic grounds upon which its justification derives from, as well as the positive implications such grounds provide to understanding the moral and political worth of the non-philosophic citizens. Popper, Crossman and other critics of Plato take the easy way to attack Plato's political engineering by claiming that he justifies political authority on metaphysical grounds and claim that such justification has punishable consequences for the citizens, including the claim that they are considered slaves. But our account has hopefully shown that this interpretation is not faithful to Plato's overall political thesis. Plato's sympathisers, including Taylor, concede this erroneous position, albeit in a modified sense. They easily concede because they have not paid attention to the naturalistic justification.

Moreover, Plato's political authority coincides with his teleological argument: for the good of the individual, all natural aptitudes and socio-political establishments, including the polis and its political authority, have instrumental value.<sup>126</sup> The perfection of these aptitudes is purposefully meant to be beneficial to promote the individual's good. The individual's good is precisely his doing of what his natural aptitude and cognitive competence enable him to attain efficiency. The lawgiver does not prescribe the content of individual happiness but aims to create enabling conditions for their realisation. It is for this reason I agree with Mohr that "Plato sees a kind of happiness as concomitant to social justice, that is, as attaching to one's fulfilling of one's social function," and has less to do with attaining psychic harmony; that psychic harmony is nothing more than a necessary background condition for happiness.<sup>127</sup> Thus, I believe that Plato's political theory is premised on his valuation of man's natural potentials,

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<sup>126</sup> The metaphysical justification also holds that it is for the good of the individual that political authority and the polis are justified. But the significant difference is that the naturalistic justification denies that the individual's good is sacrificed to serve the interest of the polis.

<sup>127</sup> Mohr 1987:131-3.

and the result of such valuation is that each member is a significant member of Kallipolis. This is the basis of my thesis (2), that the non-philosophic citizens are alienated from politics precisely because their natural aptitudes and training enable them to attain efficiency in their respective professions. The liberals who are peeved about Plato's basis for excluding the non-philosophic citizens from politics must confront the natural, biological grounds for his argument. The political authority of the guardians is a logical consequence of these natural principles.

## 2.8 Summary and Reflections

By now, we should be very sceptical about the claim that the non-philosophic citizens are excluded from politics because they are morally obtuse, intellectually incapable, and politically inept. For Plato, as we have seen, the construction of a new political system required the conception of a new socio-political establishment adequate to it – establishment which excludes the citizens from politics. While it was not unprecedented in some Greek poleis for citizens to be excluded from politics, Plato offered a rational justification for his exclusion: the non-philosophic citizens are alienated from politics precisely because they can excel in other areas crucially beneficial to attaining their own good and that of the commonwealth. It is the core function of the best guardians to set the polis on an ethical trajectory. They are to promote what Santas calls 'vulgar justice', namely, refraining from commonly proscribed criminal acts (e.g., thefts and property damage), and these common criminal acts are proscribed by all systems of justice and political regimes worth our attention.<sup>128</sup> So, the naturalistic justification absorbs the 'service conception of political authority' thesis, namely, that political authority exists for the good of the citizens. However, it is not mentioned anywhere in the *Republic* that Plato desires to nurture all the citizens to be philosophers. As we saw in the Socrates' 'three-lives and three-pleasures' argument in the previous chapter, Plato is aware of the other different conceptions of happiness. In essence, the naturalistic justification has provided us with a better explanation as to why political authority is important for the citizens: the protection of the polis against external aggression and internal disturbances is crucial for the citizens' own good. More crucially, the polis stands in better position to import products that are needful but is comparatively disadvantaged.

We can also appreciate that Plato's notion of political obligation (if he has one) is enmeshed in his social justice, namely, that the citizens obey their rulers because they accept them to be

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128 Santas 2001:61.

cognitively competent to rule. This returns us to Socrates' discussion of moderation in the polis. For the sake of emphasis, I re-quote:

**T8:** ...moderation spreads throughout the whole. It makes the weakest, the strongest, and those in between—whether in regard to reason, physical strength, numbers, wealth, or anything else—all sing the same song together. And this unanimity (ὁμόνοια), this agreement between the naturally worse and the naturally better as to which of the two is to rule both in the city and in each one, is rightly called moderation.

Here, Piechowiak writes that “Plato’s account of moderation in the state stresses not the pure control of rulers over the ruled but a rational order based on unanimity (ὁμόνοια—oneness of mind, concord) and accord (συμφωνία—harmony, harmonious union).”<sup>129</sup> This seems a plausible view. However, I take issue with Piechowiak’s explanation of **T8**. He explains that: “This presupposes that the ruled rationally recognise their inferiority in the state, which requires that they have sound judgement in matters of the state, which is the property of the rulers. This makes the account of the state slightly inconsistent, for if the ruled had sound judgement, considerable humility would also be required from them, which Plato does not mention at all.”<sup>130</sup>

I take issue with Piechowiak for the following reason. We should not pretend to lose sight that Plato sometimes uses derogatory expressions to describe the non-philosophic citizens. However, if Plato also has a positive way of referring to them, it is more sensible to account for his positive political thesis by using those expressions. Recall Socrates saying that the rulers call their citizens “providers of upkeep and wages” and the citizens, in turn, call their rulers “preservers and auxiliaries”. These positive co-referencing expressions contrast with what rulers in other cities call their citizens: “slaves” (*Rep.*, 463a3-b12). Is there even a problem when one thinks that his political leaders are the best? How we wish our political leaders are knowledgeable about politics to care about us! So, we can excuse the inferior-superior complexities because, as Reeves puts it (though in a different context), they are ‘the shadows of Plato’s actual thought.’<sup>131</sup> On this note, my response to Piechowiak’s worry is the following. The citizens do not necessarily have to exercise ‘sound judgement’ the same way as the philosopher-rulers to appreciate that their rulers are the best candidate. But they must, at least, be aware of what goes on in the polis: there is a political consensus. The tyrant even needs a

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129 Piechowiak 2019:90

130 Piechowiak 2019:90

131 Reeves 2006:172.



listening populace to promulgate his propaganda. In speaking about the Noble Lie, Socrates says that he will try to persuade (πείθειν) the rulers and the soldiers and then the rest of the citizenry to believe the autochthony (*Rep.*, 414d). If the citizens can be persuaded it suggests that they have the rational disposition to accept or reject something based on its persuasive forcefulness.

My response above to Piechowiak is weak. My rather strong response is that Plato, as I promised to show, introduced a new sense of morality starkly different from conventional understanding. This new sense of morality is closely intertwined with the polis' social justice: to be moral is to perform optimally in one's given task, such that the greatest harm to the polis is when there is an interference, and each class is unable to perform efficiently. This new sense of morality is nonsense especially to Plato's liberal critics; for, it is a justificatory basis to deny others the opportunity to serve in government. But it can also be appreciated positively: it draws attention to accord respect to every kind of profession one finds in the state (see Michael Sandel's view of this in the main Conclusion). Therefore, when Socrates says that there is moderation in any city because the ruler and the ruled share the same belief about who should govern, the most plausible understanding, I propose, should be that the governed sees their philosopher-rulers as those fit to attain optimum functionality in governance. Likewise, the ruler is also aware that the ruled can be efficient in their respective professions. Aristotle devotes Book IV of his *Politics* to discuss the lawgiver's aim of attaining ὁμόνοια in the polis, and one of the lessons is his reiteration of (though he refused to acknowledge **T8**) Plato's proposal that the ruled and the ruler must sing the same song together; there must be political consensus for Kallipolis to thrive.

In the light of the above, we understand better why the rulers call their citizens "providers of upkeep" but not slaves and the ruled in turn call their rulers "protectors." It is not out of benevolence that Plato conceives the political position of the non-philosophic citizens in these favourable terms; it is the logical consequence of the principle of human insufficiency (ὀὐκ ἀυτάρκης), together with its intimating principles. The rulers and the ruled are partners in Kallipolis. There is a genuine sense of positive relationship, i.e., mutual interdependence, between the philosophic and non-philosophic citizens.<sup>132</sup> However, the expression 'providers of upkeep' is slightly misleading, as it suggests that the ruled provides only material services and support to the rulers. But these 'providers' include all professions in the producing class, including doctors, sailors, among others. We should also bear in mind that the auxiliaries are

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<sup>132</sup> Frisbee 2021

not philosophers. The sane cooperative interaction is among the three classes of citizenry. Or so I have argued.

Nevertheless, the principle of mutual interdependence, which accords well with the polis' social justice (which is further grounded in the foundational principles of the polis) leads me to attend to my third thesis in the next two chapters, namely, that the realisability of Kallipolis supervenes upon the cooperative interaction between the rulers and the ruled, given their various cognitive competences and natural aptitudes. To do this, I claim that it is not enough to say that there is a positive relationship between the ruled and the rulers based on their willingness to socialise their talents for the commonwealth. It must be proven that the non-philosophic citizens pursue their happiness and that of the polis based on their cognitive competencies. As far as I can tell this thesis remains unexplored in scholarship. So I shall take it as an assumption to prove. To undertake this, I must first challenge a seeming orthodox interpretation of Plato's epistemology, which holds that only philosophers can possess knowledge, i.e., knowledge of the Good. I take the challenge in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Plato's Concept of Philosopher-Rulership and Epistemic Competence

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter and the next, I defend my main thesis (hereinafter ‘thesis (4)’), that the realisability of Kallipolis supervenes upon the cooperative interaction between the cognitive competencies of both the rulers and the ruled. Here, I shall focus on one strand of the argument: the cognitive competencies of the philosopher-rulers.<sup>133</sup> As has been said already, Plato proposes that philosophers should rule because they possess knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), and knowledge is necessary for governance.<sup>134</sup> By knowledge, most scholars argue that Plato intends metaphysical ἐπιστήμη. Let us call this the sufficiency condition thesis (the SCT). I challenge this widespread view. The SCT emboldens the defence of the metaphysical justification that the non-philosophic citizens are excluded from politics because they are intellectually handicapped. I argue that the philosopher-rulers cognitive competencies involve metaphysical practical ἐπιστήμη, practical wisdom (φρόνησις) and experience (ἐμπειρία); that metaphysical ἐπιστήμη is a necessary condition for ruling. Let us call this the necessary condition thesis (the NCT).

In exploring the NCT, first, I argue that the philosopher-rulers must attain optimum cognitive success in these three modes of cognition to function efficiently in ruling. This involves showing that Plato, for his political project, appeals to other senses of cognitive successes besides his strictly metaphysical epistemology. Second, I attempt to demonstrate how these three modes of cognition coalesce or coincide in ruling the perceptible world, especially in the judgement and determination of concrete perceptible matters. In Chapter Four, I shall argue for Platonic scientific knowledge and propose that the philosopher-rulers’

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133 According to the *Wordweb* dictionary, “competence” is “the quality of being adequately or well fitted physically and intellectually”. The meaning of competence is far more nuanced than this basic understanding. Nonetheless, this basic meaning will suffice for our purpose. “Cognitive” plays an adjectival role here to specify the quality of being well fitted intellectually or cognitively to undertake something. Accordingly, I shall take cognitive (epistemic) competence to mean that the philosopher-rulers’ intellectual fitness to rule is fundamentally composed of three cognitive qualities, namely, metaphysical ἐπιστήμη, practical wisdom, and experience. Their cognitive competencies also involve their moral superiority. Consider the following. One of the functions of the philosopher-rulers is to be judges in Kallipolis. This means that they must pass judgements which involve an appeal to complex interlocking elements in the decision-making process, including an appeal to experience and practical wisdom. We are assured of a confirmation of this claim in Book IX, at *Rep.*, 582a3-5, where Socrates queries whether there are better criteria for judging well than by experience, practical wisdom, and reasoning (ἐμπειρία τε καὶ φρόνησει καὶ λόγῳ), and Glaucon answers in the negative. These triadic modes of cognition are what I argue as defining the philosopher-rulers’ epistemic competence. I classify practical wisdom and experience under the rubric of Plato’s ‘scientific knowledge’.

<sup>134</sup> I attend to the nature and meaning of ἐπιστήμη in the next chapter (Section 4.3)

cognitive competencies encompass metaphysical and scientific sorts of knowledge. The plausibility of Plato's scientific knowledge will open a conceptual space for us to explore the cognitive competencies of the non-philosophic citizens. I shall only hint at Plato's scientific knowledge in this chapter.

The claim that Socrates professionalises politics is well stated in passage *Rep.*, 374b5-e3 (T7). We noted a key point in this passage: for Plato, governance is a profession. We need to note another important thing Socrates says in this passage. He is explicit that “No other tool makes anyone who picks it up a craftsman or champion unless he has acquired the requisite knowledge (τὴν ἐπιστήμην) and has had sufficient practice. If tools could make anyone who picked them up an expert, they'd be valuable indeed.” He infers that “Then to the degree that the work of the guardians is most important, it requires most freedom from other things and the greatest skill and devotion (τέχνης τε καὶ ἐπιμελείας μεγίστης δεόμενον). Socrates repeats this inference in Book III, at *Rep.*, 395b7-8, this time insisting that the best guardians are “craftsmen of the city's freedom” (δημιουργοὺς ἐλευθερίας τῆς πόλεως). Therefore, the best guardians are craftsmen of some sort, perhaps metaphorically, and crafting the polis' freedom involves their guarding it “against external enemies and internal friends, so that the one will lack the power and the other the desire to harm the city” (*Rep.*, 414b1-3). The fact that the best guardians require a kind of knowledge, which is not metaphysical ἐπιστήμη, to craft the polis' freedom threatens the SCT.

However, the claim that the guardians require knowledge (τὴν ἐπιστήμην) and the greatest skill (μεγίστης τέχνης) prompts an important question: what kind of knowledge and technical proficiency? The straightforward answer is that Plato refers to knowledge and skill about/of governance. In Book I, Socrates argues against Thrasymachus that all skills are exercised for the sake of the subject matter. Governance, like any other form of professional skill, has its own standards of achievement that can be assessed; profit-making or exploitation is vintage capitalism or other forms of business, not essential to governance (*Rep.*, 346e-347a). The details of this passage are not important to us; what needs emphasising is that governance, at least, requires knowledge of its utility. The argument that governance requires knowledge features prominently discussed in Book IV, where Socrates explores wisdom in the polis (*Rep.*, 428a-e). Socrates asserts that the “polis is really wise, and that is because it has good judgement, and this very thing, good judgement, is clearly some kind of knowledge, for it's through knowledge, and not ignorance, that people judge well” (*Rep.*, 428b3-7). However, Socrates acknowledges that there are many kinds of knowledge in the polis [πολλὰ δὲ γε καὶ παντοδαπὰ ἐπιστήμαι ἐν τῇ πόλει εἰσὶν] (*Rep.*, 428b6-7). But the kind of knowledge under

consideration that guarantees the polis sound judgement or wisdom is not knowledge possessed by the carpenter, for this is called skilled in carpentry, nor because of knowledge of how to raise a harvest from the earth (this is called skilled in farming). This particular knowledge is rather called “guardianship, and it is possessed by those rulers we just now called complete guardians” (*Rep.*, 428c1c). Now, Socrates’ basis for distinguishing the various kinds of knowledge in the polis is crucial: guardianship is the kind of “knowledge possessed by some of the citizens in the city we just founded that doesn’t judge about any particular matter but about the city as a whole and the maintenance of good relations, both internally and with other cities” (*Rep.*, 428c10-12).

The sense of relationship Socrates thinks exists between knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) and technical proficiency (τέχνη) is a healthy one.<sup>135</sup> The polis owes its sound judgement, i.e., wisdom, to the art of guardianship. The crucial question is whether the relationship between ἐπιστήμη and τέχνη in this Book IV passages is accidental or overlaps (and can even be considered identical). Parry favours the overlapping thesis.<sup>136</sup> He rightly argues that “In Plato’s dialogues, the relation between knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) and craft or skill (τέχνη) is complex and surprising. There is no general and systematic account of either but rather overlapping treatments, reflecting the context of different dialogues.”<sup>137</sup> The complexity and surprising turn of the relation in Plato are not doubtful. Nevertheless, I think in the Book IV passages under consideration, there is no apparent distinction between ἐπιστήμη as knowledge and τέχνη as a mere skill; the relation is intimately an identical one. Observe that Socrates even uses the two concepts interchangeably in the Book IV passages: he begins his search for wisdom in the polis with a concern for what kind of knowledge makes the polis wise, and he ends up mentioning crafts which involve knowledge pursuit directed at fulfilling functions different from making the whole polis wise.

The important point for us here is that to function optimally in governance, the philosopher-rulers must acquire knowledge of governance, i.e. the art of ruling. This is a fundamental theme in the Platonic corpus. In the *Protagoras*, for instance, Socrates criticises democracy as follows. When it comes to matters requiring technical proficiency, like the construction of ships, the right craftsmen are summoned. This applies to anything that is learnable and teachable. “But when it is a matter of deliberating (συμβουλευεῖν) on city management, anyone else can stand up and advise them, carpenter, blacksmith, shoemaker, merchant, ship-captain, rich man, poor

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<sup>135</sup> See Sørensen 2016; also Roochnik 1998.

<sup>136</sup> Parry 2003

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

man, low-born...and nobody blasts him for presuming to give counsel without any prior training under a teacher. The reason for this is clear: They do not think that this can be taught” (*Prot.* 319b-e). Governance belongs to the domain of professions that are teachable and learnable (μαθητά τε καὶ διδακτά), and we have seen that Plato sustains the same argument in his political engineering in the *Republic*: the polis is wise because it has good judgement or can deliberate (συμβουλεύειν) well, guaranteed by guardians who have devoted a great deal of time and attention to acquiring the art of ruling (see **T7**). Nevertheless, I need to repeat that the initial reason for excluding others from politics is because each one should concentrate on what they can do best.

Now, Socrates’ *whole-particular* distinction of the kinds of knowledge in the Book IV passages invites the following investigation. If ἐπιστήμη of guardianship means knowledge of the whole, and if the optimum aim of every τέχνη is that of producing something good on the basis of a paradigmatic model, it follows that whoever possesses the technique is able to find a good model.<sup>138</sup> Therefore, the guardians plausibly possess a paradigmatic model of governance to function optimally in ruling (cf. *Rep.*, 484c3-d3); they are the “craftsmen of the city’s freedom” (δημιουργοὺς ἐλευθερίας τῆς πόλεως). A confirmatory passage is found in the *Timaeus*, where Timaeus says that “whenever the craftsman (δημιουργός) looks at what is always changeless and, using a thing of that kind as his model, reproduces its form and character, then, of necessity, all that he so completes is beautiful. But were he to look at a thing that has come to be and use as his model something that has been begotten, his work will lack beauty” (*Tim.* 28a6-b4).<sup>139</sup>

Two important issues from the intimate relationship I am supposing exist between ἐπιστήμη and τέχνη in the *Republic*. First, the claim that ἐπιστήμη of guardianship requires a paradigmatic model readily gives the impression that Socrates is only referring to metaphysical ἐπιστήμη (see section 3.2.1). However, I argue in what follows that the epistemic competencies of the philosopher-rulers require more than metaphysical ἐπιστήμη; otherwise, Plato would have introduced the rulers to only philosophy, if metaphysical ἐπιστήμη is a sufficiency condition for attaining the paradigmatic model to rule the polis wisely. Each of the disciplines in the potential philosopher-rulers’ educational curricula is carefully designed to contribute to their epistemic competencies. For instance, mathematics, notably a theoretical discipline, is thought to have practical ends (*Rep.*, 522b-d). The purpose of this chapter, as mentioned, is to

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<sup>138</sup> Recall the so-called *ergon*-argument (which already underscores my view on the optimum functionality), which posits that every craft or skill has a specific work or function it performs. For details, see Parry 2003; Santas 2001.

<sup>139</sup> Translated by Zeyl in Cooper 1997.

offer a comprehensive conception of Plato’s philosopher-rulers relative to metaphysical ἐπιστήμη. Second, the claim that the possessor of τέχνη, *qua* ἐπιστήμη, possess not only the capacity to produce good *ergon* of the said τέχνη but also can find a good model of the τέχνη implies some metaphysical claims. Thus, in order to produce good health or justice, the physician and judge must need to know at least in some way what the forms of health and justice are. Hence, if we claim that the producing craftsmen are epistemically competent, given their crafts and the knowledge required of them, they must possess some knowledge of Forms. How defensible is this metaphysical thesis? I shall attend to this question in the next chapter.

### 3.2.1 The Concept of Philosopher-Rulership

Previously, we noted that Socrates specifies that “those who are to be made our guardians in the most exact sense of the term must be philosophers” (*Rep.*, 503b3-5). By the “most exact sense of the term”, Socrates explicitly refers to the best guardians in Book III. Why are the best guardians not fitted to rule yet? The straightforward answer is that Plato is yet to introduce them to philosophy. When they become fully-fledged philosopher-rulers, they become much better craftsmen of the city’s freedom. We noted in the previous section that the very goal of τέχνη is to produce something good on the basis of a model, and, therefore, whoever possesses the technique claims to have found the good model. Plato best captures this thought in a very famous (but unfortunately less understood) passage in Book V. I mean Socrates’ third wave:

**T9:** Until philosophers rule as kings or those who are now called kings and leading men genuinely and adequately philosophise, that is, until political power and philosophy entirely coincide, while the many natures who at present pursue either one exclusively are forcibly prevented from doing so (τῶν δὲ νῦν πορευομένων χωρὶς ἐφ’ ἑκάτερον αἱ πολλαὶ φύσεις ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἀποκλεισθῶσιν), cities will have no rest from evils. And, until this happens, the [polis] we’ve been describing will never be born to the fullest extent possible or see the light of the sun (*Rep.*, 473c10-e2).<sup>140</sup>

Why does Socrates think that this third wave will only invite great derision? Sedley’s response to this question is worth our attention. Sedley writes that quite how destabilising Socrates’ proposal is “meant to sound can be appreciated only when we realize that Socrates is referring here not just to stormy waves but to a veritable tsunami of change....When Socrates speaks of

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140 In his defence of **T9**, Socrates envisages a hypothetical “prosecutor of philosophy” (τὸν ἐγκαλοῦντα τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ), who regards philosophy as downright useless, ἄχρηστοι, *Rep.*, 487c3-495c7). It is unlikely that this prosecutor will find Argument (1) as convincing.

a third and final wave as liable to “drown us in a deluge [*katakluzein*] of mockery and unbelievability” (5.473c), his reference is...to a philosophical tsunami, a veritable cataclysm of incredulity that threatens to wash away his entire political agenda.”<sup>141</sup> Sedley entreats us to keep in mind that “a tsunami could...be sufficiently powerful to wipe out an existing city and require its wholesale re-creation. In advocating the institutions of philosopher-kings, Socrates shows himself aware (7.540d-541a) that he is doing nothing less revolutionary than that.”<sup>142</sup> If we are to reason with Sedley, what is Socrates doing with his dreadful, apocalyptic declaration?

I explore this question. First, it seems that the declaration is creating the impression that Socrates is on the move to account for a new political system different from the one he has built since Book II. Previously, we did not see Socrates saying anything tsunamic about his conception of his best guardians. Nevertheless, I think passage **T9** loses its significance in Plato’s overall political project if it is taken out of its appropriate context. A savvy reading of it will make it clear that **T9** shows a narrative continuity in Socrates’ conceptual account of his ideal political leadership. Passage **T9** establishes a strong conceptual link between Socrates’ conception of the best guardianship from Books II-III and the philosopher rulership from Books V-VII. By noticing this conceptual affinity, we take it as given that the foundational principle (οὐκ ἀντάρκης) upon which Socrates establishes the just polis remains intact. Our thesis (4) remains equally intact.

That said, I now tease out the major components of passage **T9**, keeping in mind the aim to spell out the grounds for the philosopher-rulers’ epistemic competencies. Two provisos are evident in **T9**: (1) Socrates says that “the many natures who at present pursue either one exclusively must forcibly (ἐξ ἀνάγκης) be prevented from doing so.” Socrates is unambiguous about what this proviso means: political power and philosophy must be vested in the same person. (2) He makes the realisability of Kallipolis, in terms of good governance, contingent on the first proviso. Thus, Socrates is specific that until the coincidence happens, Kallipolis will never be born to the fullest extent possible or even see the light of the sun. The first proviso says something starkly different from the claim of the SCT. Defenders of the SCT will sum up the two provisos in the following conditional:

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141 Sedley 2007:256  
142 Ibid.



- (1) If philosophers do not rule, the just polis (Kallipolis) will not be realised. Therefore, the just polis can be realised if and only if philosophers become rulers (the biconditional is crucial).

For the sake of retrospective referencing, I refer to (1) as Argument (1). I seek to modify Argument (1) because I think we miss out on important details if we take it for granted that its current state is all that Socrates seems to say in passage **T9**. In modifying Argument (1), my goal is not to engage in pointless analytic taxidermism but to indicate two main difficulties Socrates is likely to encounter if he were to settle on Argument (1) as conclusive of the philosopher-rulers epistemic competence. First, Argument (1) suggests that if philosophers are to rule, then eliminating the many evils in society is contingent on the philosopher's knowledge, i.e. metaphysical *ἐπιστήμη*. If this holds, then the defenders of the metaphysical justification—who disregard the principle of partnership and optimum functionality—will insist that metaphysical *ἐπιστήμη* is a sufficient condition for ruling Kallipolis (the SCT). But a problem looms if Socrates argues along this line. The unstated premise is that philosophic knowledge entails or involves political knowledge. But this is simply not true.<sup>143</sup> There is no guarantee that merely telling philosophers to rule will eliminate the many evils in poleis. The reason is that some philosophers, including Socrates, have ruled but were not successful in eliminating the political evils in their political communities. Nor should we take it for granted that existing kings can easily be given philosophical teachings to become good rulers. Plato himself was not successful in changing Dionysius I in Syracuse to become a philosopher-king. This makes the declaration in **T9** not as tsunamic as Sedley wants us to believe. Moreover, in the *Phaedo* and the *Theaetetus*, Plato provides a completely different picture of the

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<sup>143</sup> The conundrum is even made worse by some of Socrates' explicit utterances in his defence of his declaration in **T9**. For instance, he tells his hypothetical prosecutor of philosophy that the politically needy must naturally consult the philosopher, *qua* ruler, just as the sick naturally consults the doctor to be cured or sailors naturally allow the captain to steer the ship (*Rep.*, 489b3-c6). But if Socrates is committed to this claim, I think he would be putting up a bad and embarrassing argument for three main reasons. First, it is simply an illogical argument, because the art of philosophising is starkly different from the actual business of statecraft: metaphysical *ἐπιστήμη* neither logically entails political knowledge nor makes the philosopher-rulers omniscient. Second, he is making an unscientific argument. The reason is that if the philosopher's knowledge naturally attracts the politically needy, as the doctor's naturally attracts the sick, then it is not clear at all why Socrates should be the one to convince us that philosophy is useful for ruling, i.e. it is natural for us to think of the doctor whenever we are sick; it never occurs to us to think of the philosopher when we think about poor leadership. (After more than 2500 years of this declaration, philosophers are still grappling with their specific role in societies; see Lamb 2018). Third, it is factually incorrect, because philosophers were traditionally noted to be inept at making speeches and defending themselves at the assembly and the law court (Callicles' criticism of Socrates in the *Gorgias*). Moreover, they were generally considered to be useless and vicious. On the viciousness of philosophy, Socrates was charged on the grounds of corrupting the young, and Aristophanes tells us in his *Clouds* that graduates of philosophy were father-beaters.

philosopher: one who is totally estranged from politics and communal life.<sup>144</sup> Yet, the philosophers in *Phaedo*, *Theaetetus* and *Republic* have the same epistemic aim: grasping the Forms. As it stands, Argument (1) is ambiguous. The ambiguity is that it is not clear whether Socrates is arguing that metaphysical ἐπιστήμη entails political knowledge or that the philosopher-ruler must acquire both sorts of epistemic competencies. However, defenders of the SCT argue for the former disjunct.

I believe that metaphysical ἐπιστήμη does not entail political knowledge, but both kinds of cognitive competence are needed to excel in governance. Accordingly, I offer the following argument as a modified version of Argument (1). Given the first proviso, investing political power and philosophy in the same person means that the person is prevented from being exclusively a philosopher or politician; he is to be identified as both: a *philosopher-ruler*. But politics and philosophy belong to completely different sets of epistemic domains. As is well known, the former requires practical reasoning and experience in concrete political matters, while the latter is mainly theoretical. Thus, the two natures also have completely different sets of motivation and natural aptitudes.

Plato is aware of these different domains. On the one hand, philosophy requires different sets of natural aptitudes and motivations, which include a love for learning to the highest level, telling the truth, a good memory, and youthful passion (*Rep.*, 485a4-487a; 503c2- d4). On the other hand, Plato says that politics requires high public-spiritedness, which means that the potential rulers must be those who appear to us on observation to be most likely to devote their lives to the service of the polis, and who are never prepared to act against it (*Rep.*, 413c2-d3). Therefore, the individual who becomes a philosopher-ruler is torn between competing sets of motivations and desires. This is because whoever seeks to become a ruler in Kallipolis, for Plato, must be a product of the coincidence of philosophy and politics: a philosopher-ruler. If this holds, then I think the following Argument (2) captures Socrates' argument in **T9** better than Argument (1):

(2) If philosopher-rulers do not rule, the just polis will not be realised. Therefore, the just polis can be realised if and only if philosopher-rulers take charge of the polis.

As I see it, there is a significant difference between saying that philosophers should rule and that philosopher-rulers should rule. At a glance, it seems that there is nothing crucial about this

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144 In *Theaetetus* (173c-174b7) and *Phaedo*, Trabattoni writes that: "The way of the philosopher and that of the city separate radically and finally, ratifying the split, on the one hand, a social and civil life which...cannot be philosophical, and on the other, a philosophy that cannot be politics" Trabattoni 2016,265.

distinction. But I want to show that there is an important reason to draw the distinction, and it is not mere verbiage that the rulers must be referred to as philosopher-rulers.<sup>145</sup> Later in the discussion, Socrates repeatedly mentions that the philosopher must be compelled to return to the cave, first, to continue his education in the cave (acquire 15 years of practical training in political administration) and, second, to rule. The philosopher must be compelled because he is the ideal candidate for Plato's political leadership: Plato thinks that the best ruler is the one who, albeit paradoxically, despises (καταφρονοῦντα) ruling. Therefore, since philosophers despise ruling, they must be those who must rule (*Rep.*, 521b1-2).<sup>146</sup> The significant question is, why does Plato conceive guardians in Book II-III who must be those devoted to protecting the polis against external enemies, on the one hand, but later tells us in Book V-VII that the best rulers are those without any iota of love for ruling, on the other hand? I shall propose, among others, that Plato introduces the best guardians to philosophy to blunt their excessive love for the polis. Philosophy is to serve both moral and epistemic functions. Thus, what I see Plato doing in passage **T9** is his attempt to offer a strong utilitarian justification of philosophy for the active political life: he seeks to achieve the result of the coincidence between the contemplative and the active lives. I explore this claim in the next subsection.

### 3.2.2 The Best Guardians and Philosopher-Rulers: A Distinction

Before passage **T9**, and as we have seen, the future leaders are first identified as guardians, who are later divided into the auxiliary class and the guardian class based on who could protect the polis against internal and external enemies (*Rep.*, 412-414b). The auxiliary class represents the spirited part of the soul, and courage (ἀνδρείαν) is their characteristic nature, and the aim of educating them is to transform their savage courage into political courage (ἀνδρείαν πολιτικήν).<sup>147</sup> This means that if the best guardians are better at protecting the polis than the auxiliary class are, they are more courageous and patriotic than the auxiliaries. Moreover, and as Molchanov argues, the best guardians care for the polis but not because they love philosophical wisdom; even if they did, this wisdom is not philosophical but political.<sup>148</sup> This means that the best guardians, at least, love to rule, in their task of crafting the polis's freedom. If this holds, it challenges our initial claim that the philosopher-rulers, for Plato, must *lack* the motivation to rule. This returns us to our previous question: how do we reconcile the claim that

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<sup>146</sup> Even though we must take this with a pinch of salt. Socrates never despised politics. In the *Apology*, he tells us that his philosophical mission veered him from politics and other social function. He never considered politics as a worthless enterprise (*Apol.* 28a10-29a; 32a9-b).

<sup>147</sup> Peprah 2021b; also Molchanov (unpublished), 8

<sup>148</sup> Molchanov, *ibid.*

the best guardians are those who love to rule and Plato's desire to generate leaders who despise ruling? As I see it, there is no such contradiction if we strike a distinction between the best guardians *before* and *after* Book V.<sup>149</sup>

The fact that the best guardians will need philosophical wisdom to become full-fledged political rulers in Kallipolis presupposes that metaphysical ἐπιστήμη is only a necessary condition for good leadership (the NCT). The underlying idea is that the best guardians are best because they possess knowledge about how to protect the polis, i.e. craft its freedom. It cannot be the case that they are best without such knowledge. Plato is not oblivious that politics has its own epistemic demands and standards of achievements that can be assessed. When Plato professionalised politics in Book II, he understood clearly the task of equipping his rulers with the needed understanding of the science of politics (**T7**). Therefore, the philosopher-rulers' cognitive competencies involve more than metaphysical ἐπιστήμη. For instance, the philosopher-rulers will determine concrete perceptible matters, such as those concerned with market business, private contracts people make with one another in the marketplace, cases of insult or injury, the bringing of lawsuits, the establishment of juries, and payment and assessment of whatever dues are necessary for markets and harbours, among others (*Rep.*, 425c8-d5). Therefore, the claim that the philosopher-rulers must possess practical knowledge and experience in governance is profound. This profundity requires that we modify Argument 2 to get the following Argument 3:

- (3) A ruler in Kallipolis must have metaphysical ἐπιστήμη and the science of politics to rule well (εὐβουλία). Therefore, Kallipolis can be well-governed if and only if the rulers possess metaphysical ἐπιστήμη, practical knowledge and political experience. The last two cognitive competencies fall under the rubric of Plato's possible view on scientific knowledge.

Clearly, Plato intends a means-end relation with his declaration of **T9**: political power and philosophy must be instrumental means to solve concrete political problems. Adams specifies that for Plato, political evil is the result of a divorce between political power and knowledge of the Good, and it can only be tackled by effecting their coalescence.<sup>150</sup> And as said before, it appears to me that what Plato attempts to achieve with the declaration is to reconcile the contemplative life and active life in founding Kallipolis, and Socrates' defence from Books V-

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<sup>149</sup> Peprah 2021b

<sup>150</sup> Adam 1963:350.

VII should be read as Plato's foremost utilitarian justification of philosophy for active political life against the prosecutor of philosophy. If Plato seeks to reconcile the contemplative and the active lives with his declaration, it suggests that he is not only advancing Argument (3) but also has an ethical concern.

### 3.2.3 The Political Epistemic Thesis

Plato's ethical concern is captured in the apocalyptic picture he creates in **T9**. One can ask: what are the evils in an organised political community? Socrates is not clear about what these evils are. Nevertheless, his description of the fevered polis in Book II gives us some handy suggestions about the nature of these political evils. From Book II-IV, Socrates insists that a major threat to a polis' stability is political conflict (in the forms of *stasis* and *polemos*). And in Book II, we saw that the main cause of civil and polemic wars is *pleonexia*, i.e. when people go beyond their needs to crave for wants amid scarcity. Therefore, *stasis* and *polemos* count among the many evils of society. As we saw earlier, *stasis* is mainly caused by claims of justice, for instance, over the unfair distribution of scarce resources. The polis arose from social cooperation, and whatever benefits derived from such cooperation must benefit all. These political problems are essentially moral problems, and Plato thinks that the most realistic approach to solving them must be radical. It will require radical changes in social institutions (like the family), moral dispositions and attitudes of political leaders. If there is anything tsunamic about his declaration in **T9**, much has to do with what Gyekye calls (though in a different context) "ethical revolution."<sup>151</sup> Concretely, Plato's ethical revolutionary proposals to preserve the stability of the polis include the banning of the guardians from owning material wealth beyond what is necessary, just so they will not compete with the people for wealth (*Rep.*, 416d-417b), and abolishing the nuclear family, which results in the having of wives, husbands and children in common (*Rep.*, 461d-e).<sup>152</sup> Plato is convinced that attaining the greatest good of the polis means promoting that which binds the polis together. By that which binds the polis together, Plato means that "...as far as possible, all the citizens rejoice and are pained by the same successes and failures, and the sharing of pleasures and pains are those which bind the polis together" (*Rep.*, 462a).

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151 Gyekye 2013:100.

152 Socrates notes that family obligations and loyalties, patronage, and some communal responsibilities give rise to political corruption: "I hesitate to mention, since they're so unseemly, the pettiest of the evils the guardians would therefore escape: The poor man's flattery of the rich, the perplexities and sufferings involved in bringing up children and in making money necessary to feed the household, getting into debt, paying it off, and in some way or other providing enough money to hand over to their wives and household slaves to manage. All of the various troubles men endure in these matters are obvious, ignoble, and not worth discussing" (*Rep.*, 465b10-c6)

Conversely, the greatest threat to the polis' good is "when some suffer greatly, while others rejoice greatly, at the same things happening to the city or its people;" the privatisation of pleasures and pains dissolves the polis (*Rep.*, 462b-c). Therefore, economic polarisation is the chief bane of the good of the polis. Accordingly, the best-governed polis is the one in which most people say "mine" and "not mine" about the same things in the same way (*Rep.*, 462c3). Political stability is not premised on empty political rhetoric or manoeuvres. Clearly, passages *Rep.*, 461d-462d confirm that the preservation of the polis' good—a good which guarantees the individual's good—supervenes upon the harmonious relationship and cooperative interaction between the ruled and the rulers. Socrates' lengthy discussion of the causes of political instability in the previous Books, which centres more on tackling political corruption, anticipated his declaration in **T9**. This important observation requires us to further modify Argument (3) to capture the essence of Plato's political epistemic thesis:

- (4) Whoever becomes a ruler in Kallipolis must have not only metaphysical and scientific sorts of knowledge, but must also possess the highest moral rectitude. This is because *good* governance (εὐβουλία) requires the highest kinds of cognitive competencies about governance, which involves metaphysical ἐπιστήμη, scientific knowledge and the highest moral rectitude and disposition. Therefore, the philosopher-rulers must have the highest degrees of these cognitive competencies.

I have italicised 'good' to remind us that Plato talks about effective and efficient political leadership and not merely ruling. Argument (4) is his response to his liberal critics that it is not everyone who can be in a position to offer quality political leadership. However, argument (4) does not affect the reason for his exclusion of the non-philosophic citizens from politics. The distinction between ruling and attaining optimum functionality in ruling still remains the basis for his exclusion of the other citizens from politics. Concretely, he remains committed to the view that the citizens are excluded from politics because ruling belongs to a domain of profession outside their expertise; they can equally excel in other areas. Argument (4) only specifies the requirements of ruling τέχνη.

Therefore, I argue that when Socrates defends his declaration in **T9**, his main conclusion is Argument (4); metaphysical ἐπιστήμη is the only necessary epistemic condition for ruling Kallipolis (the NCT). This becomes more conspicuous when we pay attention to how he defends his apocalyptic declaration.

### 3.3 The Value Question

Glaucon casts doubt on Socrates' declaration in **T9** because he shares the popular belief that philosophers are generally considered useless and vicious, and challenges Socrates to hold the sceptics off by argument and escape; otherwise, Socrates will pay the penalty of great derision (*Rep.*, 473e5-474a3). Socrates takes up the challenge with the following conviction:

**T10:** If we're to escape from the people you mention [the prosecutors of philosophy], I think we need to define for them who the philosophers are that we dare to say they must rule. And once that's clear, we should be able to defend ourselves by showing that the people we mean are fitted by nature both to engage in philosophy and to rule the city, while the rest are naturally fitted to leave philosophy alone and follow their leader (*Rep.*, 474b2-c1).

In his defence from Books V-VII, Socrates, I think, uses justification by a comparative method. By this method, I mean that Socrates explicitly compares his true (τοὺς ἀληθινούς) philosopher-rulers with four categories of individuals:

- a. lovers of sights and sounds, φιλοθεάμονες καὶ φιλήκοοι, (*Rep.*, 475d1-480a),
- b. the intellectually blind (*Rep.*, 484c3-d3);
- c. people whose lives are impoverished and destitute of personal satisfaction, but who hope to snatch some compensation for their material inadequacy from a political career (*Rep.*, 520e1-521b5); and
- d. vicious and crank philosophers whose unscrupulous activities have led philosophy and its decent practitioners to be assailed by the prosecutors of philosophy as useless; they only appear to love the truth because they lack the natural qualities to be genuinely devoted to its pursuit (*Rep.*, 489c8-490d7).

Accordingly, I think that the question which preoccupied Socrates in his defence of the declaration in **T9** is, therefore: *Who can be the best candidate for ruling?* I call this the 'value question'.<sup>153</sup> The value question searches for superior qualities that Socrates thinks describe his philosopher-rulers as the best candidates and distinguishes them from the above four

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153 However, Sedley thinks that Socrates' defence of his declaration "is envisaged as addressed not to the *Republic's* philosophical interlocutors or readership but to an imaginary group of unphilosophical although culturally informed citizens who might well pride themselves on possessing knowledge, in an effort to persuade them that they have no such thing and should for this very reason put their welfare in the hands of philosopher-kings, who do" Sedley 2001:257. Here, Sedley refers to those in category (a). He leaves out how the philosopher-rulers differ from those categories of individuals in (b)-(d). Yet to arrive at Argument (4), Socrates argues against all four categories.

categories of people. Socrates thinks that such qualities are the cognitive and moral competencies of his rulers (Argument (4)). By cognitive competence, I mean that the philosopher-rulers possess the highest achievements in the triadic modes of cognition: metaphysical knowledge, practical knowledge and experience. By moral competence, I mean that the philosophers have the inherent desire to consistently make morally right choices. Socrates makes four claims to this effect. First, he argues that his true philosophers are cognitively superior to those in categories (1) and (4), because his philosophers genuinely love the sight of truth and can grasp what is always the same (*Rep.*, 475e4; 484b3-c1, 489e3-490c3). Second, in contrast to those in category (2), Socrates says his true philosophers have a clear paradigm in their souls to mould an ideal polis and preserve it (*Rep.*, 484c5-d3). Third, Socrates says his true philosophers are not inferior to others, either in experience (ἐμπειρία) or in any other part of virtue (*Rep.*, 484d5-10; also *Rep.*, 539e). Fourth, it is because of those in category (3) that Plato proposes that the only persons to be entrusted with political power are those who do not crave it; true philosophers despise ruling (*Rep.*, 521b1-5); those who presently love ruling fight for it mainly because of the material pleasures and honours that come with it. Two points are noteworthy about the value question.

First, it is clear that Socrates never had the non-philosophic citizens of Kallipolis in mind in his defence of his declaration in **T9**; he rather had the four categories of individuals above in mind. This observation strengthens my argument that there is hardly any textual evidence to support the view that the non-philosophic citizens are slaves because they lack knowledge of the Good. Second, Socrates refers to his rulers as philosophers. But it should be clear that when he makes this reference, what he has in mind is Argument (4).

### **3.4 How sufficient is metaphysical ἐπιστήμη?**

However, despite Socrates' defence of his declaration against the four categories of individuals on epistemic and moral grounds, scholarship on Plato's epistemology in the *Republic* has mainly focused on metaphysical ἐπιστήμη. Moreover, the current scholarship on metaphysical ἐπιστήμη is even conceptually inadequate. I think the inadequacy exists because the scholarly discussion has narrowly focused on an aspect of Socrates' defence of his declaration, where, in Book V, he distinguishes between his true philosophers and the individuals in category (a), i.e. the lovers of sights and sounds. In what follows, I show how such a narrow focus results in an inadequate and unsatisfactory account of the philosopher-rulers' epistemic competencies – a result which blocks any chance to account for the cognitive



competencies of the other citizens. I begin with how Socrates compares his true philosophers with those in category (a).

According to Socrates, the lovers of sights and sounds can only be “*like* (ὁμοίους) philosophers”, because the difference between them and his true philosophers is that the latter are “those who love the sight of truth” (τοὺς τῆς ἀληθείας φιλοθεάμονας) (*Rep.*, 475e2-4). The “truth” here is a substantive (non-semantic) truth. Here, the substantive truth is distinguished from semantic (propositional) truth, i.e. truth which applies primarily to propositions or assertions. And to borrow Broadie’s description of Aristotle’s substantive ‘truth’, “truth” in this Platonic context indicates, simultaneously, (a) an actual cognitive achievement in relation to some reality, and (b) the reality itself insofar as it is successfully presented to rational cognition or an apprehending consciousness.<sup>154</sup> As Socrates’ defence of his declaration subsequently reveals, Plato’s substantive truth has as its objects the Good and the Forms and their manifestations in concrete perceptible matters. Nonetheless, Plato’s thesis, I claim, is that if one possesses substantive truth of/about an object, say the Good, then one has the cognitive advantage to semantically assert true propositions about the object in question: the former is prior to the latter.

The context for this claim is the following: Glaucon says he does not understand what Socrates means by “those who love the sight of truth”, and implores him to explain. Socrates’ explanation opens with (i) a distinction between a thing itself (reality itself) and its various manifestations; and (ii) a distinction between those who love reality itself and its manifestations, on the one hand, and those who only love the manifestations, on the other hand (*Rep.*, 475e9-476b). The explanation leads to a further distinction between knowledge (ἐπιστήμη; γνώσις) and opinion (δόξα). Socrates then argues that his true philosophers possess knowledge because they not only believe perceptibles about beauty itself but also believe in beauty itself, whereas lovers of sights and sounds possess only opinions because they believe only in sensible particulars about beauty but not beauty itself. Hence, to love substantive truth is to love the whole of being, including its manifestations. So I shall follow Heidegger in arguing that ἀληθεία (substantive truth) is ‘the *unhiddenness* of being in its totality’ such that Plato’s alethic inquirer, the philosopher, aims to grasp (ἐφάπτεσθαι) the ‘totality of being’ and that since the Good and the Forms manifest themselves in concrete perceptible matters in the perceptible world, ‘totality’ here involves the apprehension of the manifestations of the Good

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154 Broadie 2020, 259.

and Forms. Therefore, to *know*, metaphysically, is to grasp the ‘totality of being’ as it reveals itself to an apprehending consciousness.

What is noteworthy is that scholars have neglected to discuss Plato’s conception of substantive truth in their attempt to understand metaphysical ἐπιστήμη. The implications of such neglect will become evident as we discuss the current debate on the philosopher-rulers’ epistemic competence. In this debate, scholars have observed that Socrates’ distinction between knowledge and opinion in the Book V passage above invites what has come to be known as ‘the two-world thesis’ (the TWT), which asserts that Plato literally conceives two different worlds: a world of Forms and a perceptible world. The question is whether the TWT is a defensible thesis in the *Republic*. Defenders of the TWT hold that knowledge is *only* possible in the metaphysical world since objects of knowledge are Forms. On the other hand, when we come to the sensible world, the highest cognitive level is *opinion* (δόξα), since all objects of opinion are only perceptibles. Given this, the allegation is that ἐπιστήμη of perceptibles is not possible in the *Republic*. The implication of this allegation for Plato’s political project is queried as follows:

- (a) If in Kallipolis, the philosopher-rulers possess only metaphysical ἐπιστήμη, and the claim that ἐπιστήμη of perceptibles is impossible holds, how can they rule, e.g. judge and determine concrete perceptible matters in the sensible world? Is ἐπιστήμη of perceptibles possible?<sup>155</sup>

In the following two subsections, I consider the views of rejecters and defenders of the TWT in their responses to this question (a). This move will enable to us appreciate how the failure to discuss the substantive truth, and the value question in general, yields unsatisfactory accounts of the philosopher-rulers’ cognitive competencies evinced in Argument 4.

### 3.4.1 Rejection of the TWT

Scholars who reject the TWT, including Fine, Nicholas Smith, and Verity Harte, have largely answered question (a) by concentrating on the part of Socrates’ defence of his declaration where he maintains that knowledge is the power ‘set over what is’ (ἐπὶ τῷ ὄντι γνῶσις); ignorance is the power ‘set over what is not’ (ἀγνῶσια ἐπὶ μὴ ὄντι), and opinion, as an intermediate category between knowledge and ignorance, is the power ‘set over what is and what is not’ (ἐπὶ τῷ ὄντι τε καὶ μὴ) (*Rep.*, 477a-b). According to Santas, Socrates’ argument

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155 Schwab 2016, 42.

“treats knowledge and opinion not as mental states but as faculties or powers which produce mental states.”<sup>156</sup> Socrates argues that knowledge, *qua* faculty, is set over intelligibles, the Forms – entities that are not subject to spatiotemporal constrictions such as change or situations. This indicates that if knowledge is power, then the cognitive state or level of one who possesses knowledge is such that he possesses the power set over Forms. Thus the formula is that knowledge is the ‘cognition-ἐπὶ-Forms’. On the other hand, opinion is the power set over perceptibles (entities that are susceptible to spatiotemporality conditions, including situations and change). Therefore, if one possesses an opinion, then one’s cognitive state is set over perceptibles. The formula is that opinion is the ‘cognition-ἐπὶ-perceptibles. Given these two formulae, it may seem *prima facie* that the TWT is a defensible thesis. Is ἐπιστήμη of perceptibles possible?

Despite the variations in their respective accounts, an overarching shared narrative among Fine, Harte, and Smith is that the TWT is indefensible, at least in the *Republic*. Their almost unanimous view is that Plato allows ἐπιστήμη of perceptibles, on the one hand, and belief or opinion about Forms, on the other hand. For instance, Fine argues that ‘...although Plato in some way correlates knowledge with Forms, and belief with sensibles, he does not say that there is knowledge only of Forms or belief only about sensibles. All he argues is the weaker claim that to know, one must first know Forms; restricted to sensibles, one cannot achieve knowledge. This makes Forms the primary objects of knowledge, but not necessarily the only ones; knowledge begins, but need not end, with knowledge of Forms.’<sup>157</sup> The difference for Fine is a difference in the propositional content of knowledge and opinion or belief in terms of truth-bearing: one who knows asserts true propositions, and one who has opinions can make true and false propositions.

Now, Fine does not directly engage with question (a) in her paper under consideration. But the basis of her rejection of the TWT points out her probable answer. Fine’s propositional knowledge thesis hinges on her reading of the “is” in the various ‘set-overs’. She reads the argument from a propositional perspective to reject what is traditionally called an object analysis of Socrates’ argument in the Book V passage under consideration. The object analysis posits that “knowledge is only of Forms, and belief is only of sensibles”, such that [o]ne cannot know sensibles or have belief about Forms.”<sup>158</sup> Fine argues, however, that “If this is Plato’s argument, it violates his starting condition of noncontroversiality, by requiring strong and

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<sup>156</sup> Santas 2001, 170.

<sup>157</sup> Fine 1978, 122

<sup>158</sup> Ibid. 139.

implausible premises that his opponents cannot be expected to agree to.”<sup>159</sup> Thus, an object analysis presupposes some metaphysical commitments that the sightlovers cannot comprehend or be willing to agree to.

Thus Fine tries to address the equivocation of the “is” in the various “set-overs”. The “is” evokes a scholarly debate about how it should be read. The alternatives offered are the *is*-veridical, *is*-predicative, and *is*-existential readings. Fine settles on the veridical reading, arguing that the TWT rests on *is*-existential and *is*-predicative readings, yielding a degree of existence (DE) and a degree of reality (DR) interpretation.<sup>160</sup> Thus, DE claims that knowledge is what exists, and belief or opinion is what half-exists. On its part, DR claims that ‘knowledge is of what is really F (for some predicate F), belief is of what is F and not F, and ignorance is of what is not F.’<sup>161</sup> For Fine, both DE and DR suggest that Socrates adopts a defence strategy to convince the sightlovers of controversial premises that they are likely to reject. For instance, Socrates tells us that sightlovers do not believe in the beautiful itself, and they are not willing to follow anyone who could lead them to the knowledge of it (*Rep.*, 476c2-3). DR and DE, however, assume the Form and its existence as the premises Socrates uses to convince the sightlovers to accept their cognitive inferiority.

Socrates, argues Fine, appeals to non-controversial premises to convince the sightlovers to accept their intellectual inferiority. Fine believes strongly that the *is*-veridical reading is based on a non-controversial ground: Plato distinguishes “knowledge and belief not by reference to their objects but by reference to the truth implications of their contents.”<sup>162</sup> In other words, “Plato’s claim is that knowledge is of what is true, that belief is of what is and is not true, and ignorance is of what is false.”<sup>163</sup> Fine concludes that this “claim states familiar conditions of knowledge and belief that the sightlovers can be expected to agree to: knowledge, but not belief, entails truth.”<sup>164</sup> By endorsing the veridical reading, Fine is committed to the view that the one whose cognitive competence is defined by the “cognition-ἐπι-Forms” formula, i.e. the philosopher, asserts only true propositions, and the one whose cognition is defined as “cognition-ἐπι-perceptibles” asserts true and false propositions. This is because, for Plato, Fine argues, “knowledge, but not belief, entails truth; there may be false beliefs, but there is no false knowledge.”<sup>165</sup> Fine concludes: “Plato has precluded neither knowledge of sensibles nor beliefs

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> For the debate about DE and DR, see Vlastos 1981.

<sup>161</sup> Fine 1978, 122

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 139

about Forms. He does argue...that whoever knows will know Forms, since it is only by reference to them that correct accounts are forthcoming; if one is restricted to sensibles, like the sightlovers, the most one can attain is belief. But although all knowledge begins with Forms, it need not end with them, too; and also, one may fail to acquire knowledge of Forms, and have only beliefs about them.”<sup>166</sup>

The possible implication of Fine’s veridical and propositional thesis for question (a) can be stated as follows. If the philosophers’ cognition is defined by the “cognition-ἐπι-Forms” formula, and if their assertions, denials, judgements, and determinations of/about concrete perceptible matters constitute propositions, then their judgements and determinations of concrete perceptible matters are *always* true (semantically).<sup>167</sup> Apparently, Fine reduces the distinction between knowledge and opinion in the Book V passage to semantic truth, i.e. the truth of a proposition that represents things as they are.<sup>168</sup> Truth, in this sense, is a property of the assertion or proposition.<sup>169</sup> Fine’s propositional thesis may provide the answer to question (a): the philosopher-rulers will always assert propositional truths in judging perceptible matters. Fine will accept our Argument (4), especially the view that the philosopher-rulers’ epistemic competencies involve their acquisition of ἐπιστήμη about which human institutions and actions are just, beneficial and fine; therefore, ἐπιστήμη about concrete perceptible matters must be possible.<sup>170</sup> But her non-controversial thesis rejects a discussion of Plato’s substantive truth, which is, however, the initial premise of Socrates’ explanation of who true philosophers are, and how they differ from the sightlovers.

However, recall that Socrates’ concern—which anticipates the distinction between knowledge and opinion (from (*Rep.*, 476c-480a)—is the following: “What if the person who has opinion but not knowledge is angry with us and disputes the truth of what we are saying? Is there some way to console him and persuade him gently, while hiding from him that he isn’t in his right mind?” (*Rep.* 476d7-e2). Socrates may have used a non-controversial premise to convince this hypothetical claimant of knowledge, i.e., “What is completely is completely knowable and what is in no way is in every way unknowable” (*Rep.*, 477a2-4). However, Socrates uncharacteristically<sup>171</sup> intends to move along this so-called non-controversial premise

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid. 139.

<sup>167</sup> I am sceptical about this conclusion (see Section 5).

<sup>168</sup> See Broadie 2020, 259.

<sup>169</sup> Haack 1978, 83.

<sup>170</sup> See Moss’ criticism of Fine in Moss 2021:122-123.

<sup>171</sup> Fine argues that “If his arguments is to rest on *genuinely* noncontroversial premises, as he claims it does, it cannot assume the theory of Forms, or any esoteric theory unacceptable to the sightlovers, at the outset” (Fine 1978:123). I italicised genuinely because we have seen that Socrates only seeks to tickle the sightlover that he knows when the genuine intent is to prove to him that he does actually know.

just so the hypothetical epistemic claimant will be consoled.<sup>172</sup> But Socrates' real motive is to prove to him that his cognitive level, which is limited to sense-perceptible matters (the beautiful things), is insufficient to grant him complete epistemic understanding of the reality of knowledge, i.e. the beauty itself. The offshoot is that the claim that "What is completely is completely knowable and what is in no way is in every way unknowable" is a metaphysical claim needing metaphysical exegesis. I see no difference between Socrates' hypothetical claimant of knowledge here and Euthyphro. Therefore, the only difference between the hypothetical claimant of knowledge (the sightlover) and the philosopher is that the latter does not accept only sensible particulars as sufficient objects of knowledge but also believes in the beauty itself. Accordingly, I claim that the beauty itself and their particular instantiations (perceptibles) constitutes the totality of being (see Section 3.5). Socrates' problem with the hypothetical claimant of knowledge is that he takes perceptibles (instantiations of Beauty) to constitute knowledge *sui generis*. In essence, I side with Fine to reject the TWT, but I disagree with her non-controversiality thesis, which rejects object-analysis (see 3.2.3) of the Book V passage. The object-based analysis is crucial in determining the full essence of metaphysical ἐπιστήμη. In my discussion of Schwab's work in the next section, we will investigate why it is not enough to say that the philosophers are cognitively superior to the sightlovers because they can assert true propositions. Meantime, I do not deny that the philosophers will assert true propositions; my argument is that their epistemic superiority is far more than this basic cognitive achievement.

For his part, Smith rejects Fine's veridical reading as conceptually inconsistent to account for the true nature of the "is". Smith observes that Plato has Socrates go on to identify things that are both beautiful and ugly, just and unjust, holy and unholy, big and small, among others: "Being, as characterised in each of these examples, is obviously conceived predicatively."<sup>173</sup> Smith then argues that "it is obviously nonsense either to talk about something as being both true and false *at the same time*, or as existing and not existing *at the same time*."<sup>174</sup> On Smith's account, the predicative reading of "is" is the correct one among the other alternatives. But predication still falls within the domain of semantics. So here again, as with Fine's *is*-veridical reading, Smith's *is*-predicative reading does less to establish the cognitive superiority of the philosophers. This, however, does not mean that we should dismiss the various *is*-readings. I

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<sup>172</sup> Socrates continues: "Consider, then, what we'll say to him. Won't we question him like this? First, we'll tell him that nobody begrudges him any knowledge he may have and that we'd be delighted to discover that he knows something. Then we'll say: "Tell us, does the person who knows know something or nothing?""

<sup>173</sup> Smith 2019, 61.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid. 61.

shall argue for what I call the *is*-absolute reading, which can accommodate the other three alternative *is*-readings.

Now, I pay attention to Smith's response to question (a). In his showing, Smith advances two main theses to support the claim that *ἐπιστήμη* of perceptibles is possible in the *Republic*. The first is what he calls the "cognitive cross-over", according to which knowledge and opinion, as cognitive states, appear to refer to objects that are not those to which their relevant powers are related. Smith supports this thesis with the passage *Rep.*, 506e, where Socrates says that he does not know, but does have some opinion about the Good. Smith also writes about the "mixed content cognitions" thesis, which straightforwardly means that there could be beliefs about Forms and knowledge about sensible particulars. Both Smith and Fine cite as a confirmation text *Rep.*, 520c1-6, where Socrates mentions that the philosopher-rulers will know (*gnōsesthe*) the things in the cave better than those who have never escaped from the place. From this text, Smith rightly says that the things in the cave are neither Forms nor the cave parable's equivalent of Forms.

It is noteworthy that among the rejecters of the TWT we have considered it is Smith who openly says something about the philosopher-rulers needing other epistemic competencies apart from metaphysical *ἐπιστήμη*. To his credit, Smith acknowledges that the philosopher-rulers will need training to acquire other kinds of epistemic competence to rule, thereby endorsing the NCT. Thus, Smith argues that the potential philosopher-rulers will require a period of habituation and undergo a period of apprenticeship before they are called upon to rule (520c1-5; 539e2-540a2). "This period of habituation and apprenticeship is required precisely because the education they have received in dialectic ("outside the cave") does not *by itself* provide them with an infallible power of judgement about the things "in the cave", or the sensibles".<sup>175</sup> I agree with Smith's habituation thesis, but I think more needs to be said than his passing comment on this important subject, i.e. Plato's possible views on scientific knowledge.<sup>176</sup> In essence, I agree with the rejecters of the TWT in the *Republic*. Smith, Fine,

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175 Ibid. 157

176 Smith made significant changes in his view about metaphysical *ἐπιστήμη* when he featured his "Plato on Knowledge as Power" (2000a) in his *Summoning Knowledge in Plato's Republic* (2019b). But he makes little effort to show how practical knowledge and experience will coalesce with metaphysical *ἐπιστήμη* in the rulership of the philosophers. For Klosko, in addition to knowledge of the Good Plato recognises that the philosophers will need other kinds of knowledge, including practical experience: Plato 'insists that they be superior in moral knowledge, but also not deficient in practical experience.' Klosko 2006, 174. However, Klosko asserts further that "Though Plato stresses the importance of the philosophers' having absolute knowledge...philosophers must rule, not because of the practical value of their absolute knowledge, but because absolute knowledge ensures proper values." Klosko 2006, 175. I find this last assertion of Klosko worrying.

and other rejecters agree with my Argument (4). I will comment on my misgiving about their take on the controversy. Meantime, I want to present the opposing answer to question (a).

### 3.4.2 Defence of the TWT

Two current defenders of the TWT in the *Republic* are Whitney Schwab and Jessica Moss.<sup>177</sup> There are fundamental similarities between their views, especially the claim that there is no δόξα of Forms and ἐπιστήμη of perceptibles. They pay significant attention to the object-analysis argument Fine rejects. For instance, Schwab hopes that the following conception of ἐπιστήμη will catch hold of the actual meaning of how Socrates conceives it:

[F]or Socrates, *epistēmē* of some fact *P* consists in grasping that *P* either is a fact about, or is grounded in facts about, the natures of certain fundamental entities. For example, to have *epistēmē* of the fact that the just person is happy is to grasp how that fact obtains in virtue of facts about the nature of justice and the nature of happiness. A consequence of this conception of *epistēmē* is that a fact is a possible object of *epistēmē* only if it either is, or follows from, a fact about the natures of certain entities. There are two main components of the view I attribute to Socrates: first, ἐπιστήμη requires grasping chains of facts linked by the grounding relation; second, that facts about natures form the termini of such chains of facts.<sup>178</sup>

Two main points are noteworthy about Schwab's ἐπιστήμη. First, Schwab takes the grounding relation between a fact and another fact or set of facts to be an explanatory one: if the fact that *P* grounds the fact that *Q*, then *P* explains *Q*. Schwab illustrates: suppose it is in the nature of piety that piety is what is dear to the gods. To have ἐπιστήμη of the fact that sacrificing is pious consists in grasping the explanatory relation between it and the fact that it is in the nature of piety that piety is what is dear to the gods.<sup>179</sup> The suggestion is that Schwab is not only offering a coherentist theory of truth but also a coherent criterion of verification: the verity and inferential structure of the proposition “the just person is happy” are assessable by means of its metaphysical (logical) relation with other facts or sets of facts of/about the natures of justice and happiness.

Second, and unlike Smith and Fine, Schwab commendably accounts for ἐπιστήμη in a way that does not reduce it to competence in asserting semantic truths. The philosophers' love of

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177 Moss 2021, and Schwab 2016.

178 Schwab 2016, 42, 56.

179 Ibid.



truth and search for it are more than asserting or possessing propositional truths and knowledge. That is, the philosophers' highest cognitive level (metaphysical ἐπιστήμη) enables them not only to assert true propositions but also to grasp the basis upon which such propositions are grounded. This partly explains why I think Fine's propositional thesis is inadequate to account for the philosopher-rulers' superiority over the lovers of sights and sounds, as I promised to show. Now, Schwab uses his conception of ἐπιστήμη to reject the claim regarding ἐπιστήμη of perceptibles:

Given this conception of *epistēmē*...we can see that Socrates' metaphysics of perceptibles led him to conclude that *epistēmē* of perceptibles is impossible, since the fact (as he sees it) that predicates apply to perceptibles only in certain circumstances plausibly entails that facts about perceptibles are not appropriately grounded in facts about natures.<sup>180</sup>

Schwab's rejection of ἐπιστήμη of perceptibles is similarly grounded in the reason we noted above: perceptibles are subject to spatiotemporal constrictions. Based on his conception of ἐπιστήμη and its ramifications, Schwab offers the following response to question (a):

[In] my interpretation, although Socrates thinks that facts about perceptibles are not possible objects of *epistēmē* because they do not follow from facts about natures, he nevertheless thinks that philosophers' opinions concerning perceptibles are expert, and hence, authoritative. And Socrates thinks that philosophers' opinions concerning perceptible matters are expert because they are informed by their *epistēmē* of intelligibles. That is, Socrates does think that *epistēmē* is necessary for good ruling, but that is because *epistēmē* of intelligibles informs philosophers' opinions concerning perceptibles and not because philosophers have *epistēmē* of perceptibles.<sup>181</sup>

This is a summary of Schwab's main argument to reject ἐπιστήμη of perceptibles. Let me say that Schwab's exposition is worth studying to understand Plato's metaphysical epistemology. Moss argues in a similar way as Schwab.

Similarly, Moss raises question (a) as an objection to her view that ἐπιστήμη of perceptibles is not possible. Moss offers two main responses. First, she thinks that "whether we like it or not, there is clear evidence that even the philosopher-rulers lack the kind of completely stable, clear, and precise grasp of the perceptible world of the kind that could qualify as *epistēmē*."<sup>182</sup>

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180 Ibid.

181 Schwab 2016, 42, 56

182 Moss 2021:123.

From Moss' response, two main features of perceptibles are as follows: (1) it is impossible to gain ἐπιστήμη about perceptible matters, including instantiations of the Forms, and (2) nothing can be known in the perceptible world. She argues that ἐπιστήμη "is cognition of ultimate Beings, and these, on Plato's ontology, are the causes of everything else. To grasp being is, therefore, *ipso facto* to grasp explanations."<sup>183</sup> Other features of ἐπιστήμη include the claim that it is clear, stable, and precise; and, most importantly, it is restricted to Forms. Moss thinks, therefore, that the philosopher-rulers, despite their elaborate education, cannot turn the fate of the unclear, unstable, and imprecise world of the perceptibles into the nature of ἐπιστήμη. In advancing this claim, Moss cites Arruzza with approval that "[i]t is the irreducibility of sensible reality to the perfect grasp of reason—its resistance to perfect knowledge—that introduces corruption into the ideal city."<sup>184</sup> Moss and Arruzza make reference to what Socrates says about how the philosopher-rulers' cognitive condition degenerates into timarchy: they miscalculate the breeding times. This is because Moss asserts forcefully that ἐπιστήμη "is infallible, but the philosopher-rulers' cognition of the perceptible realm is subject to error; hence this cognition is not *epistēmē*."<sup>185</sup>

Second, Moss responds to what she calls the 'overlapping reading' – a reading which interrogates the following: if ἐπιστήμη is exclusively of Forms, how can it be necessary for practical expertise in the perceptible world? Moss replies that this concern is much exaggerated. She thinks that "Plato himself evidently thinks it is no problem at all, and indeed offers a near-explicit and quite attractive solution. Broadly, the idea is that theory informs practice: More specifically: *the perceptible world is an image of the Forms, and therefore epistēmē of the Forms guides, although does not strictly apply to, our dealings in the perceptible world.*"<sup>186</sup> Moss thinks that the rationale Socrates gives "is not that *epistēmē* applies directly to the perceptible world, but rather that people with episteme of the Forms can use Forms as models on which to base the city, as an image" (Moss cites *Rep.*, 484c-d as a supporting text).

Moss shows expressively ways in which Plato's epistemology differs significantly from our contemporary epistemological concerns. Moss argues that, first, Plato's "central epistemological categories are very different from ours. His epistemology is centered around the contrast between *a deep grasp of ultimate reality and atheoretical thought that mistakes*

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Arruzza 2018:15, as cited in Moss 2021.

<sup>185</sup> Moss 2021, 123

<sup>186</sup> Ibid. (italics in the original)

*appearances for reality* (italics in the original).<sup>187</sup> Second, Plato's entire approach to epistemology is radically different from the contemporary approach: "His epistemology is objects-based, and hence dependent on metaphysics; ours is focused instead on notions like justification, evidence, rationality...with little or no attention to the question of cognition's objects."<sup>188</sup> The distinction Moss strikes between Platonic and contemporary epistemological focus and methodology is of less concern to us than her claim that Plato's epistemology is objects-based. The objects-based proposal grounds her defence of the TWT. She argues: "Without a Two Worlds metaphysics, Plato would think, we are not entitled to a two-kind epistemology; we are just drawing fine distinctions between fundamentally shoddy cognitive phenomena."<sup>189</sup>

Moss' object-based argument takes off on the note that "Plato's epistemology is not first and foremost driven by purely epistemological concerns, such as cataloguing our truth-aptness, or responding to scepticism, or analysing current epistemological concepts. It is driven instead by ethical concerns. That is, the cognitive kinds and qualities that are salient to Plato are precisely those that feature importantly in the answer to the question of how one should live."<sup>190</sup> Moss is right. It is a Platonic view that to act morally right requires that one grounds one's moral claims on a more genuine and objective "natures" (to borrow Schwab's expression) which are fundamentally the Forms. For instance, the incriminating feature in Euthyphro's first definition of piety (prosecuting a criminal for murder regardless of whether that person is one's father or anyone else at all, *Euthyphr.* 5d8-e2) is his universalisation of an instance of piety.

Euthyphro simply lacked a universal, paradigmatic model to ground his claims of piety. The distinction between *ἐπιστήμη* and *δόξα* relative to Plato's ethical thesis is apt and legitimate.<sup>191</sup> This is consistent with the ethical aspect of our Argument (4). The aim of the potential philosopher-rulers' education is driven by ethical concern, namely, how to cure the morally depraved society, the fevered polis. Again, if the optimal aim of every *τέχνη* is that of producing something good on the basis of a paradigmatic model, it follows that whoever claims to cure the fevered polis indicatively claims to possess such a model. Socrates is certain about this: "And once they've seen the good itself, they must each in turn put the city, its citizens, and themselves in order, using it as their model" (*Rep.*, 540a6-b1). Here, I agree with Moss about

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid. 234.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid. 235.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid. 236.

<sup>191</sup> Cf. Section 1.3.1.

the strong affinity between Plato's epistemology and ethics.<sup>192</sup> I shall return to Moss' argument in the next chapter when I discuss the cognitive competencies of the non-philosophic citizens. In what follows, I reject the position of Moss and Schwab on the TWT and the SCT.

### 3.4.3 Against the Defenders of the TWT

I have proposed that a discussion of the cognitive competencies of the philosopher-rulers must take into account Argument (4). I have shown why the views of Smith and Fine are conceptually inadequate to capture the sense of Argument (4). I have shown that their semantic arguments (veridical and predicative readings of the "is") are insufficient to account for the full essence of metaphysical ἐπιστήμη. To repeat, I argue that for Plato, metaphysical ἐπιστήμη entails the Forms and their concrete manifestations. Therefore, to know, metaphysically speaking, is to possess the totality of being, i.e. the Forms and their instantiations. The philosopher can discriminate between the Form of Justice and its instantiations because he *knows* the nature of the instantiations as only constituents of being and not being itself (see Section 3.5). Nevertheless, Fine and Smith are my allies in rejecting the claim of the TWT and the SCT. On this note, I raise three main objections against Schwab and Moss in order of weak to strong arguments.

(1) It is undeniable that Plato has an intelligible world and a perceptible world.<sup>193</sup> However, I think that defenders of the TWT exaggerate Plato's distinction. For what it is worth, it is the Platonic view, as said earlier, that our ability to make right ethical decisions supervenes upon the quality of our grounding principles – principles genuinely and objectively guaranteed by the Forms. But does Plato think of the 'two-worlds' as *literal*, actual worlds? Eric Perl rightly thinks not. According to Perl, the Forms are 'separated' from things that are their instantiations or reflections. But what could the separation (χωρισμός) mean? Perl's response is very instructive: the 'separation' is a "spatial metaphor".<sup>194</sup> The *Republic's* similes shed light on Perl's position. Plato accounts for his epistemology in the *Republic* with his three similes: the

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<sup>192</sup> Cf. Santas op. cit., 170: "Plato makes his ethics and politics depend on his epistemology and his epistemology on his metaphysics."

<sup>193</sup> For an extensive debate, see Santas op. cit., 167-191.

<sup>194</sup> According to Perl, "Separation...is simply a spatial metaphor for the radical ontological distinction between intelligible identities and the things that have and display, but are not, these identities. Forms are 'separate' or 'transcendent,' not in the sense of being located elsewhere (what could this mean, since forms are not physical or spatial entities at all?) but in that, as intelligible identities, they are distinct from, other than, the instance that they inform, the things whose whatnesses they are. There is no opposition or contradiction between 'transcendence' and 'immanence,' between 'separate from' and 'present in,' once we recognize that all such expressions are spatial metaphors. Where, among all the beautiful things in the world, is beauty? Everywhere and nowhere: everywhere, in that wherever there is a beautiful thing, there is beauty, present in it, by which it is beautiful; nowhere, in that it is not any one of these things or confined to any one of them as opposed to the others" Perl 2014, 30-31.

Sun, Divided-Line (or vertical cognitive continuum), and the Cave Allegory. These similes are thought-experiments and not products of scientific research. As thought-experiments, they guide us to appreciate Plato's division of cognitive levels. If similes are thought-experiments, and not scientific descriptions, then it is wrong to account for the two-worlds as though they are actual states of affairs. It is usual for Plato to appeal to similes and analogies where prose seems inadequate to explain a given concept or idea. Nevertheless, the three similes are his analogical ways of demonstrating differences in states of mind corresponding to differences in cognitive ability to grasp reality. For instance, the divided line, which is a sequel to the sun simile, is intended to illustrate further the relation between two hypothetical worlds—the visible and intelligible, but from the point of view of states of mind that apprehend these. Plato further divides each of the states of mind fixed to the visible realm, and that fixed to the intelligible realm, into two.

The resulting four states of mind or habits of thinking in the Divided Line Simile are characterised as relative powers of intellectual clarity, each corresponding to an object of apprehension appropriate to it. This means that the degrees of clarity are correlated to degrees of truth of reality. So the four states of mind are said to entail both degrees of clarity and truthfulness. Socrates is definite about this: “There are four such conditions in the soul, corresponding to the four subsections of our line: Understanding for the highest, thought for the second, belief for the third, and imaging for the last. Arrange them in a ratio, and consider that each shares in clarity to the degree that the subsection it is set over shares in truth” (*Rep.*, 511d6-e2). Hence, if we are to cling to strict dichotomies of different cognitive worlds, then there are mainly four and not two; the TWT does not properly account for the various worlds.<sup>195</sup> A further suggestion that the two-worlds are about levels of cognitive development and not the actual state of affairs is that the Academy of the potential philosopher-rulers is situated *in* the perceptible world (*Rep.*, 540e5-541a6). Plato's Academy is not like Aristophanes' Socratic Thinkery (suspended entity in the sky).

Second, I offer a logical counterargument. As said before, Schwab argues, and Moss agrees, that the philosophers' metaphysical ἐπιστήμη will “inform” their judgement of perceptible

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<sup>195</sup> Notice that the prisoners in the cave consider their environment as a complete world. Heidegger's description of the prisoners' complete world and condition is instructive: “The prisoners do indeed *see* the shadows *as* shadows of something. When we say that, to them, the shadows are the un-hidden, this is ambiguous and already says *too much*. It is only we, privy to the whole situation, who call what the prisoners face ‘shadows.’ Why wouldn't they say this themselves? Because they do not know anything about a fire which gives off a glow, and in whose luminosity something like shadows can first of all be cast. Thus, when... we said it could be asked ‘*what that is*’ which is unhidden there, this is not a question the prisoners themselves could raise. For the essence of their being is such that, to them, precisely *this* unhidden before them *suffices* –so much so indeed that they also do not know *that* it suffices. They are entirely given over to what they *immediately* encounter” (trans. Sadler 2012, 20).

matters.<sup>196</sup> This is because ἐπιστήμη of perceptible is impossible. Let us call this the “informative thesis.” There is a sense in which this thesis can be sustained. However, I think Socrates would have failed miserably if, despite the elaborate nature of the philosopher-rulers’ education, all that they can do in ruling is to share an opinion in any sense. To be sure, I am not claiming in any way that there is nothing like an “expert opinion”. Rather, I contend that the cognitive competencies of the philosopher-rulers are irreducible to anything related to opinion, relative to determining perceptible matters. Unlike Fine and Smith, Schwab’s expert opinion thesis relies not on his reading of the “is” in the various “set-overs”, but on a supposed relation he thinks exists between δόξα and γῶσις. Schwab observes, and he is right, that “Socrates certainly thinks that all *epistēmē* counts as *gnōsis*.”<sup>197</sup> And Socrates also thinks that δίανοια counts as γῶσις; logically, Socrates identifies δίανοια as ἐπιστήμη. Schwab observes, however, that Socrates also distinguishes δίανοια from ἐπιστήμη when he maintains that so long as mathematicians leave their principles undisturbed, no mechanism could turn their cognition of mathematics into ἐπιστήμη (*Rep.*, 511c2-d5). Hence, Socrates, according to Schwab, conceives of δίανοια and ἐπιστήμη as two distinct kinds of cognition, each of which he is willing to call γῶσις.

Schwab relies on this conclusion to gloss passage *Rep.*, 477a2-4, where Socrates maintains that “what is completely is completely knowable (γῶστόν), and what is in no way is in every way unknowable (ἄγῶστόν).” Schwab then proposes that the contrast between completely γῶστόν and completely ἄγῶστόν strongly suggests a third possibility, a *tertium quid*, namely, ‘in some way γῶστόν and in some way ἄγῶστόν’. This *tertium quid* creates a conceptual space for opinion. Given this possibility, Schwab argues that “Perceptibles could plausibly be thought of as *agnōston* in so far as they cannot be cognized in the way necessary for *epistēmē* but *gnōston* in so far as the opinions that someone with *epistēmē* forms about them have a special status.”<sup>198</sup> That is, whether cognition of perceptibles can count as γῶστόν or ἄγῶστόν becomes a matter of perspective. From the viewpoint of lovers of sights and sounds, perceptibles are ἄγῶστόν, whereas the philosophers’ opinion concerning concrete perceptibles can be identified as γῶσις because, Schwab claims, it is informed by ἐπιστήμη of intelligibles and has that special status.

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<sup>196</sup> Moss agrees with Schwab’s expert ‘opinion thesis’ (Moss 2021:129).

<sup>197</sup> Schwab 2016, 80.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

My worry here, however, is that (a<sub>1</sub>) the fact that Socrates speaks about the three cognitive states or levels (ignorance, opinion, and knowledge) does not mean that these three states exhaust all other possible cognitive states and levels within the range of completely γνωστόν and completely ἄγνωστόν, if, as mentioned in Section 3.4.1, we understand such a range to be a vertical cognitive continuum (the Divided Line). That is, the expression “in some way” is a degree modifier. And between completely γνωστόν and completely ἄγνωστόν, there are several other degree modifiers, including “nearly γνωστόν”, “almost ἄγνωστόν”, “somehow somehow γνωστόν”, and many others. If this holds, then it is questionable why we must accept that the philosophers’ judgements and determinations of/about concrete perceptible matters constitute opinion and not that which is, for instance, “nearly γνωστόν”. How are we to call judgements about mathematical matters, which also fall short of metaphysical knowledge but are also not opinion?<sup>199</sup> Moreover, (a<sub>2</sub>) Schwab claims that the so-called gnostic opinions of the philosophers enjoy the privileges of ἐπιστήμη, including the claim that “they are reliable, justified, and well-formed”.<sup>200</sup> But if ἐπιστήμη and δόξα are not themselves mental states but different cognitive faculties or powers which produce different mental states, why must the products of the philosopher’s epistemic cognitive power, like propositions about perceptible things, enjoy the privileges of ἐπιστήμη, including non-spatiotemporality, but still count as opinion in any sense? In a paper they co-authored, Moss and Schwab assert that “Those with *doxa* about something lack knowledge of it; to gain knowledge is to leave *doxa* behind.”<sup>201</sup> If so, what does the philosopher have to do with opinion after gaining knowledge? I now turn to my third and strong objection.

(3) Moss’s and Schwab’s exposition on perceptibles seems far too simple. It is as though they take all concrete perceptibles to be only *tangible* entities. For instance, the force of Schwab’s thesis relies on a passage in Book VII (he calls a “star passage”) in which Socrates says that “If anyone attempts to learn something about sensible things, whether by gaping upward or squinting downward, I’d claim—since there’s no knowledge in such things—that he never learns anything...” (*Rep.*, 529a9-c2). Actually, this passage is about astronomy. And the significant question is whether Socrates is here talking about the unreliability of the popular mode of apprehending astronomy (sense perception) or that astronomical embroideries

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<sup>199</sup> Socrates says that the crucial difference between metaphysical ἐπιστήμη and mathematical, scientific knowledge is that the latter is called thought and the former understanding; thought is “clearer than opinion, darker than knowledge” (*Rep.*, 533d3-e4)

<sup>200</sup> Schwab 2016, 81.

<sup>201</sup> Schwab and Moss 2019, 5

themselves do not constitute ἐπιστήμη. The answer can be both.<sup>202</sup> However, while Socrates looks askance at sense perception as a mode of cognition, he does not shrug off the value of astronomic embroidery; it is mereologically part of the constitutive elements of astronomy. In fact, Socrates says that “we should use the embroideries in the sky as a model in the study of these other things, i.e. the true motions of astronomy,<sup>203</sup> which are graspable by reason and thought, and not by sight (*Rep.*, 529d4-5). Socrates proposes that we can make the intelligent part of the soul useful instead of useless if we study astronomy by means of problems, as we do geometry, and leave the things in the sky alone (*Rep.*, 530a). But leaving the things in the sky alone does not mean that astronomic embroidery is useless; they are a constitutive component of astronomy.

Similarly, some perceptibles, such as instances of the Form Justice, are not readily given to the senses; hence, they cannot be ‘literally’ seen in the same way as astronomic embroidery. Such concealed and intangible perceptibles can also be ‘seen’ or grasped not by sight but by reason and thought. Thus, besides the ‘literal’ seeing of some perceptibles, Socrates’ ocular language at *Rep.*, 520c1-6 (and in many places in the dialogue) can be labelled as “metaphysical seeing”: “And because you’ve seen (ἐωρακέναι) the truth about fine, just and good things, you’ll know (γνώσεσθε) each image for what it is and also that of which it is the image.”<sup>204</sup> This confirms my claim that some perceptibles (like the participants of Forms) are not readily given to the senses as perceptibles and, therefore, determining their nature would involve studying sometimes complex situations or cases to know what they actually are and the Forms which are their various manifestations or, in the words of Perl, “what display the identities” (i.e. instantiations).<sup>205</sup> Each of the manifestations appears as a sortal kind of the Form, but none can constitute the whole of which it is a part (*Rep.*, 476a4-7).<sup>206</sup> In essence, what Schwab and

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202 On this see White 1992.

203 See *Rep.*, 529c7-d8.

204 Moss observes that rejecters of the TWT put forth this passage as decisive evidence that Plato recognises *epistēmē* of perceptibles. Moss acknowledges that Plato similarly uses *epistēmē* interchangeably with *gignoskein*. But she argues that the verb *gignoskein* “can also mean to recognize or discriminate, however, and in context that is all that it need mean.” Moss 2021, 125. We shall soon meet another instance where Plato uses ἐπιστήμη in the perceptible world and how Moss’ analysis will not be applicable. Cf. Fine finds comment: ‘Plato’s claim is that the philosophers will “know each image, what they are and of what”’; *gnōsesthe*, plus the *hatta* clause, suggests he means ‘know’ and not merely ‘recognise’.’ Fine 1978, 121

205. Perl 2014, 22, 30.

206 The following view by Ackah about Plato’s ontological separation in the *Euthyphro* is worth considering. Socrates tells Euthyphro that he wants to know the *form itself* by which all pious actions are pious (*Euthyphr.* 6d9-e1). Ackah explains Socrates’ epistemic demand as follows: “if ‘ $F(x)$ ’ is read as ‘ $x$  is  $F$ ’, where ‘ $x$ ’ stands for a subject term and  $F$  is an appropriate predicate term, then  $F(x)$ ,  $F(y)$ , and  $F(z)$  equals  $F(x, y, z)$ . In other words,  $x$ ,  $y$  and  $z$  may be different in every respect except in virtue of each being  $F$ , which appears to be what bonds them together.  $F$ , then, must denote some property common to or shared by  $x$ ,  $y$  and  $z$ . Hence neither  $x$  nor  $y$  nor  $z$  is the same as  $F$ , though each is in some way related to  $F$ . to the extent that  $x$  or  $y$  or  $z$  is not  $F$ , Socrates can talk of  $F$  ‘itself by itself, that is  $F$  as distinguished from  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$ ; to the extent that  $x$  or  $y$  or  $z$  is  $F$ ,  $F$  would be that by



Moss, together with scholars who think like them, fail to realise is that some perceptibles are *objects of study* in the perceptible world. The sense in which perceptibles are objects of study will become clear soon. (To explore this further, I now introduce the other kinds of epistemic competencies the philosopher-rulers must possess, including practical knowledge and experience, see also Section 3.6)

Interestingly, and relative to ruling, metaphysically seeing the manifestations of the Forms will require cognitive competence that is “experiential”. To illustrate with Socrates’ own example, let us return to the role of the philosopher-rulers as judges in Kallipolis. This role requires that they determine and judge concrete cases about what is just and unjust. Socrates says that their sole aim in delivering judgement will be that no citizen should have what belongs to another or be deprived of what is his own (*Rep.*, 433e9-11). Hence, the test of their epistemic competencies involves their good judgement and determination of concrete perceptible matters, including complex and nuanced cases. We can take it for granted that practical wisdom is evinced in the deliberation to judge the cases, answering the question, “what is to be done” or “what is the best course of action” in a given situation. For the philosopher-rulers to succeed at judging, Socrates tells us that “a good judge must not be a young person but an old one, who has learned late in life what injustice is like and who has become aware of it not as something at home in his own soul, but as something alien and present in others, someone, who, after a long time, has recognised that injustice is bad by nature, not from his own experience of it, but through knowledge (ἐπιστήμη)” (*Rep.*, 409b4-9, the full context from 408c3).<sup>207</sup> The sense of ἐπιστήμη in this context should not present any quandary: it is knowledge gained by experience (knowledge by acquaintance).

That is, a good judge gains experience about injustice through consistent observation of it in others. Therefore, the science of human and social psychology is crucial in the philosopher-rulers’ education. Passages like *Rep.*, 409b4-9 make us understand Socrates’ belief that the philosopher-rulers are going to be “those who have the best understanding (φρονιμώτατοι) of what matters for good government and who have honours than political ones, and a better life as well...” (*Rep.*, 520b6-10). Here, I suppose that Schwab’s informative thesis cannot do all the magic. That is, if metaphysical ἐπιστήμη is the only knowledge the philosopher-rulers are

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which—causally speaking— $x$ ,  $y$  and  $z$  are commonly known and called. Thus, though  $F$  is instantiated by  $x$ ,  $y$  and  $z$ , nevertheless  $F$  is logically and realistically distinct from any of its instantiations. All this implies that  $F$  is a causal universal of a cognitive kind that imparts strictly formal identity to its disparate instantiations” Ackah 2006:20-21

<sup>207</sup> Also in Book IX, Socrates says that the philosopher “alone has gained his experience in the company of practical wisdom” (καὶ μὴν γε φρονήσεως μόνος ἔμπειρος γεγονὼς ἔσται) (*Rep.*, 582d3).

to acquire, what sense does Socrates want to make here by claiming that the rulers have the best understanding, by which he means practical wisdom?<sup>208</sup> Defenders of the TWT and the SCT will find it very difficult to answer this question. On this note, let us conclude that since defenders of the TWT also defend the SCT because they fail to realise that some sense perceptible objects, like the polis itself, are objects of study and therefore requires complex modes of apprehending their true nature. In the next chapter, I shall show in greater detail how metaphysical ἐπιστήμη naturally coincides with other thought processes, including experience and practical reasoning in fashioning the just polis.

### 3.5 Plato's Epistemic Absolutism

So far, I have argued that the dominant literature on the philosopher-rulers' epistemic competencies, relative to metaphysical ἐπιστήμη, is inadequate. I have also demonstrated with example in the dialogue to show how the philosopher-rulers will need more than metaphysical ἐπιστήμη to succeed at ruling. Henceforth, I shall make references to the philosopher-rulers' *other kinds* of epistemic competencies; I shall discuss their nature in the next chapter. Here, I seek to offer a relatively comprehensive account of metaphysical ἐπιστήμη: the claim that to know is to possess a cognitive grasp of the totality of being, which includes the Form and its various manifestations.

This claim, I believe, collapses the TWT because (1) it acknowledges that perceptibles cannot themselves constitute knowledge, such that one must not rely on them (*contra* the sightlover or the hypothetical epistemic claimant) to claim complete epistemic competence; nevertheless, (2) perceptibles, as we saw in the case of the judge, manifest the evidence of metaphysical ἐπιστήμη. The Forms, as mentioned earlier, are realities apprehended through understanding and thought rather than sense perception.<sup>209</sup> The Forms “are thus separate in that they are not additional members of the world of sensible things, but are known by a different mode of awareness.”<sup>210</sup> But, as Perl tells us, “this does not mean that they are ‘located elsewhere,’ or that they are not, as Plato says, the very intelligible contents, the truth and reality *of* sensible things.”<sup>211</sup> For instance, Perl wonders: “Where among all the beautiful things in the world, is beauty? Everywhere and nowhere: everywhere, in that wherever there is a beautiful thing, there is beauty, present in it, by which it is beautiful; and nowhere, in that it is not any

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<sup>208</sup> It is noteworthy that the use of φρονιμώτατοι is non-accidental here. At *Rep.*, 530b5-6, Socrates refers to the philosophic part as τὸ φύσει φρόνιμον (the naturally intelligent). In Book IX, he repeatedly refers to the person with knowledge as τὸ φρόνιμος (*Rep.*, 567b10-11; 583a3-4; 583b3-4).

<sup>209</sup> Perl op. cit., 28

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

one of the things or confined to any one of them as opposed to the others.”<sup>212</sup> I share the view of Perl that the sense of ‘separation’ between the ontologically superior Form and the ontologically inferior perceptible is ‘a spatial metaphor.’ What does this mean for us? The perceptible is inferior because it is not knowledge; an instance of justice is not justice itself; it is only its manifestation.

To explore the above more, let us return to our previous question: what does it mean when Plato says his philosopher-rulers *know*? To explore this question, I am guided by Socrates’ justification by a comparative method to re-examine metaphysical ἐπιστήμη. I seek to ascertain the cognitive superiority of the philosopher-rulers in the light of the value question. I have already shown the sense in which metaphysical ἐπιστήμη naturally coincides with different modes of knowing, including experience and practical knowledge. As promised, I shall explore more about experience and practical knowledge in the next chapter. In what follows, I concentrate on metaphysical ἐπιστήμη. I have shown the problem with Fine’s veridical and propositional suggestion, grounded in her non-controversiality thesis. I have suggested that crucial attention needs to be paid to Plato’s notion of substantive truth (*Rep.*, 475e) if we are to understand the cognitive superiority of the philosopher-rulers over the sightlovers and crank philosophers. It is this claim I turn to advance here in the hope of offering a relatively comprehensive account of metaphysical ἐπιστήμη.

In his attempt to convince the sightlover to accept his intellectual inferiority, Socrates advances an epistemological thesis based on the following basic argument (*Rep.*, 476e):

- (A) The person who knows does know something, say *X*.
  - (B) It is impossible for something that is not to be known.
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- (C) One can only know something that is.

This basic argument grounds Socrates’ entire defence of metaphysical ἐπιστήμη. To know *X* is to know that *X* exists and *X* is something. The corollary is that if one knows that *X* is, then one can intelligibly predicate something as signifying *X*, for instance, “*X* is *f*”. And if *X* is *f*, then to assert that *X* is *f* and not *q* is to specify, in an instance, the truth value of the proposition ‘*X* is *f*’ that it is true. As I have already mentioned, Socrates’ exposition trades on an ambiguous reading of “εἶναι”: existential, predicative, and veridical readings, and all of these readings seem to be possible candidates for understanding his basic argument. However, in the absence

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid. 31.

of Socrates' initial premise at *Rep.*, 475e2-4, which assumes the theory of Forms, his subsequent argument formalised here as “to know *X* is to know that *X* exists and *X* is something” will warrant semantic analysis, as Fine's non-controversiality thesis seeks to do. But I have said that the semantic approach does less to account for the philosopher-rulers' metaphysical cognitive superiority.

Recall that Socrates uses the disposition to genuinely love non-semantic truth not only to distinguish his true philosophers from the sightlovers but also from the crank and vicious philosophers. How can asserting semantic truth be a major reason why the true philosophers are special in comparison with the vicious and crank ones? As an alternative to the other *is*-readings, I defend an *is*-absolute reading as what significantly decides the distinction between Socrates' true philosophers and the lovers of sights and sounds as well as the crank and vicious philosophers. To do this, I return to the passage in which Socrates engages his hypothetical claimant of knowledge. Socrates follows up the conclusion (C) in his basic argument with the following claim:

**T11:** No matter how many ways we examine it, what is completely (παντελῶς ὄν) is completely knowable (παντελῶς γνωστόν) and what is in no way (μὴ ὄν δὲ μηδαμῆ) is in every way unknowable (παντελῶς ἄγνωστόν) (*Rep.*, 477a2-4)

Two points deserve attention in this passage. First, if *X* is completely, I suggest that the “is” establishes, ontologically, the absoluteness or completeness of *X*. Let us call this the *is*-absolutist reading. The *is*-absolutist reading portends that *X* is complete in and of itself such that its completeness is independent of our cognition of/about it. That is, if *X*, e.g. Justice itself, is complete in itself, then it follows that our cognition of/about it does nothing to confer any value on it. For instance, if the gods are ontologically complete in and of themselves, it is questionable to claim that offering sacrifices to them is an act of piety; the sacrifice surely adds nothing to their completeness (*contra* Euthyphro's claim). Given this possible *is*-reading, we may be curious to find out why Socrates describes “what is” with the modifier “completely”. Taking “what is” to signify any Form,<sup>213</sup> there are Forms, such as justice and beauty, which “manifest (φανταζόμενα) themselves everywhere in association with actions, bodies, and one another, each of them appears to be many” (*Rep.*, 475e9-476a8). Hence, I suggest that the “completely”, which describes the ontological sufficiency of any Form, say, Justice, is a distinctive marker to distinguish it from all its manifestations. Socrates needs to point this out

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<sup>213</sup> *Contra* Fine's noncontroversiality premise thesis.

because one can have cognitive access to the instantiations of the Forms and think that they are their complete beings, as the lovers of sights and sounds claim. Second, Socrates is saying that “what is completely” is an object of knowledge and (we can add, study) such that it can be fully studied and known (*Rep.*, 508d9-e1). Hence, if one knows that *X* is, then one knows that *X* is completely, precisely because *X* can be studied to be known completely. The “completely” in this context, I suggest, is a degree modifier signifying the highest cognitive level that distinguishes the philosophers from the sightlovers (whose cognitive level guarantees only true beliefs about “what is”).

In general, the crux of Socrates’ argument (anticipating the three similes) is that where an idea, such as justice, involves cognition, there is an implication of degrees of cognition and their relatedness to truth and understanding. That is, ideas such as beauty, justice, piety, and temperance are cognitive in kind such that human cognition about them can be developed to optimal levels. If so, what does Socrates mean when he says that his philosophers *know*? Consistently with the absolutist reading of εἶναι, I suggest that to *know*, metaphysically speaking, is to have a complete conceptual grasp of that which does not admit degree, i.e. what is completely in and of itself, i.e. the Forms. This is what I want to call epistemic absolutism.<sup>214</sup> The idea is that to know *X* is to have a complete conceptual grasp of the Form *X*. And to have complete epistemic grasp of reality is not only to grasp *X* itself, but also the manifestations of *X*, including its instantiations. Recall that Socrates says that the philosopher does not only love beautiful things but beauty itself. Hence, the beauty itself and its instantiated beautiful things constitute the Form Beauty, the totality of being.

In my opinion, the *locus classicus* to understand Plato’s epistemic absolutism is Heidegger’s exegesis of the cave allegory.<sup>215</sup> Heidegger imputes the following essentialist conception of truth to Socrates: truth (ἀλήθεια) is *unhiddenness* of being as it reveals itself to an apprehending consciousness: something true is unhidden.<sup>216</sup> Heidegger strikes a distinction between the essence of metaphysical truth as unhiddenness of being and the correspondence theory of truth (which has *self-evidence* as its essence) as the correctness of propositions.<sup>217</sup> In this light, the sightlovers are correspondent-truth-holders because truth is to them what is self-evident, evinced in propositional locutions such as ‘This is a beautiful girl’. In essence, the

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214 For a semantic, propositional notion of epistemic absolutism, see Lai 2020.

215 It is, however, surprising that this important work of Heidegger on the cave allegory has been neglected. Heidegger has his reservations about Plato’s epistemology and metaphysics. I am not interesting in discussion his reservations here.

216 Heidegger 2002, 9

217 Sadler 2001.

correspondence theory of truth is simply the observed facts in the everyday world, what is readily given to us in the perceptible world. However, beyond what is self-evident, argues Heidegger, most realities largely remain deeply hidden from sense perception. Therefore, the whole process of the intellectual journey from the cave is an exodus from the world of self-evidence, in which exist only shadows and images, to finding out the deepest but hidden truths. Accordingly, when Socrates says that his true philosophers are those who love the sight of truth, he is precisely referring to the philosopher's epistemic journey to unveil the hidden. If we are to accept Heidegger's essentialist notion of truth—and I think we should—to know, then, is to become fully aware of 'the totality of being' as it becomes completely unhidden to an apprehending consciousness. I have argued above that totality here means the reality itself and its various manifestations.

What is the value of possessing knowledge and substantive truth, as construed? I agree with Schwab that the ultimate cognitive success of the metaphysical, epistemic journey is 'understanding' (νοῦς), even though I do not share the details by which he arrives at this conclusion. To grasp this, let us consider the distinction Socrates draws between his true philosophers and the crank and vicious philosophers. Against the crank philosophers, Socrates says that the true philosopher is to

**T12:** be guided by truth and always pursue it in every way, or else he'd really be a boaster, with no share at all in true philosophy. [For] it is the nature of the real lover of learning to struggle toward what is, not to remain with any of the many things that are believed to be, that is, as he moves on, he neither loses nor lessens his erotic love until he grasps the being of each nature itself with the part of his soul that is fitted to grasp it, because of its kinship with it, and that, once getting near what really is and having intercourse with it and having begotten understanding and truth (γεννήσας νοῦν καὶ ἀλήθειαν), he knows, truly lives, is nourished, and—at the point, but not before, is relieved from the pains of giving birth... (*Rep.*, 490a1-b7; 508d4-6; cf. 506c6-10).

Metaphysical ἐπιστήμη is the highest cognitive achievement in grasping reality on the vertical cognitive continuum. If attaining this highest cognition begets understanding and truth, it presupposes that metaphysical ἐπιστήμη is a precondition for genuine understanding of metaphysical reality that is not directly given to sense perception. Truth as the unhiddenness of being is best captured in passage T12. If this holds, then I propose that 'understanding' and 'truth' are the crowning cognitive achievements, the final epistemic values, of grasping the

Good.<sup>218</sup> I have said that if one holds substantive truth about say, Justice, one possesses a full grasp of the Justice: its totality. To say that one holds substantive truth is to assert that the deeply hidden has become unhidden to the alethic inquirer. The philosopher knows Justice and other Forms because he has gained full cognitive access to its very nature in the intelligible realm. Therefore, to say that the philosopher possesses truth about the nature of metaphysical intelligibles is to say, albeit redundantly, that the philosopher possesses complete access to these entities. Also, what does it mean to *understand*? To my mind, ‘understanding’ is a cognitive state wherein the potential philosopher-rulers acquire “authoritative certainty” about reality and an efficient executive skill to carry out cognitive activities associated with such cognitive certainty. Elsewhere, Socrates says that “one can feel both secure and confident when one knows the truth about the dearest and most important things and speak about them among those who are themselves wise and dear friends” (*Rep.*, 450d6-e1). It is this authoritative certainty, superior executive skills, and confidence that the sightlovers and vicious philosophers claim, even though they are less committed to grasping being in its totality.<sup>219</sup> Socrates mentions that the knower will have the ability to know (semantically), truly live, and become intellectually nourished. These are all cognitive benefits that are generated from understanding. Therefore, when Fine says that the philosopher-rulers can assert true propositions, she is only talking about one of the many cognitive benefits of grasping metaphysical ἐπιστήμη.

I conclude this section with the following reflections. Broadie states the aim of theoretical intellectual activity, for Aristotle, is ἐπιστήμη, scientific knowledge, which involves grasping things on the basis of their causes and principles; that we have ἐπιστήμη in relation to *p* only if we understand why *p* is the case, i.e. only if we see it as grounded on something more fundamental: its cause and principle.<sup>220</sup> Schwab has shown that this view is prior to Aristotle’s

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218 Some confirmation of this claim is provided by this text in which Socrates concludes the divided line simile with the following claim: “there are four conditions in the soul, corresponding to the four subsections of our line: understanding for the highest, thought for the second, belief for the third, and imaging for the last. Arrange them in a ratiō, and consider that each shares in clarity to the degree that the subsection it is set over shares in truth” (*Rep.*, 511d6-e2).

219 Recall that Socrates says the sightlovers are unable or unwilling to follow anyone who could lead them to know (*Rep.*, 476c2-4). Nevertheless, they claim to know and begrudge anyone who argues otherwise (*Rep.*, 476e4-8), just like Euthyphro, who boastfully claims that “I should be of no use, Socrates, and Euthyphro would not be superior to the majority of men, if I did not have accurate knowledge of all such things” (*Euthyphr.*, 4e8-5a2). The danger seems to be that they are likely to deploy insufficient or deficient principles in decision making. Their principles are close to what Green calls “unfounded claims of authoritative certainty” that typically divide and separate people into antagonistic camps, causing animosity and hostilities to flare up, rather than bringing them together in a shared understanding, as presumably, any ‘true wisdom’ might (I took Michael Green’s statement from a philosophical group discussion).

220 Broadie 2020, 253.

thought. But our account has also shown that Schwab’s view is just one of the many cognitive benefits that the philosophers derive from understanding and truth. Schwab’s account of ἐπιστήμη is too idiosyncratic: the philosophers can grasp chains of facts linked by their grounding relation. In this sense, they can only be better than Euthyphro to answer Socrates’ ‘What is X’ question more accurately.<sup>221</sup>

What is crucially missing in Schwab’s account is the following. Broadie adds that ‘*epistēmē* in a field is a disposition for understanding and explaining things in that field. *A*, who has discovered that *p* is grounded in *q*, can teach this to *B*, i.e. bring *B* to see *p* as grounded in the more fundamental *q*, and hence to understand *p*... Thus, the ultimate objective of theoretical inquiry and teaching is the act of understanding.’<sup>222</sup> In connection with this, I strongly believe that metaphysical ἐπιστήμη guarantees the philosopher-rulers the ability to objectively ground their judgement and determinations about perceptible matters. They have this ability because they *know* the nature of perceptibles and can discriminate it from the Forms themselves. Moreover, metaphysical ἐπιστήμη also grants them the authoritative certainty to teach others, i.e. the future generation of philosopher-rulers. Socrates says that the philosopher-ruler will depart for the Isles of the Blessed “having educated others like himself to take his place as guardians of the city” (*Rep.*, 540b4-6). But it deserves emphasis that if the matured philosopher-ruler can teach others like himself, it is precisely because he possesses not only metaphysical ἐπιστήμη but also superior understanding of practical matters in the perceptible world.

### 3.6 The Philosopher-Rulers as Painters of the Polis

In Section 3.4.3, we saw how metaphysical ἐπιστήμη naturally coincides with knowledge by acquaintance (experience) and practical wisdom to determine the justness of a theft case at the law court. I prove this coincidence on the assumption that some perceptible matters are objects of study, such that determining their nature requires significant intellectual effort. The same thing applies to moulding the just polis. Socrates says that his best rulers are craftsmen of the polis’ freedom. Their ability to function optimally in governance is precisely because they possess the best practical understanding (φρονιμώτατοι), noetic understanding (νοῦς), and superior experience with what matters for good governance. I now show how these modes of cognition coincide in moulding the just polis. To do this, I return to the distinction he draws between his true philosophers and the intellectually blind. Relative to these individuals,

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221 Moss 2021:116.

222 Broadie 2020, 253



Socrates claims that his true philosophers have a clear pattern in their souls (ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἔχοντες παράδειγμα) to mould the polis into perfection after the ideal because of their acquaintance with that which is always the same. Therefore, they can—in the manner of painters—look at (ἀποβλέποντες) what is most true, make constant reference to it, and study it as exactly as possible. Thus, the rulers are the best painters of the city’s beauty. From Section 3.2, we know that the philosopher-rulers possess the requisite τέχνη.

Accordingly, the philosopher-rulers can establish here on earth conventions about what is fine or just or good, when they need to be established, or guard or preserve them once they have been established (*Rep.*, 484c6-d3). In this way, I suggest that Socrates presents knowledge of the Good as relevant for politics in the sense of providing a normative guide.<sup>223</sup> In Book VII, we are told that the Good is the cause of whatever is right and valuable in anything and, as we saw above, it is also the source of truth and understanding such that anyone who is going to act rationally either in public or private must have a sight of it (*Rep.*, 517b8-c4). Hence, a person will not be a useful guardian of what is right and valuable if he does not know what constitutes their goodness. Socrates, again, compares the guardians to painters to emphasise their deliberative capacity:

**T13:** ...No city will ever find happiness until its outline is sketched by painters who use the divine model . . . [after they wiped clean the city and the characters of men] they would sketch the outline of the constitution . . . And I suppose that, as they work, they would look often in each direction, towards the natures of justice, the fine, moderation, and the like, on the one hand, and towards those they are trying to put into human beings, on the other. And in this way, they would mix and blend the various ways of life in the city until they produced a human image based on what Homer too called ‘the divine form and image’ . . . . And they would erase one thing, I suppose, and draw in another until they had made characters for human beings that the gods would love as much as possible (*Rep.*, 500b-501c3).<sup>224</sup>

Clearly, notions of the philosopher-rulers ‘trying’, ‘sketching’, and ‘erasing’ suggest trial and error in their practical deliberation of the moulding of a happy polis. It involves the question ‘what is the best course of action’ in a particular moment, wherein practical knowledge and experience become crucial. It is for this reason I take issue with Fine’s conclusion that the philosopher-rulers will assert *only* true propositions. The expression ‘to sketch and erase’

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<sup>223</sup> The normative guidance role seems close to Schwab’s informative thesis. The difference is that other kinds of that the Good and the Forms guide the search for knowledge about concrete perceptible matters.

<sup>224</sup> I thank Frisbee Sheffield for pointing out this passage to me.

implies the detection of errors in one's prior thought. This means that the rulers can make mistakes in their deliberations (in asserting propositions about a given concrete perceptible matter), despite their possession of the highest cognitive competencies in the three modes of cognition.

Nevertheless, the following passage poses a threat to my exegesis of **T13**. Socrates says that the philosophical part of the soul, “[h]aving grasped [the unhypothetical] principle, it reverses itself and, keeping hold of what follows from it, comes down to a conclusion without making use of anything visible at all, but only of forms themselves, moving on from forms to forms, and ending in forms” (*Rep.*, 511b7-c1). This suggests that the philosopher-rulers, having grasped the Good, will never make use for sense perceptible objects or scientific hypotheses. But **T13** mitigates this view; the rulers would have to “mix and blend the various ways of life in the city until they produced a human image.” Each of these lives requires its own study. That is, some perceptibles require study to determine their nature. I see the use of thought and sense perception to arrive at something ideal. A passage in the *Theaetetus* confirms the relevance of thought in this regard. Socrates and *Theaetetus* agree to the following:

**T14**: The soul when it thinks [*dianooumenē*] is doing nothing other than dialoguing, asking itself questions and answering them, and affirming and denying. And whenever it has determined something, either gradually or by leaping quickly, and affirms the same thing and does not disagree, we put that down as *doxa*. So I call forming *doxa* a saying [*to doxazein legein*], and call *doxa* a logos spoken not to another nor with voice, but silently to oneself” (*Theaetetus* 189e-190a, translated by Moss).

I see no significant difference between what the soul is doing in the **T13** and the **T14**. That is, the philosopher-rulers, in moulding a perfect polis, engage in thought processes (including using sense perceptibles) to attain the just polis; metaphysical ἐπιστήμη provides conceptual and normative guidance in this exercise.

In glossing **T14**, Moss concedes that “What we have here in the *Theaetetus* looks like a description not of cognitively deficient dreaming [as in the case of the sightlovers in the *Republic*], but instead of generic belief-formation. The description is broad and neutral: it seems to apply not only to appearance-based beliefs like the dreamings in the *Republic*...but also to the most reflective, precise beliefs about hidden underlying truths: *epistēmē*.”<sup>225</sup> Despite the prominent role Socrates gives to *doxa* in a way that significantly crashes the TWT, Moss

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<sup>225</sup> Moss op. cit., 228

contumaciously insists that “Plato’s use of ‘*doxa*’ at this point [T14] simply becomes ambiguous.”<sup>226</sup> However, I think that the ambiguity exits when we insist on imposing our interpretation—as Moss does—on the various instances of the epistemic terminologies, e.g. when we insist that Plato restrict δόξα *only* the world of becoming, therefore, δόξα is characterised as inferior, unclear, unstable. I want to insist that the variations in Plato’s characterisation of ἐπιστήμη and δόξα across the dialogues indicates that Plato neither imposes strict dichotomies between the various cognitive states, nor does he insists on an incongruous relationship between metaphysical ἐπιστήμη and the various kinds of ἐπιστήμαι. What Plato insists actually is that, unlike the sightlovers, one must not rely on sense perception and perceptibles matters as medium and objects of attaining the highest epistemic competence: ἐπιστήμη. He never says that one cannot have knowledge about perceptibles, especially in the determination of their natures. The philosopher-rulers will rule Kallipolis because they can function optimally in governance, given their epistemic competencies, which encompasses metaphysical ἐπιστήμη, practical wisdom, and experience. I will say a bit more about practical wisdom and experience in the next chapter.

### 3.7 Summary and Reflections

Plato excludes the non-philosophic citizens from politics. I have argued that he does so because he thinks that governance is a profession with its own standards of achievements that can be assessed. Accordingly, his best rulers, the philosopher-kings, are those who have metaphysical ἐπιστήμη and superior experience in what matters for good governance. I have demonstrated how these kinds of cognitive competencies coalesce in their judgement of perceptible matters. I situated the discussion within the prevailing controversy about the philosopher-rulers’ epistemic competencies. On the one other, some scholars have argued that the philosophers will need more than metaphysical ἐπιστήμη to rule efficiently (the NCT). On the other hand, others have tried to argue that metaphysical ἐπιστήμη is sufficient knowledge to rule (the SCT). While the defenders of the NCT are apt in their thought about the philosopher-rulers’ cognitive competencies, I believe that more needs to be said about this important subject. My ally scholars only give passing comments about the philosopher-rulers’ other cognitive competencies. Their respective accounts fall short of Argument (4). More importantly, they fail to widen the scope of Plato’s account of ἐπιστήμη to involve the cognitive competencies of the non-philosophic citizens. The consideration of the philosopher-rulers’ other epistemic

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

competencies has opened a conceptual space for us to account for the cognitive competencies of the non-philosophic craftsmen. I consider this in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Cognitive Competence of the Non-Philosophic Craftsmen

#### 4.1 Introduction

In Section 3.2, we came to a conclusion that in order to produce good health or justice, the physician and judge must need to know at least in some way what the forms of health and justice are. That if we claim that the craftsmen are epistemically competent, given their crafts and the knowledge required of them, they must possess some knowledge of Forms. I promised to explore this issue in this chapter. This chapter has a very ambitious aim: to prove that the non-philosophic craftsmen<sup>227</sup> are epistemically competent. I seek to defend my main thesis (4), that the realisability of Kallipolis supervenes upon the cooperative interactions between the philosophic and non-philosophic citizens. I argue that the cognitive competencies of the craftsmen with some τέχνη can plausibly fall under the rubric of scientific knowledge – a sort of knowledge which shares the domain of the intelligible world with knowledge of the Good and the Forms.

What I shall call scientific knowledge is described by Socrates as follows. The intelligible world is made up of the scientific, mathematical world (astronomy, geometry) and the metaphysical world (Forms and the Good itself); the former is a necessary prelude to study the latter. The crucial difference between metaphysical ἐπιστήμη and scientific kinds of knowledge (ἐπιστήμαι) is that the latter is called thought (διάνοιαν) and the former understanding (νοῦς); thought is “clearer than opinion, darker than knowledge” (*Rep.*, 533d3-e4; 511d). Another significant difference is that thought uses perceptibles as its premises to arrive at conclusions (*Rep.*, 511a) while metaphysical ἐπιστήμη is what reason itself grasp by the power of dialectic by using conclusions from the sciences reached through thought as hypotheses, *qua* hypotheses, enabling it to reach the unhypothetical first principle of everything, i.e., the Good (*Rep.*, 511b). I propose that the non-philosophic citizens’ cognitive competencies amount (or is related) to scientific knowledge (thought) i.e., a kind of knowledge which involves observation of concrete phenomena, a thorough study of the observed phenomena, and drawing deductive or inductive conclusions using sense perceptible matters.

#### 4.2 The Many Kinds of Knowledge Revisited

As we discussed in Section 3.2, Socrates states categorically at *Rep.*, 428b-d that there are many kinds of knowledge in the polis (πολλὰ δέ γε καὶ παντοδαπαὶ ἐπιστήμαι ἐν τῇ πόλει

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<sup>227</sup> I prefer to call the non-philosophic citizens this way.

εἰσίν), relative to the various professions in the polis. And the usage of ἐπιστήμη in this sense is non-accidental. Now, if Plato uses ἐπιστήμη, non-accidentally, to refer to a particular profession relative to the cognitive competence of the craftsmen, can it be said that the acquisition of other *kinds* of ἐπιστήμαι is possible in the perceptible world? In that case, is ἐπιστήμη of perceptibles not possible in the perceptible world, and, if so, how? This question needs a bit clarification. When defenders of the TWT, like Moss and Schwab, insist that ἐπιστήμη of perceptibles is not possible, their claim is that only metaphysical ἐπιστήμη can count as knowledge because ἐπιστήμη is of being and being—which are Forms—are the only entities ground facts about the nature of fundamental entities. Therefore, the onus lies on anyone who defends the cognitive competencies of the non-philosophic craftsmen to provide a basis upon which their judgements and propositions are grounded. But Moss has another attack on passage *Rep.*, 428b-d. Moss argues that when Plato uses ἐπιστήμη in passages like *Rep.*, 428b-d, he uses it in a ‘loose,’ ‘non-metaphysical’ sense. At best, the objection holds, when Plato uses ἐπιστήμη in a non-metaphysical sense, the appropriate understanding should be τέχνη. In other words, Moss claims that there is a loose, non-metaphysical sense of ἐπιστήμη in the perceptible world, but it is equivalent to τέχνη. Consequently, there are many kinds of ἐπιστήμαι in the perceptible world, but they can only mean τέχνη. Obviously, Moss’ view seeks to undermine the healthy relationship between ἐπιστήμη and τέχνη, as we saw in Section 3.2 (see also Section 4.7).

I shall argue in Section 4.3 that Moss is mistaken to refer to the many kinds of ἐπιστήμαι as non-metaphysical or loose. Meantime, it is important to investigate *Rep.*, 428b-d to arrive at a conclusion favourable for our understanding of the cognitive competencies of the non-philosophic craftsmen. In passage *Rep.*, 428b-d, Socrates understands all available crafts as possessing distinct kinds of knowledge, each of which he is willing to call wisdom. Thus the comparison is between the kinds of ἐπιστήμαι in the polis, corresponding markedly to different cognitive competencies. As we discussed in Section 3.2, Socrates goes on to specify that “there is some kind of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) possessed by some of the citizens in the city we just founded that doesn’t judge about any particular matter but about the city as a whole and the maintenance of good relations, both internally and with other cities” (*Rep.*, 428c10-d1). Socrates then identifies this ἐπιστήμη as “guardianship, and it is possessed by those rulers we just called complete guardians” (*Rep.*, 428d3-5). As we saw, the context of passage *Rep.*, 428b-d is crucial. It is a passage about the search for wisdom in the polis, alongside three other virtues, namely, moderation, justice and courage. Socrates’ starting premise is that he thinks the polis is really wise. And that is because it has good judgement (εὐβουλία) – a judgement

which is a kind of knowledge. It is plausible that a good judgement, like a true judgement, is something of an epistemic achievement.<sup>228</sup> The philosopher-rulers' ability to attain good judgement because of the natural coincidence between their metaphysical ἐπιστήμη, practical knowledge and experience (Section 3.6).

Nothing is condescending about how Socrates describes the ἐπιστήμῃ of the non-philosophic craftsmen. All that follows from what he says is that a craft involves some kind of knowledge and has some peculiar domain it is set over (ἐπὶ) (*Rep.*, 348d).<sup>229</sup> For instance, the carpenter is wise because his knowledge in carpentry enables him to arrange wooden implements optimally. If a good judgement is best achieved through possessing ἐπιστήμη, and a good judgement is something of an epistemic achievement, it follows that the carpenter can achieve this epistemic feat relative to his profession. On the other hand, the task of ruling involves the supervision of the entire polis (the whole). Socrates draws the following conclusion:

**T15:** Then, a whole city established according to nature would be wise because of the smallest class and part in it, namely, the governing or ruling one. And to this class, which seems to be by nature the smallest, belongs a share of knowledge that alone among all the other kinds of knowledge is to be called wisdom (*Rep.*, 428e6-429a2)

However, when Socrates says that the best guardians' ἐπιστήμη is to be called wisdom he does not mean all other professionals are imbeciles. He is rather specific about the difference between the kinds of wisdom corresponding to the kinds of knowledge in the polis: the best guardians can only be wiser than other craftsmen in explicit comparative terms: the former determines cases about the whole polis while the latter only judges things about their single-tasked professions. Nevertheless, both the best guardians and the craftsmen can achieve good judgement in their respective fields of endeavour, an achievement which is an epistemic feat. Both the non-philosophic craftsmen and the philosophic craftsmen are craftsmen of some sort, with the latter, Socrates says, being the “craftsmen of the city's freedom” (δημιουργοὺς ἐλευθερίας τῆς πόλεως) (*Rep.*, 395b7-8).

### 4.3 Craftsmanship and Metaphysics

It can be defended in Plato that in order to produce, for instance, good health or justice, the physician and judge must need to know at least in some way what the forms of health and

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<sup>228</sup> Broadie 2016:115

<sup>229</sup> See Harte 2018.

justice are. But the non-philosophic craftsmen are not philosopher. Does it mean that the objects of their ἐπιστήμαι are sensible objects? Thus, there is a logical requirement for any entity, say  $x$ , to claim the status of ἐπιστήμη in Plato: there exists an  $x$  (ἐπιστήμη), such that  $x$  is a Form. Therefore, for all  $y$  (e.g. a non-philosophic craftsman's ἐπιστήμη), if  $y$  is an  $x$ , then  $y$  must be a Form. While this is identical logical relation between ἐπιστήμη and Forms hold in some dialogues, like the *Republic*, it is less obvious in others. The relation is only assumed or presupposed in the so-called Socratic dialogues; the theory of Forms seems absent in the *Theaetetus*. Nevertheless, it is important to take on Moss' description of the various ἐπιστήμαι as non-metaphysical or loose. Socrates discussion of craftsmanship in Book X outrightly rejects such description

In Book X Socrates thinks that literary works and painting imitate life but can tell us nothing scientifically about life; and this means that those who produce them have deficient cognitive competence about their subject.<sup>230</sup> An example is the painter's imitation: there can logically be only one bed—the Form of bed made by god—which serves as a standard for all other beds; for if there were two such standards, they will logically presuppose a first by which we can know them both as meeting the conditions of a standard (*Rep.*, 597b-d). The carpenter's bed imitates the Form of bed, and therefore is second-hand. Moreover, the painter can only imitate the carpenter's bed, which is a third remove from the original, the Form bed (*Rep.*, 598). Corresponding to this third-grade *ontology* of the painter's bed is a third degree of *truth* or cognitive experience. In this regard, there are three levels of knowing associated with the painter's production of the bed. The ultimate consumer of the painted bed has a first-hand experience, call this *knowledge*, of what quality of bed to produce. (2) The manufacturers depend on the users' knowledge to produce the materials that meet quality standards. As he depends on one who knows, the manufacturer can only have second-hand knowledge, namely, correct beliefs. (3) The painter, if he is to succeed, must depend on the manufacturer to produce what is beautiful, appropriate, and of the right quality. His "knowledge" is third-hand—less than both knowledge and correct beliefs (*Rep.*, 602a-b). A central idea in this Book X ontological thesis is didactic: the arts imitate nature and must therefore imitate it scientifically and truthfully.<sup>231</sup> That is, it is not the case that all craftsmen are incapable of striving to attain the highest epistemic competence associated with their crafts. However, if one's cognitive level is doxastic and makes no effort to improve at but claims authoritative certainty about his craft—

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<sup>230</sup> I owe this summary of the Book X passage to Ackah's lecture notes on the *Republic*.

<sup>231</sup> Socrates also aims to show that the arts foster the spirited or appetitive parts of soul at the expense of the rational part; and that this has adverse effect on the individual's character and society as a whole.



like Ion and Euthyphro—the that craftsman’s cognitive competence is inferior and can even be fourth or fifth removed from truth.

In the light of the above, we can quickly dismiss Moss’ claim that the various ἐπιστήμαι are non-metaphysical by which she means that they lack being, *qua* being. Fine seems right that for Plato “All knowledge begins with knowledge of Forms, but need not end with them, too; nor need every grasp of a Form amount to knowledge of it.”<sup>232</sup> We will agree with Fine that the many kinds of knowledge (ἐπιστήμαι) in the polis all begin with Forms. This agreement, however, raises an objection. The farmer even has an ideal conception of farming; the doctor health. Granted that the various ἐπιστήμαι are Forms, a challenging question is the following. In Section 3.6, we concluded that the philosopher-rulers are apt crafters of the polis’ freedom—the ideal painters—because they possess the cognitive ability to function optimally in this respect. Therefore, although Socrates says that “no craftsman makes the form itself” (*Rep.*, 596b8), the philosopher-rulers can paint a perfect polis, including crafting its freedom, because they have seen the Forms themselves; therefore, they have a paradigmatic model grounded in metaphysical entities. Accordingly, they have first-hand knowledge, a paradigmatic model in their souls, to be painters better than the painters in the Book 10. Now, if the claim that crafts entails or presuppose Forms holds, then the challenging question for us is the following: how can our non-philosophic craftsmen who lack metaphysical ἐπιστήμη claim authoritative certainty about their crafts?

The challenge becomes more complicated in the following two ways. First, our non-philosopher craftsmen lack the natural qualities Socrates mentions to grasp the Forms of their crafts (*Rep.*, 485a4-487a; 503c2-d4). Socrates insists that dialectics is the means to grasp the metaphysical entities. To be sure, dialectics is the exercise of pure thought—a process of rational argumentation in the giving and taking of rational account, critical of assumptions (e.g. mathematical ones), which it transcends and relates to first principles (*Rep.*, 533a-dc)—with the vision of the Good and the Forms as the ultimate objective. Dialectics tries to grasp what each thing is in itself, a process culminating in coherent knowledge, and apprehension of the Good and, therefore, the Forms.

Second, dialectics involves a painstaking intellectual exercise (*Rep.*, 517b7-c4). The underlying assumption, I think, is that for Plato the value of ἐπιστήμη is the ‘highest cognitive achievement’, relative to other epistemic states on a particular cognitive continuum. And since knowledge of the Good and the Forms constitutes the highest cognitive achievement, to be

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<sup>232</sup> Fine 1978, 137.

cognitively successful in this regard is to grasp these metaphysical entities.<sup>233</sup> In contemporary epistemology, the view that the value of knowledge is the highest cognitive success relative to ‘that which falls short of knowledge’ (like opinion) requires that such cognitive success has to be primarily creditable to an agent, given the agent’s cognitive ability, for the said knowledge to count as an achievement.<sup>234</sup> This is because, as Pritchard writes, “achievements are successes that are because of ability where the success in question either involves the overcoming of a significant obstacle or the exercise of a significant level of ability.”<sup>235</sup> In this light, the philosopher-rulers’ possession of ἐπιστήμη, which manifests their highest cognitive success, is attributed to their natural qualities and education. Thus, their cognitive success is not borne out of luck, dream or any non-cognitive means but rather corresponds markedly to their cognitive abilities. Therefore, since on Socrates’ account our non-philosophic craftsmen lack the capacity for dialectics, it means that they cannot even *know* their own crafts which require knowledge of metaphysical entities. Our thesis (4) is threatened! Can there be a way out? I attempt an affirmative answer in the next section. I argue that the non-philosophic craftsmen’s knowledge is not the highest relative to the philosophic craftsmen; nevertheless, it is of a higher status.

#### 4.4 Craftsmanship and Scientific Knowledge

It is true that the non-philosophic craftsmen do not possess the natural qualities to grasp the Forms of their various crafts, relative to Socrates’ grand scheme of the philosopher-rulers’ epistemic capabilities. Yet I claim that they can function optimally in their various crafts. How? The claim that the TWT is indefensible becomes more relevant for the defence of the cognitive competencies of the non-philosophic craftsmen. That is, the possibility of having beliefs or opinion (δόξα) and thoughts (διάνοιαν) of/about Forms comes in handy to rescue our thesis (4) in terms of the cognitive competencies of the non-philosophic craftsmen. Therefore, to account for the cognitive competencies of the non-philosophic citizens, the following distinction is crucial. Plato’s ideal type of knowledge is knowledge of the Forms and the Good, and he hopes that the kind of knowledge coincides perfectly with other modes of knowledge, including knowledge by acquaintance and practical wisdom to mould a perfect polis. Nevertheless, I think that the non-philosophic craftsman’s cognitive competence can be classified as thought (διάνοιαν) or, more mildly, can be said to oscillate between belief-formation (δόξα) and thought (διάνοιαν). I defend this as follows.

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<sup>233</sup> Schwab 2016:45-46. On Plato’s concept of the value of knowledge as the highest cognitive achievement, see Broadie 2016.

<sup>234</sup> Pritchard et al. 2010, 41.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid. 70.

Socrates describes the domain of thought as follows in the Divided Line simile. As mentioned above, thought belongs to the domain of the intelligible world. It is knowledge gained from advanced scientific studies (ἐπιστήμια). At this level of cognition, the soul had made significant progress from opinion or belief to a relatively rich intellectual cognition. As mentioned above, advanced scientific study is the core of higher education and constitutes a necessary prelude to advanced philosophical studies, dialectics. Socrates explains this level of cognition as follows:

**T16:** In one subsection [of the intelligible realm], the soul, using as images the things that were imitated before, is forced to investigate from hypotheses, proceeding not to a first principle but to a conclusion. In the other subsection, however, it makes its way to a first principle that is not a hypothesis, proceeding from a hypothesis but without the images used in the previous subsection, using forms themselves and making its investigation through them (*Rep.*, 510b).<sup>236</sup>

As is evident, Socrates outlines two main differences that exist between the scientific ἐπιστήμη and metaphysical ἐπιστήμη: (a) in the domain of the scientific ἐπιστήμη one uses, as Fine puts it, “sensibles as images of Forms, although they are thinking of Forms, not of sensibles.”<sup>237</sup> On the other hand, at the domain of the metaphysical ἐπιστήμη, one thinks of Forms directly, not through images of them;<sup>238</sup> (b) at the scientific domain, the alethic inquirer proceeds from hypothesis to proceeding not to first principle but to a conclusion; at the dialectical domain, one proceeds from hypotheses to the unhypothetical first principle, i.e., the Good itself. Given A and B, the following suggestion of Fine is crucial for our exploration of the cognitive competencies of the non-philosophic craftsmen: “Although Plato provides geometrical illustration [at the scientific domain of knowledge, which Fine calls L3 and refers to the dialectical domain as L4], L3 is not restricted to geometry or even to mathematical disciplines more generally; any reasoning that satisfies the more general features (a) and (b) belongs at L3.”<sup>239</sup> Therefore, I think Fine’s suggestion provides grounds for us to appreciate that the various ἐπιστήμια constitute scientific knowledge, in that they use sense perceptible matters as premises to arrive at their conclusions. This is profound because all craftsmen aim to achieve

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<sup>236</sup> The scientific studies consist in five pure mathematical disciplines: (i) arithmetic, (ii) plane, (iii) solid geometry, (iv) astronomy (solid bodies in motion, *Rep.*, 528e), (v) and harmonics (rhythm of solid bodies in motion, because just as our eyes are made for astronomy, so our ears are made for movements of harmony, *Rep.*, 530d).

<sup>237</sup> Fine 1998:104. We saw in Section 3.6 how the philosopher-rulers, *qua* painters, think about the Form of a perfect polis in this way.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

the best of their crafts: the aim at the Form. And as we saw in passages **T13** and **T14**, the thought processes in arriving at perfection involves ἐπιστήμη of perceptibles while thinking about ἐπιστήμη itself. Our thesis (4) remains intact! This is more evident when we consider how our account fits in the polis' social justice.

Famously, within the polis' social justice system, each individual must perform his task according to his natural ability and cognitive competence. Thus Kallipolis is not a mere aggregation of humans but a functionally constituted entity, wherein each must perform a particular task to achieve the collective good. Accordingly, if ἐπιστήμη is that which corresponds markedly with one's cognitive ability—and if an achievement is a success because of one's ability where the success is borne out of overcoming significant obstacles other than sheer luck or intuition—then one can plausibly argue that the philosopher-rulers are not omniscient to perform all tasks. For instance, they cannot attend to a medically sick patient, given that the relevant craft or profession for healing is medicine and the appropriate professional is the physician. An interesting point here is that the philosopher-rulers can be ignorant about medicine.

We can charitably grant that by their education they can have δόξα of the Form of Health but they would, to a large extent, be incapable to practically heal a patient because knowledge of the Form of Health does not automatically translate into the ability to practically cure patients. If we do not want to be charitable, then it is noteworthy that for Plato an ignorant mind is that which takes non-being, falsehood as reality. But in supposing that the philosopher-rulers can be ignorant, I have in mind the following point of Smith: “Plato did not mean to tell us that we could be ignorant only *of or about* nothing, or, for that matter, only *of or about* falsehoods. Rather, we are and can be ignorant of all sorts of things that are, and ignorant of all sorts of things that...both are and are not, and all sorts of things that are true”<sup>240</sup> Accordingly, if we are to agree with defenders of the TWT that only philosophers possess ἐπιστήμη, it means that Kallipolis cannot be realised, given Plato's blinkered emphasis on a regimented division of labour and specialisation.

Now, if we agree that Plato conceives the value of ἐπιστήμη as the highest cognitive achievement more valuable than any epistemic state on *a particular* cognitive continuum, and if the ἐπιστήμωι of the philosopher and other craftsmen, however, do not fall on the same cognitive continuum, in what sense is the philosopher's ἐπιστήμη more valuable than that of, say, a physician, especially when both can assert true (and correct false) propositions about

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<sup>240</sup> Smith 2019:62

their respective professions? As I have argued, the differences Socrates strike between ἐπιστήμῃαι of the philosophic craftsman and non-philosophic craftsman are main two. First, we saw in Sections 3.2 and 4.2 that former judges about the whole while the latter judges about particular craft. Second, the former could grasp the highest level of ἐπιστήμη, i.e., the Good and the Forms. On this score, the latter's epistemic competence is, in any case, inferior to the former in the sense that scientific ἐπιστήμη falls short of metaphysical ἐπιστήμη. This notwithstanding, it is a defensible thesis that the attaining the just polis (if it is not a hopeless aspiration) supervenes upon the cooperative interactions between the various epistemic competencies in Kallipolis: it is the collaborative effort between scientific and philosophic ἐπιστήμῃαι.

#### **4.5 Craftsmanship and Education**

But there is another objection: even if the non-philosophers can acquire knowledge *in* the perceptible world, as I have argued, critics will say that Plato never cared about exploring their cognitive competencies. Contrarily, I think that Plato only takes for granted the Greek traditional mode of acquiring knowledge. Before we look at the textual evidence, the following features about the Greek traditional education. In Plato's epistemology, the claimant of knowledge must be able to give *account* of whatever he claims authoritative certain of/about. The idea is that one's cognitively competence is publicly accessible by means of how the person can transmit such knowledge to others. This is a leitmotif in Plato's epistemology: the teachability of virtue or ἐπιστήμη in general, especially with respect to Socratic epistemology. Socrates' 'What is X' question' usually requires the claimant of knowledge to demonstrate their self-acclaimed epistemic competence. We see this in the so-called Socratic dialogues, ostensibly in the *Euthyphro* and *Apology*.

On the other hand, traditional Greek 'education' (if it is appropriate to use this expression) was directed at practical ends; every crafts and virtue mostly served practical ends. The mode of transmitting knowledge was mainly hereditary, i.e., how the older generation passed their accumulated epistemic competencies to the younger generation. Practical knowledge and its usefulness has higher premium of value over theoretical knowledge. This is the thesis of the prosecutor of philosophy. As we have discussed in Section 3.2.2, when Glaucon asked whether Kallipolis can come into being. Socrates answer was his declaration in T9. Glaucon and Adeimantus consider the declaration as paradox and simply risible because philosophers are generally considered useless (*Rep.*, 487c3-495c7). Socrates' reply to Glaucon and Adeimantus takes the form of a defence of philosophy and true philosophers. From *Rep.*, 488a-489d,

Socrates' continues to vindicate philosophy by appealing to his craft-analogy. He says that the prosecutor of philosophy must be informed this:

**T17:** Tell him not to blame those decent people for this but the ones who don't make use of them. It isn't natural for the captain to beg the sailors to be ruled by him nor for the wise to knock at the doors of the rich—the man who came up with that wisecrack made a mistake. The natural thing is for the sick person, rich or poor, to knock at the doctor's door, and for anyone who needs to be ruled to knock at the door of the one who can rule him. It isn't for the ruler, if he's truly any use, to beg the others to accept his rule. Tell him that he'll make no mistake in likening those who rule in our cities at present to the sailors we mentioned just now, and those who are called useless stargazers to the true captains. (*Rep.*, 489b3-c7).

This passage directly follows after Socrates's famous ship analogy from *Rep.*, 488a-e. Recall that Plato usually tends to use analogies where prose seems inadequate to demonstrate a point, including ethics and politics. And so, it can be argued that the relationship Plato seeks to establish between philosophy and other crafts here must be understood only analogically. However, it is apparent in passage **T17** that Socrates seeks to present philosophy as possessing a sort of τέχνη, such that his true philosophers possess this kind of τέχνη relevant for statecraft, which makes it natural for those who desire true political leadership to naturally beg them to rule. The devil is certainly in this relation between philosophy and τέχνη in **T17**: the impression seems to be that philosophy entails political knowledge such that true philosophers must be begged to rule. Nevertheless, our discussion so far has made it obvious that Socrates' philosopher-rulers are those who have achieved the highest epistemic competencies to function optimally in governance.

But the significant point for us is that philosophy is charged to prove its relevance in moulding the polis. And as said before, Plato's foremost concern in his political engineering, given Argument (4), is to demonstrate the utility of philosophy for the active political life. Moreover, and as mentioned before, he takes it for granted that the non-philosophic citizens would be educated according to the traditional Greek standards. For his philosopher-rulers, he craftily blends traditional education and his own novel conception of education. The Republic is not arid of textual support. In Book V, Socrates legislates:

**T18:** Men and women will campaign together. They'll take the sturdy children with them, so that, like the children of other craftsmen, they can see what they'll have to do when they grow up. But in addition to observing, they can serve and assist in everything to do with the

war and help their mothers and fathers. Haven't you noticed in the other crafts how the children of potters, for example, assist and observe for a long time before actually making any pots? [Glaucon: I have indeed.] And should these craftsmen take more care in training their children by appropriate experience and observation (ἐμπειρία τε καὶ θέα) than the guardians? (*Rep.*, 466e3-467a6; *Rep.*, 467c-d).

Glaucon replies that it “would be completely ridiculous” for the other craftsmen to teach their children their profession through observation and experience more than the matured philosopher-rulers. Here we get another confirmation of the claim that Plato never says that metaphysical ἐπιστήμη will enable the philosopher-rulers to become adept fighters; they must have practical knowledge through experience and observation. Thus the mature philosopher-rulers must teach the young ones how to fight because competence in warfare can be acquired through military training, experience and observation of warfare. The same is said of mature craftsmen and their children. I consider **T18** as a decisive evidence that Plato seeks to blend traditional education and his own conception of education to mould the just polis. Socrates is plain that the craftsmen also gain their knowledge through appropriate experience and observation (ἐμπειρία τε καὶ θέα) and impart such knowledge unto their children through a similar process.

Now, it is important to give attention to how the thought process of the non-philosophic craftsman fits the narrative of scientific knowledge we discussed in the previous section. In making a pot the potter must know the correct clay to use, the correct mixture of the appropriate elements, and the correct heating method. Potter *A*'s kind of knowledge has a claim to be called scientific because it corresponds with his productive ability – a cognitive ability which he must have acquired through persistent training, *qua* appropriate observation and experience, of how to make pottery from another professional potter. Our Potter *A*, who has acquired his pottery knowledge through appropriate observation and experience can teach a novice *B* how to make pots through a similar scientific process. Thus, if one can properly teach with knowledge and understanding, then there is a similarity between the cognitive competence of the matured philosopher-rulers and the matured craftsmen, relative to their possession of empirical knowledge in their respective fields. The crucial point here is that the cognitive success of the craftsmen, like that of the philosopher, is not guaranteed by sheer luck or intuition but through persistent training.

As I see it, both traditional and Platonic epistemologies share two main focus: first, all kinds of ἐπιστήμαι stand in relation to something, say, an object, such that if one possesses knowledge

one can only be knowledgeable about something, e.g. one's profession. Second, whoever claims to possess knowledge must have both productive and demonstrative ability. I explain this with an important passage from the *Apology*. In his encounter with the craftsmen in the *Apology*, Socrates shares his experience: "Last of all I turned to the skilled craftsmen. I knew quite well that I had practically no understanding myself, and I was sure that I should find them full of impressive knowledge (ἐπιστήμῃ). In this I was not disappointed; they understood the things which I did not, and to that extent they were wiser than I was" (*Apol.*, 22c11-d4). The idea in this passage is straightforward: to be technically proficient in a given craft is to possess a *kind* of knowledge relative to that craft. Moreover, whether anybody possesses ἐπιστήμη cannot be known *a priori* unless that cognitive competence becomes publicly accessible, including demonstrating it to others. It seems to me, then, that Socrates was satisfied with the craftsmen in two main ways: (A) they could prove to him that they are authoritatively certain about their profession: that is, they could produce artefacts in a manner a non-professional cannot. Let us call this 'productive ability'. (B) In a proper scientific spirit, they possess the disposition for understanding and explanation to teach their craft to others. Let us call this 'demonstrative ability'. Therefore, if this interpretation is right, then the *Apology's* craftsmen possess ἐπιστήμη in relation to τέχνη, and it is evinced in their productive and demonstrative cognitive abilities.

In a nutshell, it can also be said that the craftsmen could engage in both theoretical and practical reasonings apropos their profession.<sup>241</sup> Practical, because they have reasons for acting, i.e. construct their artefacts or show their skill or determine what to do about their profession; theoretical, because not only could they assert true (and plausibly correct false) propositions about their profession but also grasp things based on their causes, relative to their profession. Thus, if we imagine how Socrates would elenctically examine them with his 'What is X? question', we could imagine how the craftsmen asserted true (and corrected false) propositions about their profession. Productive and demonstrative cognitive abilities are what Euthyphro and others who claim expertise failed to convince Socrates that they possess, even though they claimed authoritative certainty. These cognitive abilities also suggest that the craftsmen possess knowledge, i.e. scientific knowledge, and their cognitive success corresponds directly with their cognitive abilities. Socrates concedes that he could not achieve such cognitive success, perhaps, because he lacks such cognitive ability to overcome significant obstacles associated with acquiring such knowledge.

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<sup>241</sup> See Trabattoni 2016:271-3,



Another example is the following. We saw earlier that Socrates is specific that the philosopher-rulers, *qua* judges, use observation and experience to acquire knowledge of what constitutes injustice: they become aware of injustice through constant observation of unjust acts in others (*Rep.*, 408c4-e4). Socrates adds another instance:

**T19:** The cleverest doctors are those who, in addition to learning their craft (τὴν τέχνην), have had contact with the greatest number of very sick bodies from childhood on, have themselves experienced every illness, and aren't very healthy by nature, for they don't treat bodies with their bodies, I suppose—if they did, we wouldn't allow their bodies to be or become bad. Rather they treat the body with their souls, and it isn't possible for the soul to treat anything well, if it is or has been bad itself (read from *Rep.*, 408c4-e4).

Socrates' main point is straightforward: a good doctor, just like a good judge, must not have his soul corrupted. But a less obvious point is that Socrates strikes a distinction between what we might call 'experiential knowledge by participation', in the case of the cleverest doctor, and 'experiential knowledge by observation', in the case of the good judge. A doctor can treat an ailment because of his technical proficiency in medicine. Moreover, his personal experience of the disease can also give him first-hand knowledge to treat the said patient. By nature no doctor is healthy. But it cannot be said that by nature a judge is unjust; a good judge must never have participated in injustice. In any case, the point is that both the doctor and the judge possess knowledge in the relevant sense, kinds of knowledge which must properly be called scientific knowledge, because they are knowledge acquired in the perceptible world; and their mode of acquisition is through persistent training, and experience and observation of concrete phenomenon.

From the foregoing, we are in a better position to speak more about how the non-philosophic citizens can justify their knowledge claims if the need be. To do this, let us return to our favourite example: the cognitive competence of the physician. Suppose there is an epidemic. This situation falls within the domain of the cognitive competence of the physician to find out the cause of the diseases whiles simultaneously trying to cure those who have been affected. In this case, the physician must exhibit both productive and demonstrative abilities to tackle the epidemic. In particular, the physician must engage in both theoretical and practical assignments; theoretical in terms of determining the nature of the epidemic, and practical in terms of determining what to do to tackle the disease at hand. If the physician could come up with a cure to treat the patients, it means that he plausibly sampled data about the said disease,

conducted a thorough study of the disease to determine its nature. Moreover, if he could replicate the cure for wider usage and production, it means that he has a demonstrative ability. In this scenario, the doctor can scientifically explain why the epidemic occurred in virtue of some observed phenomena or facts.

To schematise, *X*, who discovers that *p* is the cure for epidemic *e* can cure *Y* who is affected and also teach *Z* how to replicate cure *p* for *e*. When *X* succeeds in doing this, it means *X* possesses knowledge in terms of *X*'s ability to acquaint with the object of his ἐπιστήμη, i.e. understanding the cause of a disease through observation and thorough study of the observed facts to find a cure for it, and his ability to teach *Z*. Consider further that *s* (e.g. a contaminated water body) is the cause of *e*. It means that this fact *s* scientifically explains *e*, i.e. it establishes a causal link between itself and the epidemic. Identifying and establishing a causal link between *s* and *e* alone involves an appeal to a complex matrix of interlocking thought processes. In this case, *X* succeeds not only in functioning optimally in his profession but can also transfer such cognitive competence to others. This is the cognitive competence Socrates repeatedly attributes to Asclepius and his sons (e.g. *Rep.*, 405c7-406c7; 407c8-408b7). Relatedly, recall what Socrates says about the sailors who seize the ship but are without knowledge of the art of navigation: "... a true captain must pay attention to the seasons of the year, the sky, the stars, the winds, and all that pertains to his craft, if he's really to be the ruler of a ship" (read fully from *Rep.*, 488a-e). The decisions of a true captain, then, are grounded in his observation of concrete phenomena, a thorough study of such phenomena, and providing inductive and deductive grounds to act on such observation and study. The captain, therefore, draws inductive conclusions based principles that are true of his navigation skills, experiences, and observation of these perceptibles.

The captain possesses scientific knowledge. In like manner, the philosopher-rulers must demonstrate these productive and demonstrative abilities in their ruling. In their adjudication of a criminal case, we saw how their metaphysical ἐπιστήμη blends coherently and naturally with their practical knowledge and experience. We can now modify our conclusion to say that their judgement must be based on a coincidence of their metaphysical knowledge and scientific knowledge. Recall that we are using scientific knowledge as an umbrella term to capture the sense of ἐπιστήμη acquired through thought, using sense perceptibles as the premises. Plato tells us some of the roles the philosopher-rulers will perform: there is the need to legislate "about market business, such as the private contracts people make with one another in the marketplace, for example, or contracts with manual labourers, cases of insult or injury, bringing lawsuits, the establishing of juries, the payment and assessment of whatever dues are necessary

for markets and harbours....” (*Rep.*, 425c8-e3). They must have an understanding of/about contracts, human psychology, and economic intelligence, among others. Each of these subject matters requires its own kind of knowledge or cognitive competence, and most of them (if not all) fall under the rubric of what we must call Plato’s scientific knowledge. This is because they involve the use of sense data as premises to arrive at conclusions.

#### **4.6 Summary and Reflections**

Had it not been the erroneous but influential interpretation that only philosophers possess ἐπιστήμη, it would have been pretty obvious that the non-philosophic craftsman can also possess ἐπιστήμη but of a different kind, relative to his or her profession. Defenders of the TWT will reject my position on grounds that ἐπιστήμη, properly speaking, refers to only metaphysical ἐπιστήμη. Such a view, I have shown in this chapter, is erroneous and must be discarded at all cost. For, it negatively affects how we should understand the political worth of the non-philosophic craftsmen. I have argued that the cognitive competencies of the non-philosophic the craftsmen, *qua* their kinds of ἐπιστήμαι, should be defined in virtue of Plato’s scientific knowledge, a kind of knowledge that uses sense data as premises to arrive at conclusions. We have seen that the philosopher-rulers’ epistemic competencies also encompass scientific knowledge. This leads me to assert that if Kallipolis is to be realised (though Socrates entertains doubt about it), the realisation supervenes upon the cooperative interaction between the cognitive and epistemic competencies of both the philosophic craftsmen and the non-philosophic craftsmen. I think, therefore, that my thesis (4) has been justified.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Plato's Political Philosophy in Perspective

#### 5.1 Introduction

In the last two chapters, I have defended the thesis that the realizability of the eudaemonistic goals of both the individual and the polis supervenes upon the cooperative interactions between the rulers and the ruled, relative to their natural aptitudes and epistemic competencies. The defence was strategically imperative to prove the political worth of the non-philosophic citizens. Governance is the prerogative of philosopher-rulers because they can function optimally in governance, given their natural aptitudes and education. Plato constructs Kallipolis on a strong sense of partnership and mutual independence between the rulers and the ruled. In this chapter, I reflect on some of the core issues we have discussed in the previous sections. The goal is to put our four theses in the right perspective by way of reassessing scholarly accounts of some of the central issues in the *Republic's* political philosophy.

#### 5.2 The Epistemic Balance

The philosopher-rulers, *qua* professional politicians, have the task to set the fevered polis on an ethical trajectory, engage in economic activities with other poleis through imports and exports, engage in warfare, among many other political functions. Political power is their prerogative because they possess the requisite knowledge, according to Plato, to attain optimum functionality governance. J. S. Mill has shown his intellectual deference to Plato for proposing that governance requires knowledge. Schofield cites Mill with approval: "Mills sees Plato as exalting knowledge, 'not Intellect, or mere mental ability, of which there is no idolatry at all in Plato, but scientific knowledge, and scientifically-acquired craftsmanship, as the one thing needful in every concern of life, and pre-eminently in government. It is for him 'the pervading idea in Plato's practical doctrines.'"<sup>242</sup> Mills calls this "the strong side of the Platonic theory":

First, the vigorous assertion of a truth, of transcendent importance and universal application—that the work of government is a Skilled Employment; that governing is not a thing which can be done at odd times, or by the way, in conjunction with a hundred other pursuits, nor to which a person can be competent without a large and liberal general

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<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

education, followed by special and professional study, laborious and of long duration, directed to acquiring, not mere practical dexterity, but a scientific mastery of the subject.<sup>243</sup>

Mill, however, has his reservation about Platonic intellectualism. As Schofield puts it: for Mill, “Where Plato went wrong was in postulating ‘infallibility, or something near it, in rulers thus prepared’, and in ascribing ‘such a depth of comparative imbecility to the rest of mankind, as to unfit them for any voice whether in their own government, or any power of calling their scientific rulers to account’.”<sup>244</sup> Mill is however confident that “if the balance is redressed to accommodate these criticisms, the basic idea of the professionalization of government survives intact as a valid principle of highest significance.”<sup>245</sup> For Mill, what constitutes science is “a philosophic and reasoned knowledge of human affairs—of what is best for mankind.”<sup>246</sup> To explore this humanistic scientific knowledge, and Mill chooses the *Statesman* over the *Republic* in exploring his this scientific knowledge. Schofield comments that Mill’s formulation of science “suggests one reason why in the first instance he chose [the *Statesman*] rather than the *Republic* to explain the way knowledge figured in Plato’s thinking about politics. The knowledge discussed in the *Statesman* can indeed be seen as focused on human affairs. In the *Republic*, by contrast, the knowledge that distinguishes philosophers (and so philosopher rulers) from non-philosophers is undeniably metaphysical knowledge of the eternal and changeless reality of the Ideas.”<sup>247</sup>

Mill’s conception of Platonic ‘Scientific Governor’ identifies with my account of the philosopher-rulers as those who possess scientific knowledge. However, Mill’s does not find Plato’s metaphysics convincing as compared to his scientific knowledge. This means that Mills offers a twist to the traditional interpretation of the relationship between knowledge and politics in the *Republic*; it is rather scientific knowledge and not metaphysical ἐπιστήμη which accounts for the difference between the ‘Scientific Governor’ and the rest of the citizenry. Mill is right to point out that Plato has a concept of scientific knowledge—a neglected aspect of his epistemology, albeit very crucial. However, we ought to be convinced that the *Republic* is not bereft of a convincing account of such knowledge. In the absence of this observation, the implication of Mill’s claim becomes obvious: the non-philosophers are cognitively imbeciles. But this interpretation, I have argued, is untenable in the *Republic*. My account of Plato’s

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<sup>243</sup> Mills 1978:436.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Schofield 2006:139

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid. Schofield notes Mills’ preference for the *Statesman* other than the *Republic* because he was following the lead of George Grote.

scientific knowledge in the previous chapter is enough to answer Mills, that there is an ‘epistemic balance’ between the philosopher-rulers and the non-philosophic citizens in terms of epistemic cognitive competence in the performance of one’s duty. We cannot rate the philosopher’s knowledge as superior to any other kind of knowledge, precisely because, and as I have shown, every kind of knowledge belongs to a different domain with its standards of assessments. Nevertheless, we can only rate one kind of knowledge as having a higher premium of value over another *only in relative terms*. The cobbler cannot rule because ruling falls outside the domain of his epistemic competence; the philosopher-ruler can rule because Plato claims the philosopher has the best model of a just polis in his soul. Therefore, it is only relative to the art of ruling that the cobbler’s epistemic competence becomes useless, just as the philosopher’s epistemic competence is irrelevant for the art of cobblery.

### 5.3 Promoting Political Friendship

By now it should be clear that when we speak about the principles of politics in the Republic, what should readily come to mind are the ethical foundational principles which ground the coming to be of the polis, namely, partnership, sharing and helping. These principles support the idea that there is a strong sense of mutual interdependence between the rulers and the ruled. However, it is one thing to say that these principles are guarantee the coming to be of the polis and another to say that they support the sustenance of the polis. The ideality of Kallipolis is not a given; that is, healing the fevered polis requires a great deal of intellectual effrontery. The vital question is, how does Socrates, *qua* lawgiver, intend to achieve social harmony (ὁμόνοια) in Kallipolis?

For reasons given in Section 2.6, I have argued that Plato is not a contractarian. Mutual interdependence guarantees the philial relationship between the rulers and the ruled. That Kallipolis thrives on the collaborative spirits between the various epistemic competencies at its disposal. But other social values are equally crucial to cement the philial bond between rulers and the rule. One of such values is political friendship. Plato shares the general Greek belief that friendship is a precondition for a well-functioning society: “The whole point of our legislation was to allow the citizens to live supremely happy lives and the greatest possible mutual friendship” (*Laws* 743c5-6). Aristotle has this to say about political friendship:

**T20:** Friendship (φιλία) seems...to hold states together, and lawgivers to care more for it than for justice; for concord (ὁμόνοια) seems to be something like friendship, and this they aim at most of all, and expel faction as their worst enemy; and when men are friends they

have no need of justice, while when they are just they need friendship as well, and the truest form of justice is thought to be a friendly quality” (*NE* 8.1, 1155a25-28).

But Aristotle’s three types of friendship makes it necessary for us to think about the kind of friendship that fits the description of the kind of friendship Plato seeks to foster among the citizens in Kallipolis. To explore this view, a cursory view of Aristotle’s friendship is useful. Famously, Aristotle’s classification of friendship into three is grounded on his observation that what connects people as friends is something lovable (το φιλητόν), and what is lovable is either what is good, or pleasant, or useful (*NE* VIII.2, 1155b17-27). These three kinds of lovable correspond to the three kinds of friendship, namely, the friendship of pleasure, the friendship of utility, and the friendship of virtue.

The key distinction among these kinds of friendship is that when people become friends based on either pleasure or utility, they do not value themselves as much as the pleasure or utility the friendship affords; such friends are useful to each other only because of the pleasure or utility they derive from the friendship. Aristotle is specific that friendship of utility seems to occur most frequently between the old, as old men pursue pleasure but profit; and friendship of pleasure is prevalent is between young people (*NE* VIII.3, 1156a23-35). On the other hand, Aristotle repeatedly mentions that true friendship is based on virtue, and it exists only among good men. Among five key defining qualities, Aristotle defines a friend as one who: (a) who wishes and promotes by action, the real or apparent good of another for that person’s sake; (b) wishes the existence and preservation of his friend for the friend’s sake, and (c) one who shares his friend’s joy and sorrows. Aristotle concludes that it is “because the good man has these various feelings towards himself, and because he feels towards his friends in the same way as toward himself (for a friend is another self), that friendship also is thought to consist in one or other of these feelings” (*NE* IX.4.1166a30-34).

In connection with these defining qualities of true friendship (a)-(c), Aristotle also says that concord (ὁμόνοια) seems to be a friendly feeling. The political import he draws from this statement is crucial for us. He says that concord is said to prevail in a political community “when the citizens agree as to their interests, adopt the same policy, and carry their common resolves into execution.... Concord appears therefore to mean friendship between citizens, which indeed is the ordinary use of the term; for it refers to the interests and concerns of life” (IX.6.1-2.1167a23-1167b4). Aristotle quickly adds that “concord in this sense exists between good men, since these are of one mind both with themselves and with one another, as they always stand on the same ground; for good men’s wishes are steadfast, and do not ebb or flow

like the tide, and they wish for just and expedient ends, which they strive to attain in common” (IX.6.3.1167b5-9).

Aristotle’s three-type friendship provides a significant challenge for our account of the philial relationship between the philosopher-rulers and non-philosophic citizens in Kallipolis. The crucial question is, if one’s material contribution to Kallipolis is the explanatory marker to account for the partnership between the rulers and the ruled, is it not a kind of friendship based on utility? Aristotle complicates this issue here. He says that utility-based and pleasure-based friendships are not genuine kinds of friendship (*NE* 8.3., 1156a6-21). True friendship is based on virtue and it exists only among good men (*NE* 8.3, 1156b6-30). Aristotle finds this true kind of friendship only in a polis in which all the citizens are virtuous. Thus, as scholars have noted, the connecting point of Aristotle’s *Politics* VII-VIII is that the supremely ideal polis is realisable when *all* the citizens are virtuous, i.e., “when the nature and training of the citizens are such that they possess the excellences of character and the intellectual skills” to live cooperatively and harmoniously with one another.”<sup>248</sup> Or when the constitution is so well designed that it guarantees the collective virtuousness of all the citizens (*Pol.* 1332a28-38). The polis of virtuous citizens, therefore, presupposes the natural existence of rational order based on concord and ethical equalitarianism, as the citizens recognise their equal moral worth and are aware of, as well as exercise sound judgement about, matters in the political community. Aristotle calls this ideal polis “the city of our prayers” (*Pol.* 7.4, 1325b33-40). Even though Aristotle says the supremely ideal polis—virtuous polis—needs a lawgiver, the ethical stratum in such a polis suggests that it does not need one, since a lawgiver’s task is mainly to set the polis on an ethical trajectory. Kraut thinks that Aristotle’s ideal polis “is the exception rather than the rule.”<sup>249</sup> In this exceptionally ideal polis, the prevailing environment naturally supports acts of genuine friendship.

Now, if we bring the insight of Aristotle’s types of friendship to understand the philial relationship between the rulers and the ruled in Kallipolis, can it be said that Plato intends to foster a virtue kind of friendship? Plato does not envision a community of ‘all-morally-virtuous’ citizens in his Kallipolis. Otherwise, the realisability of Kallipolis will be a hopeless utopian aspiration, I think, not because its ethical stakes are far too high for the citizens, but because of several other reasons, including the fact that the concept of all-morally-virtuous citizenship undermines the role of conflict in politics, i.e. how differing wants and competing

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<sup>248</sup> Kraut 2006:125.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.* 124.



claims of justice are conciliated within a particular political community.<sup>250</sup> But the *Republic's* political thesis, as we have seen, is definite about its political direction to attaining the ideal: the ideal is realisable if and only if each citizen performs his or her function excellently. On this score, I follow Frisbee to argue that true virtue friendship between the philosopher-rulers and the citizens is grounded in what I have called here the principles of politics in the *Republic*, viz., mutual interdependence, sharing, partnership and reciprocity. Frisbee relies heavily on MacIntyre's catch-phrase 'dependent rational animals' to explore this view. For instance, Frisbee argues that the "philosopher-ruler is a contemplator, no doubt, but he is also... 'a dependent rational animal', whose education is designed to foster a widespread sense of mutual interdependence in the community. This recognition of this dependence is a bond of *philia*, the cultivation of which ensures that citizens will care for one another and assist each other to their mutual advantage."<sup>251</sup>

Frisbee asserts further that "Ruling is an expression of this *philia*; it is how philosophers show the reciprocity characteristic of friendship, make a return for the benefits received, and show care and concern for others in their service."<sup>252</sup> The general thrust of Frisbee's argument is to attempt a plausible answer to one of the traditional problematic questions in Plato's political proposals in the *Republic*, namely, why Plato compels the philosophers to return to the cave. The context is this. Glaucon raises the concern that Socrates is proposing a worse life for the philosopher-rulers relative to the other citizens, even though they wield political power and are at the helm of affairs. Frisbee agrees that Socrates' constructionist account of the polis in Book II, and the principles he counts on, are germane to the entire political project of the *Republic*. For instance, in defence of her claim mentioned above, Frisbee promises to do the following: "In tracking the language of 'nurture', 'sharing', and 'community' in Socrates' replies to Glaucon's concern and showing how it is embedded within this sense of mutual interdependence and *philia*, I am to show that *philia*—a certain kind of affective bond or love—motivates their willingness to rule."<sup>253</sup> Frisbee counts heavily on the following claim of Vasiliou: "Plato, like Aristotle, understands moral motivation as arising from proper education and habituation."<sup>254</sup>

Frisbee's thesis eruditely reconciles the *Republic's* principles of politics and the idea of moral motivation. Nevertheless, I have the following reservation. I see her attempt to

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<sup>250</sup> Cf. Yack 1985.

<sup>251</sup> Frisbee 2021:84

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Frisbee op. cit. 83

<sup>254</sup> Vasiliou 2015:37 as cited in Frisbee 2021:84.

‘intellectualise’ the reconciliation. That is, if the non-philosophic citizens, who are without the education purposely designed for the future philosopher-rulers, are readily motivated to socialise their talents and share in the polis’ labours, it is not clear to me why the philosophers must need education before they will be motivated to rule. The key question is, how are the non-philosophic citizens morally motivated to attend to their philial obligation? This is an important question.

My proposal to do away with this conundrum is the following. If ruling is an expression of *philia*, as Frisbee argues, then within the context of mutual interdependence and reciprocity it is a fair proposition that all professions in Kallipolis are expressions of philial. However, I do not see any reason whatsoever to ‘intellectualise’ these principles if one does not pay attention to the traditional system of educating the non-philosophic craftsmen. By intellectualising these principles, I mean the attempt to make these principles products of the philosophers’ education. To be sure, I am not claiming that these principles cannot be imbibed in the citizens through education. My claim is that if we agree with the motivational scholarship that the philosophers will return to the cave to rule because they have been pedagogically habituated to have a sense of philial obligation toward their fellow citizens and the continuity of the political community, the important question will be how the non-philosophic citizens will be morally motivated. If these principles are naturally foundational to the coming to be of the First Polis, then it should be clear that they are prior to any cultural intervention like education. Nevertheless, the motivational scholars can boost their argument if they pay attention to the traditional mode of educating the non-philosophic craftsmen.

As I have shown, Plato takes for granted that the Greek traditional system of education has relevance for training his philosophic craftsmen. We saw that traditional education aims at practical utility of all crafts. But there is a moral aspect to this utility of crafts: the very existence of the polis supervenes up these crafts as each craftsman does what he can do best with his crafts. For the sake of the survival of offspring and the sustenance of the polis, these crafts are transferred from one generation to another. In this case, the productive and demonstrative abilities of the craftsmen have moral significance for Plato. If (social) justice is when one does what one can function optimally in, and if the survival of the citizenry and the continuity of the political community rest solely on this conception of justice, then the traditional system of education superintends the habituation of these moral principles, especially mutual interdependence, in the non-philosophic craftsmen. The continuity of the perfect polis relies heavily on how the older generation passes unto the new generation the knowledge, experience, practical wisdom, belief systems and modes of behaviour they should have to play their social

roles in adult life.<sup>255</sup> On this score, we can grant that if *philia* generates naturally, then sustaining it for the benefit of both the individual and the political community supervenes upon both the traditional and Platonic systems of education. Apart from education, the rulers have the crucial mandate to create enabling conditions to foster virtue friendship. This is the moral component of Argument (4). What are these enabling conditions? I consider them in the next section.

#### 5.4 Promoting *ὁμόνοια* and Argument (4)

In Section 3.2.2, we considered the reasons why Plato desires that political power must be the prerogative of philosopher-rulers: it is a very crucial step in attaining social harmony (*ὁμόνοια*). Our focus in that section was on political leadership. In this section, we look at other measures Socrates puts in place to foster *ὁμόνοια*. Social harmony as a preeminent objective of the legislations of Socrates, *qua* lawgiver, is closely tied with the following pragmatic measures that he puts in place. The first is the inclusive nature of Plato's conception of individuals who constitutes the citizenry. Evident in the principle of insufficiency (*οὐκ ἀτάρκης*) is the belief that humans are equal to each other, in terms of their awareness of their vulnerability and the positive dependency they create as a result. Hence, when Socrates says that "I think a city comes to be because none of us is self-sufficient (*οὐκ ἀτάρκης*)," he uses "us" to refer to both men and women. Consequently, it is not out of benevolence, again, that Plato proposes that women should be made a significant part of the polis, including taking part in political leadership, but the logical consequence of the principle of *οὐκ ἀτάρκης*. In Section 2.3, I pointed out that the principle of human insufficiency—which is the basis of human vulnerability—paradoxically sheds significant light on individual human agency in tackling such vulnerability. Plato's inclusion of women in political leadership does mean two main things: (a) it is revolutionary in Greek politics; second, the fact that women's participation in our modern politics is considered a significant milestone in our politico-social consciousness adds considerable support to my claim that Plato is serious about his political project in the *Republic*. From this perspective, it is a verity that Plato is the forerunner of feminism; he had the intention to correct (to borrow an expression of Sen) "the extensive neglect of the interests and agency of women."<sup>256</sup>

Permit me then to follow the erudite economist Amartya Sen to contemporarise Plato's political philosophy in this context. Plato understood the curing of the fevered polis as an actual

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<sup>255</sup> See Busia 1969

<sup>256</sup> Sen 2000:12

state of affairs. Curing the fevered polis, *qua* developing it as such, “consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency. The removal of substantial unfreedoms...is *constitutive* of development.”<sup>257</sup> Therefore, including women in the political leadership, as well as the plausibility that other women would be allowed to excel in all other areas, was one significant step in the removal of political unfreedoms in Greek politics.<sup>258</sup> Aristotle does the opposite. When Aristotle refers to individuals in the pre-polis communities who fashioned the political community, he refers to only men.

This is a well-known fact. However, if due to some awareness of human insufficiency, the polis becomes a self-evident necessity for the individual, it is not clear how Aristotle’s ‘generic’ use of the individual in this context squares with his immediate hierarchical account of the individual. I use ‘generic individual’ to refer to the political animal with productive and rational capacities. Aristotle’s unfounded *naturalistic* justification of inequality and his classification of men into master and slave is not supported by the principle of insufficiency. But given the biological fact that there are differences of aptitude, it follows that by nature some individuals can be more physically or cognitively superior, or both, *relative to doing certain things* than others. There are significant ways in which individuals are unequal, including intellectual and physical talents and capacities. However, a difference in intellectual and physical aptitudes does not automatically translate into a negative valuation of human worthiness, i.e. into superiors and inferiors, master and slave. The corollary is that given Aristotle’s hierarchical distinction of the individual, based on his naturalistic justification of cognitive superiority and inferiority, it is far from evident how his lawgiver can be successful in creating enabling environment, among other conditions, to foster true friendship among citizens in a degenerate political community.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Aristophanes, in his *Ecclesiazusae*, might be said to have given a hint of this revolutionary idea. But it was Plato who gave philosophical reasons as to why women should assume such a position; his proposal was never comical. Annas 1976, however, think that Plato does not deserve the feminist accolade. Annas argues that Plato only speaks about women philosopher-guardians and not the entire women caucus in Kallipolis. There is no textual evidence to support this view. In contemporary feminism, Plato, I think, is immune to the mordant criticism Carole Pateman against the contractarians. For Pateman, when the contractarians say let us form a social contract, the ‘us’ refers only to men. For the contract is a patriarchal and sexual pact: “The original contract is a sexual contract pact.... [and the] story of the sexual contract is also about the genesis of political right, and explains why exercise of the right is legitimate – but this story is about political right as *patriarchal right* or sex right, the power that men exercise over women” Pateman 1988:1.

<sup>259</sup> This becomes more conspicuous when we consider Aristotle’s second ideal polis, i.e. the mean polis. Aristotle’s mean-polis emerges as a product of a political compromise (fashioned in the context of Aristotle’s mean-virtue) between rich oligarchs and the poor majority (*Pol.* 1295b13-28). Aristotle says that in all political communities there are three elements: one class is very rich, another very poor, and a third in a mean. The compromise is between the morally superior and the morally obtuse (*Pol.* 1295b3-10). The compromise is

This leads us to the second pragmatic step Plato adopt to promote virtue friendship to attain social harmony in Kallipolis. Recall that Socrates says that the rulers call their citizens “providers of upkeep and wages” and the citizens, in turn, call their rulers “preservers and auxiliaries”. These positive co-referencing expressions contrast with what rulers in other cities call their citizens: “slaves” (*Rep.*, 463a3-b12). In addition to this important conceptual scheme, remember also that Plato’s other measures to create enabling environment include his ban of guardians from owning wealth beyond what is necessary, just so they will not compete with the people for material wealth (*Rep.*, 416d-417b); the guardians are to share everything in common (*Rep.*, 543a). The need for this pragmatic measure is one of the many ways to deal with the problem of *stasis*. Pleonexia leads to *stasis*, particularly economic and political polarisation (*Rep.*, 373e3-374a2).

The philosopher-rulers stand directly opposed to the tyrant who uses his political power and office to enslave his people and use them as instruments to achieve his unquenchable appetitive desires. One of Plato’s ways to remove unfreedoms, then, is to blunt political power and office as tools to enslave the ruled. For instance, Socrates insists that it is necessary “to guard in every way against our auxiliaries doing [terrible things] to the citizens because they are stronger, thereby becoming savage masters instead of kindly allies” (*Rep.* 416a-b). Socrates speaks in the spirit of true friendship. But in Book II of *Politics* Aristotle criticises infelicitously Socrates’ measures for tackling *stasis*. As scholars, including Annas, have observed, Aristotle misunderstood Plato and the misunderstanding is manifested in why his lawgiver will seem to struggle to create conditions to reap the societal-bonding benefits of virtue friendship.<sup>260</sup> In

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political, because it presupposes the existence of conflict perhaps over claims of unfair distribution of available state resources. Thus, Aristotle’s mean polis is more truthful to the nature of conflict in politics than his supremely ideal virtuous-polis.

Putting aside the obvious fact that the superior has no business with the inferior, except for purposes of friendship of utility or pleasure, the prospect of Aristotle’s mean-political system eliminating factions is wildly questionable. Thus, for two main reasons, I doubt how Aristotle’s lawgiver will be successful to create enabling conditions to foster the virtue friendship in this economically and morally polarised polis. First, Aristotle is mistaken in his judgement about how the middling group will be the best candidates to rule. They are in the middle not because they are content with their social and economic position, but perhaps circumstances (including the fact that they have never wielded political power) prevent them from avarice and profligacy. Thus, the ‘middle’ has the *potential* to become fabulously rich; they obviously would not wish to become poor. Therefore, changing the locus of political power is a matter of postponing the problem of *stasis* rather than solving it. Second, if friendship of virtue can exist among only good men who are equal, as he argues, then one wonders how the lawgiver will be successful to foster this ideal friendship among the triadic structure of the citizenry: the rich, the middle, and the poor, regarded collectively as the political whole. Except for their political compromise, they are simply not equal (cf. *NE* IX.6.1, 1167a22-26).

The thrust of this comparison is to correct the wrong impression that Plato’s political thought is more theoretical and unrealistic than Aristotle’s. Plato does not undermine the role of conflict in politics; he understood the nature and cause of political conflicts and took practical measures to tackle them. Most of Aristotle’s criticism of Plato in the *Politics* are infelicitous and demonstrate a misunderstanding of Plato’s political project.

<sup>260</sup> For extensive scholarship on Aristotle’s criticism of Plato, see Mayhew 1997.

essence, there is at least a minimum sense of a symmetrical relationship between the philosopher-rulers and the ruled in Kallipolis because the ruled recognise their leaders to be those who can function optimally in governance, and the rulers see the ruled as those fit to efficiently function in their respective professions. Plato does not justify slavery in the *Republic*; again, we can see that the logical force of οὐκ ἀντάρκης does not give room for justification of slavery.<sup>261</sup>

A political environment like Kallipolis creates a favourable environment to achieve the aim of virtue political friendship and social harmony, despite its massively hierarchical structure. That is, the realisability of individual eudaemonistic goals is not threatened by the strict political hierarchy. On this note, I agree with Sen that in any given political jurisdiction “the freedom of agency that we individually have is inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political and economic opportunities that are available to us. There is a deep complementarity between individual agency and social arrangements.”<sup>262</sup> The position of the defenders of the metaphysical justification only proves that Plato fails to make social and political arrangements to remove unfreedoms. The naturalistic justification, on the other hand, shows how Plato does otherwise. Our Argument (4), which grounds our thesis (4), has been proved, I think.

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<sup>261</sup> Cf. Vlastos 1941.

<sup>262</sup> Sen 2000:12

## CONCLUSION

I set out in this study to argue against a traditional and still popular interpretation, the *metaphysical justification*, according to which the non-philosophic citizens in Kallipolis are excluded from politics because they cannot possess knowledge of the Good. I have agreed with some scholars, including Hall and Piechowiak, that even though there seem to be some grounds to defend metaphysical justification (Section 1.3), Plato remains non-committal to the view that only philosophers can be morally rational. None of these ‘star’ passages defending the metaphysical justification pins Plato down as holding the view that the non-philosophic citizens are slaves. I have drawn the attention to some crucial passages which contradict any such negative reference. In Book V, Socrates compares Kallipolis to other poleis and concludes that his rulers call their citizens “providers of upkeep and wages” and the citizens, in turn, call their rulers “preservers and auxiliaries”. Socrates says these positive co-referencing expressions contrast with what rulers in other cities call their citizens: “slaves” (*Rep.*, 463a3-b12). In Book V, Plato says that Kallipolis is a Greek polis, and because the citizens will indeed “be good and civilised” (*Rep.*, 470e). Therefore, the claim that the non-philosophic citizens are slaves because they lack moral rationality and self-determination is untenable. Therefore, the claim that the citizens must unquestionably follow the philosopher-rulers for their moral wellbeing is equally indefensible in the *Republic*.

While the non-philosophic citizens’ capacity for moral rationality is a very strong thesis to redefine their worth in Kallipolis, I have argued in this study that their moral worth is not enough to indicate their significant political position within the political hierarchy of Kallipolis. I argued that they are significant partners to the realisability of Kallipolis. To show this, I reinterpreted how Plato justifies the political authority of the philosopher-rulers in a way that opens a conceptual space to account for the material contribution of the citizens. By paying close attention to the principles of ‘insufficiency’, ‘partnership’, ‘sharing’, in Socrates constructionist account of the polis in Book II, I have argued for the *naturalistic justification* as the appropriate alternative to understand Plato justification of the political authority of the philosopher-rulers.

The naturalistic justification does not deny that metaphysical ἐπιστήμη makes the philosopher-rulers cognitively superior to the non-philosophic citizens. It rather emphasizes the two natural principles Socrates takes as necessary conditions to make society possible: (a) *mutual needs*—individuals are not self-sufficient and need to live together (*Rep.*, 369b-d); and (b) *difference of aptitude*: different people are good at different things, and it is best for all that

each concentrates on developing what each is good at doing (*Rep.*, 370a-b). These two principles hold that each individual in Kallipolis is endowed with some natural aptitudes and qualities a development of which conduces to the person's good and that of the political community at large. This is consistent with Plato's social justice, namely, that each person must perform functions that their natural aptitude and education can enable them to perform efficiently and optimally. Plato's social justice defends the worthiness of every person in Kallipolis. The naturalistic justification does not challenge the idea that some citizens in any organised society must need external moral agency since all cannot live the virtuous life. Instead, it argues that the ethical and political implications of metaphysical justifications cannot be sustained.

In defence of the naturalistic justification, therefore, I have defended four logically connected theses: (1) *all* citizens are to focus on professions in which they can function optimally. Therefore, if ruling is the prerogative of philosopher-rulers it is because they can function optimally in governance. (2) Similarly, the other citizens are excluded from politics because their natural aptitudes and training enable them to attain efficiency in their respective professions. (3) One's ability to function optimally in a given profession depends on one's natural aptitude and cognitive competence. To do this, I have argued to show how Plato conceives the cognitive or epistemic competencies of the non-philosophic citizens. If theses (1)-(3) are plausible, and I think they are, it is my utmost conviction that (4) the realisability of the eudaemonistic goals of both the individual and the polis supervene upon the cooperative interactions between the rulers and the ruled, relative to their natural aptitudes and epistemic competencies. Thesis (4) opposes the claim of the metaphysical justification that Plato's politics bodes some kind of absolute political determinism, namely, that the rulers are to determine every aspect of the citizens' life. In my interpretation, the *Republic's* strict political hierarchy does otherwise; it does not threaten or undermine the realisability of individual eudaemonistic. From this perspective, I agree with Cantu that Kallipolis "is an organic whole composed of classes of functionally integrated individuals."<sup>263</sup> Cantu's claim shares the views of my theses (1) and (2).

The novelty of my study is evident in my theses (3) and (4) and their defences, namely, that the non-philosophic citizens are not only morally rational but that their material contributions to their happiness—which cumulatively and invariably become their contribution to the realisability of Kallipolis—are based on their cognitive or epistemic competencies. I end the

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<sup>263</sup> Cantu 2010:159.



study with the following risible story told by Sextus Empiricus, *qua* Pyrrhonist sceptic, in his attempt to discredit dialecticians.

**T21:** A witty anecdote is told about Herophilus the doctor. He was a contemporary of Diodorus, who vulgarized dialectic and used to run through sophisticated arguments on many topics including motion. Now one day Diodorus dislocated his shoulder and went to Herophilus to be treated. Herophilus wittily said to him: ‘Your shoulder was dislocated either in a place in which it was or in a place in which it wasn’t. But neither in which it was nor in which it wasn’t. Therefore it is not dislocated.’ So the sophist begged him to leave such arguments alone and to apply the medical treatment suitable to his case (Sextus, PH. 2.245, trans. Bury 1933).

The point here is not to side with Sextus to scoff at dialectics or downplay the importance Plato attaches to metaphysical ἐπιστήμη. The crucial lesson from the anecdote, relative to theses (3) and (4), is that Plato’s philosopher-rulers are likely to encounter the predicament of Diodorus if they are to consider themselves to be the only knowledgeable individuals in Kallipolis, and thereby look askance at all other citizens. But thankfully they do not. There is a genuine sense of friendship and strong social bonds beyond their mutual contribution to the development of the polis. All the citizens, as Frisbee persuades us, are “dependent rational animals” in a genuine sense of filial relationship. And it seems that the positive co-referencing expressions between the rulers and the ruled share something in common with a slogan that has become a commonplace in our Covid-19 pandemic era: “We are in this together.”<sup>264</sup> Sandel submits that “Morally, the pandemic has reminded us of our vulnerability, of our mutual interdependence: We are in this together.”<sup>265</sup> But in contrast to our modern society, the solidarity this slogan evokes in Plato’s Kallipolis is plausibly solidarity of genuine understanding of mutual interdependence, mutual respect for each citizen’s talent and shared responsibilities between the rulers and the ruled.

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<sup>264</sup> Sandel 2020:3

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

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